

Sports Authority of India

Press Release

Hima creates history at IAAF World Under-20 Championships

History was created for Indian athletics on 12th July when 18-year-old Hima Das sprinted to gold with a timing of 51.46 seconds in the Women's 400 metres event of the IAAF World Under-20 Championships being held in Tampere, Finland.

Das, the daughter of a farmer, is from Dhing, a small town in Assam with a population of under 20,000 and located about 145 km away from the state capital Guwahati. She was originally a footballer and only turned to track and field in 2016.

Das has been performing well for quite some time, even prior to her feat in Finland, she had finished sixth in the 400 metres final at the Commonwealth Games earlier this year, with a timing of 51.32 seconds. Last month at the National Inter-State Championships, she bettered that with a timing of 51.13 seconds. Sports Authority of India taking her strong timings and potential into consideration inducted her into their flagship Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) in May this year.

The Government has been committed towards its support for Track and Field and recently sanctioned Rs. 21.23 crores for five months (April to August) under the Annual Calendar for Training and Competition in 2018-19. The engagement of high-quality foreign coaches for our athletes provides a fair chunk of this expenditure. In Das' discipline, the government has engaged the services of Galina Bukharina, a bronze medal winner at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, on a three year contract from 2017 to 2020, on an annual salary of Rs. 80.4 Lakhs to train both individual and relay runners.

Das's gold at Tampere isn't India's first medal at the IAAF World Under-20 Championships, Neeraj Chopra, Seema Punia and Navjeet Dhillon have done likewise but it is India's first track medal. While India has done reasonably well at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games in the past in track events, winning the gold medal at a world event is an achievement that should be lauded.

The Government is proud to support Hima Das in her journey so far and will support towards her pursuit of Olympic glory.