

Press Release

Government is committed to create a world-class sports ecosystem for athletes: Kiren Rijiju at 53rd SAI Governing Body Meeting

New Delhi, October 8, 2020: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri. Kiren Rijiju chaired the 53rd Governing Body Meeting of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) today. The meeting was attended by members and various stakeholders, among them, Rajeev Mehta, Secretary, Indian Olympic Association, several sports icons, including former table tennis player Kamlesh Mehta, badminton player and Dhyan Chand awardee Trupti Murgunde, hockey player and Arjuna Awardee Deepak Thakur, Wushu World Championships silver medallist Yumnam Sanathoi Devi and boxer Akhil Kumar.

A number of key decisions were taken by the committee:

1) It was decided that to provide additional impetus to the preparation of Olympics 2024 and 2028, some of the country's best training centers will be notified as Target Olympic Podium Scheme National Centre of Excellence (TOPS NCOE). The centers will be operated in collaboration with National Sporting Federations. Speaking about the decision, Shri. Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, said, "The government is committed to provide a sports ecosystem of global standards for athletes. These TOPS NCOEs will have state-of-art infrastructure, best-in-class coaches and support staff as well as modern sports science support." Both SAI and non-SAI sporting facilities across the country will be earmarked as TOPS NCOEs, depending on the existing facilities and performance of athletes at those centers.

2) Sports Minister announced that talent scouting committees, consisting of top ex-athletes, coaches and experts are being formed and will begin the task of identifying sporting talent in various disciplines from across the country within the next 4-5 months, once the Covid situation improves. This step is in line with the plan to identify young sporting talent that can be groomed for Olympics 2024, 2028.

3) Various other decisions taken during the meeting includes, creation of new sports infrastructure projects and upgradation of existing infrastructure projects at various National Center of Excellence to the tune of Rs 120 crores. A policy has also been put in place to provide out of turn promotion of coaches employed in SAI based on their performance in various national and international events.

All committee members showed keen interest in the proposed agendas and on executing the plans discussed by the Sports Minister. The committee was also very appreciative of the online training and knowledge enhancement initiatives undertaken by SAI for athletes and coaches, during SAI.

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