

sportspopup

Meghalaya to host next edition of National Games in February/March 2027

**NEW DELHI:** Meghalaya will host the 39th edition of the National Games in February/March 2027, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha has informed state chief minister Conrad Sangma. As host state of the next edition, Meghalaya will be handed the IOA flag during the closing ceremony of the ongoing 38th Games in Uttarakhand. The ceremony will be held in Haldwani on Friday. "I am pleased to inform you that the IOA has decided to allocate the hosting rights of the 39th National Games to the state of Meghalaya, scheduled to be held in February/March 2027," Usha wrote in the letter to Sangma on Monday.

Shillong to host Indian men's team's two international football matches in March

**NEW DELHI:** Shillong's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium will host the Indian senior men's team's two matches that they will play during the FIFA international window in March, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Tuesday. The announcement came just a few days after the same venue hosted NorthEast United's home match of the Indian Super League (ISL), the first in Meghalaya, against Mumbai City on February 7. "This is the first time that JLN Shillong will (host) senior men's international matches after the stadium was refurbished last year," the AIFF said in a release. In the first match, India will play against Maldives on March 19 in an international friendly as part of preparations for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round campaign. The second match will be against Bangladesh on March 25, India's first game of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round. India have been drawn in Group C of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round, along with Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangladesh. The teams will play each other twice in a home-and-away round-robin format till March 2026. The group winners will make it to the Asian Cup tournament proper.

'Concussed' Shanaka in trouble as SLC initiates inquiry against him

**COLOMBO:** All-rounder Dasun Shanaka landed in trouble after Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) decided to initiate an inquiry against him for allegedly faking concussion to skip a domestic match to play for Dubai Capitals in the ILT20. Shanaka, a former white ball formats captain of Sri Lanka, left Sinhalese Sports Club's three-day match against Moors Sports Club in the Major League Tournament after playing the first two days. It has now been alleged that match referee Wendell Labrooy had been led to believe that Shanaka had a concussion to get a substitute approved. "SSC (Shanaka's first-class club) would probably be conducting their own inquiry as well," SLC CEO Ashely De Silva told ESPNcricinfo. He was one of the three players who were recalled by SSC for the match against Moors, as they were trying to avoid relegation. The 33-year-old played the first two days against Moors, bowling 21 overs and then made an unbeaten 39 at the end of day two.

Klaasen, Maharaj, De Zorzi, Bosch join South Africa squad in Pakistan

**KARACHI:** South Africa were bolstered by the arrival of key players Heinrich Klaassen, Keshav Maharaj, Corbin Bosch and Tony de Zorzi ahead of the crucial tri-series match against Pakistan here on Wednesday. They were playing in the recently concluded SA20, and SA can look forward to approaching this game with more confidence after going down against New Zealand in the previous match. All four players are also part of SA's Champions Trophy squad. South Africa played with a depleted squad against the Kiwis handing ODI debuts to four players but Matthew Breetzke smashed a record-breaking 150, the highest score by a debut opener in 50+ years cricket. South Africa lost the match despite posting a 300-plus total and will be hoping that some of the senior players will be able to put up a better show against the hosts. Pakistan also have a do-or-die game like their opponents as both have lost to New Zealand. A victory on Wednesday will ensure the winner a place in the final of the tri-series against the Kiwis here on February 14.

HERALD PIC



Goa won silver medal in the triathlon men's team event of Modern Pentathlon at the 38th National Games underway at Uttarakhand, on Tuesday

Fr Agnelo YSC win

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**RAIA:** Fr Agnelo YSC, Paroda, moved past United Boys of Ambaulim 2-1 to move ahead in the Lourdes Trophy in-

ter-village football tournament played at Ambelim ground on Tuesday. Nikhil Gaonkar and Reagan Costa scored for Fr Agnelo YSC, while Sowell Fernandes reduced the margin for UB Ambaulim.

