



22 January 2025

IOA/VI/55/2156

To,
Ms Harshita Yadav
(through Advs, Mr Jeesh Kalathil Gopi and others)

**DELHI HIGH COURT JUDGMENT IN WP (C) 514/2025 REGARDING INCLUSION OF
KALARIPAYATTU AS A COMPETITIVE SPORT IN THE 38TH NATIONAL GAMES**

Dear Ms Yadav,

1. This letter is issued in compliance with the judgment dated 15 Jan 25 of the Hon'ble Delhi High Court in WP (C) 514/2025, directing the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to provide a reasoned decision on your representation seeking the inclusion of Kalaripayattu as a competitive sport in the 38th National Games. The matter has been deliberated upon with due consideration of the cultural, historical, and practical aspects involved.

2. **Observations:**

(a) **Cultural and Historical Significance:** Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art with origins in Kerala, is a significant part of India's rich cultural and historical heritage. It is recognized not only as an art form but also as a symbol of the nation's enduring traditions. The IOA acknowledges the role Kalaripayattu has played in shaping the cultural identity of India and its recognition as a national heritage.

(b) **Limited Spread and Participation:** While the cultural and historical value of Kalaripayattu is undisputed, its current status as a competitive sport reveals certain limitations. The practice and organized competitions of Kalaripayattu are predominantly concentrated in specific regions of the country, primarily in Kerala and its neighbouring states. Unlike other sports disciplines that enjoy widespread participation and established governing structures across the nation, Kalaripayattu lacks the geographical spread and depth of participation necessary for inclusion as a competitive sport in the National Games.

(c) **Guidelines for Inclusion in the National Games:** The IOA, in its policy framework for the National Games, emphasizes the inclusion of sports with a broad national footprint, robust governing bodies, and active participation across multiple states. This ensures fairness and inclusivity in competition while promoting sports that align with the overarching goals of the National Games. Kalaripayattu, in its current form, does not meet these criteria.

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(d) **Promotion of Heritage Sports:** The IOA recognizes the importance of promoting traditional and indigenous sports as part of India's cultural legacy. Efforts are therefore made to provide platforms for such sports through exhibitions, cultural showcases, and non-competitive events within the framework of the National Games and other sports festivals.

3. **Decision:** After careful consideration of the Hon'ble Delhi High Court's judgment, the representation of stakeholders, and the principles governing the National Games, it is concluded that:

(a) Kalaripayattu will not be included as a competitive sport in the 38th National Games due to its limited national spread and participation, which do not meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion.

(b) To honour the cultural and historical significance of Kalaripayattu, the IOA has included Kalaripayattu as a demonstration event during the 38th National Games to showcase the art and heritage of Kalaripayattu to a wider audience.

(c) The IOA remains committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all sports and will continue exploring avenues to elevate the status of traditional and indigenous sports through non-competitive and cultural initiatives.

4. **Conclusion:** The IOA deeply respects the aspirations of the Kalaripayattu community. While inclusion as a competitive sport in the National Games is not feasible, the IOA assures all stakeholders of its commitment to preserving and promoting India's sporting heritage.



(Dr. PT Usha)
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
President, Indian Olympic Association

Copy to: Chairperson, GTCC
CEO, 38th NG