Cricketing Legend Sachin Takes City by Storm, Urges to Take Sports to Every Village in India

by Anushree Madhavan

Coimbatore: Chants of "Sachin, Sachin!" filled the air at Coimbatore grounds in the city on Friday, where the cricketing legend graced as the chief guest for the fourth edition of Isha Gramotsavam, a celebration of rural India through sports. Even though the event was for villagers from across Tamil Nadu who excelled in various fields, the city seized the opportunity to show its love for the 'master blaster', who visited the city for the first time.

The finals of the men's volleyball and women's throwball tournaments were held in the presence of Tendulkar and founder of Isha Foundation, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. Also present at the venue was Tendulkar's ardent fan, Sudhir Kumar Chaudhary, who had attended every home match the Indian team has played since 2003.

The team from Tiruchy bagged the first place in volleyball and the team from Devarayarapuram, Coimbatore, won the throwball finals. Sachin and Sadhguru awarded the winners and the runners up. As Sachin took to the stage, the cameras didn't stop flashing and neither did the chants die down. "Being a sportsman, I am happy to see that sports is being encouraged among villagers and so many have participated. Sports has taught me to be focused and disciplined," he said amid cheers.

He also went to suggest that from the next edition on, the village sports competition should be taken to villages across India and especially the Pottamari Kandiriva village in Andhra Pradesh that has adopted. Sadhguru, the brain behind the competition, agreed.

Sharing his thoughts on team work and people's lifestyle, Sachin said, "It is said that we are the diabetic capital of the country. We need an immediate change in lifestyle and everyone should play at least one sport. As a youngster, I was always told by my grandmother that health is the truest wealth and being healthy is important in every field," he said.

Before the final match between the men began, Sachin served the first shot and shared in his address that as a child he played volleyball too. "Not just that, even the Indian team, before we went to play a match, played a round of volleyball," he added. Sadhguru said that Sachin was here to celebrate the spirit of rural India, and his presence must be an inspiration to pick up a ball and play and wished that he adopted more villages and took sports to villagers.

Tendulkar's Ardent Fan Keeps the Crowd Engaged

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Meanwhile, Sudhir kept the crowd engaged by chanting Sachin's name and blowing his horn. He expressed his happiness in coming to the city for the first time on the same occasion that his idol did.

"I came directly after cheering for the Indian team in Sri Lanka. While I was there, my friends told me that Sachin was coming down to Coimbatore and I came down too. I was happy that India won in Sri Lanka after 21 years and the happiness is continuing here too," he said adding that, even after Sachin has retired, Sudhir continues to chant his name when a match is played on Indian grounds.

Among the finalists was Naga Mani (78) who has been playing throwball for the past 12 years. Though she has watched Sachin on TV, she was happy to see him in person.

"I have never seen his game, but I am happy that he saw me play. He gave a pat on my back and said that I am doing a great job and shook hands with me," she said elated.

After taking the city by storm with his presence, Sachin also gave a glimpse of his batting skills by smashing a six with a ball that Sadhguru delivered at him.