

35th J&K UT Senior Volleyball Championship begins

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KUPWARA: 35th J&K UT Senior Volleyball Championship for men being organised by Kupwara District Volleyball Association under the aegis of Volleyball Association of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with J&K Sports Council commenced at volleyball court, Chogul, Handwara in Kupwara here on Thursday.

The tournament, in which 21 teams from across the Union Territory of J&K are in the fray to clinch the championship trophy are participating, was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Satish Kumar, SDPO Handwara.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest underlined the importance of sports among youth for improving all round development of the country. He also called upon the youth to make the nation strong by eradicating all social evils from the society with special emphasis on drug trafficking, lauded the efforts of the organizers and



Chief Guest, Satish Kumar, SDPO Handwara posing with participating teams and other dignitaries.

association in promoting the sports in general and game of volleyball in particular thus involving youth in constructing activities. The Chief Guest was introduced to all the participating teams by Abdul Hamid, President and Shabir Khan Secretary of Kupwara District Association.

On the occasion, Jagir Singh Randhawa, international player and Senior coach of the Indian Volleyball team was also present. Other dignitaries

present were Shahbaz Ahmed Tehsildar Handwara, Town Commander 21RR, Payaz Ahmed Khan Sarpanch Chogul, Kuldeep Magotra CEO, Abdul Ahad Shah Vice President, Mohd Tariq Joint Secretary, Akbar Ali Office Secretary of V&JK and all district Presidents and Secretaries/office bearers of Volleyball Association of J&K. Abdul Hamid Wani, Chief Education Officer was the Guest of Honour on the occasion.

Earlier, Abdul Hamid, President Volleyball Association of Kupwara welcomed the dignitaries and highlighted the activities of the championship. "In this 3-day championship total 52 matches will be played," he said. The matches are being conducted by a panel of national referees of Volleyball Federation of India as well as J&K UT referees namely Amarjit Singh, Neeraj Sharma, D.K Raina, Intizar Ali,

Mohd Shabir, Sidharth Hussain, Wasim Akram, Modh Ikhtlaq, Mohd Ayaz, Amit Sharma, Manik Nagotra, Mulkhraj and Mohd Ilyas. The inaugural match was won by Anantnag by defeating Pulwama. Today's results: Jammu beat Shopian by 2-1 (23-25, 25-17, 15-3); JKP beat Baramulla by 2-1 (29-27, 22-25, 15-5); Kathua beat Poonch by 2-0 (25-23, 25-14); Anantnag beat Samba by 2-0 (25-10, 25-15);

Budgam beat Doda by 2-0 (25-10, 25-12); Ramban beat Kupwara by 2-0 (25-18, 25-22); Srinagar beat Bandipora by 2-0 (25-20, 25-20); Pulwama beat Ganderbal by 2-0 (25-17, 27-25); Rajouri beat Reasi by 2-1 (25-23, 21-25, 15-13); Jammu beat Budgam by 2-0 (25-16, 25-20); JKP beat Ramban by 2-0 (25-20, 25-22); Srinagar beat Kathua by 2-1 (20-25, 26-24, 16-14); Ganderbal beat Anantnag by 2-0 (25-21, 28-26); Shopian beat Doda by 2-0 (25-21, 25-16); Baramulla beat Kupwara by 2-0 (25-19, 25-19); Bandipora beat Poonch by 2-0 (25-20, 25-17); Budgam beat Rajouri by 2-1 (29-27, 18-25, 15-9); Pulwama beat Samba by 2-0 (25-22, 25-14); Jammu beat Doda by 2-0 (25-14, 25-20); JKP beat Kupwara by 2-0 (25-22, 26-24); Anantnag beat Pulwama by 2-0 (25-23, 25-12); Baramulla beat Ramban by 2-0 (25-19, 28-26); and Srinagar beat Poonch by 2-0 (25-14, 25-20).

Shivani of J&K joins Asian Games contingent

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JAMMU: Shivani Charak, a top Indian sport climber from J&K, has finally been picked by Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), the apex body for adventure sports in the country, for participation in the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou, China.

"She is among the three men and four women climbers of India who shall participate in Lead and Speed Climbing and Bouldering. The other climbers are Bharat Pereira of Karnataka, Aman Verma of Tata Adventure Academy, Jamshedpur, Viraj of Army, Shivpreet of Punjab, Saniya Farooque Sheikh of Maharashtra and Anisha Verma of Tata Adventure Academy, Jamshedpur," disclosed senior vice president of the Mountaineering Association of J&K (MAJK), Ram Khajuria.

