



India's Strengthened Sports Ecosystem

Budget 2026-27 Series

February 18, 2026

Key Takeaways

- *Union Budget 2026–27 announced the Khelo India Mission, marking a major shift to a long-term, outcome-driven framework to transform India's sports ecosystem.*
- *With an allocation of ₹4,479.88 crore, the Budget announced the highest-ever funding for the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, reflecting sustained priority to youth and sports development.*
- *A ₹500 crore sports goods manufacturing initiative strengthens domestic capacity, promotes innovation and positions sports as a driver of jobs, skilling and economic growth.*

Introduction

*Sports has emerged as a critical pillar of youth development, employment generation and national aspiration in India's journey towards a *Viksit Bharat*. Recognising the transformative potential of sports in shaping disciplined, healthy and skilled citizens, the Government of India has consistently strengthened policy and institutional support for the sector.*

The Union Budget 2026–27 reinforces this commitment by placing sports firmly within the framework of long-term national capacity building.

The Union Budget is guided by three fundamental kartavyas (duties):

- *To accelerate and sustain economic growth, by enhancing productivity and competitiveness, and building resilience to volatile global dynamics.*
- *To fulfil the aspirations of our people and build their capacity as strong partners in India's path to prosperity*
- *To ensure that every family, community, region and sector has access to resources, amenities and opportunities for meaningful participation.*

In her Union Budget Speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated:

"The Sports Sector provides multiple means of employment, skilling and job opportunities. Taking forward the systematic nurturing of sports talent which is set in motion through the Khelo India programme, I propose to launch a Khelo India Mission to transform the Sports sector over the next decade."

*This step aligns with the second kartavya outlined in the budget. Inspired by innovative ideas from the *Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026*, this unique Yuva Shakti-driven Budget channels youth energy and vision into building a world-class sporting ecosystem.*

Union Budget 2026–27: Focus on Khelo India Mission

In the Union Budget 2026–27, the Government announced the launch of a Khelo India Mission to transform the sports sector over the next decade. Taking forward the systematic nurturing of sports talent already initiated under the Khelo India Scheme, the mission marks a shift towards a long-term, mission-mode approach for sports development in the country.

Five Pillars of the Khelo India Mission

As outlined in the Budget Speech, the Khelo India Mission will focus on the following key areas:



Khelo India Mission

Mission to facilitate:

- **Integrated talent development pathway**, supported by training centres
- **Systematic development of coaches and support staff**
- **Integration of sports science and technology**
- **Competitions and leagues** to promote sports culture
- **Development of sports infrastructure** for training and competition

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Together, these focus areas aim to create a seamless pipeline from grassroots participation to elite performance, while ensuring sustainability and scale across disciplines.

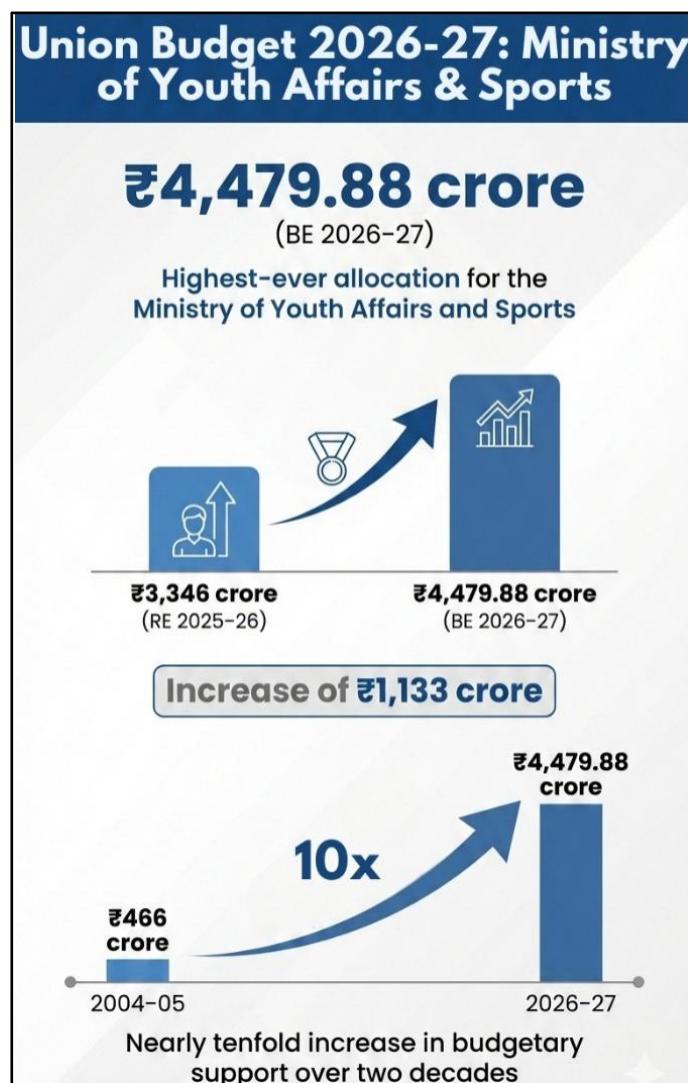
Unprecedented Financial Outlay: Fueling the Sporting Dream

