

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS  
(DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS)  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 3200**  
ANSWERED ON- 19/03/2026

**IDENTIFICATION OF SPORTING TALENT**

3200. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA

Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state :-

- (a) the mechanism adopted for identification of sporting talent at the grassroots level;
- (b) the number of athletes identified and enrolled in development programmes during the last five years, year-wise;
- (c) the financial and training support provided to such athletes during the said period; and
- (d) the monitoring framework in place to track long-term athlete development?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS

(DR. MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)

(a) to (d) 'Sports' being a State subject, the responsibility of development of sports, including adoption of mechanism for identification of sporting talent at the grassroot level, identification and enrolment of athletes in development programmes, providing financial and training support to athletes and monitoring long-term athlete development, rests primarily with the respective State/Union Territory Governments. The Union Government only supplements their efforts by bridging critical gaps.

However, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the identification of sporting talent at the grassroots level is undertaken through a systematic and multi-tiered mechanism under the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Khelo India Scheme. Under SAI Sports Promotional Schemes, talent is scouted through competitions at district, state, national and international levels, followed by selection trials, battery of tests, anthropometric measurements, physiological and psychological assessments, medical check-up, age verification and evaluation of future potential, as applicable under the respective schemes.

Further, under the Khelo India Scheme, talent identification and development is a continuous process. Talent Identification and Development Committees comprising eminent athletes, coaches, experts and representatives of concerned stakeholders identify promising athletes during competitions such as Khelo India Games and National Championships on the basis of sport-specific benchmarks. Grassroots talent scouting is also supported through Khelo India Centres established at the district level, where Past Champion Athletes serve as mentors and scouts.

The number of athletes identified and enrolled under the Sports Authority of India's Sports Promotional Schemes during the last five years are as under:

Year	Athletes supported
2021-22	7,998
2022-23	9,169
2023-24	8,968
2024-25	9,555
2025-26	9,423

Further, the number of athletes supported under the Khelo India Scheme during the last five years are as under:

Year	Athletes supported
2021-22	2,816
2022-23	2,759
2023-24	2,752
2024-25	2,781
2025-26	2,904

Athletes identified under SAI Sports Promotional Schemes are provided comprehensive support in accordance with approved scheme norms, which include access to coaching, sports science support, sports equipment, sports kit, competition exposure, boarding and lodging, medical/insurance support, educational assistance and stipend, depending on the scheme. SAI's scheme document for 2025-26 specifies financial norms for various components under STC, Extension Centres and NSTC, including sports kit, competition exposure, stipend, insurance and institutional equipment support.

Under the Khelo India Talent Development programme, each identified Khelo India Athlete is provided annual financial assistance of up to ₹6.28 lakh per annum, which includes ₹1.20 lakh as out-of-pocket allowance and the balance towards coaching, sports science support, diet, equipment, consumables, insurance, lodging, travel for competitions/camps, education support and other admissible expenses.

A monitoring framework is in place to track the long-term development of athletes admitted under SAI Sports Promotional Schemes. Close monitoring and half-yearly scientific assessment of athletes is undertaken by the Institutional/Regional Heads by utilizing in-house sports science facilities or by engaging reputed sports science institutions. Baseline performance at the time of admission, including battery of tests, sport-specific tests and performance appraisal records, is documented and used for periodic review, retention and weeding out decisions. Training diaries are also maintained in relevant schemes for continuous assessment of athlete progression.

In addition, under the Khelo India Scheme, planning and monitoring mechanisms are provided at the State and District levels, supported by structured institutional oversight under the scheme guidelines.

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