



## Press Release

### **Anurag Singh Thakur launches Khelo India Para Games 2023 Mascot Ujjwala and logo**

**New Delhi, 26th November 2023:** First-ever Khelo India Para Games 2023 logo and mascot Ujjwala was launched in New Delhi today by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Hon'ble Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and several eminent athletes and para athletes.

'Ujjwala'- a sparrow, was unveiled as the official mascot of Khelo India – Para Games 2023. The little sparrow is a symbol of the pride of Delhi and its uniqueness portrays determination and empathy. Ujjwala, as the mascot of Khelo India – Para Games 2023, is a reminder that strength comes in many forms and the human spirit is unbreakable.

Among the attendees, former Indian Women's Hockey Team Captain Rani Rampal, Indian freestyle wrestler and Olympian bronze medallist, Yogeshwar Dutt, Indian professional wrestler Sarita Mor along with Indian professional boxer Akhil Kumar were present.

The presence of star para athletes like Pramod Bhagat, Bhavina Patel, Avani Lekhara, Sumit Antil added to the special occasion.

Reflecting on the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of an inclusive sports eco system, Shri Anurag Thakur said, "On the occasion of the launch of the inaugural edition of the first-ever Khelo India Para Games, I would like to congratulate everyone. It is because of our Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision, that Khelo India has become a household name. It has become a movement from a scheme and Khelo India was missing the Para Games for the last few years. From 2018 till date, we have had 11 Khelo India Games, we are delighted to add Para Games this year."

“Also, for the last four years, the budget for Khelo India was Rs 3,000 crores sanctioned by the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and today, I am elated to announce that for the next five years, it has been increased to more than Rs 3300 crores,” he added.

Since 2018, a total of 11 Khelo India Games have been successfully held. This includes 5 Khelo India Youth Games, 3 Khelo India University Games and 3 Khelo India Winter Games. Thakur expressed that these Games have been instrumental in identifying talent across the country and has aided in India’s performance at the prestigious multi-discipline events. Now, with the first-ever Khelo India Para Games, talented para athletes keen on pursuing a career in para sports can be identified and further assisted in bringing desirable results for the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Indian freestyle wrestler and Olympian bronze medallist, Yogeshwar Dutt said, “It is great to see the Government of India coming up with such a wonderful initiative. I am looking forward to see all these athletes in action. I would like to wish all the players participating in Khelo India Para Games best of luck.”

Sharing his excitement post the unveiled event of Khelo India Para Games, Para Athlete Pramod Bhagat, who won a gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics in Para-badminton, said, “I believe that the Para Games currently have a very promising future, particularly for young people and para athletes. Also, for the coaches who would be able to use their training to boost efforts on enhancing athletic talents and preparing them for India to witness increased participation in national and international tournaments beginning with the Khelo Para Games. It is one of the most significant initiatives launched by Khelo India.”

Over 1400 participants from across 32 states and union territories including Services Sports Control Board are expected to participate in the maiden Khelo India Para Games which will witness para athletes vie for honours in 7 disciplines including para athletics, para shooting, para archery, para football, para badminton, para table tennis and para weight lifting. The events will be held across 3 SAI stadiums – the IG Stadium, Shooting Range in Tughlaqabad and the JLN Stadium.