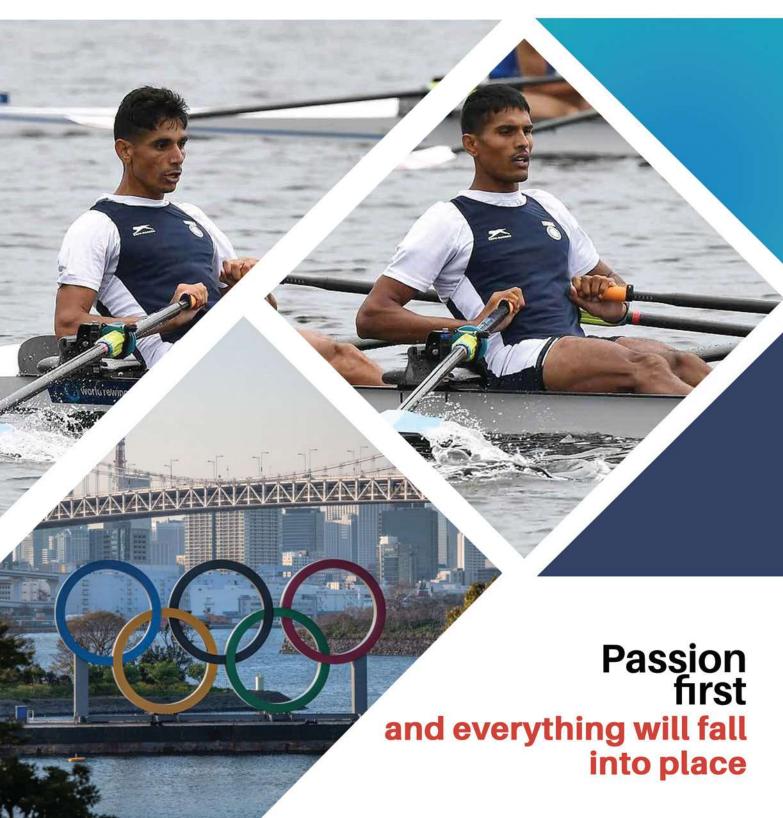
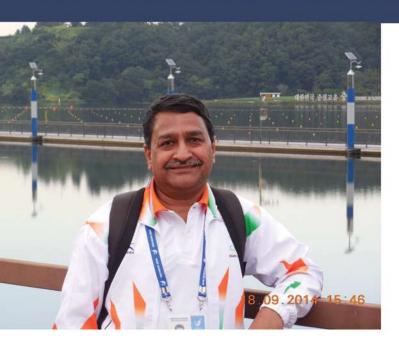
Edition 5 | Quarter 3 JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

ROWING INDIA





SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE



It gives me immense pleasure to connect with you all through this edition of our now famous and much awaited "RFI-Newsletter".

Hope you and your families are doing well and wish you the best in the months ahead.

With the festival season in full swing there is even more pressure on all of us to be careful and smartly wise to evade the virus, though most of you may be double vaccinated. Never ever lower your guard and mask. It's not yet time to relax on any of the protocols advised by the Government.

Olympic participation and doing well and moving ahead is the most important news for you all. Then came the meeting with the President and Prime Minister over breakfast. Attending India's 75th Independence Day was another event etched in memory forever and then the Indian Olympic Association felicitations in New Delhi.

Your Secretary General attended a virtual Commonwealth Rowing Association meeting being an EC Member. Many decisions affecting Commonwealth Rowing were discussed. We are planning a Commonwealth Rowing Championships combining flat water and coastal rowing in a combined regatta soon. One of the promising places discussed was in Namibia. Namibia Rowing Association are willing to host the CRA Championships. More to follow in the months to come.

Out National Calendar is now full.

In October we have the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Friendship Championships selections in Bhopal. This selection race is for choosing the India Team which is followed by a Conditioning Camp before we move on to the actual championships.

BIMSTEC Friendship Regatta is in November 2021 at Upper Lake, Bhopal. Participants from Thailand, Srilanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan are expected to participate. This is to promote friendship and cooperation amongst the Bay of Bengal rim countries.