TODAY'S SPORTS

**Goa Professional League:** FC Goa vs Dempo SC, at Duler Stadium, Mapusa. Cortalim Villagers SWSC vs Panjim Footballers, at Tilak Maidan, Vasco. Kick off 3.45 pm  
**GFA U-15 Division II League Play-Offs:** Ave Maria A&WC vs SCC Loutulim, at Betalbatim ground. Rossman Cruz Nagoa vs YWSC, Assolna, at Benaulim ground. Kick off 3.45 pm  
**GFA U-15 Division I League:** South Goa United SC vs FC Goa, at Don Bosco Oratory ground, Fatorda, 3.45 pm  
**Batora United Women's Football Festival Cup:** Livvel Sports Club, Benaulim, vs Maina Sports Club, at the DSYA ground, Curtorim, 4.30 pm  
**United Boys of Ambaulim all Goa volleyball:** Red Riders, Gaondongrim, vs DX Boys, 8 pm; Kakoda Boys vs B B Brother, Raia, 9 pm  
**17th All Goa Inter-Village Seraulim Panchayat Cup football:** Carmona Sports Club vs Guardian Angel SC, Curchorem, at Seraulim panchayat ground, 4.30 pm  
**All Goa Siolim veterans football:** Siolim Veterans vs Chuchelim Veterans, at Siolim ground, 4.30 pm

Relegation-battling Delhi FC hold league toppers Churchill Brothers

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**RAIA:** In what was a top versus bottom clash, relegation-battling Delhi FC equalised twice to secure a 2-2 draw against league toppers Churchill Brothers in a thrilling 2024-25 I-League match played at the Raia panchayat ground, on Tuesday.

Churchill Brothers went into the lead twice in the game through Rafiq Aminu (12th minute) and Stendly Fernandes (43rd) but threw away their advantage on both occasions due to defensive errors. While Samson Keishing scored the first goal for Delhi FC in the 41st minute, Junior Onguene Nkengue's innocuous cross was turned into his own net by Churchill defender José Luis Moreno in the 54th minute.

Even though the draw extended Churchill Brothers' unbeaten run to four matches, they will see this as a missed opportunity to consolidate their lead at the top of the standings. The Red Machines have 27 points from 14 matches with eight wins, three draws and three losses under their belt. They are three points ahead of the second-placed Namdhari FC, who have played a game less, and can draw level with them at the top if they beat Churchill Brothers' local rivals Dempo Sports Club, on Thursday.

Delhi FC, on the other hand, managed to arrest their slide after losing five consecutive matches. They

INACIO NORONHA



Churchill Brothers and Delhi FC players in action at the Raia panchayat ground, on Tuesday

are still languishing at the bottom of the table with 10 points from 14 matches but Tuesday's result will certainly boost their confidence.

The match started with Churchill Brothers showing why they are the league frontrunners, dictating the pace and employing a fluid attacking style coupled with an organised defensive set-up.

Their first breakthrough came in the 12th minute. Pape Gassama's fierce run on the left flank concluded with a shot that Delhi FC goalkeeper Lalmuansanga could not handle. Although Aminu's initial rebound shot was blocked by Samson Pereira, the Ghanaian didn't falter on the second attempt as he smashed the ball into the net.

The goal enabled Church-

ill Brothers to settle down quickly into the game before a defensive error saw them concede the leveller in the 41st minute. Churchill captain Lamgoulen Hangshing was penalised for a risky challenge at the edge of their box and

Keishing converted from the resultant set-piece. Keishing's free-kick cleverly exploited the Churchill wall and bounced awkwardly in front of goalkeeper Sayad Bin Abdul Kadir to find the back of the net.

The joy for Delhi was short-lived as Churchill regained the lead just two minutes later. A precise cross from Lalremruata found Aminu, whose header was initially saved by Lalmuansanga but fell kindly to Stendly who made no

mistake from close range.

Churchill Brothers started the second half strongly and could have extended their lead but Aminu's header off a Lalremruata's free-kick hit the crosspiece.

