



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 [Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#) and the **Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council** under the government's [Khelo Bharat initiative](#).
- **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 KIWSF.
 - 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 **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** 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.