



# 38th National Games and Kalaripayattu

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## Why in News?

The **Indian Kalaripayattu Federation** has accused the [Indian Olympics Association \(IOA\)](#) of downgrading the [Kalaripayattu](#) to the **demonstration section** of the event, **not the competitive section**.

- Demonstration events **showcase** sports for **promotion** and are excluded from the official medal tally.

## What are Key Points about Kalaripayattu?

- **About:** It is one of the **oldest and most scientific** martial arts globally, originating in **Kerala**.
  - The warrior sage **Parasurama** is credited with establishing Kalaripayattu, which **Bodhidharma** (a Buddhist monk from South India) later introduced to China at the **Shaolin Temple in the 5th century AD**.
- **Philosophy:** The term "**Kalari**" in Malayalam refers to a **traditional gymnasium** where "**Payattu**" (**fight or exercise**) is taught.
  - It emphasizes **mind-body coordination** with techniques inspired by the attack and defense systems of eight animals i.e., **elephant, lion, boar, horse, snake, rooster, cat, and fish**.
- **Types:** Kalaripayattu has two types i.e.,
  - **Northern:** It focuses on **weapons and linear movements**, and
  - **Southern:** It emphasizes **multi-directional** movements with **fewer weapons**.
- **Stages of Training:**
  - **Maipayattu:** **Body conditioning** to prepare for combat.
  - **Kolthari:** Training with **wooden weapons** like short and long sticks.
  - **Angathari:** Introduction to **sharp metal weapons** after overcoming fear.
  - **Verumkai:** **Bare-hand fighting** focusing on anatomy for strategic strikes.
- **Current Context:** It was included as a competitive sport in the **37<sup>th</sup> National Games, Goa** but relegated to a **demonstration sport in the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, Uttarakhand**.
  - Kalaripayattu athletes won **22 medals**, including 19 gold, in the 2023 National Games.

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# MARTIAL ART

Martial arts are traditional combat systems practiced for various purposes such as physical, mental, spiritual growth and self defence.

## Huyen Langlon (Manipur)

- ↳ **Meaning:** Huyen (War) Langlon (Knowledge)
- ↳ **Components:** Thang-Ta (Armed Combat) and Sarit Sarak (Unarmed Fighting)
- ↳ **Weapons:** Thang (Sword) and Ta (Spear)



## Lathi Khela (West Bengal)

- ↳ **Lathial:** Practitioner of Lathi Khela
- ↳ **Weapon:** Lathi (One of the world's oldest weapons)



## Gatka (Punjab)

- ↳ Toned-down version of the deadlier **Shastar Vidya**.
  - ↳ Sharp swords (Shastar Vidya) replaced by Wooden Sticks and Shield (Gataka)
- ↳ **Role of Sikh Gurus:** 6<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru Hargobind adopted it through 'Kirpan' for Self-Defense.
  - ↳ 10<sup>th</sup> Guru Gobind Singh made it compulsory for everyone
- ↳ **Weapons:** Sword and Sticks
- ↳ **Establishment of Gatka Federation of India:** 2018



## Kalaripayattu (Kerala)

- ↳ **Feature:** This art form includes mock duels (armed and unarmed combat) and physical exercises.
  - ↳ Focuses on footwork
- ↳ **Kalari (Battlefield):** Place where this martial art is practiced
- ↳ **Weapon:** Strikes, Kicks



## Mallakhamb (Madhya Pradesh & Maharashtra)

- ↳ **Feature:** A gymnast performs aerial yoga with a vertical wooden pole
- ↳ **Meaning:** Malla (Wrestler) Khamb (Pole)
- ↳ **Origin:** Indian subcontinent



## Silambam (Tamil Nadu)

- ↳ Allows the use of a broad range of weapons
  - ↳ **Feature:** Incorporates tactics of animal motions (snake, tiger, and eagle)
  - ↳ **Created By:** Lord Muruga [Son of Lord Shiva (Kartekeya) and Sage Agasthya]
  - ↳ **Spread:** Tamil Nadu to Malaysia



## Kathi Samu (Andhra Pradesh)

- ↳ **Weapons:** Various kinds of Swords
- ↳ **Garidi:** Location where Kathi Samu is performed
- ↳ **Stick Fight (Vairi):** Plays a significant part as a precursor to the real sword fight.



## Paika Akhadha (Odisha)

- ↳ **Meaning:** Warrior School
- ↳ **Physical Activity:** Rhythmic gestures and weapons swung on the beat of the drum.



## Pari Khanda (Bihar)

- ↳ This martial art forms the basis of Chhau dance (UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity)
  - ↳ **Meaning:** Pari (Shield) Khanda (Sword)
  - ↳ **Created By:** Rajput
  - ↳ **Weapons:** Sword and Shield



## Thoda (Himachal Pradesh)

- ↳ Mixture of martial art, sport and culture
  - ↳ **Focus:** Skill of archery
  - ↳ **Performed on:** Baisakhi (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April)
  - ↳ **Weapons:** Bows and Arrows
  - ↳ **Included Teams:** Pashis (Pandavas) Saathis (Kauravas)



### NOTE

- ↳ Various **Indian martial arts** are now part of the routine training of regiments of the Army.
- ↳ The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** inducted 4 indigenous martial art forms- **Kalaripayattu, Mallakhamb, Gatka** and **Thang-ta** into the **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)**.

## What are Key Points About National Games 2025?

- **About:** The National Games of India is an **Olympic-style multi-sport event** where athletes from **states and Union Territories** compete for medals.
  - The **38<sup>th</sup> edition** of the National Games will take place from **28<sup>th</sup> January to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025** in Uttarakhand.
- **Competition Structure:** The National Games will feature **32 sporting disciplines** for competitive events.
  - In addition, **four demonstration sports** will be included i.e., **Kalaripayattu, Yogasana, Mallakhambh, and Rafting**.
- **Theme and Tagline:** The mascot of the games is **Mouli**, inspired by **Uttarakhand's state bird, the Monal**, reflecting the region's natural beauty and cultural diversity.

- The tagline for the games is "Sankalp Se Shikhar Tak" (from resolution to zenith).



## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2018)

Tradition	State
1. Chapchar Kut festival—	Mizoram
2. Khongjom Parba ballad —	Manipur
3. Thang-Ta dance —	Sikkim

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to India's culture and tradition, what is 'Kalaripayattu'? (2014)

- (a)** It is an ancient Bhakti cult of Shaivism still prevalent in some parts of South India
- (b)** It is an ancient style bronze and brasswork still found in southern part of Coromandel area
- (c)** It is an ancient form of dance-drama and a living tradition in the northern part of Malabar
- (d)** It is an ancient martial art and a living tradition in some parts of South India

**Ans: (d)**

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