

Sports Authority of India

PRESS RELEASE

Future medal prospects in three sports included under TOPS

New Delhi, 9th May 2018: The Mission Olympic Cell met earlier today to review the performances of athletes included under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and also to discuss the inclusion of potential medal-winning talent under the scheme. Six new athletes from Track and Field, Shooting and Weightlifting were included under TOPS, while two weightlifters who were originally there only till the 2018 Commonwealth Games were also included.

35-year-old Seema Punia from Discus Throw has been one of India's most distinguished Track and Field stars. A three-time Olympian, she has won laurels for the country at both the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games as well. Her standout performance was her gold medal effort from the 2014 Incheon Asian Games. She has also won three silvers and a bronze in the Commonwealth Games from 2006 to 2018.

18-year-old Hima Das is one of India's most promising young runners. She excelled at the Commonwealth Games where she ran a time of 51.32 seconds in the Women's 400 metres final. She also represented India in the 4x400 relay at the Commonwealth Games.

23-year-old Navjeet Kaur Dhillon from Amritsar is highly regarded in the Indian domestic circuit for her feats in Discus Throw. At the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, she made the successful transition at senior international level as well, winning the Bronze medal in the same event.

22-year-old shooter Akhil Sheoran won his first-ever medal at senior level, a gold in the Men's 50 metres Rifle 3 Position event at the Shooting World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico held in March this year.

18-year-old Elavenil Valarivan's best has so far come at the junior level, she won the gold medal at the 10m Air Rifle event at the 2018 ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia, setting a world record in the process. She is a highly-rated young prospect and we hope with support from TOPS, she will perform with distinction at the senior level as well.

Weightlifting prospect Rakhi Halder has also been included under the TOPS scheme. She recently created a national record in the women's 63 kg category at the Women's Senior National Championships in Mangalore, lifting 128 kgs in the clean and jerk breaking a record held for 19 years by 2000 Olympic bronze medalist Karnam Malleswari.

The government has also included weightlifters Pardeep Singh and Sanjita Chanu who were originally only there till the 2018 CWG. Singh won silver in the men's 105 kg category and Chanu won back-to-back gold medals in 2014 and 2018.

There has also been a decision made to drop 12 athletes covered by TOPS, from Track and Field, Shooting and Weightlifting on the grounds of poor recent performances and fitness concerns.

TOPS is a scheme under National Sports Development Fund of Department of Sports under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

