

India's Next Chess Prodigies Gather in Jalgaon: Union Minister Raksha Khadse Inaugurates 38th National Under-11 Championship

“Opportunities at a Young Age Lay the Foundation for Future Success” - Smt. Raksha Khadse

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The 38th National Under-11 Chess Championship was inaugurated with grandeur today at the picturesque Anubhooti Mandap in Jain Hills, Jalgaon. This prestigious tournament, crucial for identifying and nurturing nascent talent, was declared open by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse.



The opening ceremony drew parallels to the recent remarkable victory of Divya Deshmukh at the FIDE Women's World Cup, a testament to the immense potential within India's young chess community.

In her keynote address, Smt. Raksha Khadse emphasized upon the lasting significance of opportunities available during formative years, aligning with the Ministry's vision to foster a vibrant sports culture at the grassroots level. She highlighted the government's commitment to empowering young athletes through flagship initiatives like the 'Khelo Bharat Niti 2025' and the 'Khelo India' program. These initiatives aim to nurture sporting talent, promote fitness, and provide the necessary infrastructure to develop future sporting

champions, she said.

Smt. Khadse extended her best wishes to the young players, noting that chess instills invaluable qualities such as discipline and intellectual sharpness, laying the foundation for their future success in both sports and life.



The tournament has attracted over 550 chess prodigies from across the nation, among whom nearly 400 participants boast of official FIDE (International Chess Federation) ratings — a testimony to the championship's calibre. Representing states and territories including Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Punjab, and Rajasthan, these young talents have converged in Jalgaon for national recognition and international rating.

The championship is being conducted in accordance with the Swiss League format across 11 competitive rounds, offering participants a significant opportunity to earn and improve their FIDE international ratings. Among the noteworthy contestants are Advik Agrawal from Pune (FIDE Rating: 2251) and Devi Bijesh from Kerala (FIDE Rating: 1869), whose participation adds to the distinction of the event.

The championship is the result of joint efforts by the Jain Sports Academy, Jalgaon District Chess Association, Maharashtra Chess Association, and the All India Chess Federation, under the primary sponsorship of Jain Irrigation.

A total prize purse of ₹8 Lakhs has been announced, with cash awards extending beyond the champions and runners-up to commendable draws and performances across the board celebrating skill, sportsmanship, and strategic prowess.



This national championship stands as a significant milestone in the educational, athletic, and socio-cultural journey of Jalgaon. With its successful organization, Maharashtra further cements its place as a pivotal state in promoting chess talent, offering inspiration for the emerging generation of Indian chess players.

Smt. Smita Wagh (Member of Parliament), Shri. Ashok Jain (Chairman of Jain Irrigation and Advisor to the All India Chess Federation), Shri. Siddharth Mayur (Executive President of the Maharashtra Chess Association), Shri. Atul Jain (President of the Jain Sports Academy) and Shri. Debashish Barua (Chief Arbiter) were among the other dignitaries present at the event.

Rini Choudhury

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