



## Press Release

**New Delhi: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### **Beijing Olympics-bound Arif Khan thanks Government for recognizing Winter Sports**

**January 30, New Delhi:** Arif Khan, set to represent India this Winter Olympics in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events, is in a good state of mind ahead of the games. Representing a population of 1.3 billion is something he has always dreamed of and he is now ready to set his best foot forward.

“It has been my dream to introduce the sport to Indians. I am happy to have inspired the youth in my own way by becoming that one person from the mountains to represent this country in the Winter Olympics. Many people are more aware now that there is opportunity for mountain skiing in India,” Arif said in a press conference facilitated by the Sports Authority of India.

“We have mountains, snows as well as free ride Alpine Skiing in Gulmarg. In the next 4-5 years, if we get a few more slopes and infrastructure, we can become the next big destination for Winter Sports. We can utilize the Himalayas for sport and tourism purposes. This is just the beginning. It feels great to represent 1.3 billion people. My dream is always to inspire people, especially in the Jammu and Kashmir valley. I still try to improve myself. Right now, I am very proud to carry the India flag in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics this year,” Arif added.

Arif, inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, was recently approved an amount of Rs 17.46 Lakh by the Sports Ministry towards training in Europe and procurement of equipment, ahead of the grand event in China. “It was great to get the support of SAI as a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme,” Arif continued. “It helped me buy the equipments, pay the bills of the coaches. The financial support felt really good. Everyone in my Skiing fraternity is happy that the Government is recognizing the sport. The Govt has so many plans for the development and infrastructure upgradation for Winter sports. I would like to thank all the stakeholders who are helping this cause and has assisted in my training too.”

Arif is set to compete in Beijing on February 13 and 16 in the two events he has qualified. Looking ahead to the main event, he says, “I have been training for the last two years very seriously. I want to be in top 30 in the World in the Winter Olympics. Even a slight mistake while going down the hill can make or break you in the competition. But I personally feel in the last 1 year, my training has been very good and I have improved a lot.”

**EOM**