

Sports & youth affairs budget raised by over Rs 350 cr, Khelo India gets biggest share

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PTI, NEW DELHI: The government's flagship Khelo India programme to scout and nurture athletes at the grassroots level was the biggest beneficiary as the allocation for sports and youth affairs was hiked substantially by Rs 351.98 crore in the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, here, on Saturday.

The ambitious scheme has been allocated Rs 1,000 crore for the financial year 2025-26. This is Rs 200 crore more than the grant of Rs 800 crore in 2024-25.

Overall, the Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports was designated Rs 3,794.30 crore. The increase is substantial considering there

is no major sporting event like the Olympics, Commonwealth or Asian Games lined up in the next one year. The assigned amount for assistance to National Sports Federations has also been hiked marginally from Rs 340 crore to Rs 400 crore.

India is currently pushing through with an ambitious bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games for which a letter of intent has been submitted to the International Olympic Committee.

The allocation for Sports Authority of India (SAI), the nodal body for the conduct of national camps and logistical arrangements for athletes' training, was enhanced from Rs 815 crore to Rs 830 crore.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presents the Union Budget 2025-26 in the Lok Sabha, in New Delhi, on Saturday

SAI is also responsible for maintaining and utilising stadia across the country. A similar hike was announced for the National Dope Testing Laboratory, which will receive Rs 23 crore this financial year. It

had been given Rs 18.70 crore in 2024-25. The National Anti-Doping Agency's budget was increased from Rs 20.30 crore to 24.30 crore.

The contribution to the National Sports Development Fund, which was created in 1998, will continue to be Rs 18 crore for a second successive year, while the government has decided to cut the grant for incentive to sportspersons from Rs 42.65 crore to Rs 37 crore this year.

Cuts were also announced to the funding for National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development and Youth Hostels. However, the contribution for multilateral bodies and youth exchange programmes has been raised from Rs 11.70 crore to Rs 55 crore.

A Rs 20 crore fund has been approved for the enhancement of sports facilities in Jammu and Kashmir, which is Rs 14 crore more than the previous year.

A massive chunk of the increased budget will be going to the National Service Scheme which will receive Rs 450 crore, a hike of Rs 200 crore from the previous year. The National Service Scheme (NSS) aims to "develop character and personality of youth in schools and colleges."

It's a scheme that works towards shaping youngsters through social work and community service.

Sky, Samson's form in focus

PTI, MUMBAI: The series already in their pocket, India would look to address their nagging batting woes against an England team gunning for revenge after feeling hard-done by a debatable concussion substitute when the two teams clash in the fifth and final T20 International, here, on Sunday.

The hosts will hope that England is carrying after the 15-run loss in the fourth game. India's 15-run win in the fourth T20I at Pune on Friday gave the hosts an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match affair, but left England exasperated over the choice of the concussion replacement who played an impactful role.

For England, it has been a series of more misses than hits but they have been outplayed generally across departments. India have had a flawless campaign so far, winning all their six matches in the tournament. The Niki Prasad-led side has been in red-hot form across departments.

In-form opener Gongadi Trisha has been in ominous form with the bat, and is the highest run-getter in the tournament with 265 runs in six innings at an average of 66.25. She is followed by

her left-handed opening partner G Kamalini, who is third in the list with 135 runs in six innings at an average of 45. On the bowling front too, the Indians are ruling the roost, Vaishnavi Sharma and Aayushi Shukla occupying the top spots on the wicket-takers' list.

South Africa, on the other hand, qualified for their first-ever final following an impressive five-wicket win over Australia in the semi-final and will be looking to upset the Indians en route to the title.

India eye 2nd consecutive title

PTI, KUALA LUMPUR: Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a dominant India will start as overwhelming favourites to win their second consecutive title when they take on South Africa in the final of the Women's U19 T20 World Cup, here, on Sunday.

WOMEN'S U-19 T20 WORLD CUP SQUADS
India: Niki Prasad (c), Sanika Chalke, G Trisha, Kamalini G, Bhavika Ahire, Ishwari Awasth, Mithila Vinod, Joshitha VJ, Sonam Yadav, Parunika Sisodiya, Kesari Drithi, Aayushi Shukla, Anandita Kishor, MD Shabnam, Vaishnavi S.
South Africa: Simone Lourens, Karabo Meso, Kayla Reyneke (c), Jemma Botha, Seshnie Naidu, Diara Ramlakan, Monalisa Legodi, Nthabiseng Nini, Fay Cowling, Jae-Leigh Filander, Luyanda Nzuza, D van Rensburg, Mieke van Voorst, Ashleigh van Wyk, Chanel Venter.
Match starts at 12 pm

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FC Goa look for 3 pts in the away match

AGENCIES, JAMSHEDPUR: Jamshedpur FC are all set to host FC Goa in the Indian Super League match on February 2, at the JRD Tata Sports Complex, at 7.30 pm. The Red Miners are placed third in the points table, since they have 31 points from 17 matches courtesy of 10 victories and a solitary draw.

