

Press Release

Sports Authority of India shortlists 258 athletes in 12 disciplines for TOPS Junior

New Delhi, August 5, 2020: In a move to groom athletes for the 2024 and 2028 Olympics, the Mission Olympic Cell has shortlisted 258 athletes in 12 sporting disciplines including the 85 selected before the lockdown, who will be part of the TOPS Developmental Group. This was announced by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri.Kiren Rijiju during a review meeting held today.

Speaking about the decision the Sports Minister said, "Establishing Junior TOPS and extending support to the developmental group is a critical measure to realize India's dream of being among the Top 10 countries in the 2028 Olympics. It takes 8 years to groom an athlete into an Olympic medal probable and we have started right on time for the 2028 Olympics."

The formal induction of the athletes in the development group would be undertaken after setting an effective monitoring mechanism for an athlete's progress in the long run. Towards this, it has been decided that performance benchmarks will be established for individual athlete for next four years, in consultation with all stakeholders, including the athlete, coach, High Performance Directors/ Chief National Coach of NSFs. The training support to the TOPS Developmental Group will be extended in each discipline through a group / systems approach, and a monthly Out Of Pocket Allowance of Rs. 25,000 will be given to every athlete.

Of the 12 disciplines, 16 athletes have been shortlisted in athletics, 34 in archery, 27 in badminton, 4 in cycling, 7 in table tennis, 70 in shooting, 14 in swimming, 11 in judo, 36 in boxing, 16 in weightlifting, 5 in rowing and 18 in wrestling. The list of athletes will be available on the SAI website.

In yet another decision taken at the review meeting, Sports Minister announced that training of athletes at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in a phased manner from October 1, 2020. This is an effort to bring athletes back to on-field training in view of the Unlocking of the country.

However, keeping in mind the health and safety of athletes and coaches, the Covid 19 situation in the state where the NCOE is located will be considered while finalization.

In view of the preparation for Olympics and to ensure that athletes have world-class infrastructure and equipment to train with, it has also been decided that the funds extended to all SAI NCOEs will be enhanced. "Funds will be provided to upgrade existing infrastructure and equipment or procure new ones, as per the need of athletes. We are ready to provide all support needed to ensure that athletes in India have the best facilities at par with the world," Sports Minister said.

To ensure a safe environment for all athletes, especially those joining the camps in their teenage years, a series of sensitization workshops are held in SAI NCOEs on various subjects. It has been

decided to increase these awareness workshops including workshops on sexual harassment act with aim to make athletes aware of sexual harassment issues and about the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and motivate them to speak up against any form of harassment.

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