This is followed by the Junior Nationals in December 2021 in Pune and then the Senior National in January 2022 on the ARN Course in Pune.

We are also planning an Umpires Clinic followed by an exam which was on the cards for quite some time now.

Our rowing calendar is tight. Time to hit the waters and train. Looking forward to seeing you all on the waters soon.

Cheers MV Sriram Secretary General

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AN UNFORGETTABLE AUGUST 2021....



month of August 2021 for INDIA Rowing. After a sterling performance in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, where Indian Light Weight Double Scullers finished 11th in the World, the INDIA team of Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat along with Drona Coach Ismail Baig and Secretary General MV Sriram had the special honor and privilege of being invited by our President for high tea on the 14th August at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The event was organized at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, in a very big hall, attended by all the participants from the Indian Contingent. This was followed by a special invitation to attend the 75th Independence Day celebrations at the historic Red Fort, as special invitees, by our Prime Minister. Sitting in the front row and listening to the Prime Minister at close range was a treat to all the invitees. After the flag hoisting and speeches our Honourable prime minister broke protocol and mingled with the India Contingent and briefly interacted with them. Then came the Indian Olympic Associations felicitation function organized at the Asoka Hotel. Cash prizes were distributed to all the winners. National Federations who participated and produced winners were also specially honored. This meeting was presided over by our Honourable Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Anurag Thakur and his minister of state Shri Nisith Pramanik.

The last of the functions in New Delhi was indeed the most talked about morning in the capital.

It was indeed a very fortunate and unforgettable month of August 2021 for INDIA Rowing. After a sterling performance in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, where Indian Light Weight Double Scullers finished 11th in the World, the INDIA team of Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat along with Drona Coach Ismail Baig and Secretary General MV Sriram had the special honor and privilege of being invited by our President for high tea on the 14th August at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The event was organized at the Rashtra-trapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, in a very big hall, at-

With the encouragement and support coming right from the top, the enthusiasm and energy levels of our sports men was ecstatic.

The intent of the government was clear. It was to encourage sports and support it in whatever manner needed to improve its popularity and get good results in future games for India.

-MV Sriram



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That the 2021 Olympic Games were an experience unlike any preceding event, is a well-documented fact. Training centres were impacted around the globe with crews going well beyond their call of duty in terms of sacrifices made for the sport.

All of this dedication culminated in the young duo of Arjun and Arjun Lal qualifying for the Olympic Games. At this point we must appreciate the effort of the steely pacing partners at the National Camp, who stayed on at the camp and supported their peers in their preparation.

Once at Tokyo, the national coach who was accompanying the crew, had his work cut out for him, he needed to ensure the team adhere to the stringent covid protocols whilst simultaneously set boats, study their competition and train for the event.

At the Games, the Men's Lightweight Double scull placed a noteworthy 5th Place in the Final B, India's best performance till date.



Whilst sharing the strategy followed Mr Baig shared that 'The aim was to reach the Final B. We have not done that ever, and this is one of my most memorable experiences I have had at an Olympic Games' he said (Mr Baig has accompanied the team to 5 Olympic Games so far).

We faced a string of hurdles before travelling to the games, including several family emergencies. Even our national coach's entire family fell sick, yet we stayed on to push the limits. Arjun said about their experience. The robust coaching contingent for the camp also included Padmashri Awardee Bajrang Lal and Gurdarshan Singh, who was able to mentor the athletes with their vast experience in the sport.

The coach noted in his analysis of the competition that many crews who attended the games also were the Linz. World Rowing Championships, 2019 and also at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers that the goal would be challenging enough to achieve. 'Ismail Sir asked us to keep cool and perform exactly like we had several times before at practice. This combined with our grit, rhythm and exposure allowed us to reach the desired target' quipped an effervescent Arvind. India was also the highest ranked team amongst the Asian country participants.

We are sure this performance will only instil a greater desire in our national crews to succeed in the global arena.