Their nearest target would be surpassing the second-positioned FC Goa,

who have 33 points to their name currently from as many encounters as Jamshedpur FC. Jamshedpur FC are relishing a formidable home record as of now, as they are unbeaten in their last five games in the stadium, winning four times. However, they have emerged victorious only once in the five times that they have hosted FC Goa at the venue, losing thrice and drawing once.

All in all, this is an encounter straight for the top-two spot as of

now. The top-two ranked teams at the end of the league stages qualify directly for the semi-finals, whereas the sides from third to the sixth spots play a single-legged eliminator at the higher ranked side's home venue.

If Jamshedpur FC win this match, they will leapfrog FC Goa in the points table, and if the Gaurs prevail, they will build a formidable distance with the Red Miners - an equation that brings lasting interest in this fixture.

Mohun Bagan SG extend lead atop

AGENCIES, KOLKATA: Mohun Bagan Super Giant defeated city rivals Mohammedan SC 4-0 in the Indian Super League match played at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krangan, here, on Saturday.

Braces from Subhasish Bose and Manvir Singh saw the Mariners breach the Mohammedan SC defence. With this win, the Mariners are 10 points clear at the top of the points table this season. They now have 43 points and the second-placed FC Goa have 33 to their name. This was also Vishal Kaith's 50th ISL clean sheet as he became the first goalkeeper to register such a feat. Mohammedan SC will face Hyderabad FC on February 8, whereas Mohun Bagan SG will play Punjab FC on February 5.

ISL RESULT
Mohammedan SC 0 Mohun Bagan Super Giant 4 (Subhasish Bose 12', 43', Manvir Singh 20', 53')

Punjab FC triumph against Bengaluru FC

AGENCIES, NEW DELHI: Punjab FC edged past Bengaluru FC 3-2 in the Indian Super League match played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, here, on Saturday.

The home team broke their seven-game-long winless run with an emphatic comeback that saw them strike thrice in the second half to get three points under the belt and stay in ninth spot with 23 points

to their name. Bengaluru FC will play next against Jamshedpur FC on February 9, whereas Punjab FC are set to feature against Mohun Bagan Super Giant on February 5.

ISL RESULT
Punjab FC 3 (Asmir Suljic 55', Filip Mrzljak 79', Luka Majcen 90+6') Bengaluru FC 2 (Edgar Mendez 49', Rahul Beke 90+2')

Dempo SC go down to Rajasthan FC 4-0

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FATORDA: Dempo Sports Club's hopes of building on their previous win were dashed in dramatic fashion as they suffered a 4-0 defeat at the hands of a clinical Rajasthan FC in the I-League 2024-25 encounter at the Nehru Stadium on Saturday.

The Goa side's defensive frailties were exposed time and again, with the visitors taking full advantage of Dempo SC's struggles. Despite high expectations following their previous win, Samir Naik's team failed to find their rhythm, with a lack of intensity and tactical shortcomings

throughout the match. Spanish forward Gerard Artigas gave Rajasthan FC the lead just before half-time, connecting with a perfectly timed cross from Alain Oyarzun, as Dempo SC defenders were caught off guard. Goalkeeper Ashish Sibi did well to get a hand to it but couldn't prevent the ball from crossing the line.

Rajasthan FC doubled their advantage shortly after the break. A chaotic scramble inside Dempo SC's box allowed Uruguayan substitute Lucas Rodriguez Cabral to pounce and find the back of the net. The frustration

for Dempo SC grew as their defenders failed to clear the danger, letting the visitors extend their lead.

Dempo SC's defensive woes were evident again in the 61st minute when a long ball caught out centre-back Mohamed Ali, allowing Naoba Meetei to calmly slip the ball past an advancing Sibi for Rajasthan FC's third goal.

With the game winding down, Rajasthan FC put the game to bed in the 86th minute. Oyarzun, who had already assisted in the opening goal, sealed the emphatic victory with a powerful left-footed strike

from outside the box, set up by Cabral.

The result leaves Dempo SC in a difficult position, staying in 8th place with just 14 points from 12 matches. With the loss, their hopes of turning around their season after a promising win appear distant. On the other hand, Rajasthan FC continued their impressive run, staying unbeaten in their last eight matches and climbing to 4th place with 19 points, level on points with third-placed Gokulam Kerala FC.

