

Div Com Jammu attends closing ceremony of 6th National Rafting Championship at Shibnote

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DODA: The four-day 6th National Rafting Championship, titled "The Ultimate River Battle," concluded today with a grand ceremony at Shibnote (Premnagar), Doda.

The ceremony was attended by the Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, DDC Chairperson Doda Dhanan Singh Kotwal, Municipal Commissioner Jammu Dr. Devansh Yadav, Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh, Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar, ADDC Doda Roshan Lal, ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, CO, ACR Doda, SDM Thathri, CEO BDA, Joint Director Tourism along with officers from various departments, representatives of the Rafting Federation J&K, Team SDRF J&K, Chenab Rescue teams, Municipality officials, locals and visiting tourists. Addressing the gathering, the Divisional Commissioner congratulated all participating teams and appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders for making the event a grand success. He lauded the Directorate of Tourism for promoting adventure tourism in the Chenab Valley and highlighted the Government of Jammu & Kashmir's commitment to strengthening tourism across the Jammu Division.



Div Com Jammu Ramesh Kumar with other dignitaries at prize distribution ceremony.

He emphasized that destinations such as Guldanda, Bhaderwah and Jai Valley possess natural beauty comparable to the Kashmir Valley and noted that ongoing infrastructure development, including new roads and tunnels, will significantly improve connectivity and reduce travel time to these picturesque locations. He further informed that 75 tourist destinations have been identified by the Directorate of Tourism, including several in Doda and Bhaderwah, where new events and tourism initiatives will be promoted.

The Divisional Commissioner Jammu also encouraged the promotion of local culture, folk dances and traditional music to provide the youth with platforms to showcase their talent and generate employment opportunities. He congratulated the BSF men's and women's teams for winning top honours in the championship and appreciated the role of the Police and security agencies in ensuring

smooth and secure conduct of the event. DDC Chairperson, Dhanan Singh Kotwal, in his address, acknowledged the efforts of Deputy Commissioner Doda for encouraging both officials and locals to successfully host such large-scale events across the district. He also appreciated the Directorate of Tourism and District Administration Doda for identifying new adventure tourism sites and promoting youth participation. Highlighting developmental achievements, he stated that 31 new roads were inaugurated in recent months, improving rural connectivity and benefiting local communities. He noted that such events generate livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth and requested the Directorate of Tourism to organize more events during the summer season as well. He also expressed gratitude to the security forces for their support and protection. Director

Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta expressed gratitude towards District Administration Doda, and all stakeholders for ensuring the smooth conduct of the championship. He informed that while five previous rafting championships were organized in Reasi, hosting the sixth edition in Doda marked a significant step in expanding adventure tourism across the Chenab region. He encouraged local youth interested in rafting to connect with the Directorate of Tourism, assuring necessary permissions and institutional support to promote adventure activities. He further announced that events like Sarthali Winter Festival and the Shibnote Rafting Championship would be incorporated into the official tourism calendar. Upcoming tourism projects for Guldanda and Padri along with a proposed Winter Carnival in Guldanda, were also highlighted as key initiatives aimed at boosting regional tourism.

During the ceremony, dignitaries distributed mementos and cash prizes to winners of the rafting championship, including marathon and sprint events, securing first, second and third positions.

Earlier, the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, DDC Chairperson, Municipal Commissioner Jammu Dr. Devansh Yadav, Deputy Commissioners of Doda and Reasi, Director Tourism, SSP Doda, CO and other dignitaries undertook a rafting expedition from the scenic rafting site of Shibnote (Premnagar) to Karara, covering an approximate distance of 15 kilometres, showcasing the immense adventure tourism potential of the Chenab River stretch. The championship was held from February 19 to February 22, 2026 and was organized by the Directorate of Tourism Jammu in collaboration with the District Administration Doda, attracting participants, tourists and adventure enthusiasts from across Jammu & Kashmir and various parts of the country. A vibrant musical programme was also organised yesterday at Bhaderwah by the Directorate of Tourism in collaboration with the District Administration Doda, which was attended by all dignitaries, officers, participants, locals and tourists, adding a cultural highlight to the celebrations.

