

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS
(DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS)**

LOK SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3709
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2021**

Welfare of National Sportspersons

**3709. Shri Jayant Sinha
Shrimati Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi
Shri Jagdambika Pal**

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

(a) Whether the Government has taken any steps to ensure the welfare of national sportspersons and take care of their physical, mental and financial needs during the lockdown, if so, the details thereof including the financial assistance provided during the last three years;

(b) the steps taken / being taken to ensure athletes participating in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and Asian Games, 2022 remain physically and mentally fit and healthy; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that the athletes participating in the Tokyo Olympics and other upcoming International Tournaments receive an adequate and safe practice environment ?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS
[KIREN RIJIJU]**

(a) to (c): Sir, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following measures were taken for the welfare of the sportspersons during the pandemic:

i) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) were laid down to resume sports activities in the training centres under the name of “Khelo India-Firr Se”. The SOP covers all stakeholders at the training centres including:

- **All Athletes**
- **All technical and non-technical support staff**
- **All administrative staff**
- **All hostel and facility management staff**
- **All visitors to the centre**

A COVID Task Force Committee was set-up to ensure the guidelines are strictly implemented at the training centre. The committee was responsible for the constant monitoring and management of the health protocols of the government.

The SOP categorises the sporting disciplines into non-contact sports, minimal/medium-contact sports, full contact sports and water sports.

ii) Regular interaction with the athletes was done in order to boost their morale and keep them motivated in these tough times. Seminars and workshops by experts in sports psychology, sports science/medicine, nutrition in Covid, strength & conditioning, high performance sports environment, anti-doping have been organized for Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) athletes via, video conferencing, social media like Facebook Live, Insta Live etc., to educate athletes about how to cope with stress during tough times and focusing on their objectives so that the training is not hampered.

iii) National Coaching Camps :

National Coaching Camps were resumed from 01.06.2020 for the 2021 Olympic bound athletes. The SOP formulated is being strictly followed at the national camps. Timetable has been formulated for the athletes (or group of athletes in case of team sport) so that they can train without coming in contact with the other athletes. Other than the coaches, support staff and necessary administrative staff, no one else is allowed to meet or interact with the athletes at the national camps.

During the lockdown Phase, the athletes under TOPS Scheme which covers upcoming Olympics 2021 (Tokyo), 2024 (Paris) and 2028 (Los Angeles) as well as Asian Games, 2022 probable athletes were

provided with necessary sporting equipment such as (Barbell Rods, weights, Exercise Bicycle etc.), air pellets, target system with the help from SAI Regional Centres, State Governments and NGOs at their homes during the first phases of nationwide lockdown so that they can train within their homes. This facility was extended as per request of the athlete and feasibility of operationalizing the same during lockdown.

To ensure the welfare of national sportspersons and to take care of their physical, mental and financial needs during the lockdown, including the financial assistance provided during the last three years is as follows :

YEAR	Funds (OPA) released to Athletes through TOPS scheme (Rs. in crore)		Funds (OPA) released through Khelo India Scheme (Rs. in crore)
	Core Group	Development Group	
2017-18	6.51	--	--
2018-19	5.94	--	11.80
2019-20	5.93	--	31.86
2020-21	4.60	3.00	25.92

Currently, 104 athletes and 2 teams (Senior Hockey Men and Women) in the TOPS Core Group and 269 athletes in TOPS Development Group are being provided Out of Pocket Allowance (OPA) of Rs. 50,000/- and Rs. 25,000/- respectively. Under Khelo India Scheme, 2947 budding athletes have been identified. OPA of Rs. 10,000/- per month is being provided to identify athletes under this scheme.
