



Press Release

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Paralympian Manoj Sarkar speaks on importance of Saantulit Aahar, says lack of balanced diet was the reason he couldn't excel in competitions as a teenager

Haldwani, Uttarakhand; March 22: “From a 10 rupee racket and painting walls for a livelihood till clinching a medal for the country and standing here to motivate you all, is a big achievement for me today,” said Indian para-shuttler and Paralympics Bronze Medallist, Manoj Sarkar as he interacted with over 300 children from 75 schools during yet another edition of Meet the Champion programme at Lalit Arya Mahila Inter College in Haldwani, Uttarakhand on Tuesday.

The unique initiative that sees Olympians and Paralympians visiting schools to speak to students on the importance of having a balanced diet, Saantulit Aahar, fitness and sports has been envisioned by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Talking to students about the importance of eating right, the star shuttler said, “No food is good or bad, eating right just means controlled intake of food. It is also important to take on regular physical activities to digest what we eat, remember, Fitness Ki Dose, Aadha Ghanta Roz.”

Inspiring students with his life story, he also narrated how difficult life was for him when he started his journey as an athlete with a racket bought by his mother at a cost of ten rupees and how he realized that lack of proper diet was a factor behind his loss in the state-level competitions when he was just 18. “I gave my 100 per cent in these competitions but never understood the meaning of Santulit Aahar which is the main source of energy to perform the best in all fields,” said Manoj.

Stressing on the importance of a balance diet, Manoj played some interesting animated videos focusing on the regular habits of eating and intake of all the nutrients in a sensible manner.

Amidst the exciting interaction, students also shared their thoughts with the ace shuttler with various questions related to diet, fitness and sports. They questioned if the athlete has ever secretly eaten something which was out of his strict diet, difference between the diet of a player and a student, his favourite hobby other than badminton etc. Notably, the medallist made a point to answer each and every question creating an immediate bond with his young audience.



Among the students from 75 schools, more than 20 students from the National Association of Blind also participated in the programme with the same zeal. Like other children, they also participated in a Quiz Session based on nutrition, sports and fitness which was conducted by Manoj during the event. The winners from the quiz were given away an Indian Olympic Jersey which brought an added buzz in the gathering.

“Through this programme, I have not only learned about the importance of a good diet but Manoj Sir has also taught how to succeed amidst all odds,” said Shruti Burgali, a class XI student from Krishna Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary School, Haldwani.

This unique initiative is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Education and is part of the government’s ‘Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’.

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