Legend Masters 3.0 Inter-State T20 Championship J&K, Andhra Veterans script emphatic wins



Veteran Cricket Association J&K team posing for a photograph after winning the match.

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JAMMU: The League Matches of Legend Masters 3.0 Inter-State T20 Championship witnessed electrifying performances as veteran cricketers showcased their class and competitive spirit. The tournament is being organised by Veteran Cricket Association J&K in collaboration with Excise Department J&K & Shree Toyota. In the opening encounter, Veterans Cricket Association posted an imposing 195/6 in 20 overs against Team Hyderabad. Vijay Dogra led from the front with a brilliant 62 off

35 balls (7 fours, 1 six), while Waseem Baba (24), Sunny (24) and Sameer Malik (19) provided solid contributions. Skipper Vivek Suri remained unbeaten on 17 off just 10 balls, finishing strongly. In reply, Hyderabad Mavericks were bundled out for 109 in 20 overs. Rakesh Reddy (19) and Raj (18) tried to steady the innings, but disciplined bowling ensured a comfortable victory for the Veterans Cricket Association. In another league clash, Garuda Bengaluru were bowled out for 101 in 17.5 overs. Suraj Bhonkar top-scored with 34 runs, but

consistent breakthroughs restricted their momentum. Chasing the target, Andhra Veteran Cricket Association reached 102/4 in 14.4 overs, sealing the win convincingly. R. Thata Babu starred with an unbeaten 51 off 36 balls, well supported by Jana (28*), guiding the team home with ease. The league matches highlighted competitive cricket, sportsmanship, and the enduring passion of veteran players. Legend Masters 3.0 continues to provide a grand platform for experienced cricketers to relive their glory and inspire young enthusiasts.

Epic clash of titans: J&K's steel challenges Karnataka's fire in Ranji Trophy final

Hosts' batting fireworks meet visitors' seam-and-spin mastery

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JAMMU: In the white-hot crucible of Indian domestic cricket's pinnacle, Jammu & Kashmir's Himalayan grit ignites against Karnataka's batting supernova. From February 24 at the KSCA's roaring Hubballi Ground far from Bengaluru's bustle, this Ranji Trophy final erupts under a crisp winter sun, pitting J&K's unyielding bowling fortress against Karnataka's run-machine mastery. Expect seismic shifts, heart-stopping collapses, and innings that etch legends. It's a showdown of near-perfect symmetry. Karnataka unleashes a batting quintet of proven Indian elites: elegant opener KL Rahul, silky Devdutt Padikkal, comeback king Karun Nair, gritty Mayank Agarwal, and prodigious Smaran

Ravichandran. Their depth has powered a campaign blending flair and steel. J&K counters with raw firepower. Pace spearhead Auqib Nabi's seam sorcery has ravaged 55 wickets this season alone, backed by lanky left-arm Sunil Kumar and explosive quick Yudhvir Singh Charak - a trio that rivals the world's best attacks. In spin, the visitors hold a sly edge: promising Abid Mushtaq and crafty Vanshaj Sharma outwit Karnataka's steady Shreyas Gopal. J&K's batting radiates resilience: opener Shubham Khajuria's reliability (despite recent wobbles), Abdul Samad's explosive dynamite, Kanhaiya Wadhawan's tactical nous, skipper Paras Dogra's seasoned nous, and Shubham Singh Pundir's dogged anchoring. Youngster Yawar

