

# J&K Gymnasts to shine on International stage; Flag off ceremony held

**J&K Gymnasts Vaibhavi Sharma and Muskan Rana flagged off to participate in prestigious International FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup**

TT CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, JULY 14 : In a grand ceremony, two talented gymnasts from J&K, Ms. Vaibhavi Sharma and Ms. Muskan Rana, were flagged off to participate in the prestigious International FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup. The event is scheduled to take place in Romania and Italy on July 20, 2025. Ms. Anissa Nabi, Chief Sports Officer Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council flagged off two gymnasts from Jammu and Kashmir to participate in International FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup to be held in Romania and Italy. The flag off ceremony was attended by Sat Pal, Divisional Sports Officer J&K Sports Council and Kiran Wattal, President Gymnastics Association of J&K, Anil Khajuria (Sr. Vice President), Rakesh Malhotra (Treasurer), S. Tajinder Singh (Associated Secretary), Sunil Sharma (Chairman, Discipline Committee), Rajan Sharma



(Chairman, Activity Committee.), Satyam Gupta (President, Jammu Distt.), Adv. Anness Chaterji (Secretary, Jammu Distt.), Swarn Singh (President, Udhampur Disstt.), Raj Kumar Bucha (Secretary, Udhampur Disstt.), Adv. Y.C. Katoch (President, Kathua Distt.), Anil Khajuria (General Secretary) along with other dignitaries who extended

best wishes and support to the players and termed it as moment of immense pride for Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Wattal said that Ms. Vaibhavi Sharma will represent J&K in the World Challenge Cup in Romania, while Ms. Muskan Rana will compete in the World Cup in Milan, Italy. Both athletes have previously participated in international

sports events, bringing glory to the Union Territory of J&K. Wattal acknowledged the support of Ms. Nusrat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council; Sarmad Hafiz, Commissioner Secretary, Sports; Satish Sharma, Minister of Sports, J&K; and especially Manoj Sinha, LG, J&K, in providing facilities for the upliftment of gymnastics in the region. The participation of

these gymnasts in the international event is a moment of immense pride for Jammu and Kashmir. The athletes are expected to showcase their skills and bring laurels to the region, added Wattal. Ms Nusrat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, and Er Kiran Wattal, President, Gymnastics Association of J&K, extended their best wishes to the gymnasts for

a stellar performance.

Wattal expressed confidence that Ms. Vaibhavi Sharma and Ms. Muskan Rana will excel in the International FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup. He stated that both gymnasts have the potential to shine on the international stage and bring pride to Jammu and Kashmir and the nation. Wattal's confidence stems from the gymnasts' previous performances and the training they have received. He believes that with their talent, dedication, and hard work, they will be able to showcase their skills and make a mark in the international gymnastics arena. The Gymnastics Association of J&K and the J&K Sports Council have been working tirelessly to provide the necessary support and facilities to the gymnasts, and Wattal is optimistic that these efforts will pay off in the form of outstanding performances from Ms. Sharma and Ms. Rana.

**Jannik Sinner instantly flips on 'Carlos Alcaraz' stance in Wimbledon speech, Spaniard's reaction steals the show**



Jannik Sinner reigned supreme as he got his French Open revenge against Carlos Alcaraz, winning in four sets in their men's singles Wimbledon final on Sunday. Alcaraz, two-time defending champion, clinched the first set, but then Sinner roared back to win the next four in a 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 victory.

It marked Sinner's fourth Grand Slam title, and now he is one short of Alcaraz's total of five. The Italian was obviously in a jovial mood during the presentation ceremony, and even joked during his interview, when praising Alcaraz. He quipped, "So keep going, keep pushing, you are going to hold many, many times this trophy... You already have two, so!"

Sinner also had a playful joke for his brother, who was there to watch his match. He said, "It's so special because seeing my parents here, my brother, my whole team, it's amazing. Actually, a special thanks to my brother because there is no Formula 1 race this weekend, that's why he's here!"

Sinner recently served a short doping ban after his Australian Open victory, and he returned to action in May.

He was also emotional after his win, and was seen smiling at his box after the match. "It feels emotional because only me and the people who are close to me know exactly what we have been through on and off the court and it has been everything except easy," he said.

"We've tried to push every practice session, even I was struggling at times mentally. Maybe even more in practice sessions because I feel like when I play the match, I can switch off and just play. I believe that this helped me a lot."

It also proved to be Sinner's first Grand Slam title since his doping ban came to an end, and he also lost to Alcaraz in the French Open final.

## "Should Have Been Avoided": Luis Enrique On Club World Cup Final Scuffle



Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said he was "just trying to separate the players" after being caught up in a scuffle on the pitch at the end of his team's 3-0 defeat to Chelsea in the Club World Cup final on Sunday.

