

Sports Authority of India

PRESS RELEASE

Major decisions taken at TOPS review meeting

New Delhi, 16th May 2018: The Mission Olympic Cell met earlier today to review the performances of athletes included under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and consider the requests of athletes under the scheme to have funds released for their training and competition purposes. 4 new athletes were included, 21 were extended post the Commonwealth Games while 27 were axed or discontinued with (post the CWG).

15 year-old Double Trap shooter Shardul Vihan, part of India's Asian Games team has been included under the TOPS scheme. He is ranked number two in India as well as winning the senior nationals championships.

21 year-old 400 metres hurdles runner A Dharun has been included under TOPS. He has been developing as a very good athlete in recent times.

Also a new inclusion under TOPS is 19 year-old long jumper Sree Shankar who jumped 7.99 metres at the recent Federation Cup national championships. This jump would have got him a silver medal at the 2014 Asian Games.

22 year-old Sonia Baishya who ran the women's 4x400 relay for India at the recent Commonwealth Games, has been included under the scheme.

28 year-old Para Powerlifter Sakina Khatun, a bronze medal winner from the 2014 Commonwealth Games, has been extended having originally been a part of the TOPS scheme till the CWG. She has been performing well and is considered as a medal prospect for upcoming international events.

A policy decision was taken that the top six 400 metres runners would receive an extension under the TOPS scheme, given that Men's 4x400 relay team are a strong prospect for the Asian Games.

Four women's 400 metres runners in addition to Sonia Baishya and Hima Das (included in TOPS last week) have also received an extension under the TOPS scheme post the CWG, on the basis of their timing and performance.

Three men and three women players from India's victorious Table Tennis team --- Achanta Sharath Kamal, Harmeet Desai, G Sathiyam, Manika Batra, Mouma Das and Madhurika Patkar, have received extension under TOPS, post their brilliant performances at the CWG.

Four gymnasts Ashish Kumar, Rakesh Patra, Aruna Reddy and Praniti Nayak have also received extension under TOPS post the CWG upto the Asian Games.

The Committee also approved the release of funds to cover the training and competition expenses of athletes covered under TOPS in eight sports. Among the major decisions that were taken at the meeting include;

- a) Sanctioning a total of Rs. 33.4 Lakhs to purchase high-end cycling equipment and consumables for five Indian cyclists covered by TOPS.
- b) A total of Rs. 4.24 Lakhs alongside air fare and visa to swimmer Sajjan Prakash for his training and competition expenses till the upcoming Asian Games.
- c) A total of approximately Rs. 14.7 Lakhs alongside air fare and visa to squash players Dipika Palikal and Saurav Ghosal for their training till the Asian Games.
- d) A total of approximately Rs. 8.3 Lakhs to tennis player Ankita Raina for her training and competition expenses till the end of July.

There was also a decision made to exclude some TOPS athletes. Amongst them were Mohan Kumar and Sachin Roby (Men's 4X400 metres relay runners), Anu Raghavan and Debashree Mazumdar (Women's 4X400 metres relay runners). Also excluded was shooter Sangram Dahiya who is not part of India's Asian Games team, along with him another shooter Shapath Bharadwaj was also dropped.

Women's 400 metres runner Nirmala Sheoran has also been dropped as she has not reported to any training camp for nearly two years. Table Tennis player Soumyajit Ghosh has been excluded from the TOPS scheme as he is presently suspended by his Federation.

8 Weightlifters have been discontinued under the TOPS scheme post the 2018 Commonwealth Games, while 7 Archers have been dropped owing to poor performance. Four winter sports athletes have also been dropped, given that the Winter Olympics finished earlier this year.

TOPS is a scheme under National Sports Development Fund of Department of Sports under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. This committee meets every week to review performance and funding support.