

Media and Technology are helmet in a cricketer’s kit bag: Shastri at WAVES 2025

■ **VIVEK SHARMA**
MUMBAI: Former India captain and head coach Ravi Shastri delivered a passionate address at the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025, drawing a compelling parallel between cricket and modern-day tools of progress-media and technology. Speaking at a panel titled "Intersection of Sports, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Media", Shastri urged players to embrace these evolving elements as essential components of a modern sports career.

"Media and technology are like helmets in a cricketer's kit bag-you jolly well embrace it," Shastri quipped, underlining how the two have become indispensable to the growth of the sport and its players. He compared their current importance to the protective and performance-enhancing gear used in cricket, calling them tools that must be used strategically and confidently.

Recalling his own playing days, Shastri reflected on the limited media landscape of the past. "In my time, there was just radio and Doordarshan. That was it. There was no social media, no podcasts, no live streaming," he said. "The relationship with brands back then was limited to logos and TV



ads. But look where we are now-platforms are everywhere and only getting bigger."

Ravi Shastri shared his insights on cricket's transformation through media and technology. "Media and tech today are like a helmet in your kit-essential," he remarked, reflecting on how fan engagement and athlete branding have grown.

He described his own journey as "a wave"-symbolic of both personal highs and the broader evolution of the sport.

In a high-impact fireside chat titled "Building a Global Powerhouse: Saudi Arabia's Vision for Gaming & Esports", IIE Faisal bin Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud, Chairman of the Saudi Esports Federation, presented

ed the Kingdom's sweeping plans to redefine the global esports landscape.

The session, moderated by Girish Menon, Chief Strategy Officer at Jetsynthesys, explored how the Kingdom's youth-driven policies, strategic investments, and global partnerships are transforming Saudi Arabia into an emerging hub for gaming and esports innovation.

With over 67% of its population identifying as gamers, Saudi Arabia is cultivating an ecosystem designed for long-term sustainability. From landmark events such as Gamers Without Borders to the hosting of the Esports World Cup, the country is positioning itself at the forefront of international competition.

The cornerstone of this

vision is the Saudi Esports Academy which provides training across a range of fields-coaching, event production, game development-creating meaningful career pathways for young professionals.

The Federation's efforts are also supporting the rise of content creators, fostering an inclusive and scalable industry built on community engagement and cross-border collaboration.

Faisal emphasized that Saudi Arabia's goal extends beyond tournaments. "This is about opportunity creation, ecosystem development, and showcasing what's possible when a country aligns resources, vision, and talent," he said. As the discussion revealed, the Kingdom's approach could well shape

global gaming trends over the coming decade.

Earlier in the day, a dynamic panel on "Sports, Technology, Entrepreneurship & Media - The REAL STEM" brought together voices from across the sports ecosystem. The session was moderated by producer and entrepreneur Dheer Momaya and featured cricketing icon Ravi Shastri alongside Prashant Khanna (Jiostar), Nullah Sarker (Kosmos), Vikrant Mudaliar (Dream Sports), and Dhaval Ponda (Tata Communications).

Panelists pointed to technological advances such as immersive feeds, fantasy gaming, and AI-driven content personalization as tools reshaping how fans connect with sports. Vikrant Mudaliar underlined how fantasy platforms have turned audiences from passive viewers into active participants. Prashant Khanna highlighted inclusivity tools like sign language commentary and custom visual feeds.

Nullah Sarker stressed the importance of storytelling: "Fans don't just follow stats-they follow people." Echoing this, Dhaval Ponda noted how live sports remain the soul of global content consumption, with technology now enabling custom viewing experiences.

JU inaugurates Inter-Departmental Tournament with enthusiasm

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The University of Jammu kick started its much-anticipated Inter-Departmental Tournament for the academic session 2025-26 with vibrant enthusiasm and a spirit of healthy competition at the University Gymnasium Hall. The grand inauguration marked the beginning of exciting matches in Table Tennis and Chess, with separate categories for both men and women participants.

The tournament is being held under the esteemed patronage of the Chairman, Campus Sports Committee, University of Jammu, and under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Daud Iqbal Baba, Chairman, Campus Sports Committee. The event is efficiently coordinated by Raj Kumar Bakshi, Incharge PTI, who ensured smooth execution of the sporting events.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Daud Iqbal Baba emphasized the vital role of sports in enhancing students' mental health, relieving stress, and boosting overall productivity. He remarked that such inter-departmental tournaments foster a sense of camaraderie, belonging, and positive energy within the university, contributing significantly to students' holistic



Players competing in chess tournament.

development.

The opening day witnessed thrilling matches across disciplines. In Men's Table Tennis, the Mathematics Department emerged dominant, defeating the Biotechnology Department and the Physical Education Department, both by 2-0. In Men's Chess, the Zoology Department defeated the Law School, MCA Department won against Geology Department, Law Department beat D.S.R.S Department, and Physical Education outplayed Design Your Degree Department.

In Women's Chess, the Physical Education Department defeated

D.S.R.S Department and later secured victory over Law Department, while Law Department earlier beat Design Your Degree Department.