-Rohith Maradapa

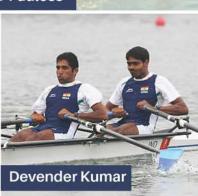




A TRIBUTE TO PAST OLYMPIANS













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A House for the best Talents of our Country

MADHYA PRADESH STATE WATER SPORTS ACADEMY, BHOPAL (MPSWA)

In conversation with Coach Dalvir Singh Rathore

The MPSWA is one of the most well-endowed water sports centres in the country, and houses Rowing, Canoeing, Kayaking and Sailing training centres. The Rowing discipline is managed by Asian Games Medallist and Arjuna Awardee, Shri Dalvir Singh Rathore.

Since the centre's establishment the task of recruiting athletes fell upon the coach who personally scouts talent from across the state, based on the good standards of height, fitness and swimming knowledge. After filtering through the fresh recruits only 32 talents remain at the centre year-round.

The centre housed on the Upper Lake, Bhopal, offers a 15 kilometre stretch of uninhibited waters to train on, making it well suited for Long-Distance training. Equipped with the latest fleet of Filippi and Swift racing crafts, 30 Ergometers, a State-of-the-art Sports Science Centre, ancillary support systems and well-furnished sport hostels, the MPSWA has truly become a Centre of Excellence, with the Madhya Pradesh team winning several overall trophies at the National Championships.









Your centre, the MPSWA has come to the limelight within the short span of its existence? Could you share your experience with us?

Our centre was established in the year 2015, and by 2017 itself, Madhya Pradesh rowing began to produce excellent results. We won 12 medals at the Senior Nationals Championship held at Bhopal in January, 2017, and won the overall trophy at the Junior & Senior National regattas, for three consecutive years.

Our Honourable Sports Minister, Smt Yasodhara Raje Scindia, an ardent sportsperson takes interests in our top athletes and enquires about the progress of the tops athlete, by their individual names.

India won the bid to host the 2020, Asian Rowing Championship, at Bhopal, but we were unable to host it due to the pandemic. What are your thoughts and feelings on this?

We have a world class centre with suitable infrastructure and equipment to run International Regattas. Our national rowing team regularly trains at our rowing centre and our country's top rowers have been all praise for our training facilities.

The rowing fraternity in Madhya Pradesh feels dejected to have missed out the opportunity to host the 2020 Rowing Championship.

The MP Sports Ministry personnel often ask me 'Aap kyun nahi karwarahe ho?' (Why are you not conducting the Asian Regatta?). We have hosted many national level regattas, our first one being the Junior National Championship held in January, 2017, just a year into our inception. Now we are just waiting for the opportunity to host such major events, as it will provide a boost not just to rowing in MP, but across India.

Could you share with our readers, the secret to your coaching success?

I personally give each student my full focus and seldom allow other coaches to interfere with my athletes. Also, I never miss a session at any cost. This dedication from my side inspires my athletes to give their all.

The Indian rowing circles know that you lose your voice by cheering for your athletes at every regatta! Why is that?

My bond with my athletes is such that when they hear me cheer for them, they put in that extra effort and that brings about the desired results. Hence, I don't miss an opportunity to cheer them.

What is the future of your centre looking like?

Being in the 6th year of our operations, the centre has already produced some international athletes. Khuspreet Kaur who rowed at the Olympic Qualifiers placed 5th in the B Final. This was her very first international competition and only her 2nd Regatta, ever. Going forward, our women rowers are bound to perform even better as they gain competition exposure.

Our centre offers the perfect environment to build champion rowers, also we are in the process of hiring a foreign coach. All of this together will contribute to an even stronger performance from our rowers. My aim is to help India win many more medals and to see a women's crew row at the Olympics.

How else do you support your rowers?

Affiliations with schools and colleges, ensure that our Centre's rowers get the best all round development. Home tutoring is being offered to several rowers at their boarding facility in the Tatya Tope Stadium, this ensures education is given equal importance along with their sporting activities.