Bibhas Roy from Tata Adventure Sports Academy is the coach of the team.

Whereas Shivani Charak and Saniya Sheikh shall compete in Lead Climbing and Bouldering, other two women climbers Shiv Preet and Anisha Verma shall compete in Speed climbing only.

Whereas five climbers Aman Verma, Viraj, Shiv Preet, Anisha Verma and Saniya Sheikh have already reached Hangzhou along with the coach, the remaining two climbers Bharat Pereira and Shivani Charak along with Chairman of National Sport Climbing Committee Kirti Pais shall leave for Hangzhou, China tomorrow.

The Sport Climbing competitions of the Asian Games are scheduled to begin from October 3.

Meanwhile, members of the MAJK and Tawi Trekkers J&K led by Zorawar Singh Janwal, Ram Khajuria and Shawetika Khajuria have congratulated Shivani Charak for the grand achievement and wished her all the best for the Asian Games.



Rashtriya Rifles, Jammu Tourism organise trekking expedition



Army and police officials and others posing with trekkers.

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RAMBAN: Rashtriya Rifles of the Indian Army, in partnership with Tourism Department, initiated a three-day trekking expedition from Pogal in the district on Thursday.

The trek was officially launched by BDC Chairman Ukhral, Karlep Singh and witnessed by local dignitaries and media personnel. Sixteen trekkers from various backgrounds, including athletes,

bloggers, photographers, state government representatives and local residents, gathered for this event. This group comprised two women and 14 men, featuring a diverse mix of local and out-of-town participants.

The trek commenced from the scenic Pogal Valley and will explore uncharted meadows, lakes, waterfalls and rugged peaks in the majestic Pir Panjal Ranges. The participants will engage with

local youth to promote patriotism, women's empowerment and self-employment. They will also get a close look at the local way of life, including savoring local cuisine.

The primary goal of this event is to boost tourism, which has gained momentum due to the return of normalcy in the region and various development initiatives, facilitated by the state machinery, especially the JKTDC.

Rahul Sahai calls on Anshul Garg CEO Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

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JAMMU: Rahul Sahai Chairman PHDCCI Jammu pitched for more coordination between Tourism department of Jammu, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, District Administrations for efforts to prolong stay of pilgrims in Jammu.

Rahul Sahai Chair PHDCCI Jammu said that idea of this meeting is to prolong the stay of pilgrims in Jammu City and Division which in return can uplift the economy of Jammu.

Sahai said as Jammu is known as City of Temples and the most famous temple here is Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple which is attracting maximum religious tourist, So it is suggested to showcase Jammu's tourist destinations like Jamboor Zoo, Sri



Rahul Sahai Chairman PHDCCI Jammu presenting memento to Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB.

Venkateshwara Swamy temple which is famous as Tirupati Balaji Temple in Sindhra, Jammu Tawi Golf course, Beating Retreat at

Suchetgarh, Gandola at Jammu, Raghunath Temple, Bawe Mata Temple, Bagh e Bahu Light & Sound Show, Kol Kandoli Temple,

Patnitop, Sanasar, Bani, Basohli, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah tourist destinations, Physical Pamphlets should be distributed to yatris with links of bookings defined in the message so that it could be easier to plan for yatri's to prolong their stay in Jammu.

Sahai highlighted that there are no hoardings on Nandani - Katra road for showcasing Jammu's Tourist destinations so that yatri could see and plan to visit Jammu's tourist destinations. Sahai said there should be vibrant promotion through led screens of video's of Jammu's tourist destinations in Katra bazars, Ban Ganga to bawan road, Railway station of Katra etc.

Sahai said Yatra slip Counters have all the data Eg: Mobile Number, Email address etc. of the visiting Pilgrims, Detailed docu-

ment regarding Jammu's attractions should be sent on pilgrims whatsapp, email, Physical Pamphlets should be distributed to yatris with links of bookings defined in the message so that it could be easier to plan for yatri's to prolong their stay in Jammu.

