



## Press Release

New Delhi: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

### **Six para-athletes inducted to the Target Olympic Podium Scheme ahead of big competitions in 2022, Olympic 2024**

**New Delhi, February 23:** Six Para Sport athletes were added to the core group of athletes for support under TOPS by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at a Mission Olympic Cell meeting attended by members including ex-players Bhaichung Bhutia, Anju Bobby George, Trupti Murgunde, besides representatives of various federations and IOA President Shri. Narendra Dhruv Batra. The meeting was chaired by SAI Director General Shri. Sandip Pradhan. The athletes inducted into the scheme include Ekta Bhayan, Neeraj Yadav, Nimisha C Suresh and Radha Venkatesh (Para Athletics), Prachi Yadav (Para Canoe) and Paramjeet Kumar (Para Powerlifting).

The MOC also approved a request from two-time Olympic Games medalist PV Sindhu to support the cost of her fitness trainer Srikanth travel and stay during the German Open, All-England Championships, Swiss Open and Korean Open in March and April.

Sindhu's own travel and stay costs will be borne under the Ministry's Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) budget for the Badminton Association of India. Her trainer's expenses for travel to these four tournaments have been sanctioned from the Target Olympic Podium Scheme.

Similarly, World No. 25 and 2012 Olympic Games bronze medalist Saina Nehwal's request for financial assistance for her physiotherapist Ayesha towards her travel and stay during the German Open, All-England Championships and Swiss Open was also approved. SAI already extends financial assistance towards Ms. Ayesha's monthly remuneration.

The MOC also approved proposals worth more than Rs. 43.50 lakh from badminton players, Ashmita Chaliha, Aditi Bhat, and doubles players MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila, Vishnuvardhan Goud and Krishna Prasad, Pullela Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly as well as Shikha Gautam and Ashwini Bhatt to enable them compete in international events.

Besides, proposals from Manika Batra, Archana Kamat, Payas Jain, Yashaswini Ghorphade, Suhana Saini, Diya Chitale worth more than Rs 8.5 lakh have been approved along with their air fares. This assistance has been extended towards international competitions.

**EOM**