The MP government also recognizes and motivates high achievers offering over 3 different awards annually, namely, - The Vikrama awards, for international medallists, the Vishwamitra, for gifted coaches and the Eklavya award, for upcoming Junior athletes.

Amongst these Awardees, at least 15 athletes a year are awarded government jobs. Recipients of the Vikrama Award in particular are given secured posts in the Police, Excise and other government departments.

The support of the Government of Madhya Pradesh and the Rowing Federation of India, promises to allow more talented athletes to emerge from the centre in the upcoming years.

-Rohith Maradapa



DALVIR SINGH RATHORE'S JOURNEY

Chief Coach, Bhopal Water Sports Centre & Madhya Pradesh Rowing

The Beginning: Distance Runner to Champion Rower

Hailing from the town of Etah, Uttar Pradesh, Mr Dalvir Singh Rathore was always an athlete who dabbled in several sports including Basketball, Volleyball, and his sport of choice, Cross Country Running.

Long before marathons and distance running was famous, Mr Dalvir excelled at the 25 Kilometre Cross Country event. It was his proficiency at this sport that led him to a place in the Indian Army where he continued to partake professionally in a mix of these sports. But as fate had it, Dalvir's athletic ability and body frame was made for Light-weight rowing. In the year 1983 he was in CME, Pune training amongst the best of the rowers from the Engineering Regiments of the army. He was one among the 20 personnel who were chosen to be at the CME camp from BEG Roorkee.

Being a sculler, he experienced success early on. At his first National Championship he finished second only to Captain Bisamber Singh at the Muttukadu, National Rowing Championships in 1985.





International Waters

Mr Singh began his international career representing India at the 1st Asian Rowing Championships, Sha Tin, Hong Kong in 1985. He placed 5th in the lightweight sculls and 6th in the lightweight Double Sculls. Subsequently he was a reserve at the 1986, Asian Games. From there, Mr Singh went on to win 4 Silver medals for India at the Asian Level before the 1990 Asian Games.

In 1990, he opened India's sculling medal tally at the 11th Asian Games, Beijing, China, with 2 Bronze medals. One in the Lightweight Single and the other in the Lightweight Double Scull event with partner, Ramanjit Singh Bopperoi, the son of an Army officer, who subsequently got an admission to the United States based on his medal performance.

The next Single Scull medal at the Asian Games came nearly 16 years later, when Bajrang Lal Thakar, secured Gold at the 2006, Doha, Asian Games. Mr Dalvir also placed 12th at the World Rowing Championship in the same year, and participated at international invitation Regattas in Russia and Italy, during his career.

Rowing India

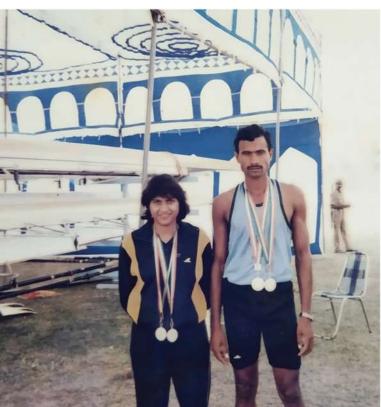


rowing in 1991, by the then president of India, Shri R Venkatraman. Shortly after this intense streak of victories, the same year, he bowed out of competitive rowing due to a back injury and was assigned a coaching role by the CME at Pune.

During his tenure at the CME he was part of the At present, Mr Singh trains the Madhya Pradesh coaching contingent of the 1997, Asian Championship and the 1998, Asian Games, Bangkok where India won 2 Bronze medals in the Light- -Rohith Maradapa weight and Open weight four events.

Dalvir Singh was awarded the Arjuna Award for In 1999, he returned to coach his home centre, BEG Roorkee. Under his tutelage the team enjoyed significant success with his Fours crew beating the famed Services crew at the Kodaikanal, Sprint National Championships. He also coached his team to win the overall Championship at the Chandigarh, Senior National Championship in the early 2000s.

Water Sports Academy at Bhopal.









