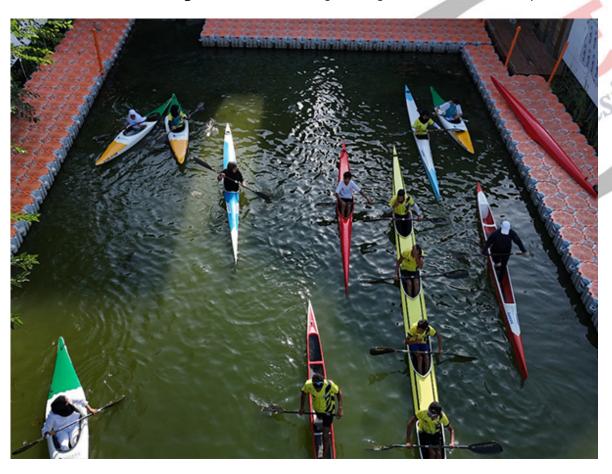


First Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025

Why in News?

The inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) 2025 will be held at Dal Lake from 21st August 2025 to 23rd August 2025, with over 400 participants competing in rowing, canoeing, and kayaking.

• This will be the **2nd Khelo India event** in Jammu & Kashmir, following the Khelo India Winter Games in **Gulmarg**, further establishing the region as India's winter sports hub.



Key Points

- About: KIWSF 2025 is being organised jointly by the <u>Sports Authority of India (SAI)</u> and the <u>Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council</u> under the government's <u>Khelo Bharat initiative</u>.
- **Objective:** It aims to **expand grassroots sports**, generate local employment, and upgrade infrastructure.
- Events: It will be the first consolidated Open-age category championships where all 14 kayaking and canoeing events and the 10 rowing events are Olympic events.

- There will also be three demonstration events water skiing, shikhara boat spring, and dragon boat race.
- Qualifications: The November 2024 kayaking and canoeing nationals in Tehri (Uttarakhand) served as a qualifier, with the top 15 in singles and doubles, and the top eight in fours, advancing to KIWSE
 - For rowing, the top eight from the nationals held in Bhopal in March 2025 will take part.
- Participants: The KIWSF will include athletes from 36 states and Union Territories, with the absence of a Services team.
 - The Games will feature **almost equal representation**, with 409 athletes competing for medals, including 202 women.
 - Madhya Pradesh (44), Haryana (37), Odisha (34), and Kerala (33) will have the largest contingent at KIWSF 2025.
 - **Gujarat**, Puducherry, and West Bengal will have the smallest teams.

Khelo India

- Launched by the Indian government in 2017, Khelo India aims to revitalize the nation's sporting culture by engaging children at the grassroots level and enhancing infrastructure and academies for various sports.
 - The initiative began with the Khelo India School Games in 2018 in New Delhi, and after the <u>Indian Olympic Association (IOA)</u> joined in 2018, the games were renamed to Khelo India Youth Games, with the **first edition held in Pune** in 2019.
- The Khelo India movement introduced the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), Khelo India University Games (KIUG), and Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) as annual national sports events where youth from various states and universities showcase their skills and compete for medals.
 - A new addition to the Khelo India calendar, the Khelo India Water Sports Festival and the Khelo India Beach Games, which took place in Diu in May 2025, highlight the expansion of events under this initiative.
- The Khelo India Youth Games, which started in 2018 with 18 sports, expanded to 27 sports in 2025 when held in Bihar, with competitions organized in the **Under-17** and **Under-21** categories for both boys and girls.
- The Khelo India Centres initiative, part of the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE) scheme, focuses on strengthening sports infrastructure at the grassroots level in India.

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