

## Jalandhar sports enthusiasts vent ire at 'non-sporting' events activities

Fed up with the main stadium in this Punjab city being given for days together for fairs and workshops, sports enthusiasts Friday decided to take matters into their hands and ransacked the stalls of an education fair.

Scores of sports lovers entered the Guru Gobind Singh Stadium here and ransacked the stalls.

The sports lovers were angry with the Improvement Trust of Jalandhar for allotting the stadium for non-sporting activities continuously over the last few weeks.

'The Improvement Trust is out to ruin the sports culture of Jalandhar. The stadium has been virtually closed for sports lovers for over 15 days,' rued Amarjit Singh of the football and walkers' association.

The stadium last month witnessed an Art of Living workshop for eight days followed by a star night by singer Mika for two days. This was followed by the education fair.

After the agitators ransacked the stalls, the police were called in. A compromise was later reached in which the Improvement Trust officials assured the agitators that the stadium would not be given frequently for non-sporting events.

'We are losing out on practice and exercises. The stadium was not built for non-sporting activities. If they want to earn money, they should build an exhibition ground,' a footballer told IANS here.

Morning walkers and fitness lovers, who come to the stadium daily, said that the repeated events were disturbing them.

'Sometimes the stadium is sealed for days because of security concerns before an important event is held. Sports seem to be last on the priority of the local administrators. Organisers of these events leave the stadium and the ground in a bad shape,' said sports enthusiast Balkar Singh.

Jalandhar city is well known globally for high-quality sports goods manufacturing. Sporting equipment for major events in football, cricket, boxing, hockey and several other games is supplied from here.

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