

PRESS RELEASE

Jisna Mathew & Ancy Sojan headline Kerala athletics challenge in Khelo India Youth Games

Pune, January 5: Two-time Asian junior 400m champion Jisna Mathew, a trainee of the legendary PT Usha, will headline Kerala's athletics challenge in the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) to be held in Pune from January 9 to 20.

Ancy Sojan, who won a double gold in the 200m and long jump in the inaugural Khelo India School Games (KISG2018) in New Delhi last year and 100m hurdler Aparna Roy, declared the best track and field athlete in KISG2018, will add muscle to Kerala, a powerhouse in Indian athletics.

Kerala was third in athletics and eighth overall in the medals tally at KISG2018 and will hope for a better showing from the 69-member squad to produce one of the most dominant showings in KIYG2019 in Pune's Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex.

The first contingent from Kerala for the event will leave for Pune on January 6 and the athletics team will arrive the following day. Athletics forms the biggest chunk of Kerala's 308-strong squad that will arrive into Pune in batches.

Many of Kerala's young stars have already been supported by Sports Authority of India, and the state government has also been also forthcoming in supporting the athletes.

Kerala is competing in 11 of the 18 disciplines at the KIYG to be held from January 9 to 20. The state has been having rigorous camps for the past few months. While the basketball camp was held in Mundyad in Kannaur, the footballers went through their paces at the Chandrasekharan Nair Stadium and the kabaddi team trained at the Central Stadium. The kho-kho squad trained at the Sree Padam Stadium in Attingal, while coaching camp for men's volleyball team was held at the Indoor Stadium in Thriprayar and the women trained at the Indoor Stadium in Kottayam.

The 13-swimmers in the camp, comprising nine males and four women, was held at the Aquatic Complex and the wrestlers trained at the Operation Olympia Centre.

In judo, nine male and six female hopefuls, and the weightlifters trained at the Indoor Stadium at Thrissur and the five gymnasts trained at the Jimmy George Indoor Stadium here.

One of the highlights of the Kerala's preparations has been the presence of a strong support staff in the form of 25 coaches, 20 managers, four physiotherapists, five psychologists and a medical officer during the various camps.

Other sports where Kerala will compete include are basketball, football, kabaddi, kho-kho, volleyball, swimming, wrestling, judo, weightlifting and gymnastics.