



KALARIPAYATTU AT NATIONAL GAMES 2025 – ART & CULTURE

NEWS: Kerala's traditional martial art, Kalaripayattu, has sparked controversy ahead of the 38th edition of the National Games scheduled to begin on January 28, 2025, in Uttarakhand.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

1. Controversy in National Games:

- This year, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has relegated Kalaripayattu to the "demonstration" section instead of keeping it in the competition category.

2. Status in Previous Edition:

- In the 37th National Games held in Goa in 2023, Kalaripayattu was included as a competition event where athletes could win medals.
- Its exclusion from the competitive section has disappointed nearly 200 Kalaripayattu athletes from 18 states who were preparing to compete.

3. Federation's Reaction:

- The Indian Kalaripayattu Federation criticized the IOA for its decision, terming it unfair to the athletes.
- IOA President P. T. Usha announced that the final decision on Kalaripayattu's status would depend on a Delhi High Court order expected within a week.

Key Facts about Kalaripayattu

1. Origin and Cultural Significance:

- Kalaripayattu, considered one of the oldest and most scientific martial arts in the world, originated in Kerala.
- This martial art is a practice of mind-body coordination and is deeply rooted in Kerala's cultural heritage.
- According to mythology, the warrior sage Parasurama is credited with founding Kalaripayattu. The term "Kalari" refers to a traditional gymnasium where this martial art is taught, and "Payattu" means practice or training.

2. Animal-Inspired Movements:

- The movements in Kalaripayattu are inspired by the attacking and defensive systems of eight animals: elephant, lion, wild boar, horse, snake, fighter cock, cat, and fish.

3. Regional Styles:



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- **Northern Style:**
 - Emphasizes the use of weapons, including swords and shields.
 - Movements are linear, involving forward and backward motions.
- **Southern Style:**
 - Focuses on freehand combat with fewer weapons.
 - Movements are circular and allow practitioners to move in all directions.



KALARIPAYATTU

THE MOTHER OF ALL MARTIAL ARTS

Four Stages of Training:

- **Maipayattu:**
 - This initial stage involves body conditioning exercises to prepare the practitioner for combat.
 - Practitioners learn agility, flexibility, and stamina.
- **Kolthari:**



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- This stage introduces the use of wooden weapons such as short sticks and long sticks for attack and self-defense.
- **Angathari:**
 - Once the practitioner gains confidence with wooden weapons, sharp metal weapons like swords and daggers are introduced.
 - The goal is to overcome fear and develop precision in using deadly weapons.
- **Verumkai:**
 - The final stage involves bare-hand combat techniques.
 - Practitioners are taught the anatomy of the human body to target vital points effectively.

Ethnic Styles in Kerala:

- Kalaripayattu has three prominent ethnic styles practiced in northern Kerala (Malabar region):
 - **Vattenthirippu Style**
 - **Arappukkai Style**
 - **Pillathangi Style**

Global Influence:

- It is believed that Kalaripayattu influenced martial arts in China.
- Bodhidharma, a South Indian Buddhist monk from Thanjavur (historically part of Kerala), is said to have introduced Kalaripayattu to China in the 5th century AD at the Shaolin Temple.
- Bodhidharma also introduced Kalari-based treatments and herbal medicines to the region.

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 **38th edition** of the National Games will take place from **28th January to 14th 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.**



38th NATIONAL GAMES Uttarakhand 25 SILVER JUBILEE YEAR

SANKALP SE SHIKHAR TAK 28TH JAN TO 14TH FEB 2025

- **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).

Thang-Ta (Huiyen Lallong): The Manipuri Martial Art

1. Historical Role:

- Thang-Ta, also known as Huiyen Lallong, is an ancient martial art of Manipur.
- During the medieval period, it was an integral part of the 'Lallup' system, which mandated military training for all able-bodied men to ensure the kingdom's preparedness against threats.
- It played a vital role in maintaining Manipur's independence and resilience.

2. Colonial Suppression and Revival:

- During British colonial rule (1891–1947), Thang-Ta was banned but survived through secret home schools run by Gurus (masters).
- After Manipur's integration into India in 1949, the martial art gained public attention. It has been showcased in national and international festivals since 1976.



3. Core Techniques:

- **Thengou Palba:** Sword and shield training for offensive and defensive skills.
- **Sarit Sarak:** Unarmed combat techniques that include strikes, kicks, joint locks, and throws.
- **Kanglon Chatpa:** Acrobatics, leaping, and high kicks to add agility and visual appeal.
- **Thaomei:** Spear-fighting techniques to enhance precision and agility in long-distance attacks.
- **Meditation and Breathing Exercises:** These are practiced to cultivate mental focus, calmness, and inner strength.

4. Combat Style:

- Huiyen Lallong combines striking, grappling, and weapons-based techniques, making it a versatile system of self-defense.
- It is characterized by fluidity, agility, and adaptability, with an emphasis on practical application.

Conclusion

Both Kalaripayattu and Thang-Ta are deeply rooted in India's cultural and martial heritage. While Kalaripayattu showcases Kerala's rich history and scientific approach to combat, Thang-Ta reflects Manipur's resilience and military preparedness. Their contemporary relevance as performance arts and competitive sports highlights the need to preserve and promote these traditions.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-essentials/knowledge-nugget-of-the-day-kalaripayattu-thang-ta-gatka-upsc-indian-martial-arts-9787618/>