

Press Release

Sports Minister speaks to elite weightlifters and chief coach in NCEO Patiala, decision to be taken soon on resumption of training

New Delhi, May 11, 2020: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri. Kiren Rijiju spoke to all the nine elite weightlifters and chief coach Vijay Sharma who are staying in Sports Authority of India's National Center of Excellence in Patiala and sought their feedback on resumption of training in a phased manner. All training of athletes have been suspended since March 25, in view of the global Corona pandemic.

The meeting was attended by Ravi Mital, Sports Secretary, Sandip Pradhan, Director General, SAI, Sahdev Yadav, Secretary General, Weightlifting Federation of India and other senior officials.

Speaking to the Sports Minister individually, weightlifters Mirabai Chanu, Jeremy Lalrinnunga, Rakhi Halder, Ajay Singh, Gurdeep Singh, Satish Shivalingam, Sneha Soren, Achinta Sheuli and Raja Muthupandi, shared that since the environment inside the SAI training center is absolutely safe with no one from outside being allowed entry and those housed inside not going out of the campus, they would like to resume active training. Currently the athletes are doing basic fitness exercises in the isolation of their rooms.

During the interaction, Mirabai Chanu said,

"We are in a safe and protected environment here in the SAI training center. We are doing basic fitness, but I am eager to resume active training so that I can give my best in Olympics in Tokyo."

Speaking to the athletes Sports Minister said, "I understand that our weightlifters need to get back to active training in view of the upcoming Olympics. We have formed a committee at SAI to create a Standard Operation Procedure to be followed strictly during training. We have included medical experts in the committee so that health-related precautions are included in the SOP. The feedback that I have taken from athletes and chief coach today will be used to draft the SOP for weightlifting. I am hopeful that the report of the committee will be ready soon and we will be able to come back to you with a decision regarding the resumption of training. We want our athletes to start training but it cannot be at the cost of their health. We must take all necessary precautions before we take a decision."

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