

## Sports Ministry announces new incentive structure to fund 500 private academies

New Delhi: In a first-ever move, the Sports Ministry has introduced a incentivisation structure to extend monetary support to 500 private academies, through the Khelo India Scheme over the next four years starting FY 2020-21.

In this model, private academies shall be graded into different categories based on quality achievement of players trained by the academy, level of coaches available at the academy, quality of Field of Play and allied infrastructure, availability of sports science facilities and staff. The 14 priority disciplines identified for excellence in 2028 Olympics will be eligible for receiving support in the first phase.

Speaking of the decision, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri. Kiren Rijju said, "It is important for the government to extend support to these institutions so that sporting talent can be groomed even in the most remote areas of the country. There are a lot of small academies in various parts of the country that are doing very good work in identifying and training athletes. This move aims to encourage all academies, especially the private academies to continue improving the level of infrastructure, resources and sports science support so that athletes can get best in class training."

Reacting to the decision, Olympian Gagan Narang, who also runs a private academy called Guns for Glory Shooting Academy, said, "This is a huge boost for private academies because it will motivate them to ensure they keep creating world class infrastructure and ensure higher resources in the development of world class athletes."

Under the scheme, SAI and NSFs will be working together. SAI will also hold discussions with NSFs and implement categorisation and gradation of the academies. The number of academies to be funded and the quantum of funding under each discipline will be determined by an objective evaluation of the need for investment and each NSF's capabilities to leverage the incentivisation model and promote excellence in Olympics in their respective discipline. There will be a special focus on developing sports science facilities at all the academies to improve the overall quality of training.

National Badminton Coach Pullela Gopichand thanked the Government and the SAI for this initiative. "I think this is a big initiative for sports in the country and this will benefit all sections of sportspersons and the sports ecosystem immensely. This is a huge step forward and I would like to congratulate the Government and the Sports Authority of India for the wonderful initiative," Gopichand said.

EOM