Television footage showed the PSG boss raising his arm to the neck of Joao Pedro, who had earlier scored Chelsea's third goal following a Cole Palmer brace at the MetLife Stadium. "There was pushing and shoving, a lot of tension and pressure. The situation obviously should have been avoided," Luis Enrique told reporters.

"My intention was clearly to just try to separate the players."

He admitted that Chelsea were deserved winners as he urged his team to enjoy a short summer break at the end of a remarkable campaign.

Defeat for PSG denied them what would have been a stunning clean sweep of trophies as they failed to add the Club World Cup to the UEFA Champions League and French league and cup double they claimed in May.

"I think over the course of the game they deserved their win. They played very well," Luis Enrique said. "I said beforehand that Chelsea were a very good team and they deserve their victory and the trophy."

A historic season for

PSG ends after 11 months and 65 matches, and they now have exactly one month before returning to action in August -- there will be another trophy on the line in their next game, against Tottenham Hotspur in the UEFA Super Cup.

"I think it is important for us to enjoy our holidays. They will be very short. But we need to make the most of them," he said.

PSG's victory in this year's Champions League also means they will have another crack at winning the Club World Cup when they participate in the next edition, which is due to take place in 2029.

"I think this tournament was born out of the need to know who the best team in the world is. I think it is an interesting format and I think it could become a real top-level competition," said the Spaniard.

"There is just the difficulty of finding space for it in the current calendar, but I think it is an interesting tournament -- we had the chance to win it but there was another team who were better than us in the final."

## Saina Nehwal Announces Separation From Husband, Says "We're Choosing..."



Olympic bronze medalist Saina Nehwal announced her separation from husband Parupalli Kashyap on Sunday. Nehwal, who won bronze at the London Olympics 2012, took to social media to announce the news. "Life takes us in different directions sometimes. After much thought and consideration, Kashyap Parupalli and I have decided to part ways. We're choosing peace, growth, and healing - for ourselves and each other. I'm grateful for the memories and wish nothing but the best moving forward. Thank you for understanding and respecting our privacy during this time," Saina wrote on her Instagram story.

Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap got married in 2018. Saina and Parupalli both trained at the Pullula Gopichand academy in Hyderabad. While Saina grabbed the headlines with her brilliant performances and bronze at the Olympics, Parupalli also made a name for himself with a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games 2014. She was the second Indian woman to win an Olympic medal after Karnam Malleshwari.

In 2015, Saina became the first Indian woman to achieve the World No.1 ranking in women's singles. Parupalli has not announced anything about the separation from his side. Back in 2024, Saina revealed that she is battling arthritis and will have to decide on her badminton future.

"The knee is not very good. I have arthritis. My cartilage has gone to a bad state. It is very difficult to push for eight-nine hours," Nehwal said on the 'House of Glory' podcast hosted by shooting great Gagan Narang, who was India's chef-de-mission in the recent Paris Olympics.

## Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty Eye Japan Open Glory, PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen Seek Revival

The Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will look to extend their consistent run and end their title drought when they spearhead the country's challenge at the Japan Open Super 750 badminton tournament beginning in Tokyo on Tuesday. Currently ranked world No. 15, Satwik and Chirag have reached three semifinals this season, besides making the quarterfinals at the Indonesia Open last month. After semifinal finishes at the Malaysia and India Open in January, the 2022 Commonwealth Games champions missed several weeks due to Satwik's health issues and Chirag's lingering back injury.

Returning to full fitness, they made a semifinal appearance at the Singapore Open and reached the quarterfinals in Indonesia. The former world No. 1 duo will open their campaign against Korea's Kang Min Hyuk and Ki Dong Ju.

In singles, Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu will hope to rediscover form at the USD 950,000 event.

Lakshya has struggled this season with multiple



first-round exits, his best show being a quarterfinal finish at the All England. Troubled by a back injury that forced him to retire against Lin Chun-Yi at the Singapore Open, he showed glimpses of returning touch during a narrow three-game loss to world No. 3 Shi Yu Qi at Indonesia. The 23-year-old, now ranked 18, opens against China's Wang Zheng Xing.

For Sindhu, ranked 16, a quarterfinal at India Open in January remains her best performance in 2025. The former world champion, who turned 30 this month, has endured four first-round and three second-round exits this year.

Recovering from a hamstring injury, she has been training under Indonesian

coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama for the past six months and begins her campaign against Korea's Sim Yu Jin.

Among others, Unnati Hooda, a Taipei Open semifinalist earlier this year, faces seventh seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand in the opening round, while Anupama Upadhyaya takes on fellow Indian Rakshitha Ramraj.

In men's doubles,

Hariharan Amsakarun and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi will face Korea's third seeds Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae.

Women's doubles pairs Kavipriya Selvam-Simran Singh and the Panda sisters - Rutaparna and Swetaparna - are also in the fray.

