

Despite ban, Greyhound races held

Raakhi Jagga Posted online: Sun Feb 03 2013, 01:55 hrs

Ludhiana : Despite a ban, greyhound races were conducted with much fanfare during the third day of the Kilaraipur Rural Sports festival on Saturday. The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) had banned these races and communicated this to the state government through a letter to the animal husbandry department in December 2012.

For a while after that, the ban had been enforced but there were no such rules at the rural games on Saturday as participants came with dogs worth lakhs to take part in the competition. In all, 32 greyhounds took part in the event that sees the canines chase fast moving artificial rabbits.

When contacted, the director of the animal husbandry department Dr H S Sandha said: "There is no rule in our act to stop the races. The letter from AWBI had asked us not to encourage these races and we had not not made them a part in the livestock competitions organised by us. But we cannot stop the races in any private competition. At the same time, however, we are not encouraging such races."

The AWBI authorities, however, disagreed. "The ban on such races still stands and the department should make efforts to stop them even in private competitions as well. Once such animals get old, their condition is pitiable," said Dr Sandeep Jain, member, AWBI.

Meanwhile, the organisers say that they had informed authorities well in advance. Jagbir Singh Grewal, president of Grewal Sports Association, which is organising the games, said: "We had intimated the animal husbandry department well in advance about our programme schedule and no one raised any objections. The games have been conducted and no cruelty to animals was done during its course. Not even a single animal welfare organisation raised any objection."