

Sports Authority of India

PRESS RELEASE

Performance review, funding approvals at TOPS meeting

New Delhi, 25th May 2018: The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) 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 needs. Five athletes (Three shooters and two Badminton players) were newly included while four athletes (Three shooters and one Badminton player) were dropped from the scheme.

Badminton:

17-year-old Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and 20-year-old Chirag Shetty are two of the most promising young athletes to have emerged on India's Badminton landscape. The doubles duo have made rapid strides in recent times. In the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, they won silver at the Men's doubles tournament, while they were also part of India's team that won gold in the Mixed Team event where they played the men's doubles together. Both athletes have been included till the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

The committee also approved the hiring of a physiotherapist Christopher Pedra by Saina Nehwal for a duration of 14 days during her preparation for the Malaysian and Indonesian Open in June.

It was also decided to drop Badminton player Ajay Jayaram from the TOPS scheme. Jayaram's performances have been on the decline and he is no longer ranked amongst India's top 10 men's singles players.

Shooting:

Veteran Trap Shooter 41-year-old Manavjit Singh Sandhu has been included in the TOPS scheme. A part of India's squad for the Asian Games and the World Championships, Sandhu has a quality record spanning two decades. A world championship gold in 2006, two World Cup golds in 2010 and 2014 and a Commonwealth Games gold in 1998. In addition to these gold medals, he has also won 14 silver and bronze medals in these tournaments and the Asian Games. Sandhu has been included in the TOPS scheme till the World Championships.

20-year-old Trap shooter Lakshay Sheoran is ranked number one in India and has won accolades in junior international events. Sheoran won a bronze for India in the

Men's team event at the recently-held Junior World Cup in Australia. He has been included in the TOPS scheme till the World Championships.

35-year-old Trap shooter Seema Tomar is also included in the TOPS scheme. She won the gold medal in the Asian Shooting Championships in 2014 held in Al Ain and the silver medal in the Shooting World Cup in Dorset, England. She has also won a silver medal in the Asian Shooting Championships in 2016 held in Abu Dhabi. Tomar has been included till the World Championships.

The committee has also sanctioned a total of approximately Rs. 41.8 Lakhs for skeet shooters Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Sheeraz Sheikh for their training in Italy under world-renowned coach Ennio Falco.

There was also a decision made to exclude three shooters from the TOPS scheme. Two shooters Kynan Chenai and Rajeswari Kumari have been dropped on grounds of poor performance as well as not being in the Indian squad for the upcoming Asian Games and World Championships. A third shooter Zorawar Singh has been dropped because of inconsistent performances over a period of time. Zorawar last won a medal for India in 2007.

Gymnastics:

A total of approximately Rs. 23.3 Lakhs has been sanctioned for three gymnasts Ashish Kumar, Aruna Budda Reddy and Pranati Nayak for a training camp in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Athletics:

A total of approximately Rs. 23.5 Lakhs has been sanctioned for Discus Thrower Seema Punia for a three-month training program in Russia as well as the purchase of a Game Recovery System.

Wrestling:

A total of approximately Rs. 10.56 Lakhs has been sanctioned to wrestler Bajrang Punia to undertake a 40 day training camp in Georgia.

The Target Olympic Podium Scheme is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which is an attempt to provide assistance to India's top athletes.