Hassan must summon big-match fire to silence doubters. Karnataka's attack, meanwhile, blends express pace and guile: tearaway Prasidh Krishna, rising star Vidyadhar Patil, hard-hitting allrounder Vyshak Vijaykumar, and Shreyas Gopal's wiles - a quartet primed to exploit any pitch gremlins. Jammu & Kashmir's remarkable all-round batting depth could prove decisive. Their lower-order warriors and tailenders thrive under pressure, delivering match-winning runs in any scenario. Underdog warriors from the Valley, J&K arrive forged in adversity, their semifinal surge a saga of mountain defiance. Fans across the Union Territory pulse with hope for a maiden title, a triumph to echo through Jammu's lanes and Kashmir's

meadows. Though the KSCA Hubballi ground typically offers a batting-friendly surface, its balanced grassy pitch favours both pacers and spinners. If not fitness issues, hope J&K fields the same Playing XI as in the semifinals against mighty Bengal. For neutrals, it's cricketing opera: J&K's disciplined chokeholds versus Karnataka's daring strokeplay, where one killer spell or match-defining ton rewrites histories. Who blinks first - the hosts' batting brilliance or the visitors' bowling blade? Strap in. This final crafts poetry from leather and willow. A high-voltage nerve-shredder awaits. The side that masters crunch-time poise claims immortality.

Youth Engagement Programme-2026 ignites grassroots sports revolution in Kishtwar

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KISHTWAR: The Department of Youth Services & Sports, District Kishtwar, on Sunday organized the much-anticipated Youth Engagement Programme-2026 at Chowgan Ground, Kishtwar, marking a historic step towards strengthening grassroots sports culture in the district. The programme witnessed the grand launch of the "League of Classics," featuring Block-Level Trial-cum-Selection competitions in multiple disciplines, including Cricket, Football, and Volleyball for U/17 and U/19 boys categories at the Inter-Panchayat Block Level, Kishtwar and Municipal Council Kishtwar. The mega sporting initiative was conducted under the directions of Anuradha Gupta, Director General, Youth Services & Sports,



J&K and Pankaj Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, whose visionary leadership continues to provide a dynamic platform for youth engagement and talent identification across the Union Territory. The programme was organized under the close guidance and supervision of Jaffer Haider Sheikh, DYSSO Kishtwar, who emphasized the importance of structured competitions at the grassroots level to nurture

hidden talent and channel the energy of youth towards constructive sporting activities. The selection trials witnessed enthusiastic participation from young sportspersons across different Panchayats and Municipal wards of Kishtwar, reflecting a massive response at the grassroots level. The competitions were conducted in a fair, transparent and merit-based manner by a panel of experienced officials and technical experts from the

Department of Youth Services & Sports. The presence of Zonal Physical Education Officers (ZPEO) Kishtwar and Nagseni further strengthened the supervision mechanism, ensuring the smooth conduct of trials and adherence to departmental norms. All officials of YSS Kishtwar actively coordinated the event, demonstrating remarkable teamwork and commitment. The "League of Classics" is envisioned as a stepping stone for higher-level competitions at the District, Divisional, and UT levels, thereby opening pathways for young athletes to represent Kishtwar on prestigious platforms. The Department of Youth Services & Sports, District Kishtwar, remains steadfast in its mission to create history in sports excellence and youth empowerment in the district.

Kathua Admin launches Open District Cricket Tournament

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KATHUA: District Administration Kathua, in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department Kathua, on Sunday commenced the Open District Cricket Tournament under the aegis of Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, with inaugural day matches being held across different subdivisions of the district. The tournament is being organized under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, with the objective of promoting sportsmanship and spreading awareness against drug abuse among the youth. At Billawar, under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Billawar, Vinay Khosla, two matches were played at Playground Bhaddu as part of the inaugural fixtures. In the first match,

A.K Billawar defeated United II Billawar. In the second match, M.K Deccan Charges Billawar secured victory against Ramkot Cricket Club. Similarly, at Government Model Higher Secondary School Basohli, inaugural matches were conducted under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Basohli, Pankaj Bhagotra. Plassi Cricket Club defeated Game Changer CC Mahanpur, while Basohli Warriors emerged victorious against United Hut. At Hiranagar, under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hiranagar, Phulail Singh, two inaugural matches were played at Sai International Stadium. Hiranagar Cricket Club defeated Superking Cricket Club, while Mukesh II Cricket Club registered victory over Pro

