



### **MYAS seeks MEA assistance to complete vaccination of seven athletes based overseas**

**New Delhi, July 5:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has sought the assistance of the Ministry of External Affairs to complete the Covid-19 vaccination of seven athletes and 17 support staff now based overseas.

The sportspersons include javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, who is based in Uppasala in Sweden, boxers Manish Kaushik, Satish Kumar, Pooja Rani and Simranjeet Kaur who are in Assisi, Italy, and wrestlers Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia, who are in Russia.

In Sweden, Covishield (AstraZeneca) is available only for those above the age of 65. Italy's vaccination policy makes it difficult for the Indian boxers to receive their second shots of Covishield there while Russia has only Sputnik vaccine. It is likely that the Indians athletes and the support staff will get their second doses in the Indian missions in those countries.

The four boxers and 11 coaching and support staff, who need the vaccine, were originally slated to return to India from its base in Italy on July 8. The Boxing Federation of India wrote to Government to let the boxers continue training in Italy till it leaves for Tokyo. It thus became important for the MEA's assistance to ensure that the 15 members are fully vaccinated.

Though the Tokyo Olympic Committee for the Olympic Games has not made it mandatory for the athletes and officials to be vaccinated against Covid-19, India decided to vaccinate its athletes, coaches and support staff on a priority basis to ensure their safety.

Besides, some other athletes are due to get their respective second doses soon. Shooters Rahi Sarnobat, Saurabh Chaudhary and Deepak Kumar will receive their vaccination in Zagreb, Croatia. Tennis player Ankita Raina will get her second dose in the High Commission of India in London while Judoka Shushila Devi will complete her vaccination here.

**EOM**