

Press Release

Khelo India Youth Games kitchens creating happy participants and satisfied champs

Pune, January 12: Four hundred and fifty kilos of rice, 600 kilos of flour, 140 kilos of pulses, 700 kilos of vegetables, 140 litres of refined oil and 350 kilos of salt are a sample of what is going into feeding nearly 6000 young athletes at the ongoing Khelo India Youth Games here on a daily basis.

As the Games enter their sixth day, kitchen staff have been working at breakneck speed and almost around the clock at the three dedicated locations to make sure the athletes and the hundreds of officials and guests who have descended on Mahlunge-Balewadi are well fed and happy.

To keep this mammoth exercise rolling smoothly, 60 chefs, 200 kitchen helpers and over 200 catering staff have been toiling away. "Things have settled down now, but by and large it has gone very smoothly," said Gautam Chheda, vice-president of BVG India Limited and the man responsible for getting fresh, nutritious food to the athletes, and on time, said.

"In all, we are serving about 18 items including a salad, soup, curd, daal, rice, two kinds of vegetables, rotis, papad and fruit. It is a healthy and balanced meal and aimed at meeting the nutrition needs of these young people," Chheda said.

"The menu was drawn up on the basis of inputs from nutrition experts and dieticians who advised that we should be providing 1,800 calories per person for the main meal which is lunch. A large part of the ingredients that are in use are in fact in-house especially items like spices, gram and fruits which we either manufacture at BVG, or source directly."

And how has the experience been for those toiling away in the kitchens? "This is a healthy diet, and given the sheer number, the feedback we have got from the children, the team managers and leaders has been very positive and encouraging for us. While the lunch that everyone gets here is vegetarian, we have made arrangements other requirements as well for those who are not used to an exclusively vegetarian diet," Chheda added.

And as one walks around the mess halls, which are by themselves something to see, there is a clear sense that happy stomachs are making for happy participants and impressive performances too.