RESULT
Dempo SC 0 Rajasthan United FC 4 (Artigas 45', L Rodriguez Cabral 49', P N Meitei 61', A Oyarzun 86')

Clencio scores a brace as Goa down Mizoram 2-0

Goa will play their last crucial match against hosts Uttarkhand on February 3

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MAPUSA/PANJIM: Goa played their hearts out to register a 2-0 win over Mizoram in the 38th National Games football match played at Indira Gandhi International Sports Complex, Halldwani, Uttarkhand, on Saturday.

NATIONAL GAMES

Goa after their 3-2 defeat to Assam came strongly into today's match and scored in each session of play against Mizoram.

Coach Charles Dias was happy to have back his striker Clencio Pinto in his starting XI, who had netted

a brace against Assam but had to leave the field due to head injury. In the 42nd minute Clencio was instrumental in the opening goal as he set up Mohammed Faheez inside the 18-yard box, who made no mistake to slot the ball into the goal, 1-0.

On crossing over, Goa doubled their lead with Clencio Pinto scoring from the penalty spot, after Mizoram defender pushed Krishna Gawas inside the penalty box.

Mizoram time and again attacked the rival citadel but the last line of Goa's defence Brian Faria, Joseph Clemente, Umang Gaikwad and Sarino Fernandes along with goalkeeper Ak-

shat Hadkonkar held to their two goals lead till the final hooter.

Goa will play their last crucial match against hosts Uttarkhand on February 3. Commenting post match, Head Coach Charles Dias commended team for the victory against Mizoram.

He said, "The boys played very well and made the opposition pay. Our goalkeeper was fantastic. We played well in the first game too but made some mistakes but today we were very good. We made a few changes in the playing 11 and it paid off. We now play against the hosts Uttarkhand day after, and we should continue with this form."

Shooters disappoint

Goa's shooters came in 23rd out of 25 teams in the 10 metre mixed team qualification round. They scored

619.1 points and the heat was won by Punjab, who scored 631.7 points.

Aditya Sawant, a shooter involved in the match said it was a good match and the practice before the match was very good but the team did not manage its time well and were a bit delayed. This meant they were under pressure for every shot. And that played on their performance.

He said the team was ranked fourth from the bottom. The shooting team is done with the competition and will be returning to Goa on Saturday night.

Swimmer clocks slowest time

Aahil Sheikh clocked the

slowest time in the 200m butterfly event. He clocked 3:03:03 the slowest time in the heat.

When asked for the reason for the poor performance he said the swimmers were selected on the basis of their performance in the State championship. Which he said was five months ago. Aahil said he was part of the Khelo India training session in Mapusa.

He however hoped Goa would have something to cheer for when Shrungi Bhandekar participated in the 100 metres backstroke. He said she was a strong contender and her event would be held early in the morning.

sportspopup

Davis Cup: Mukund, Ramkumar walk away with easy wins, India lead Togo 2-0

NEW DELHI: Sasikumar Mukund returned to Davis Cup action with a fluent straight-set victory while Ramkumar Ramanathan hardly broke a sweat in his match as an untroubled India took a 2-0 lead in the World Group I play-off tie against Togo, here, on Saturday. The opening match of the tie went on expected lines with Liova Ayite Ajavon, languishing outside the top-1000, lacking ammunition to test the 365th ranked Mukund in his home conditions. The 28-year-old Indian needed just one hour and 15 minutes to walk away with a 6-2 6-1 win in the opening singles at the DLTA Complex. Ramkumar then overpowered Togo number one Thomas Setodji 6-0 6-2 in the second singles which got over in just 50 minutes. A good fight was expected from Setodji but it turned out to be another lop-sided affair.

India wicketkeeper-batter Saha retires from all forms of cricket

KOLKATA: India wicketkeeper-batter Wriddhiman Saha retired from all forms of cricket on Saturday, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career after playing his final Ranji Trophy group-stage match for Bengal against Punjab at the iconic Eden Gardens here. The 40-year-old Saha, who made his international debut in February 2010, has played 49 matches for India across formats -- 40 Tests and nine ODIs. He also represented Bengal and Tripura in domestic cricket, featuring in 142 First-Class and 116 List A matches. "It has been 28 years since I first stepped onto a cricket field in 1997, and what a journey it has been! Representing my country, state, district, clubs, university, college, and school has been the greatest honour of my life," Saha said in an emotional post in 'X'. Reflecting on the impact of cricket on his life, Saha said, "Everything I am today, every achievement, every lesson learned I owe it all to this wonderful game. Cricket has given me moments of immense joy, unforgettable victories, and invaluable experiences. It has also tested me, shaped me, and taught me resilience. "Through the highs and the lows, the triumphs and the setbacks, this journey has made me who I am. But as all things must eventually come to an end, I have decided to retire from all forms of cricket."