Asian Championship Gold medallist

Tejash Shinde emerged. Hailing businessmen his unlikely foray into sport was seeded when his Uncle Anil Shinde suggested he take up Rowing considering his Boys Sports Company Company(BSC) interview in Kirkee, Pune, and upon being selected commenced training in Jan '08.

Hailing from the remote, but My first interaction with Tejash began bountiful district of Satara in rural early in our rowing careers, where we Maharashtra, a young lad named rowed side by side in the sculling event at the Sub Junior National Championfrom a family of agriculturists and ship at MIT, Pune in 2009. He was not one to get off to the fastest start, often being left behind in the first 100 -150 metres, but he would slowly and steadily gain on his competitors leaving them height and athletic build. Slowly far behind by the time the first buzzer gaining interest in the idea, a rang. He finished the event with Gold, young Tejash appeared for the and that too, with a timing faster that matched that of the Pairs and Fours. Subsequently aged just 15 years, he emerged Champion in the Single Scull into their fold in June, 2007, he event at the (Under 18) Junior National Championship, held at Hyderabad in 2010.

Big Dreams

Shortly after the Juniors' win, he attended his first International Regatta, the 16th Asian Junior Championship in 2010, albeit as a reserve.

'I went as to a Reserve Rower but there I saw our JM4- win Gold at the event, that's when the thought came in my mind, that even I can win a Gold for my country.' - Tejash Shinde

Many young athletes who achieve such success early on usually turn to easier pastures, not Tejash. He continued to pursue his passion, set larger goals and bigger targets for himself. In March, 2012 Tejash had joined the Indian Army.

Upon recruitment, he continued to train alongside older stalwarts like Azad Mohammed and Sawarn Singh, and continually placed amongst the best athletes in our country. He also accompanied the Indian Senior team as a reserve for the Quadruple sculls in the 2013 World Rowing Championships, Chungju, South Korea.

A story of grit & determination



'I kept that goal in my mind, worked a strategy to reach there and eventually secured a Silver in 2011 and finally, Gold at the 2012, Junior Asian Championship in China. We beat the Dragons on their home turf, this was a great moment for us. I would like to thank Ismail sir, Johnson sir and Jenil sir for coaching us to this victory'.

The Dry Spell

His perseverance however was not enough to earn him a place on the national team for several years after the 2012 Junior victory. His moment however came during the 2015, Asian Rowing Championship, Beijing, China. There he was part of the Light Weight Men's Four event, where he partnered with, 2-time Olympian Manjeet Singh, Jegan and Pandurang in the JM4-.

'2015 seemed to be a comeback year, but resulted in a heart wrenching 4th place finish, that too when the rest of our team returned with 7 medals from the same championship.'



Coping Strategies: The way forward

'Spending 7 years without a medal at the international level was disappointing to both myself and my well-wishers', says Tejash. On being asked how he coped with the loss, Tejash exclaimed 'It was excruciating. I did not believe the result for many months.' "I went home and spent an entire month grounding myself. I tried to accept defeat and reflect on my steps". 'I still remember reading Usain Bolt's biography 'Faster than lightning' and a Marathi novel on Chattrapati Shivaji Shreeman Yogi. These two books helped me change my defeated mindset and inspired me.'

Resilience: Rebuilding self, one stroke at a time

"I was just coming to terms with the Asian Games results when I found my name did not feature in the Preparatory National Camp for the 2019 Asian Championships. 'Just quit rowing' my parents and other well-wishers advised, but something in me told me to hold on".

He recollects a conversation with National Coach Mr Ismail Baig, "I remember Sir telling us to prove ourselves to get into the camp. I took this as a challenge and worked towards proving my worth."

Tejash ignored the cynical voices, and gave it his all, to make it into the light-weight men's four of the National Team. All the while however he did not want to disappoint his parents who did not wish him to compete kept his progress a secret from his family, who wanted him to give up rowing.

"I didn't want to disappoint my family, so I didn't tell them about the competition, but instead told them that I won't be using the phone for a week", quipped Tejash. Although this left a young Tejash heartbroken, it only boosted his morale to support the team's efforts. He kept up his performance being amongst the most elite light weight sweep rowers in the country during the lean periods of 2016-17. Finally, his chance came after a gap of 3 years, in the year 2018.

