

**The Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh
Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh
Department of Information & Public Relations, Leh**

Khelo India Winter Games have a role to take sporting excellence to new level, says PM Modi

Sports Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya declared Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 open saying that India has truly become a "4D sports nation"

Leh, Jan. 23: On an icy morning, the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 got off to a rousing start at the iconic NDS Stadium here on Thursday. The first part of the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 is being hosted by the Union Territory of Ladakh till January 27. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will host the snow games from February 22-25.

The 5000-capacity NDS stadium showed the spirit and romanticism of adventure sports on a freezing day as Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Ladakh and J&K for organising the first major sports meet of the national calendar and demonstrating to the world why they are hotspots for winter sports.

The flight from Delhi, which was carrying Hon'ble Union Sports Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, who was to grace the KIWG 2025 opening in person, could not land at Leh's Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Airport due to bad weather. However, in a heart-warming message, Dr Mandaviya declared the Games open.

Several dignitaries, including the Lt Governor of UT-Ladakh, Brigadier Dr BD Mishra, was present in opening ceremony that was highlighted by teams marching past the VIP podium on their skates. A cultural display and an exhibition ice-hockey match made for a crisp opening ceremony.

In his message to KIWG 2025, PM Modi reiterated the government's commitment to spread sports activities across India and said how Ladakh and J&K have not only "elevated the culture of sports in our country, but also boosted tourism, showcasing the nation's beauty and diversity."

"Our government attaches top priority to sports development in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. Through 100 Khelo India Centres in Jammu & Kashmir and three in Ladakh, including a State Centre of Excellence in Leh for athletics, archery, and boxing, our efforts are shaping the region into a hub of sporting excellence," said PM Modi, adding that "KIWG 2025 will play a crucial role in taking our sporting excellence to the next level."

Dr Mandaviya expressed his disappointment at missing the opening ceremony but cheered all the stakeholders saying, that India was truly a "4D sports destination."

"If I talk of one and a great united India, then I also look at the diversity hidden in it and the benefits that come from it. Currently we are in Leh, we can hold the Winter Games here due to the prevalent weather conditions. If we go towards the Northeast, it's a great region for the development of adventure sports.

"Going forward, we will explore the immense possibilities of beach games in South India, we will see all our other popular games being organised on the west coast. This tells us that we are a 4D Nation in terms of sports," said Dr Mandaviya.

After a successful 2024 where India excelled in chess, cricket, Olympics and the Paralympics in Paris, Dr Mandaviya says the future looks good. "While laying the foundation of the Khelo India Winter Games, we had a dream about this amazing sporting event. That dream was to present a tough challenge to the world on behalf of India in every sphere of sport and to sing 'Jana Gana Mana' while standing atop the Winter Olympics podium.

"Khelo India Winter Games is that school where we are preparing the stars of Winter Olympics in the coming years. These stars are being forged by toiling hard, so we may expect the fruits of this labour in due course," the sports minister added.

The KIWG 2025 sporting events started on Thursday with ice hockey matches at the NDS complex and the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre. Nineteen teams, comprising of states, Union Territories and institutional outfits like Army and ITBP, are competing. A total of 594 participants, of which 428 are athletes, are involved in the Ladakh leg of KIWG 2025. This is the second time Ladakh is hosting the Winter Games, into its fifth edition.

ABOUT KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES

Under the Khelo India Scheme, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) organizes National-level competitions, i.e., Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India Winter Games to provide a platform for talented athletes to showcase their sporting and competitive skills. Starting in 2020, so far four editions of the Khelo India Winter Games have been successfully conducted with the participation of 36 States/UTs. The fifth edition of Khelo India Winter Games 2025 will be held in the UT of Ladakh and J&K from Jan. 23-27 and Feb. 22-25, respectively, across two ice and four snow disciplines. Apart from tapping talent, Khelo India Winter Games also showcase a region's art, culture, heritage, and promotes tourism through sports.



