

In major thrust to indigenous games, Sports Ministry includes Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba in KIYG 2021

New Delhi, December 20: The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four Indigenous Games to be a part of Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled to take place in Haryana. The games include: Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba.

Speaking about the decision, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri. Kiren Rijiju said, "India has a rich heritage of indigenous sports, and it is a priority for the Sports Ministry to preserve, promote and popularise these games. There is no better platform than the Khelo India Games where athletes of these games can compete. The games have huge popularity and is telecast across the country by Star Sports, so I am confident that in the 2021 Khelo India Youth Games these four disciplines, along with Yogasana, will get their much deserved attention among sports enthusiasts and youth of the country. In the coming years we will be able to add more indigenous sports at the Khelo Games."

The four selected games represent different parts of the country. Kalaripayattu has its origin from Kerala and has practitioners all over the world; Bollywood actor Vidyut Jammwal being one. Mallakhamba, meanwhile, has been well-known across India and Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been the hotspots of this sport. Gatka originates from the State of Punjab and this traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh Warriors is used both as self-defense as well as a sport. Thang-Ta, a Manipur marital art has passed into oblivion in the recent decades, but the sport will get national recognition again with the help of the Khelo India Youth Games 2021.

"We are glad to know that the Sports Ministry has included Indian ancient martial art Gatka in the Khelo India Youth Games. We are sure that this effort of Khelo India will certainly help to promote and revive a forgotten Indian traditional martial art having a historical significance. In addition this step will give boost to the efforts of National Gatka Association of India in furtherance of creating awareness in the country as well as overseas," said Harjeet Singh Gerwal, President, National Gatka Association of India.

The Thang-Ta federation also confirmed that the competition will vastly popularize the sport. "Over 400 athletes from different States will participate in the competition. We want to be very successful in the competition and this will help us get more recognition nationally and internationally," said Vinod Sharma, Secretary, Thang-Ta Federation of India.

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