Anshul Garg, CEO, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board gave the patient hearing to the subject and thanked Chair PHDCCI for these suggestions and assured that shortly we will get these works done, Garg also shared that Govt is of the same view that pilgrims should spend some more nights in Jammu and Katra and any suggestion in this regard is welcomed. He said Organizations like PHDCCI should plan programs to deliberate on the issue.

RPHQ Jammu's Santolia (Seven tiles) tourney concludes

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JAMMU: Range Police Headquarters (RPHQ) Jammu on Thursday organized Santolia (Seven tiles) Tournament under Civic Action Programme at Nayodiya Vidhalya Basholi under the guidance of DIG JSK Range Shakti Kumar Pathak, in different locations of District Kathua where quarterfinal, semifinal and final of the qualified players played.

The programme started with Pledge (say no to drugs) and National Anthem with a welcome of the Chief Guest, Shakti Kumar Pathak, Guest of Honour, Shivdeep Singh SSP Kathua, and Special Guests Rajinder Singh Katoch SSP SO to DIG Jammu, Ajit Singh Badwal, ADC Basohli and BDC Basohli Sushma Jamwal, BDC Mahanpur Raj Singh, BDC Bhoond Sheetal



DIG JSK Range Shakti Kumar Pathak with participating teams and other officials.

Nagar, Shankar Singh and BDC Dhar Mahanpur Sushma Karyal, Chairman Municipal Committee Basohli Somesh Sapolia and 28 Sarpanchs from different Panchayats were also present. While addressing to media, Shakti Pathak said that total 54 teams of boys and 31 teams of girls in which approximately 750 students from far flung areas of district Kathua

have been participated in the Santolia (seven tiles) Tournament and today total 15 teams has been played which are qualified for today's round in which 8 teams for boys and 7 teams for girls.

He briefed the value and importance of sports and education in students life.

He also said that youth is the backbone of the society, students/youth should away

from the drugs and negative influence which is the main motive of the J&K Police to organizing such sports tournaments.

The principal, teachers, dignitaries and general public presented in venue appreciated J&K Police for organizing such type of tournament, and they also said that they expected same from the J&K Police in future also.

In boys, Middle School Baddu beat Veer Savarkar Higher Secondary School Basohli by 08 points and won the final Santolia (Seven Tiles) match.

In girls, Girls High School Bahnore beat Girls High School Doula by 6 points and won the match final Santolia (Seven tiles) match.

Final Match winning teams were awarded with mementos, medals, certificates, Santolia Kit, books, T-shirts

and cash prize of Rs 5000. Final Runner up Teams awarded with memento, medals, certificates, books, T-shirts and cash prize of Rs. 3000.

Semifinal winner teams awarded with books, certificates and Cash Prize of Rs. 2000 and semifinal runner-up teams awarded with books, certificates and cash prize of Rs. 1000. Rest all the participated teams awarded with certificates.

The event was conducted under the overall supervision of the Staff officer to DIG Jammu Rajinder Singh Katoch SSP.

All the team members of RPHQ Jammu played a very vital role for concluding the whole event with best efforts for arranging all the possibilities and all officers appreciated the staff of RPHQ as well as Kathua Police for their good work and successful closing of the event.

Horticulture Deptt conducts Farmers' awareness-cum-training programme



Tehsildar Khour Monica Sharma speaking at an awareness programme.

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KHOUR: The Department of Horticulture Jammu conducted one day Farmers' Awareness cum Training Programme on Canning and Processing of Fruits at Panchayat Bhagwana Chak of block Khour under the chairmanship of Director Horticulture Jammu, Ram Savak.

Chief Horticulture officer Jammu Ashwani Sharma, Tehsildar Khour Monica Sharma, MCC Jammu Uttam Chand, DL Subject Matter Specialist Sandeep Gupta, HDO Amit Saraf, besides PRI members, women entrepreneurs and farmers participated in the programme.

While addressing the gathering of more than 100 farmers of the area, Ram Savak briefed the farmers about the various Centrally and UT sponsored schemes of the department in detail and urged them to come forward and avail incentives under different schemes of the department.

He also impressed upon the trainees to associate

with the Horticulture department and form Self Help Groups (SHGs) for setting up of small fruit and vegetables processing units. He assured that the department will help them in setting up of Micro Food Processing units under the PMFME scheme, a landmark initiative of Aatman Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan for the value addition of fruit products which will not only provide employment opportunities to the beneficiaries, but will also make them self-reliant and henceforth can play an important role in enhancing the family income.

