

KIRTI INAUGURATION PRESS RELEASE/March 12

Khelo India Rising Talent Identification Programme will be the stepping stone in India becoming a Top 10 sporting nation in 2036 and Top 5 in 2047: Anurag Singh Thakur

Aimed at scouting talent among school-goers between 9 and 18, the Hon'ble Union minister for youth affairs and sports inaugurated KIRTI in Chandigarh

Chandigarh, March 12:The Hon'ble Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the unique Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme amidst much enthusiasm at the Sector 7 sports complex, in Chandigarh, on Tuesday. Aimed at school children between nine and 18 years, the nationwide scheme will have two main objectives: to hunt talent from every nook and corner of the country and to use sports as a tool to curb addiction towards drugs and other gadgetry distractions.

On a bright and sunny day, Shri Thakur emphasized that KIRTI was a dream of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to build a culture of sports and also create a cradle of talent that can win India medals at global competitions like the Olympics and Asian Games.

KIRTI made a solid launch across 50 centres in India. Fifty thousand applicants are being assessed in the first phase across 10 sports, including athletics, boxing, wrestling, hockey, football and wrestling. KIRTI aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments across the country through out they ear to identify talent through notified Talent Assessment Centres.

A scouting and training programme of this scale is a first in India and comes at a time when the nation wants to "become a top 10 sports nation in the world by 2036 and among the top five by 2047," said Shri Thakur.

Shri Thakur emphasized that youth were the building blocks of the nation and to achieve results in sports, one must start early. Saying an athlete needed at least 10 years of preparation to win an Olympic medal, the minister said, "KIRTI wants to reach out to every block in the country and connect with those kids who want to play a sport but don't know how. We know every child playing sport won't win a medal but at least we want to use sports to keep the young away from drugs and other addictions. I urge every child to register through the MyBharat portal and the onus will be on us to go to them and provide the opportunity through KIRTI."

KIRTI's athlete-centric programme is conspicuous by its transparent selection methodology based on Information Technology. Data analytics based on Artificial Intelligence are being used to predict the sporting acumen in an aspiring athlete. Shri Thakur added that a talent scouting system of this magnitude will need tactical collaboration with the National Sports Federations and the state governments. He added that the government has already spent Rs 3000 Crore on infrastructure and have more than 1000 Khelo India Centres across the country.

Present on this occasion, among others, were Member of Parliament from Chandigarh, Shrimati Kirron Kher, Shri Rajiv Verma, the advisor to the Chandigarh Administration, and Hangzhou Asian Games Silver Medalist and rising javelin star and a Paris Olympics medal contender, Kishore Kumar Jena.

Shrimati Kher lauded the KIRTI programme and said Chandigarh has given celebrity sportspersons like Kapil Dev, Yuvraj Singh and Abhinav Bindra and this scheme has come as a big boost to those playing a game.

“Every parent wants their child to achieve something in life. But many time dreams and reality don’t meet. At least in sports, KIRTI will help bridge that gap. Now every child wanting to play and excel in a sport will have a pathway,” said Shrimati Kher.

Several young boys and girls turned up for the selection process at the Sector 7 sports complex in Chandigarh. For 14-year-old sprinter Aman Sharma and 17-year-old walker Jaskaran Singh, KIRTI has opened a big window of opportunity. “We now know where to go and train. KIRTI is really motivating us,” said Jaskaran, waiting for his turn for a photo-op with Paris-bound Jena.

Jena was feted by Shri Thakur and the man who challenged Neeraj Chopra at the Asian Games and the world athletics meet in Budapest last year said: “I have highlighted before that sportspersons do not receive enough support at the grassroots level. When they start winning medals they receive financial and moral support, which should not be the case. KIRTI is a great scheme and is engaging kids of the right age. They are full of energy and this is the time to groom or nurture them after identifying their talent.”

Shri Thakur once again reiterated India’s intention to host the Youth Olympics in 2030 and the Summer Olympics in 2036.

“If we have to become a global superpower, we have to showcase and capitalize the soft power of sports. Music, films and sports are vehicles to ride and we are good at all of them. KIRTI will only help strengthen that. From the government side, we only have to smoothen the ease of business and that’s a priority,” said Shri Thakur, who is also the Union minister for Information and Broadcasting.

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ABOUT KHELO INDIA MISSION

The Khelo India Scheme is the flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. A brainchild of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Khelo India Mission aims at infusing sports culture and achieving sporting excellence in the country thus allowing the populacetoharnessthepowerofsportsthroughitscross-cuttinginfluence.Under the “Sports Competitions and Talent Development”vertical of the Khelo IndiaScheme,the“TalentIdentificationandDevelopment”componentisdedicatedtoworking towards the identification and development of athletes at the grassroots and elite levels to develop the sports eco system in the country.

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