The seamless and fair conduct of all matches was made possible through the dedicated efforts of officials Raj Kumar Bakshi, Vikas Karlopie, Gagan Kumar, P. D. Singh, Dr. Inderjeet Singh, and Anil Singh, whose professionalism and commitment ensured the tournament's success.

The University's Inter-Departmental Tournament continues to uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and teamwork, enriching the campus environment with zeal and vibrancy.

Wushu selection trials from May 3

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Wushu Association of Jammu and Kashmir shall conduct two-day selection trials for the Sub-Junior Wushu team on May three and May four at Wushu Hall, MA Stadium, here.

The selected them then take part in the 25th Sub-Junior National Wushu Championship at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu from May 26 to May 31.

Before the team depart for the venue, those selected probable shall undergo a coaching camp, organised by J&K Sports Council (JKSC), from May four to May 23, a handout issued by the Association here today informed.

The selection shall be made by the already named selection committee including Rajinder Singh, Kamal Kishore, Ajay Paul Gill, Lalit Singh, Ashi Jamwal, Appu Jamwal and observer from JKSC.

In case of further enquiry, players should contact the organising team (9596910112).

Mohd Alyas appointed as Technical Official for Khelo India Volleyball Tournament

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Mohd Alyas, a proud native of the border district of Poonch and currently serving as the Director of Physical Education and Sports at Government Degree College, Poonch, has achieved a remarkable milestone by being selected as a technical official for the upcoming Khelo India Volleyball Tournament.

The prestigious national-level event is scheduled to be held in Patna, Bihar, from May 2 to 8, 2025.

Alyas is one of only 28 technical officials chosen from across the country to officiate at this premier sporting event, which showcases India's emerging sporting talent and is organized under the flagship Khelo India initiative.

An accomplished volleyball professional, Mohd Alyas is a certified national referee accredited by the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI). He has also



successfully completed a specialized certificate course from the esteemed Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS), Bengaluru.

With a background as a professional player, Alyas has represented the senior national team on several occasions and received his foundational training under the Sports Authority of India. His selection is a matter of immense pride for the region and serves as an inspiration for young sports enthusiasts in Jammu and Kashmir.

BSB Poonch, MBS Simbal dominate on day 3 of 1st Guru Tegh Bahadur Memorial Hockey Tournament

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The 3rd day of the 1st Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Memorial Hockey Tournament witnessed thrilling action at the Guru Tegh Bahadur Mini Stadium, Camp Gole Gujral, Jammu, as two intense matches were played to enthusiastic crowds. The tournament is being jointly organized by Khalsa Hockey Club and Khalsa Warriors Hockey Club under the aegis of Hockey J&K, with the aim of promoting the sport of hockey and channeling youth energy into positive sporting engagement.

The first match of the day saw BSB Hockey Club Poonch take on Khalsa Blues. Displaying superior skill and coordination, BSB Hockey Club secured a commanding 5-0 victory. Star player Ashu delivered an outstanding performance and was deservedly named 'Man of the Match' for his contribution.



Participating teams posing for a photograph with dignitaries.

Dr. Anitpal Singh, a noted orthopaedician, was the Chief Guest for the opening match. He congratulated the organizers on initiating such a meaningful and timely sports event. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized the critical role of sports in building character, promoting fitness, and steering youth away from the growing menace of drug abuse and other negative influences.

In the second match, MBS Hockey Club Simbal faced

off against Khalsa Warriors, and it was another dominant display as MBS secured a 4-0 win. Surpreet Singh emerged as the standout performer of the match and was awarded the 'Man of the Match' title for his exceptional play.

The second match was graced by Sukhmandan Chaudhary (Ex-MLA) as the Chief Guest, and Parvinder Singh (Dubai) as the Guest of Honour. Both dignitaries applauded the efforts of the organizing

teams and underlined the importance of such grassroots-level tournaments in reviving hockey in Jammu & Kashmir and encouraging youth participation.

Several prominent personalities and sports enthusiasts attended the event, including G.S Bakshi, Gurpreet Singh (Vice President, Hockey J&K), Supinder Deep Singh Bakshi (General Secretary, Hockey J&K), Harminder Singh, Sarabjit Singh, Rajinder Singh, Amarpal

Singh, Malkeet Singh, Jetinder Singh, Karanjeet Singh, Harjeet Singh, Kamaljeet Singh Raju and RP Sarma.

The matches were officiated and supported by a capable technical panel, which included Gagandeep Singh, Pankaj, Balmeet Singh and Surinder Singh.

The day's matches highlighted the growing passion for hockey in the region and reflected the commitment of the organizers to nurture local talent.

MLA inaugurates Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions of Zone-Akhnour

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AKHNOOR: The Department of Youth Services & Sports, Zone-Akhnour, commenced its Inter-School Zonal Level Sports Competitions at twin venues-Government Higher Secondary School, Sohal, and Indoor Stadium, Akhnour.

These competitions are being organized under the chairmanship of District Youth Services & Sports Officer, Jammu, Sukhdev Raj Sharma, and the overall supervision of Zonal Physical Education Officer (ZPEO) Akhnour, Ashok Kumar.

