

Press Release

SAI and HI officials discuss Olympic prep for teams on video conference, plan drawn up for next 16 months

New Delhi, April 5, 2020: In the wake of postponement of the Tokyo Olympics, and in view of the 21-day lockdown in the country, the Sports Authority of India is holding meetings through video conference with all Presidents, Secretary Generals, High Performance Director, Head Coach, CEOs of respective National Sports Federation to reassess their long-term plan, qualification scenarios and strategy to align with the Olympics to be held in 2021.

One of the first meetings in this series of planned conferences was held by Sandip Pradhan, Director General, Sports Authority of India and other SAI officials, with representatives of Hockey India (HI), including Elena Norman, CEO, HI, Cdr. RK Srivastava – Executive Director, HI, David John – Director, High Performance, Graham Reid – Chief Coach, Indian Men's Hockey Team and Sjoerd Marijne, Chief Coach, Indian, Women's Hockey Team.

Various modalities pertaining to the game sport, including the teams' training, domestic competition structure and foreign exposure were discussed. A number of viable solutions and alternatives to the earlier planned strategy were deliberated keeping in view the ongoing lockdown, training under quarantine (Physical and psychological aspects) and possible restricted cross border movement even after the lockdown is lifted.

During the meeting, DG, SAI also reviewed various measures instituted for containment of Covid-19 at SAI Centre Bangalore where both the Indian men's and women's teams core probables are accommodated. The Chief Coaches of both the Indian Men's and Women's team, Reid and Marijne said they were happy with the current measures put in place by the Sports Authority of India and in particular at the SAI Centre Bangalore to keep the athletes, coaches and support staff protected. Both the Chief Coaches said that we're our athletes are in safer environment compared to athletes in many other countries.

Appreciating SAI's proactiveness of holding the meeting, Marijne said, "We had a positive discussion about the state of affairs and we indicated our preferences once the situation improves and as soon as more is known about the possibilities in the future. We also mentioned about our preference about players staying in national camps during domestic tournaments in order to avoid injuries in the lead up to the Olympics next year. I particularly liked the proactiveness of SAI and Hockey India and I am very optimistic about our preparations for the Tokyo Olympics. I think it is good that we are thinking about the positives and way forward."

Following the video conference, Reid too expressed confidence that Olympic preparations of the teams are on track. "We had a very productive meeting and discussed the planning process for the next 16 months. We informed SAI that the team and staff are being well cared for, while in strict quarantine. We discussed various scenarios and await decisions as to when we can re-start full training. We also agreed to remain as flexible as possible with the aim of being ready to go as soon as international competition recommences."

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