II Cricket Club. Likewise, at Degree College Bani, under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Magistrate Bani, Sandeep Kumar, Bani defeated Duggan, while Backen secured victory over Lowang in the opening day matches. Refreshments were served to all participating players and officials. The tournament will continue in the coming days, with winning teams advancing to subsequent rounds, culminating in the grand finale at District Headquarters Kathua. Pertinently, the District Administration Kathua has undertaken a resolve to engage youth in constructive pursuits and strengthen the fight against drug abuse through sustained sports-based interventions under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

Tejal, Prema power India A to Asia Cup Rising Stars title



India Women team after receiving winner trophy of ACC Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars on Sunday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

BANGKOK: Tejal Hasanbis made an impactful 51 not out off 34 balls on a slow turner before leg-spinner Prema Rawat made the ball talk as India A outplayed Bangladesh A by a whopping 46 runs in a low-scoring final to defend the ACC Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars here on Sunday. At 44 for four, India were in trouble but Hasanbis, who has played ODIs for India, and captain Radha Yadav, another international, (36 off 30) shared an 89-run stand for the fifth wicket to lift their team to 134 for seven in 20 overs.

Considering conditions and strength of Indian bowling attack, the Radha-led side comfortably defended by bowling out Bangladesh for 88 in 19.1 overs. The star with the ball was Prema (3/12 in four overs), who was part of RCB's triumphant campaign in the recently played WPL. She gave the ball plenty of flight

and got enough purchase off the surface. Bangladesh were never in the run chase having lost their first wicket for 12 runs in the third over. The procession started when Ishma Tanjim was caught off pacer Saima Thakor after unsuccessfully charging down the pitch. Prema got her wicket with a classical leg-break that bounced a tad extra to take the outside edge of Shamima Sultana. Even in the inaugural final of the tournament in 2023, India A had got the better of Bangladesh A. Batting first, India A felt the pressure on a trick surface but Hasanbis showed plenty of skill and character to bail her team out of trouble. She batted at a strike rate of 150.00, much higher than the rest of the batters in the game to make a decisive difference. While the top four hardly contributed for India A, Hasanbis was able to clear

the ropes twice with Radha providing much needed support at the end. Congratulating the young

squad, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia praised the team, led by Radha Yadav, for its outstanding achievement and lauded the efforts of the coaches and support staff behind the success. "The dominance of India Women continues! Just a day after the senior women's team won the T20I series in Australia, India A Women have clinched the Rising Star Asia Cup in Bangkok today. A big congratulations to the young and talented team led by Radha Yadav. Kudos to the coaches & support staffs too," BCCI secretary Saikia posted on X.

SCOREBOARD

| India A Women | |
|--|--------------|
| Nandini Kashyap run out (Sadia Akter/†Shamima Sultana) | 8 |
| Dinesh Vrinda b Fatema Jahan | 19 |
| Anushka Sharma b Fahima Khatun | 8 |
| Mimnu Mani c Sanjida Akter Meghla b Farjana Easmin | 0 |
| Tejal Hasanbis not out | 51 |
| Radha Yadav (c) c Farjana Easmin b Fahima Khatun | 36 |
| Tanuja Kanwar c Lata Mondal b Fahima Khatun | 1 |
| Prema Rawat c Farjana Easmin b Fahima Khatun | 4 |
| Madiwala Mamatha † not out | 2 |
| Extras | 5 |
| Total | 134/7 |
| Bangladesh A Women | |
| Ishma Tanjim c Sharma b Thakor | 3 |
| Shamima Sultana † c †Mamatha b Rawat | 20 |
| Sarmin Sultana c Rawat b Yadav | 18 |
| Sadia Akter c Kashyap b Rawat | 10 |
| Lata Mondal st †Mamatha b Rawat | 1 |
| Fahima Khatun (c) c Thakor b Mani | 14 |
| Farjana Easmin c Kashyap b Mendhiya | 6 |
| Shorifa Khatun c Rawat b Kanwar | 9 |
| Sanjida Akter Meghla c Rawat b Kanwar | 5 |
| Fatema Jahan c Kanwar b Mendhiya | 1 |
| Fariha Trisna not out | 0 |
| Extras | 1 |
| Total | 88/10 |



Participating teams posing with DC Kathua, Rajesh Sharma and other dignitaries.