

Khelo India Water Sports Festival

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival was held at Srinagar's Dal Lake from August 21 to 23, 2025. Organized jointly by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council, the event was described as a historic milestone for sports tourism in the region.

Key details

- **Dates and Location:** The three-day festival began on August 21, 2025, and took place on the iconic Dal Lake in Srinagar.
- **Significance:** It was the first-ever national-level, open-age water sports competition under the Khelo India scheme.
- **Objectives:** The festival was held to promote grassroots sports, create livelihood opportunities for locals, and rejuvenate regional infrastructure.
- **Competitors:** The event saw participation from athletes across 36 states and Union Territories, with more than 400 participants competing in various events.
- **Events:** The competition included all 14 Olympic disciplines in kayaking and canoeing, as well as 10 rowing events.
- **Mascot and Logo:** The festival's mascot was the Himalayan Kingfisher, while the logo featured a traditional Shikara on Dal Lake with snow-capped mountains.
- **Outcome:** Early news reports indicated a strong showing by Jammu & Kashmir athletes, with the host union territory winning a gold medal in canoeing.

Additional context

- The "Khelo India" initiative is a government program launched to encourage sports and fitness across the country.
- It has been held in other forms, such as the Khelo India School Games, Khelo India Youth Games, and Khelo India University Games.
- While the query refers to a recent event, a similar festival also took place the year before, with reports from September 2024 mentioning athletes competing and J&K winning a gold in canoeing.

Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Terms

01

Khelo India Scheme

The Khelo India scheme is a flagship government initiative launched in 2017 to promote sports at the grassroots level by identifying and training young talent.

Scheme details

- **Launch and continuation:** The scheme was introduced in 2018. The government has approved its continuation through the 15th Finance Commission cycle (2021–22 to 2025–26).
- **Central Sector Scheme:** It is a Central Sector Scheme, meaning it is 100% funded by the Union Government.
- **Merger of previous schemes:** Khelo India was launched after merging three older schemes:
 - Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA)
 - Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS)
 - National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS)

Core objectives

- **Grassroots development:** The primary goal is to revive the sports culture at the grassroots level by building a strong framework for all sports across the country.
- **Talent identification:** It identifies and nurtures young talent from the local and national levels.
- **Scholarships for athletes:** The scheme provides annual financial assistance of ₹5 lakh for eight consecutive years to talented players identified in priority sports.
- **Holistic development:** It aims to foster an ecosystem that promotes sports for mass participation ("Sports for All") and competitive excellence ("Sports for Excellence").
- **Promoting universities:** The scheme promotes 20 universities across the country as hubs for sporting excellence, allowing athletes to balance education with competitive sports.

Major components and events

The scheme has been streamlined into five main components:

- **Creation and upgradation of sports infrastructure:** Developing and improving sports facilities nationwide, from district to state levels.
- **Sports competitions and talent development:** Organizing various annual competitions to provide exposure to athletes.
- **Khelo India centres and sports academies:** Setting up Khelo India centres and State Centres of Excellence (KISCE) to provide training and support.
- **Fit India Movement:** Integrated to promote physical fitness among the masses, especially school children.
- **Promotion of inclusiveness through sports:** Encouraging participation among women, persons with disabilities, and indigenous/tribal communities.

Key annual sports events include:

- **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG):** An annual competition for students in Under-17 (school) and Under-21 (college) categories.
- **Khelo India University Games (KIUG):** An annual event for university athletes.
- **Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG):** Conducted in snow and ice sports disciplines.
- **Khelo India Para Games (KIPG):** Provides a platform for disabled athletes to showcase their talent.
- **Khelo India Water Sports Festival:** A recent addition, first held in August 2025 at Dal Lake, Jammu & Kashmir.

Related sub-schemes

- **ASMITA Scheme:** Launched in 2021 as a dedicated initiative within Khelo India to empower women and girls in sports.
- **KIRTI Program:** The Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) program is an athlete-centric initiative that uses modern data analytics and technology to identify talent at the grassroots level.

Practice Questions:

1. Consider the following competitive water sports:

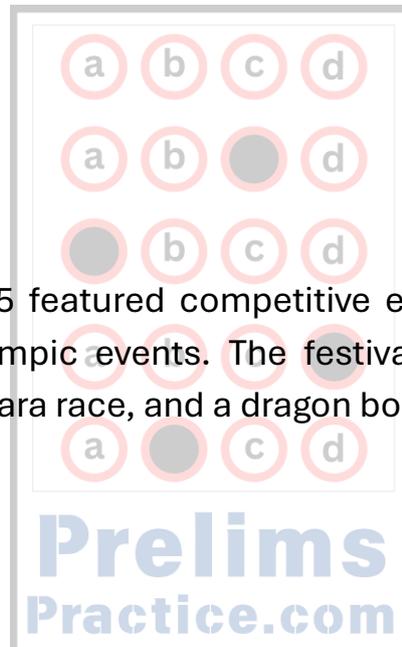
- I. Rowing
- II. Canoeing
- III. Kayaking
- IV. Sailing

How many of the above competitive water sports were included in the first Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

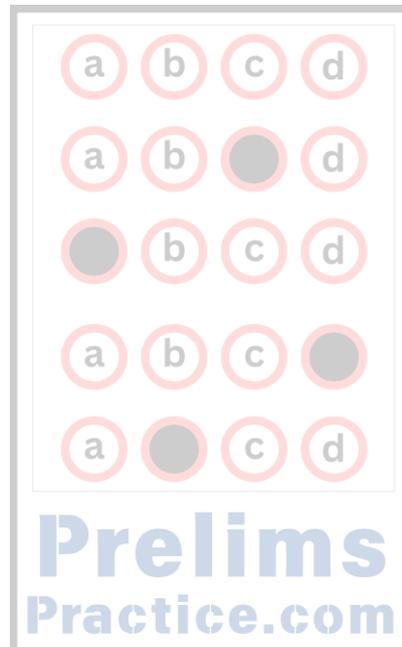
Answer: c

Explanation: The KIWSF 2025 featured competitive events in rowing, canoeing, and kayaking. All these were Olympic events. The festival also included demonstration events like water skiing, a shikara race, and a dragon boat race, but not sailing.



For More Practice Questions, visit:

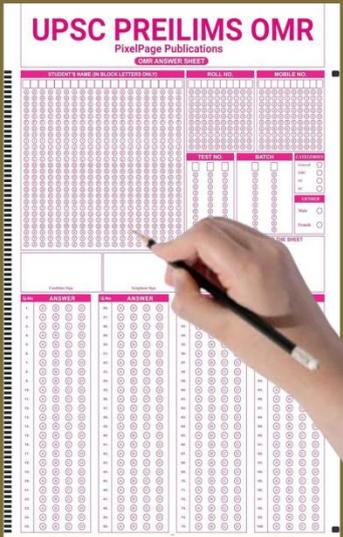
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