



India's Largest Rural Sports Festival Isha Gramotsavam Debuts In Haryana

- *Cluster-level matches of Volleyball and Football will be held in Panipat, Karnal, Ambala on 25-26 July and in Hisar and Kurukshetra on 1-2 August. The Divisional Round will be held on August 9 in Karnal with the qualifying team advancing to the Grand Finale from 4-6 September in Coimbatore at the iconic Adiyogi.*
- *Isha Gramotsavam has a prize pool of over ₹1 crore with cash awards at the Cluster, Divisional and Grand Finale stages. The winning volleyball and throwball teams will receive ₹5 lakh each, while the runners-up will receive ₹3 lakh. The third and fourth-placed teams will receive ₹1 lakh and ₹50,000 respectively.*

23 July 2026, Chandigarh: Isha Gramotsavam, Bharat's largest rural sports festival, is making its debut in Haryana this year, bringing the spirit of rural sports and community celebration to the state for the very first time. Envisioned by Sadhguru – Yogi, Spiritual Guru and Founder of Isha Foundation – the Isha Gramotsavam not just strengthens the village communities through sport but also provides a platform for rural youth and women to showcase their sporting talent.

Addressing the press conference in Chandigarh on Thursday, Swami Pulaka, Isha Brahmachari and National Coordinator of Isha Gramotsavam, said, *"In the states where Isha Gramotsavam has been held over the years, we have witnessed inspiring transformations beyond the playing field. Villages have come together in celebration, women have stepped out to participate with wholehearted support from their families, and communities have become stronger through the spirit of sport. We have also seen many participants choosing healthier lifestyles, gradually moving away from unhealthy habits and addictions."*

"Haryana already has a proud sporting legacy, and we hope Isha Gramotsavam will further strengthen that culture at the grassroots, bringing villages together, inspiring rural youth and women, and creating an occasion where every community can celebrate, compete and grow together," he added.

The tournament will follow a multi-stage format comprising Cluster-level matches, Divisional rounds and the Grand Finale. In Haryana, Cluster-level matches will be held on 25-26 July in Panipat, Karnal, Ambala while Hisar and Kurukshetra will host cluster matches on 1-2 August. The Divisional rounds will be held on August 9 in Karnal with the qualifying team from Haryana advancing to the Grand Finale from 4-6 September at the Isha Yoga Center Coimbatore, in front of the iconic Adiyogi.

Unlike professional sporting events, Isha Gramotsavam is exclusively for everyday rural citizens — from farmers and daily wage earners to homemakers and students.

Anuj Jaglan, 29, dairy farmer from Jondhan Kalan village of Panipat and a Gramotsavam participant, said, *"When I heard about Isha Gramotsavam, a few boys from our village and I formed a team and registered*



as it was free of cost. Within a few days, we noticed a positive change. Instead of spending evenings on mobile phones, we started to come together to practice."

"In villages, addictions like hookah are very common, but Gramotsavam gives rural youth a direction through sports. When others see their friends playing and enjoying the game, they too are inspired to step onto the field instead of falling into unhealthy habits. If even a few young lives change because of this, it will be a victory beyond the tournament," Jaglan added.

Isha Gramotsavam has a prize pool of over ₹1 crore which includes cash awards at the Cluster, Divisional and Grand Finale stages. At the Cluster level, the winning team will receive ₹10,000, the runners-up ₹7,000, while the third and fourth-placed teams will receive ₹5,000 and ₹3,000 respectively. Teams qualifying from the Cluster level will advance to the Divisional rounds, where the winners will receive ₹15,000, the runners-up ₹10,000, the third-placed team ₹6,000 and the fourth-placed team ₹4,000.

At the Grand Finale, the winning volleyball and throwball teams will receive ₹5 lakh each, while the runners-up will receive ₹3 lakh. The third and fourth-placed teams will receive ₹1 lakh and ₹50,000 respectively. Separate prize money has also been earmarked for the Paralympic category.

One of the inspiring stories from Haryana's inaugural edition of Isha Gramotsavam is that of a 66-year-old farmer named Jalpati, from Waiser village in Panipat. Defying age-related stereotypes, she has registered for the tournament and is bringing together a women's throwball team from her village. Her enthusiasm reflects how Isha Gramotsavam is becoming a platform for women across generations to step onto the playing field with confidence, inspiring more women to participate and strengthening the spirit of community through sport.

Saurabh Thakur, Isha Volunteer and Haryana Coordinator for Isha Gramotsavam, said, *"Our aspiration is to see more women stepping onto the playground. In many rural households, women are still expected to remain at home, with responsibilities like cooking and caring for the family taking priority over their own needs. Through Isha Gramotsavam, we hope to create an environment where families encourage their daughters, sisters, and mothers to play, compete, and experience the confidence and joy that sports bring. When a woman steps onto the field, it inspires not just a team, but an entire village."*

The 18th edition of Isha Gramotsavam is expected to bring together over 80,000 participants from more than 40,000 villages across 10 states and one Union Territory. Accredited by Fit India, this year's tournament will feature more than 7,000 teams, including an estimated 15,000 women participants across the country. Organised by Isha Outreach under its Action for Rural Rejuvenation initiative, the tournament will be held across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

This year's edition will feature volleyball for men and throwball for women. Participation is open to rural players who have not represented their state or India at the national or international level. All players must belong to the same Gram Panchayat. Volleyball players must be at least 14 years of age, while



throwball players must be at least 13 years old. In the women's throwball category, each team may include up to three players below 21 years of age. Eligible rural citizens from across Haryana can register for free at isha.co/gramotsavam and take part in the state's first edition of the tournament.

Isha Gramotsavam has earned national recognition for its contribution to rural development and sports promotion. It is recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, as a National Sports Promotion Organization (NSPO). In 2018, the initiative received the prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar for its outstanding contribution to grassroots sports.

The support of Isha Gramotsavam's partners has made it possible to provide a national platform where thousands of rural athletes can discover their potential, represent their villages with pride, and celebrate the spirit of rural Bharat through sport. This year's edition is supported by Gravton Motors as the Mobility Partner, Nivia Sports as the Sports & Equipment Partner, TATA AIA Life Insurance Company Limited as the Bronze Partner, Wonder Cement as the On-ground Support Partner, and CG Power and Industrial Solutions Limited, Varindera Constructions Limited, Royal Infraconstru Ltd, and Agilisium Consulting as CSR Partners.

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