Undaunted, Delhi FC managed to level the scores again in the 54th minute when a seemingly harmless cross from Junior Onguene Nkengue was inadvertently turned into his own net by Churchill defender José Luis Moreno.

The remainder of the match saw Churchill Brothers pressing hard to clinch a winner. But Delhi FC, bolstered by some stellar saves from Lalmuansanga, held their ground under pressure to earn a commendable draw.

**RESULT**  
**Churchill Brothers 2** (Rafiq Aminu 12', Stendly Fernandes 43')  
**Delhi FC 2** (Samson Keishing 41', José Luis Moreno 54' og)

Sporting Clube win home opener

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**BAMBOLIM:** Sporting Clube de Goa secured a 1-0 win in their first home match against Biswa Darjee netting the goal in the 9th minute at the Bambolim Athletics Stadium, on Tuesday.

What started as a tough start for Sporting Clube de Goa, with just one point secured in their second match against CNFC, has since gained momentum. After collecting only one point from their opening two away fixtures, the Flaming Oranje triumphed in front of their home supporters taking home another point against KLASA FC.

I-LEAGUE 2

Sporting Clube lined up with Abhimanyu Singh in goal, supported by defenders Myron Fernandes, Joel Colaco, Joyner Lourenco and Kunal Kundaikar. The midfield saw Biswa Darjee, Ivon Costa, Dattaraj Gaonkar, Rohan Rodrigues and Naocha Singh dictating play while Doyal Alves led the attack. The substitutes' bench featured Nitish (GK), Kima, Dhiraj, Samuel, Joyson G, Givson, Selwyn, Vikram, Semboi, Francisco

While Sporting Clube delivered a commanding performance, the opposing team faced their third defeat of the season, struggling to find the back of the net for four consecutive games.

Sporting Clube started brightly and took the lead early in the game. In the ninth minute, Naocha sent in a perfect delivery in the box to Biswa Dharjee where he buried the header in the goal. In the next minute Naoc-

HERALD PIC



Sporting Clube de Goa's Biswa Darjee celebrates after scoring the goal against KLASA FC at Bambolim Athletics Stadium, on Tuesday

ha had the chance to double the lead when Datta sent a great through pass to Naocha, whose touch seemed too heavy as his shot went over the on-rushing keeper and the goal.

The first half remained 1-0 in favour of Sporting Clube.

In the second half, Sporting Clube displayed solid defensive efforts while creating several goal-scoring chances, but were unable to convert. In the 74th minute, Dattaraj Gaonkar

was forced off the field for treatment, leaving Sporting with just ten players.

As the match neared its conclusion, KLASA FC earned a free kick in the 90th minute, but Sporting's goalkeeper was well-placed to make a key save. Despite the numerical disadvantage, Sporting Clube de Goa held firm to secure a 1-0 victory. Sporting Clube's next match will be an away fixture against USC on February 15, at Kalyani Stadium.

Guardian Angel SC go down fighting to Clube de Salgaocar

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**MAPUSA:** Guardian Angel SC went down fighting to new entrants Clube de Salgaocar by 2-1 margin in the Goa Professional League match played at Duler Stadium, here, on Tuesday.

For Clube de Salgaocar, Pratesh Shirodkar netted a brace, while Nitesh Hazra scored for Guardian Angel SC.

Guardian Angel SC did have better ball possession and attacks at the rival goal but twice new signing Ronald Singh was timely tackled by rival defenders.

GOA PRO LEAGUE

In the very 5th minute, a costly error by Clube de Salgaocar's defender Mevzen Oliveira saw Guardian Angel SC's U-21 Rayan Menezes get hold of the ball just outside the 6-yard box but his weak strike was saved by Clube de Salgaocar's custodian Sanij Bugde, bring a smart diving save.

As the match progressed,

HERALD PIC



Clube de Salgaocar and Guardian Angel SC players vie for the ball in the Goa Professional League, at Duler Stadium, Mapusa, on Tuesday

Five minutes later, Clube de Salgaocar had a narrow escape with Referee Ritesh Parsekar overlooking a push by Clube de Salgaocar's defender Reezvon Fernandes on Guardian Angel SC's Ronald inside the 18-yard box, with Guardian Angel SC's players appeal for a penalty was being turned down.

