



Press Note

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SHIMLA CRICKET CARNIVAL 2026: A MASSIVE YOUTH MOVEMENT AGAINST DRUGS LAUNCHED ON MAY 23RD WITH MLA HARISH JANARTHA AS CHIEF GUEST

- **FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHIMLA WILL HOST A CRICKET TOURNAMENT IN FLOOD LIGHTS**

SHIMLA, HIMACHAL PRADESH – In a powerful, highly coordinated, and decisive response to the rapidly escalating threat of synthetic drug abuse across the state, the Himalayan Sports and Culture Youth Club Shimla is immensely proud to announce the official launch of the Shimla Cricket Carnival 2026. Operating under the resolute and highly resonant social theme "नशा छोड़ो - खेल खेलो" (Quit Drugs, Play Sports), this unprecedented, mega anti-drug youth movement is fundamentally set to transform the city's holistic approach to youth empowerment, community rehabilitation, and public health.

The highly anticipated Launching Ceremony took place on Saturday, 23rd May 2026, at 7:00 PM at the prestigious Rotary Club, The Mall, Shimla. Sh. Harish Janartha, Hon'ble MLA Shimla Urban, graced the historic occasion as the Chief Guest. His presence demonstrates profound administrative solidarity and robust legislative support for this highly critical social cause.

With recent, highly alarming epidemiological data indicating that nearly 27% of the youth demographic in Himachal Pradesh is currently vulnerable to severe drug abuse, and the volumetric consumption of highly addictive synthetic drugs like Chitta rising exponentially from 3.4 kg to 14.9 kg in just five years, the Shimla Cricket Carnival offers a vital, structurally sound, and highly healthy alternative. The central social cause of the event aims to systemically replace the psychological isolation of addiction with the powerful teamwork, intense discipline, and aspirational goals of competitive sports, systematically transitioning vulnerable youth from dangerous drug streets to highly regulated athletic stadiums.

The tournament format is meticulously and scientifically designed for maximum social inclusion across all 34 wards of the Municipal Corporation Shimla. Phase 1 of the carnival will feature highly accessible grassroots "Gully Cricket" played strictly with a red cloth ball. This strategic decision ensures exceptionally low financial entry barriers, guaranteeing the widespread, enthusiastic participation of over 600 local youth. Following this, the Phase 2 high-intensity knockouts will dramatically elevate the top 16 performing teams into rigorous, professional athletic matches with white leather ball.

The massive carnival also proudly hosts a highly competitive Institutional League featuring more than 20 premium teams from major government departments, public sector units, press, bar council and regional banks, providing crucial adult role models for the youth. Additionally, a specially invited Women's Tournament comprising 4 elite teams will be held to aggressively promote gender equality and establish powerful female athletes as highly visible anti-drug role models within the community.

Through a highly strategic, formalized collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA), the event will also serve as a legitimate professional pathway, featuring dedicated talent scouting and expert technical coaching.

In a spectacular, historic first for the capital city, the grand tournament matches will be played both during the day and late at night under highly professional floodlights at the Police Ground, Bharari, scheduled from the 1st to the 13th of June 2026.

Furthermore, the carnival pioneers an entirely unprecedented, highly quantifiable environmental initiative titled: "Every Dot Ball, One Tree." For every single dot ball successfully bowled during the entirety of the multi-week tournament, the central organizing committee officially pledges to plant one native tree, brilliantly linking elite athletic excellence directly to the critical ecological conservation of the fragile Himalayas.

The Shimla Cricket Carnival 2026—designed as a deeply heartfelt, permanent tribute to our esteemed members who are no more with us - Sanjeev Thakur, Avinash Negi, Amit Thakur, and Neeraj Thakur—warmly invites the entire city, regional corporate sponsors, and the national media to join hands in this vital movement. Together, let us structurally build a drug-free, ecologically green, and fiercely proud Shimla.

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