



PM Shri Narendra Modi inaugurates 2nd edition of Khelo India Winter Games in Gulmarg

New Delhi, Feb 26: The second edition of Khelo India Winter Games saw a grand launch on Friday in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who inaugurated the sports meet virtually, delivered the inaugural address of the Games and said that this is a major step towards making Jammu and Kashmir a major hub with India's effective presence in the Winter Games. He conveyed his best wishes to the players of Jammu and Kashmir and players from all over the country.

Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju was also present during the ceremony at Golf Club, Gulmarg along with Shri Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor, J&K, and a host of other dignitaries.

The annual event, which made its debut last year in Ladakh and J&K, is organized by the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of J&K under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

Union Sports Minister, Shri Kiren Rijiju, announced various plans to further develop the sports ecosystem in J&K. "We had announced that we will create a state-of-the-art winter sports academy here. Now, we are happy to inform that all the procedures are in place to get the world standard institute opened here soon."

"Out of 100 small Khelo India Centres we had announced across all districts of the valley, 40 are already approved and the remaining 60 will be approved in the next financial year. Ex athletes, coaches can run these centers and give back to sports, while earning a livelihood. We have also opened two Khelo India State Center of Excellence here focusing on the disciplines of Judo, Fencing and Rowing. Srinagar will be made hub for water sports. Also, we have decided to give a Khelo India academy accreditation to the Mata Vaishnodevi sports complex," Shri Rijiju added.

Shri Manoj Joshi, Lt. Governor, J&K, thanked the sports department for the smooth conduct of the launch event, and said, "We want to give the message of unity, love, empowerment and peace through the games in the beautiful valley of Gulmarg.

The second edition of the Games will see a participation of over 1375 people, including 932 athletes across 27 States and Union Territories. The participation list of athletes also includes the Indian Army and the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports. The various sports disciplines include Sprint, Speed Skating, Ice Hockey, Figure Skating, Ice Stock, Giant Slalom, Snow Boarding, Vertical Race, Cross Country, Snowshoe, Long distance running, Ski Mountaineering, Skiing and Nordic Ski.

The J&K administration has put in place a special team of doctors and ambulances round the clock for the length of the event, along with a special team of the State Disaster Response Fund for relief and rescue operations.

Last year, hosts J&K topped the medal tally with a total of 26 golds.

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