

## Press Release

### **Local girl Poorva Barve will be a strong contender as lot of young latent will be on display in badminton**

**Pune, Jan 9:** Local girl Poorva Barve along with National champion Aakarshi Kashyap will be the front-runners among a host junior shuttlers gunning for gold in the Under-21 women's section at the Khelo India Youth Games 2019 at the Shiv Chhatrapathi Sports Complex, Mhalunge Balewadi.

Among the regular proven challengers to the throne will be Malavika Bansode (Maharashtra) and Gayatri Gopichand (Andhra Pradesh), daughter of Indian icon Pullela Gopichand.

Poorva, amongst all, is older and experienced and is in her transition year having completed her run as an Under-19. Poorva rounded off the year-end BWF World rankings ranked No.9. The other three – Malvika and Gayatri are a little younger, but on-court all the four-share healthy competition.

In the U21 men's section, India Under-19 No. 1 Priyanshu Rajawat (Madhya Pradesh) leads the pack and has his task cut out with the presence of three of the Top-5 ranked players in India which include No. 3 Abhyansh Singh (Uttar Pradesh), No. 4 Satish Kumar K (Tamil Nadu) and No. 5 Akash Jadhav (Delhi).

Absent from the field is National Champion is Kiran George.

Among the others to push are Dhruv Rawat (Utr) and Bidyasagar Salam (Manipur), the latter showing tremendous talent of later.

In the Under-17 section, all eyes will be on Atharva Aras in the boy's section. Aras will be playing on his home courts and will lead Maharashtra's challenge. Likewise, in the girl's section, Gujarat's Tasnim Mir is a favourite. The state challenge is led by Ananya Phalke, Prerana Alvekar and Livia Fernandez.

The 16-round draw begins on Wednesday.