Further, the Department under the chairmanship of Director Horticulture Jammu Ram Savak organised a Training Programme on Layering, Budding and Grafting of fruit plants at Govt. Fruit Plant Nursery Garhi-Bishnah of block Khour for the unemployed youth including female trainees.

The programme was also attended by vice chairman DDC Suraj Singh, DDC

member Bushan Bral, Chairman Municipal Committee Jourian and other PRI members of the area.

This program, focused on nurturing the skills of unemployed trainees in hybrid fruit plant propagation, included the generous distribution of free tool kits, facilitating their journey towards establishing private nurseries with the support of the horticulture department.

Director Horticulture highlighted the commitment of the department to empower individuals, particularly those facing unemployment, with practical skills that can lead to self-reliance and economic growth within the horticulture sector.

He further added that such innovative training programs not only benefit the unemployed trainees but also contributes to the advancement of horticultural practices and local horticultural industries.

By encouraging entrepreneurship in hybrid fruit plant propagation and private nursery setup, it opens doors to employment opportunities and strengthens the horticultural community. Vice chairman DDC and DDC member appreciated such fruitful efforts of the horticulture department that can help the unemployed youth of the area in becoming self-reliant.

As Cricket World Cup fever grips India, bat manufacturers in J&K struggle to meet demand

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

Srinagar: Sunil Kumar, an expert batmaker from Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, is among several master craftsmen lured to Sangam as manufacturers in this south Kashmir town have witnessed a surge in orders ahead of the Cricket World Cup that begins next week.

While sales of bats made from Kashmir willow witness an uptick ahead of every multilateral event organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC), orders this year have been higher as India is hosting the event after a gap of 12 years.

"With the Cricket World Cup approaching, the demand for bats has risen so much that we are not able to complete all the orders," Kumar told PTT.

While more work translates into higher earnings, Kumar is happy that the bats he makes will reach international cricket.

"I am a batmaker with 20 years' experience. I have made

bats for ace cricketers such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo," Kumar said.

Fawzul Kabir, the spokesperson for the Cricket Bat Manufacturers' Association of Kashmir, said the demand for Kashmir willow bats has steadily increased over the past two years after the ICC granted approval for these to be used in international tournaments.

"We have been manufacturing cricket bats for 102 years but didn't have any national or international recognition till 2021. After getting the ICC's approval, our bats appeared in different international tournaments and the demand has risen manifold," Kabir, who manufactures bats under the GR8 Sports brand, said.

Kabir claimed that Kashmir caters to 80 per cent of the global demand for cricket bats.

"With the World Cup around the corner and being hosted by India, the demand has risen

manifold. We manufacture around three million bats annually but the demand for this month and the previous one was 15 times higher. We manufactured around three to four million bats in two months that we delivered," he said.

Kabir claimed that from 'zero exports' till 2021, more than 1.85 lakh bats from Kashmir have been exported to various countries.

"We are giving the world a better alternative in the form of Kashmir willow, that too at a cheaper price. Quality-wise also, if you see our bat, the biggest six in the (T20) World Cup was hit by a player using our bat," he said, adding at least 17 players will be using his company's bats during this edition of the World Cup.

Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh, a worker at a bat manufacturing unit, said the workforce here waits for the World Cup as their wages go up. "We always wait for the World Cup because our

work increases manifold and we get double the wages. We work day and night during these days as this is the source of our livelihood," he said.

Sheikh said the buyers increase their orders three to four times around the time of the World Cup. "Those who usually order 1,000 bats ask for 3,000 to 4,000 bats now," he added.

Omer Alam, a former cricketer from Jammu and Kashmir who played in the Ranji Trophy, said the investment into improving the quality of Kashmir willow bats is now paying dividends.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KULGAM: The provincial level U-19 cricket tournament for girls organized by the Joint Director Youth Service and Sports Kashmir at Kulgam concluded suc-

cessfully on Thursday.

In the race to clutch the trophy, Kupwara emerged as the winner defeating the opponent team from Budgam in the final.

The match was witnessed

by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Viqar Ahmed Giri as chief guest while Tehsildar Hq Ali Mohammad and employees of Department of Youth Service and Sports Kulgam

were also present on this occasion.

Later, a prize distribution ceremony was held during which the winning team and other participants were felicitated.