High Hopes Asian Games, 2018

The Asian Games year was something the nation had her eyes on. And Tejash was one of the favourites for the lightweight sweep events. From a host of 30 + elite rowers in the National Camp that year, he made the cut for the LM4- and LM8+ events. The progress of the crews in

The progress of the crews in training wasvery promising, especially the LM8+ crew. They managed to secure the fastest timing, yet (5:40), for the lightweight event, which made them medal favourites, but despite this stellar timing, the crew lost the bronze medal to Hong Kong by half a second, despite beating them in an all-out Semi-Finals.

'It all was a matter of one stroke. Whoever took the last stroke would have won the race.' Tejash added. This left the entire team shattered.



The Return of a Champion: 2019 Asian Championship - Gold

Upon reaching the Chungju competition venue, Tejash said he felt 'A completely different energy within myself and the crew.' "The first two days of training itself made me confident about gold. And we made it."

'Many people even thought of removing me from the crew thinking me to be unlucky, but we proved them wrong. I am very happy to have lived up to the expectation of my Coach Mr Ismail Baig.' says Tejash Shinde.

"His training led us to peak at the right time and win the Gold at the 2019 Asian Championship" says Tejash & Jasveer Singh, his partner at 2019 Asian Championship as well at the Boys Sports Company.

Q&A with Shinde Lessons & Gratitude

What other opportunities has rowing opened up to you?

Tejash admits the journey has had its peaks and troughs, yet he is grateful to the sport for not being just a vocation or passion, but for offering him a fulfilling career in the Indian Army, that has brought him recognition, glory, promotions and even his life partner, Ms Sayali Shelke.

'I don't feel good when I miss a session on water for anything. Rowing gives me peace and happiness.' he quips.

'During the pandemic I was lucky to be able to mentor many underprivileged youngsters from my state as a Mentor in Just Play India, an initiative started by my rowing partner and IOC Young Leader, Rohith Maradapa.'

What do you wish you did differently when you were younger?

When I was 10, I wished to study and pursue my career in Computer science. But life had different plans and I am loving them.

What are your goals for the future?

My goal is to win Gold at the 2022, Asian Games, China, and watch our national flag hoisted. I ultimately hope to get India an Olympic berth through the World Championships.

What is your greatest learning from the sport?

Work smart, not just hard. Smart work will pay you off, it may take time but pay off it shall.

What is your advice to young rowers?

- Don't get stuck in your defeats
- Learn from mistake and apply
- · Enjoy every stroke you row
- · Explore and go step by step
- Every step/every stroke matters
- -Rohith Maradapa



Rowing India



am honored to have raced in the Coastal World Beach Sprint Finals this year held in Oeiras, Portugal. There were over 700 boats, 34 countries represented and several Olympic medalists competing. As a Goan, I was extremely proud to have my first race representing India in Portugal and so many family members cheering from the beach! This was an amazing experience and like the other competitors, I am most happy rowing & getting support from RFI. I look forward to putting in more training time for a podium win. Mrs Singh Deo erased the miles between us and encouraged me the entire week of competition and National Coach Mr. Baig was helpful explaining how the progression works and shared his wisdom and words of encouragement. -Gayle Zulema de Miranda

2021 WORLD BEACH SPRINTS FINALS

In the world of rowing we grew up in, all we knew was rowing in the lakes, rivers and dams...but the world is changing and it is changing very fast. Three new streams of Rowing are taking center stage, slowly, but surely. Beach Rowing, Indoor Rowing and Para Rowing are becoming popular and INDIA surely does not want to be left behind.

This years' 2021 World Rowing Coastal Championships and World Rowing Beach Sprints Finals was held at Oeiras, Portugal. Oeiras beach is around 16 kilometers from Lisbon, capital of Portugal on the Atlantic Ocean.