## Chelsea Boss Enzo Maresca Hails 'Great Triumph' In Winning Club World Cup



Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca insisted winning the Club World Cup meant as much as winning the Champions League after his side beat Paris Saint-Germain 3-0 in the final of the first edition of FIFA's new competition on Sunday. "I have the feeling that this competition is going to be as important, if not more important than, the Champions League," said Maresca after adding the trophy to the UEFA Conference League title his team won in May. Maresca only took over at Chelsea a year ago but was previously on the coaching staff under Pep Guardiola at Manchester City when they won the Champions League a few years ago, but this competition fea-

tures the best teams in the world and I think we can value it on the same level," said the Italian.

"It is a great triumph for us and it will allow the Chelsea fans to have that on our shirt for the next four years, so it is a source of pride."

Maresca said he instructed his players to go out and take the game to PSG from the off -- they went on to net all three goals in the first half with Cole Palmer netting a brace before Joao Pedro added his name to the scoresheet.

"The message was to let them understand that we were here to win the game and I think in the first 10 minutes we showed them that," Maresca said.

"That set the tone of the game, and then the quality of the players was also important."

## Dr. Kuldeep Called on Director General YSS Department Ms. Anuradha Gupta

TT CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, JULY 14 : Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta, General Secretary Jammu & Kashmir Amateur Kabaddi Association, Technical Director Asian Kabaddi Federation & Secretary Vansh Sabre Sports Foundation, along with S. S. Gill Technical Director J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association and S. Tajinder Singh called on Ms. Anuradha Gupta, Director General Youth Services & Sports Department Jammu & Kashmir & congratulated her on her recent appointment as Director General Youth Services & Sports Department, Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr. Gupta apprised to Director General Youth Services and Sports Department that J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association under the guidance of our dynamic President Mr. Anil Kumar (of the association is going to conduct the J&K (UT) Kabaddi Referee's Course Level-I at Srinagar, Kashmir from 28th to 31st July 2025.



Dr. Gupta also requested to issue a directions to their all district officers to call their PET/PEM/Lecturars who are interested /touched with kabaddi discipline with the directions to be registered with J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association on or before 25th July 2025 for Kabaddi Referee course Level-I So that they may have opportunity to learn, gain, improve the standard of kabaddi game from the qualified National as well as International ITO / NTO of Federation who will teach and trained them as per rules and reg-

ulation of Amateur kabaddi Federation of India. Moreover that they shall also be refreshed themselves and update with latest Kabaddi rules which they can also apply during your dept. kabaddi Coaching Camps and also be a part of organizing of under the age group of 14, 17 and 19 kabaddi tournament in district level, Province level as well as U.T. level and moreover, they may also trained their U.T. level kabaddi teams before participation in school National Games.

During the interaction Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta apprised Ms. Anuradha

Gupta Director General Youth Services & Sports Department Jammu & Kashmir about the achievements of Kabaddi Game in Jammu & Kashmir. Dr. Gupta informed her that the Kabaddi Stadium off Jammu in the premises of M.A. Stadium is the 1st Stadium of North Zone, which has the feat of being made on International Standards under the guidance and leadership of Ms. Nuzhat Gull, Secretary Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council & is an exclusive stadium for Kabaddi Game.

Dr. Gupta also informed her about the achievements of the sportspersons in Kabaddi Game. Dr. Kuldeep Gupta gave his best wishes & hoped that the experience of Ms. Anuradha Gupta Director General Youth Services & Sports Department Jammu & Kashmir will help in development and promotion of sports in each nook & corner of Jammu & Kashmir (UT) and particularly Swadeshi Khel-Khel Kabaddi.

## Liverpool's moving Diogo Jota homage after Preston win leaves Andy Robertson in tears, chokes up commentators



After the full-time whistle was blown by referee Darren England at the pre-season match at Deepdale Stadium in Preston—where Liverpool defeated Preston North End 3-1—fans at the away end paid an emotional tribute to Diogo Jota. The scenes left Liverpool commentators and Scottish left-back Andy Robertson visibly moved.

The Portuguese forward, who played 182 games for the Reds and scored 65 goals, tragically passed away in a car crash in Spain earlier this month, alongside his brother André Silva. The accident came barely two weeks after Jota had married his wife, Rute, leaving her and their three children behind. Sunday's match marked Liverpool's first outing since the devastating news.

Tributes to Jota were

seen all around the pitch. Liverpool fans held up banners and sang the iconic anthem "You'll Never Walk Alone." Liverpool academy player Conor Bradley chose not to celebrate his goal out of respect for the late forward. Meanwhile, striker Darwin Núñez paid homage by mimicking two of Jota's signature goal celebrations—the famous 'Shark' and the 'Gaming' gestures. Left-winger Cody Gakpo joined in as well, performing the Shark celebration after scoring Liverpool's third goal. One of the most poignant moments came after the final whistle, when players and coaching staff—including those who didn't feature in the match—stood together and applauded for five minutes as Jota's tribute song echoed around the stadium.