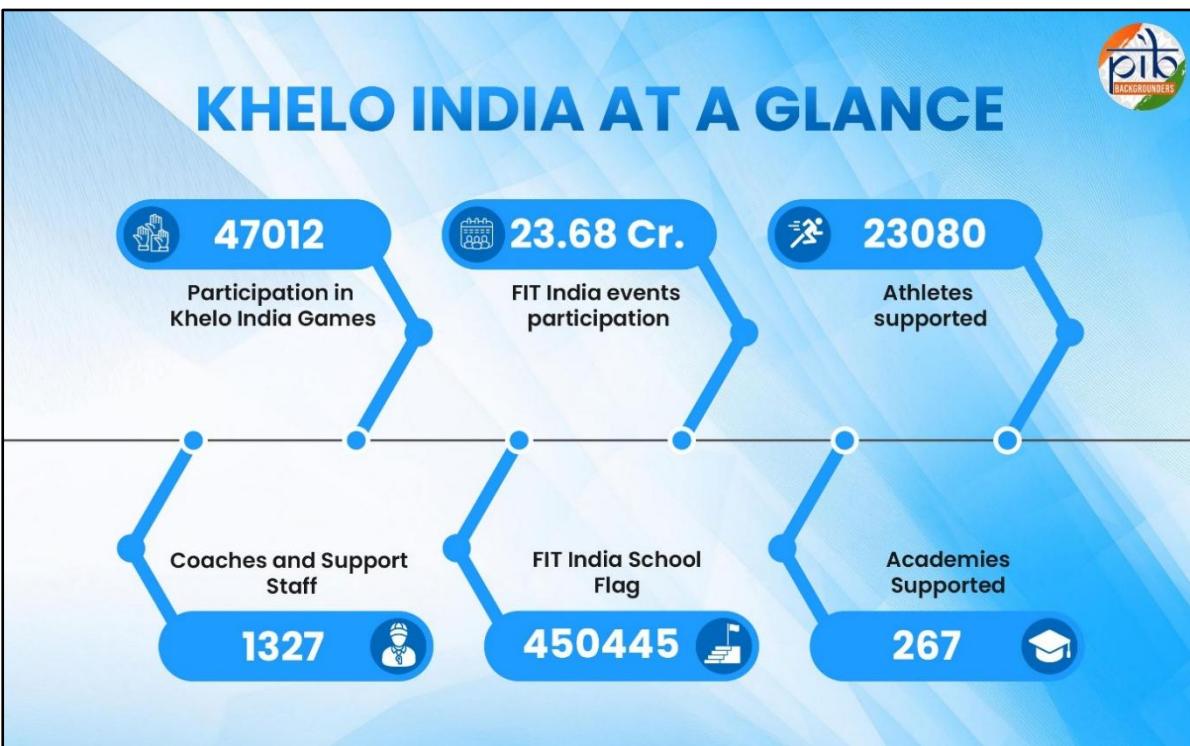
The Khelo India Scheme, launched in 2016-17, has seen significant financial growth over the years, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting mass

participation and excellence in sports across India. The scheme aims to foster sports culture and achieve sporting excellence nationwide.

