

Indian men's and women's boxers to travel to Italy and France for training and competition

New Delhi/Patiala, October 7: India's elite men and women boxers will travel to Italy and France for a period of 52 days from October to December for their overseas training and participation in international competition. The overseas training and exposure has been sanctioned by the government at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.31 crores.

A 28 member contingent will travel which include 10 male boxers and 6 women boxers along with the support staff. Amongst the boxers who will be participating include Amit Panghal, Ashish Kumar, Satish Kumar, Simranjit Kaur, Lovlina Borgohain and Pooja Rani, all of whom have earned quotas for the Tokyo Olympics. All the four events (Men's 57 kg, Men's 81 kg, Men's 91 kg, Women's 57 kg) where India is yet to win a quota, will have boxers who will be a part of the travelling contingent. They will be accompanied by 8 coaches and support staff in the men's team and 4 coaches and support staff in the women's team.

Lovlina Borgohain, Women's 69 kg boxer, is looking forward to be participating in competition again, "It is very good that we will be getting a feeling of competition again. I am very excited about this. With 10 months to go before the Olympics, getting to compete against European opponents will be really helpful."

The men's and women's boxing team will be training at Assisi, Italy for a period of 52 days from October 15 to December 5. The expenses will include their boarding, lodging, airfare and visa fees. Covid Tests of all 28 players and staff will also be covered under this expense.

13 boxers from the contingent will also participate in the "Alexis Vastine" International Boxing Tournament to be held in Nantes, France from October 28 to October 30.

Ashish Kumar, Men's 75 kg boxer said that this is good preparation as they would be coming up against opponents who they might face at the Olympics, "It will be very helpful for us to play against competitors from abroad. We were already at camp in Patiala and regained our fitness, going abroad will really help. When we meet new competitors, we will get an idea of our level. It will help us get a better idea of where we stand and what aspects we need to improve on."

Nine boxers, the highest ever for a single Olympics from India have earned quotas for the Tokyo games. The World Olympic qualifying event scheduled for next year is the last event for Indian boxers to obtain quotas for the Olympics.

CA Kutappa, Chief Coach, Indian Men's Boxing Team is very happy that the boxers will travel abroad and calls this exposure trip as an opportunity to know where they stand against international competition after all the disruptions that have taken place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "At this time last year, we were at peak competition fitness, participating in the World Championships and were training intensely. Thank the government for sanctioning this. The boxers are very happy, they wanted to do something different, they need competition and training. They want to see where they stand compared to the European boxers. This overseas exposure will give a better idea of competition from Europe."