On today's schedule, around 450 students from



MLA Akhnour, Mohan Lal interacting with players.

various government and private schools of Akhnour zone participated with enthusiasm in Kho-Kho competitions for under-14 and under-17 boys and girls categories. These competitions aim to identify

and nurture sporting talent for further selection in the upcoming Inter-Zonal District Level Tournaments.

MLA Akhnour, Mohan Lal, was the Chief Guest at the event. An alumnus of GHSS

Sohal himself, he inspired the students with his motivational address.

Quoting prominent writers and former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, he emphasized the importance of vision, effort, and determination. "It does not matter where you come from; what matters is where you are going. The Constitution gives you the right to pursue your dreams," he said, leaving the students uplifted and motivated.

ZPEO Akhnour, Ashok Kumar, appreciated the enthusiastic participation of students and the efforts of the school staff. He emphasized the importance of continued engagement in sports for holistic development and urged the young athletes to prepare earnestly for the Inter-Zonal District Level

Tournaments that are scheduled to begin shortly.

The Principal of GHSS Sohal, Sushma Thakur, who attended the event as the Guest of Honour, welcomed all dignitaries, participants, and officials to the venue. She delivered an inspiring speech, encouraging the budding athletes to pursue their passions with perseverance and discipline. She expressed pride in her institution's opportunity to host such a prestigious sporting event and extended heartfelt appreciation to the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Zone-Akhnour, for choosing GHSS Sohal as one of the host venues.

All officers and officials of Youth Services and Sports, Zone-Akhnour, were present at the event and ensured its grand success.

J&K Softball Association to hold selection trials on May 5

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The J&K Softball Association is conducting selection trials for boys and girls on 5th May 2025 from 10:00 AM onwards at Polo Ground, Srinagar to form teams for the 43rd Junior National Softball Championship, scheduled at Punjab University, Chandigarh from 29th May to 2nd June 2025. Eligible players from affiliated district units must report with necessary documents including Domestic Championship certificates (2024-25), three passport-size photos, Aadhaar Card, Birth Certificate, School Leaving Certificate, Domicile Certificate, and Health & Fitness Certificate. Selected athletes will undergo a 21-day residential coaching camp starting 6th May 2025 in Srinagar. The selection process will be overseen by an observer from the J&K Sports Council. For further details, players can contact jksportballassociation@gmail.com.

Heritagean Viraj Singh shines at National Muaythai Championship

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Heritage School celebrated the remarkable achievement of Viraj Singh, student of Class VIII A, who has brought honour to the institution by clinching the bronze medal at the 2nd WBC National Muaythai Championship, held in Chandigarh on 25th - 27th April, 2025.

The championship drew talented martial artists from across the nation, making it a highly competitive platform.

Viraj's outstanding display of refined combat



skills earned him a well-deserved spot on the winners' podium.

The entire Heritage fraternity extended heartfelt

congratulations to Viraj on this commendable accomplishment and wishes him continued success in his future sporting pursuits.

CUJ hosts NPTEL-SWAYAM Awareness Workshop-cum-Felicitation Ceremony

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The NPTEL Team (IIT Kanpur) and the NPTEL Local Chapter, Central University of Jammu (CUJ), jointly organized an NPTEL Awareness Workshop-cum-Felicitation Ceremony on Friday at the CUJ campus in Rahya Suchani (Bagla), Samba.

The event aimed to familiarize faculty and staff from Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) with NPTEL's online certification courses, features, and the role of Local Chapters. The inaugural session began with the traditional lamp-lighting ceremony.

Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor CUJ, congratulated all the students and faculty for achieving this milestone and achieving 'A' Rating getting a grade as well as being listed among top 100 institutes across the country. Prof. Jain further remarked that this is a major encouragement to all of our efforts to provide our students with the best resources to expand their knowledge beyond the classroom. He also appreciated Dr. J N Baliya SPOC, SWAYAM NPTEL C U Jammu for putting up his sincere efforts in this direction.



Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor CUJ and others at workshop.

Dr. Angana Sengupta, Project Manager, NPTEL explained NPTEL's operational framework and the National Credit Framework (NCRF).

Prof. Raghu Nandan Sengupta, IME, IIT Kanpur demonstrated MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) development for NPTEL.

Prof. Yashwant Singh, Registrar, CU Jammu, spoke about the online courses and the Central University of Jammu.

Earlier Prof. J. N Baliya, sharing this achievement informed that Central University of Jammu SWAYAM NPTEL Local Chapter, which is active since 2017, has been facilitating the NPTEL technology courses offered through online platforms. He further added that SWAYAM NPTEL enables the students and faculty to gain

valuable skills through the programs designed and delivered by the experienced IIT and IISc Bangalore faculty through online courses in different technology, Social science and humanities disciplines.

During the event the outstanding performers, from Local Chapter during the July-December Examinations, will also be felicitated with Gold and Silver Medals as well as certificates of achievement.

The Central University of Jammu SWAYAM-NPTEL Local Chapter has again been awarded A Grade in the recently declared results of the online courses offered by SWAYAM NPTEL.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Preeti Gupta (CUJ). The program was anchored by Dr. Anju Thappa.