After much probing in the 13th minute, Clube de Salgaocar had their first good attempt at the rival goal where a fierce 25-yard

in the 75th minute, a cross by Mevzen Oliveria was controlled and shot at the goal by Isac which came off the crossbar to Pratesh who stabbed the ball into the far corner of the goal, 2-0.

Never say die spirit saw Guardian Angel SC's score from the penalty spot in the 90th minute, through Nitesh Hazra, after Clube de Salgaocar's Tipanna Shantappa had handled the ball and on receiving the second caution was sent off by the referee, 2-1.

DBO Fatorda in semis

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**RAIA:** Don Bosco Oratory, Fatorda, scored a convincing 3-0 win over Navelim Villagers Union to enter into the semi-finals of 17th All Goa Inter-Village Seraulim Panchayat Cup football tournament organised by United Sports Club of Seraulim at Seraulim panchayat ground, on

Tuesday.

Navelim Villagers Union without their regular players were on the backfoot from the word go giving Don Bosco Oratory the opportunity to attack time and again.

Don Bosco Oratory managed to score their first goal in the 23rd minute through Richie Vaz after dominating the play.

SERAULIM FOOTBALL

At half time, the score read 1-0 in favour of Don Bosco Oratory.

The second half too belonged to Don Bosco Oratory who pumped in two more goals through Elroy Barreto and Richie Vaz in the 44th and 47th minute to complete a brace for Richie.

Gaurs look to safeguard spot

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**MUMBAI:** Mumbai City FC will host FC Goa in the Indian Super League match to be played at the Mumbai Football Arena on February 12, at 7.30 pm, here.

The Islanders will target extending their stronghold against the Gaurs, since they are unbeaten in their previous 13 ISL encounters against them - winning eight times and drawing on five occasions.

FC Goa are placed second in the points table with 36 points from 19 matches, winning 10 games and drawing six. However, they faced their first away loss of the season when Jamshedpur FC beat the side 3-1 earlier this month. The Gaurs

have not been dealt with straight away losses in the ISL since a brief three-match-long stint between October-December 2022.

Both these sides have different objectives coming into this encounter. FC Goa are 10 points behind the top-placed Mohun Bagan Super Giant (46), but their key objective right now is to safeguard their standing in the second spot.

ISL PREVIEW

Finishing there will mean that they qualify straight for the semi-finals and would not have to play the single-legged eliminator in the playoffs. For that, they would have to fend off competition from the third-placed

Jamshedpur FC (34), with both sides having played the same number of games (19). This game can have a huge impact on the eventual title race.

If FC Goa lose against Mumbai City FC, and Mohun Bagan Super Giant beat Kerala Blasters FC away on February 15, the Mariners will become the ISL 2024-25 League Winners in that case.

FC Goa Head Coach Manolo Marquez refused to look too far ahead in the league stages at the moment.

"The most important thing for us right now is the next game, and not the ones that follow. It doesn't matter what happened in the past. We need to consider the circumstances around this match," he said.

Sesa FA in final

INACIO NORONHA



Chief guest Girjadevi Desai, physical education teacher at Ramacrisna Madeva Salgaocar Higher Secondary School, Margao, in the presence of Francisco Fernandes, GFA match commissioner and other dignitaries, present the women-of-the-match to Rezilla Almeida of Sesa Football Academy

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**RAIA:** Sesa Football Academy downed Calangute Association 2-0 to move into the final of Batora United Curtorim Women's Festival Soccer tournament played at DSYA ground, Curtorim, on Tuesday.

Rezilla Almeida of Sesa Football Academy netted the first goal of the match in the 10th minute. Then Christine of Calangute Association missed a chance to score in the 15th minute. Rezilla Almeida of Sesa Football Academy netted her second goal in the 47th minute.

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