

SAI response to incorrect report in TOI on 2nd August, 2018, on sports equipment shortage

This is with reference to the news report in the Times of India of today with the heading “SAI Academies grapple with equipment shortage”. The report gives a partial and therefore, incorrect view of the position regarding procurement of sports equipment in the SAI academies and regional centres.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the equipment procurement for the training of athletes in the last two months. This involves both streamlining procurement processes to reduce the time taken, ensuring correct specifications as per requirements of the athletes and buying the equipment at a reasonable price. As part of this review, SAI has directed all its centres and academies to make an assessment of the equipment at their centres and prioritize the equipment required to be procured. The emails referred to in the Times of India report are some of those sent by the SAI centres in response to this directive from SAI headquarters. Since the news report fails to provide the context in which these emails were sent to SAI headquarters, the correspondent is jumping to the wrong conclusion that there is no response to this issue.

SAI is in contact with the Government E-Market place (GEMs), the Ministry of Commerce e-portal, to have specified equipment included in the portal. Sports equipment for hockey, boxing and badminton has already been identified for this purpose. Ordering on the GeM portal will make the time taken for procuring the equipment shorter and also ensure that a reasonable price is being paid for it.

As part of the Khelo India Scheme, which has recently been streamlined, SAI is establishing academies for children as part of the scheme to create a supportive and professional eco-system for the development of sports persons. The gathering of information regarding equipment shortage will enable the Khelo India Division in SAI to prioritise purchases, keeping in mind the need for equipment as well as funds provided under the Scheme.

SAI has already identified 734 sports persons under the Khelo India Scheme who are now being linked to various identified academies. These academies will be funded for nutrition, coaching and equipment as and where required.

SAI is aware of the need to ensure that equipment purchase for sports persons is done in a comprehensive and streamlined manner keeping in mind the principles of fiscal prudence and prioritization. The comprehensive exercise undertaken therefore will result in an upgradation of the SAI centres and training academies within the next six months.