The 2021 World Rowing Beach Sprint Finals was held first between September 24th and 27th 2021. This is a quick 500-meter race in the ocean close to the shore where rowers must sprint to the respective boats (generally two boats at a time) and jump into their respective boats and row towards a floating buoy and turn around and come back to place where they started and then jump out of the boat and hit a finishing bell placed at the point from where they started to sprint to the boats. By a process of elimination, the ultimate winners are decided through a draws system. The boats are broader and heavier than normal flat water rowing boats and have buoyancy tanks (air entrapped spaces) to help the boat float and not sink in the rough sea waters.

India was proud to enter Gayle Zulema de Miranda in the CJW1X (Women's Single Sculls). Born in Goa, the 18-year-old is the grand-daughter of late cartoonist Mario de Miranda. She is India's big hope in coastal rowing, at present. In her maiden attempt she went on to come upto the quarter final stage, losing valiantly to Tunisia's Hela Belhaje Mohamed, who went on to win the Gold in the event.

On the whole, Beach Rowing is taking us close to a different taste of water. Slightly rough, slightly salty with a lot of sun, tan and fine sand tossed all over. The talent is all there to be tapped, trained and channelized to achieve success in coastal rowing. India Rowing is seriously starting her journey here. -MV Sriram





J&K ROWING - AN INSIGHT

The J&K Association for Rowing & Sculling, an Associate Member of the Rowing Federation of India and recognized by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, is based in Srinagar, Kashmir. It is headed by the exuberant Mr Navin Kumar Chowdhary (IAS), as President, who is also the Principal Secretary to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, which is now transforming and healing the lives of Kashmiris and helping them find a new meaning to their lives. The association is ably supported by a team of devoted and sincere committee who have silently worked to make the association relevant in the water sports world of India today. J&K Rowing has been in the news recently, having imported eight sets of the latest Olympic class rowing boats and oars along with umpiring/coaching catamarans and safety rescue boats. The equipments are going to be shared between Kashmir and Jammu Rowing Academies being established for furthering Rowing in the valley. There is immense talent to be trained and we are sure Water Sports in Kashmir is about to take off with the Government of In-

MAHARASHTRA STATE INDOOR ROWING CHAMPIONSHIP

Maharashtra Rowing Association successfully hosted the 5th State Indoor Rowing Champion-ship from 10th to 13th March 2021. The event was conducted virtually and more than 50 rowers had participated in various category events covering, Sub junior, Junior, Open, Para & Masters category.



dia's total support to all sporting activities in the region, as part of the revival package.

Behind all the happenings is Bilquis Mir who has tirelessly worked, coordinated and stood like a rock and helped in establishing the new association and the Water Sports Academy in the Dal Lake and is in the process of establishing other water sports centres for promoting water sports in other districts.

Recently the Rowing Federation of India deputed its Chief Coach Ismail Baig and Shining Star Bajrang Lal Thakar to inspect the facilities and advice the Association on various issues. RFI has also recommended some very qualified coaches who will take up their jobs soon and handle coaching of the immense talent available on the ground and groom them into champions in the near future. From very small beginnings, J&K Rowing has transformed itself in a short span of time and is ready to host a National Rowing Championships with the ready-made infrastructure in place. Our best wishes to them.

-MV Sriram

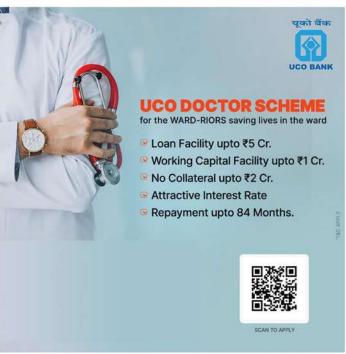


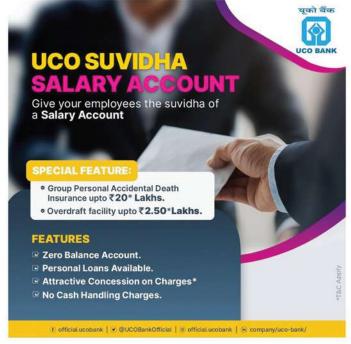




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