Goa international Silambam meet: Gudiyatham students win 24 gold medals

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News

24 students from **Gudiyatham** (Vellore district) won **24 gold medals** at an international **Silambam** championship in **Goa** (reported **3 to 5 October 2026**). They won **21 golds in single-stick (otrai silambam)** and **3 in double-stick (irattai silambam)**. Teams from **Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Nepal** also took part. The students train at the Thalai Silambam training school, Gudiyatham, and were given a public welcome on their return.

Key facts

Sport	**Silambam**: an ancient Tamil martial art fought with a long **bamboo staff**
Medals	24 gold: 21 single-stick + 3 double-stick
Other countries	Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Nepal
Next goal	Asian-level competition

Background

- The word comes from **'silam'** (hill) and **'bam'** (bamboo): the staff was made from hill bamboo. The ideal staff reaches the user's **forehead**.

- **Sangam literature** mentions it: the **Silappathikaram** refers to silambam staves being sold to foreign traders.
- Silambam was a **demonstration sport for the first time at the Khelo India Youth Games 2023**, held in **Tamil Nadu** (Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore) in January 2024.
- It is popular in **Malaysia**, where Tamil migrants took it.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu gives Silambam players a place in the **3% sports quota** for government jobs. **Gudiyatham** is a taluk town on the **Koundinya river**, known for its **match and beedi** industries. Vellore district is also home to the **Vellore Fort** and the **Vellore Mutiny (10 July 1806)**, the first large-scale sepoy mutiny against the British.

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