Rohit, Virat have massive role to play in Champions Trophy: Gambhir

MUMBAI: India head coach Gautam Gambhir placed his faith on batting icons Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to play "massive roles" in the Champions Trophy and said they add "so much value" to the team and the country's cricketing landscape in general. The modest form of Kohli and Rohit in recent times has fuelled speculation about their future, but Gambhir did not read too much into it. "I think both Rohit and Virat, they add so much value to the dressing room. They add so much value to Indian cricket as well. They've got to play a massive role (in the Champions Trophy)," Gambhir said during the BCCI annual awards, here, on Saturday. "And I've said it before as well, those guys are so hungry, they want to play for the country. They have the passion to play for the country and deliver for the country," he added. Gambhir said the team cannot relax even for a moment in the Champions Trophy because they have just three league matches, as compared to the 50-over World Cup. "Champions Trophy is a completely different challenge as compared to the 50-over World Cup because literally every game is a make-or-break, so you can't stop anywhere in this tournament. "So hopefully we're going to start off really well, because ultimately, if you want to go on and win the competition, you have to win five games," he said.

GOAN FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

SCS Poitomado enter quarters

RAIA: Santa Cruz Society of Poitomado pipped Carmona SC 1-0 to enter the quarter-finals of Lourdes Soccer inter-village football tournament organised by Ambelim SC at Ambelim ground, on Saturday. Aaron Fernandes scored the winning goal for Santa Cruz Society of Poitomado in the 56th minute.

USC Seraluim in last eight

RAIA: United Sports Club of Seraluim got the better of St Anthony Club, Colva, 3-0, in the 17th All Goa Inter-Village Seraluim Panchayat Cup football tournament organised by United Sports Club of Seraluim at Seraluim panchayat ground, on Saturday. The half time ended in a goalless draw. USC Seraluim changed their techniques and brought in two strikers as they felt the urgency to score goals. They finally succeeded in scoring the first goal in the 45th minute when Mohammed Sahil ran down the right flank and smartly passed the ball to Floscio Fernandes, who tapped the ball into the goal. Two minutes later, USC Seraluim scored their second goal through Gladston Braganza, 2-0. The third goal came from Keith Rodrigues in the dying minutes when he scored from close a range after receiving a pass from Gladston.

Fr Agnelo YSC march into quarters

RAIA: Fr Agnelo YSC, Paroda, got the better of SCC Loutolim 5-3 via tie-breaker to enter into the quarter-finals of 1st Vauradeancho Ixti Trophy organised by Batora United Club in association with Margao Sports Club, at the DSYA ground, Curtorim, on Saturday. Both the teams showcased their talent in front of large crowd and remained 1-1 draw till the full time. Omark Gaurkar opened the scoreline for Fr Agnelo YSC, while Ignatius D'Silva equalised for SCC Loutolim. In the resultant tie-breaker, Fr Agnelo YSC proved to be the better shooters. Noted triatrist Antonette de Maina, Alison, Cajiton de Curtorim and Amresh Kamat presented the man-of-match award to Sowell Fernandes of Fr Agnelo YSC.

TODAY'S SPORTS

GFA Division II League Ilhas Zone: Portais Sporting Club vs Amaravati Sports Club, at Taleigao ground. Agassaim Youth Club vs Nauxim Sports Club, at Agassaim ground. Kick off 3.45 pm. **Bardez Zone:** Goan Warriors FC vs Benny XI SC, at Porliat ground. Vagator Parish Youth SC vs BAFE, at Vagator ground. FC Tuem vs PVC Association, Parra, at Duler Stadium, Mapusa. Kick off 3.45 pm. **GFA U-15 Division I League:** Geno FC vs Sporting Clube de Goa, at Parra ground. Cortalim Villagers SWSC vs Panjim Footballers, at Cansaulim ground. Kick off 3.45 pm. **1st Vauradeancho Ixti Trophy:** United Club Verna vs Maina Sports Club, at the DSYA ground, Curtorim, 4.30 pm. **17th All Goa inter-village Seraluim Panchayat Cup:** St Anthony SC, Marna-Siolim vs Velsao Sports and Cultural Club, at Seraluim panchayat ground, 4.30 pm. **Ambelim Sports Club inter-village Soccer:** Don Bosco Oratory, Fatorda, vs Dramapur SC, at Ambelim ground, 4.30 pm.