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Press Release

Veeyapuram Chundan (Village Boat Club) crowned CBL Season 5 champions; tops overall points

- **Niranam Chundan (Niranam Boat Club) lifts President's Trophy winning the final race in Kollam**

Kollam, Jan. 10: Veeyapuram Chundan, rowed by Village Boat Club, Kainakary, emerged as champions at the close of the fifth edition of the Champions Boat League (CBL) today, securing the highest overall points in the IPL-style league race for 'Chundan Vallams' organised by the Kerala Tourism department.

However, in the final race of the season for the prestigious President's Trophy held in Ashtamudi lake here, Niranam Chundan, rowed by Niranam Boat Club, defeated Veeyapuram to claim first place with a timing of 03:36:548 minutes.

Veeyapuram had already sealed the championship earlier by winning nine out of the eleven races and finishing at the top of the points table.

Due to a slight curve at Nettayam in Ashtamudi Lake, the early lead in the final race was not clearly visible to spectators on the shore. The intensity of the contest became evident through the television visuals. Until the final lap, three boats—Melpadam (Pallathuruthy Boat Club), Veeyapuram and Niranam—were neck and neck. In the last lap, Niranam surged ahead with a decisive burst, while Veeyapuram and Melpadam lost rhythm. Veeyapuram finished second (03:37:826 minutes) and Melpadam third (03:40:233 minutes).

Veeyapuram—fondly called “Veeru” by its supporters—secured the Season 5 championship with triple hat-trick victories at Kainakary, Thazhathangady, Piravam, Kottappuram, Pulinkunnu, Karuvatta, Pandanad, Kayamkulam and Kallada. Notably, Veeyapuram did not allow Pallathuruthy Boat Club, champions of the previous four seasons, to finish ahead even once this year, underlining their competitive dominance. The Village Boat Club officials received the championship prize of ₹25 lakh along with the CBL Trophy on behalf of Veeyapuram Chundan.

Niranam Chundan's victory in today's President's Trophy signalled strong intent for the next season. By overcoming the previously unbeaten Veeyapuram at Ernakulam Marine Drive earlier, and repeating their strength at Ashtamudi, Niranam proved that their success was not a matter of chance. Fatigue from finishing third, fourth and fifth in the



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first six races affected them in the later stages. The rise of a team from Pathanamthitta district defeating traditional water-sport powerhouses from Alappuzha and Kottayam reflects the growing acceptance of boat races beyond their traditional strongholds.

The prize distribution ceremony was presided over by MLA Shri M. Mukesh. The President's Trophy races were inaugurated by Minister for Dairy Development and Animal Husbandry Mrs J. Chinthurani, while Shri N. K. Premachandran MP flagged off the races. MLA Shri N. Noushad, Kollam Mayor Shri M. K. Hafees, District Panchayat President Dr. R. Latha Devi, Deputy Mayor Dr. Udaya Sukumaran, District Collector Shri N. Devidas, Kerala Tourism Additional Director (General) Smt Sreedhanya Suresh (IAS), who presented the CBL report, and Deputy Collector Shri Rakesh Kumar (KAS) were among those present. Joint Director of Tourism and CBL Nodal Officer Shri Abhilash Kumar T. G., State Coordinator Dr. A. Ansar (KAS), Deputy Director Shri Shanavas Khan A. R., and DTPC Secretary Jyothish Keshavan also attended.

In the Kollam race today, Nadubhagam Chundan (Punnamada Boat Club) finished fourth, Naduvileparamban (Immanuel Boat Club) fifth, Karichal (Karichal Chundan Boat Club-KCBC) sixth, Cheruthana (Thekkekara Boat Club) seventh, Payippadan (Kumarakom Town Boat Club) eighth, and Champakulam (Changanassery Boat Club) ninth.

After eleven races, Veeyapuram Chundan finished first in the overall CBL points table with 108 points, followed by Melpadam Chundan of Pallathuruthy Boat Club with 92 points, and Niranam Chundan of Niranam Boat Club with 86 points. The remaining positions were: Nadubhagam Chundan (4th), Naduvileparamban (5th), Karichal (6th), Cheruthana (7th), Payippadan (8th) and Champakulam (9th).

The club finishing first in the championship received ₹25 lakh, second place ₹15 lakh, and third place ₹10 lakh. Additionally, at each race venue, prize money of ₹5 lakh for first place, ₹3 lakh for second, and ₹1 lakh for third was awarded. Each team also received a ₹4 lakh bonus.

Massive crowds that turned up across the eleven venues stood as testimony to the fact that, over the last seven years, the Champions Boat League has grown into one of Kerala Tourism's most popular offerings. Races featuring smaller boats were held at Kasaragod, Dharmadam in Kannur, and Feroke in Kozhikode. The Malabar leg also witnessed enthusiastic public participation, matching the passion traditionally seen in Alappuzha's water festivals.

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