

Kiren Rijiju meets representatives of 15 NSFs to discuss resumption of sports

New Delhi, June 23, 2020: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri. Kiren Rijiju had a virtual meeting with representatives of the Indian Olympic Association and 15 National Federations to discuss the way forward for the 15 sporting disciplines in terms of training of athletes, participation in national and international competitions and organising sporting events in India.

The meeting was attended by President of the Indian Olympic Association Dr. Narinder Dhruv Batra, Sports Secretary Ravi Mital, Director General of SAI Sandip Pradhan, Secretary General of the Indian Olympic Association, Rajeev Mehta and Presidents and Secretary Generals of Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Fencing, Football, Hockey, Judo, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Weightlifting and Wrestling.

Speaking about the importance of the meeting, the Sports Minister said, "We are in the first phase of Unlock and as a country we are slowly adapting to the present situation and therefore the time is right to slowly open up sports, while following safety protocols. Since federations are best qualified to decide the way forward for each sport, the ministry would like to get ideas from federations. Their ideas will be the key in planning India's post Covid strategy in sports. After today's meeting the Sports Ministry will review all the ideas and work in tandem with federations to open up sports. I feel from August onwards we should be able to start some sporting events as well."

The Sports Minister has urged all Federations to speak to league managers and propose a few events that can be organised in each sport, in the coming months. "Given the situation, we have to be innovative about events. We may need to hold smaller events in stadiums and not have spectators. But we can surely try and beam the sports on television channels and social media platforms. The resumption of sporting events will boost the confidence of our athletes and also create an atmosphere of normalcy in these trying times. We can plan some events August onwards," Sports Minister added.

Among the key points discussed in the meeting, it was suggested by the Ministry that Federations could submit an interim Annual Competition and Training Calendar (ACTC) to kick start training of Olympic bound athletes in a phased manner. The same could be reviewed later when the international competitions calendar are published by the respective International Federations. "The ACTC has to be kept flexible this year so that decisions can be taken depending on the changing scenario," said IOA President, Narinder Dhruv Batra.

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