It encourages sports participation throughout the country, leveraging sports' holistic influence for the development of children and youth, community development, social integration, gender equality, a healthy lifestyle, national pride, and economic opportunities related to sports development.

- **2017-18 to 2019-20:** Financial outlay of **Rs. 1756 crore** approved for three years to revamp the scheme.
- **2020-21:** Budget of **Rs. 328.77 crore** allocated for one year.
- **2021-22 to 2025-26:** Financial outlay increased to **Rs. 3790.50 crore** for five more years, marking a significant boost in funding to support a broader range of activities and enhance sports infrastructure.
- **2026-27:** The Budget for 2026-27 provides an allocation of **₹924.35 crore** for **Khelo India**, underscoring continued financial commitment as the scheme enters a new phase of long-term, outcome-oriented implementation.





Sports Goods Manufacturing: Building Domestic Capability

Alongside the Khelo India Mission, the Union Budget 2026-27 has announced a dedicated initiative for sports goods manufacturing, with an allocation of ₹500 crore. This initiative recognises India's potential to emerge as a global hub for high-quality, affordable sports goods.

Strategic Objectives:

- Promote domestic manufacturing capacity
- Advance research and innovation in equipment design
- Drive innovation in material sciences for sports equipment
- Strengthen India's presence in global sports supply chains
- Generate employment opportunities in manufacturing and allied sectors

A Yuva Shakti-Driven Approach

A distinctive feature of Union Budget 2026-27 is its youth-centric genesis. Emphasising the youth-centric nature of the Budget, the Finance Minister underscored that the proposals reflect ideas and aspirations emerging from youth engagement initiatives.

This ensures that sports policies reflect the aspirations, innovative thinking and lived experiences of young Indians—those who will both benefit from and build the sporting ecosystem. By involving youth in policy conceptualisation, the Budget ensures relevance, dynamism and alignment with generational aspirations.

MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026: Engaging Youth in Budget Understanding

Reinforcing the youth-centric approach, Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026, a nationwide

initiative aimed at enhancing youth understanding of the Union Budget and making budgetary provisions more accessible, relatable and citizen-centric.

The initiative seeks to connect the Union Budget 2026 with the everyday lives of citizens by engaging youth from colleges, institutions and coaching centres across the country through a structured and participatory framework.

The Budget Quest is a national-level competition conducted in two rounds on the [**MY Bharat platform**](#), open to youth registered on the portal:

Round 1 (3-17 February 2026): An online quiz on the Union Budget 2026, testing participants' understanding of budgetary provisions and their implications. Top performers from each State and Union Territory will qualify for the next round.

Round 2 (17 February - 3 March 2026): An essay-writing round where qualified participants will respond to 8 topics related to the Union Budget aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat, sharing their views and ideas on how budgetary provisions impact national development.

Essays will be evaluated between 3-10 March 2026, with State/UT-wise merit lists announced on 10 March 2026. Winners will receive an opportunity to interact with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the vision of a Viksit Bharat Budget.

From Aspiration to Achievement

The Union Budget 2026–27 is more than just a financial statement; it is a Yuva Shakti-driven roadmap for a sporting revolution. By placing sports at the heart of youth empowerment and announcing the Khelo India Mission, the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to building a future-ready, inclusive and high-performing sports ecosystem.

The vision is clear and time-bound: India among the Top 10 sporting nations by 2036 and Top 5 by 2047.

With sustained financial support, mission-mode implementation and a holistic ecosystem approach, the sports sector is poised to contribute meaningfully to employment generation, national pride and India's emergence as a competitive sporting nation, aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

References

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