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PRESS RELEASE

Aroma Chundan scores maiden victory in the first race of CBL Sixth Season

Ramesh Chennithala inaugurates the Sixth Season of Champions Boat League at Karuvatta

Alappuzha, Sept 19: The sixth season of the much-awaited Champions Boat League got underway at Karuvatta. Aroma Chundan, rowed by Aroma Boat Club, emerged victorious in the first league race with a brilliant performance.

Home Minister Shri Ramesh Chennithala, who inaugurated the sixth season of the CBL, said that providing financial assistance for the preservation of Chundan boats and boat sheds is under consideration for the next Budget.

The first league race, held at the Karuvatta Leading Channel Water Stadium, witnessed a fiercely contested battle. Aroma Chundan finished first after defeating Mulpadam Chundan, rowed by Pallathuruthy Boat Club, which had been the CBL champion for three consecutive seasons, in the final lap. Niranam Chundan, rowed by Niranam Boat Club, finished third.

The finishing times in the final were: Aroma Chundan — 3:26.15 minutes; Mulpadam — 3:26.83 minutes; and Niranam Chundan — 3:27.06 minutes. The final lineup was decided on the basis of the best times recorded in the heats. Aroma and Mulpadam remained neck-and-neck through the first three quarters. Mulpadam managed to move slightly ahead midway through the race. However, the Chundan boats made their decisive surge in the final lap. Neither Mulpadam nor Niranam could match Aroma's rowing speed. Aroma can be said to have maintained the dominance it displayed at the Nehru Trophy.

The previous Oommen Chandy government had allocated Rs 2.5 crore for the preservation of Kerala's heritage Chundan boats and boat sheds. Since the time has come for similar restoration work, discussions are underway with the Tourism Minister regarding allocating funds in the next Budget, the Minister said. He also requested the Tourism Minister to convene a meeting to discuss development activities following the declaration of Karuvatta as a tourism village. Steps are being taken to deepen the Leading Channel and increase its water-



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holding capacity. The work of constructing protective walls on both sides of the channel is nearing completion.

Shri Ramesh Chennithala said that tourism-focused infrastructure development will continue to be implemented in the area in the coming years.

Although there had been rumours that the government would withdraw from the CBL, Tourism Minister Shri P.C. Vishnunadh, who presided over the function, said that the government has decided to take the CBL forward with renewed vigour to promote Kerala's water festivals and boat clubs. He pointed out that, instead of the unfamiliar names used previously, the competitions this time are being conducted under the original names of Kerala's traditional Chundan boats.

Shri Vishnunath said that the Tourism Department chose Haripad-Karuvatta as the venue for this year's state-level inauguration of the CBL as a mark of respect and regard for Shri Ramesh Chennithala, whom he described as the commander-in-chief of the fight against substance abuse. He said the government aims to make the Champions Boat League more attractive in the coming years by developing it fully along the lines of the IPL cricket model.

Excise and Cooperation Minister Adv. M. Liju delivered the keynote address. Shri Subair Kutty PI, Joint Director, Department of Tourism, presented the report. Haripad Block Panchayat President Shri V.K. Nathan, Karuvatta Grama Panchayat President Smt. Sreelakha Manu, District Panchayat member Smt. Anila Raju and members of various local self-government institutions attended the function.

The finishing positions at Karuvatta are as follows: Aroma Chundan — first (Aroma Boat Club, Paravur, Kollam); Mulpadam Chundan — second (Pallathuruthy Boat Club); Niranam Chundan — third (Niranam Boat Club, Niranam); Veeeyapuram Chundan — fourth (UBC Kainakary FC); Arppookara Chundan — fifth (Emmanuel Boat Club, Kumarakom); Cheruthana Chundan — sixth (NBC Nattakom Boat Club); Punyalan Niranam — seventh (Kumarakom Town Boat Club, Kumarakom); Nadubhagam Chundan — eighth (PBC Punnamada, NCFC Boat Club); and Thalavady Chundan — ninth (Village Boat Club). These are the nine boats participating.



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The remaining league races in the season, which comprises a total of 11 races including the final, will be held at Kallada, Kollam (September 23); Pandanad, Alappuzha (September 26); Kottappuram, Thrissur (October 4); Marine Drive, Ernakulam (October 10); Piravom (October 17); Thazhathangadi, Kottayam (October 24); Pulinkunnu, Alappuzha (October 31); Kainakary (November 7); and Kayamkulam (November 14).

The sixth season of the CBL will conclude with the President's Trophy Boat Race to be held in Kollam on November 21.

At each race venue, the first-place finisher will receive Rs 5 lakh, the second-place finisher Rs 3 lakh and the third-place finisher Rs 1 lakh. An additional bonus of Rs 4 lakh has also been earmarked for each team.

The club finishing first in the championship will receive Rs 25 lakh as prize money, while the second-place club will receive Rs 15 lakh and the third-place club Rs 10 lakh.

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