



Sports Ministry gives go-ahead to open 2 Khelo India Centres in Goa; Joaquim Carvalho and Bruno Coutinho say it will herald sporting change in the state

Panjim: The Sports Ministry has approved 2 Khelo India Centres (KICs) in Goa, at a cost of Rs 20 lakhs. Setting up of KICs in Goa is part of the larger plan of the Sports Ministry to open 1000 new KICs in all states and UTs, with at least one KIC in each district of the country. The decision was taken in June 2020.

The 2 centres in Goa are part of 143 new centres approved in 7 states last week. With this, the total number of KICs in the country stands at 360. The KICs have been launched by the Sports Ministry in partnership with the state governments to ensure the availability of grassroot-level sports infrastructure across the country. Speaking about the decision, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports says, "It is our endeavour to make India one among the top 10 countries in the 2028 Olympics. To fulfill this goal we need to identify and nurture a large number of talented sportspersons from an early age. With the availability of good coaches and equipment facilities at the district-level Khelo India Centers, I am confident that we will be able to find the right children for the right sport and at the right time."

Lauding this initiative taken by the Sports Ministry to further strengthen the sports ecosystem across the country and in Goa, Joaquim Carvalho, a member of India's 1984 Olympics men's hockey team and former men's team coach says, "It is the best thing that can happen to Goa with the opening up of these two new Khelo India Centres. Goans are very sturdy and robust people who love sports. Every district has a sports ground. I have been to a few districts myself and the talent on display is humongous. With these KICs coming up, it is an opportunity for the talent to be channelised properly. Things are only going to get better from here."

Former Indian men's football captain and Arjuna awardee in 2001, Bruno Coutinho feels with these two centres coming up, it will provide better training and coaching for talented young athletes, "It will be the best thing for Goa. It will motivate athletes and encourage students who can combine their studies and sports together. We have lacked these centres in Goa in the past. These Khelo India centres will provide good training and coaching for our athletes."

While providing good quality infrastructure to the sporting talent in the state, the KICs will also act as an employment generator for sportspersons from the state who are not in an active playing career any longer. As part of the partnership with the centre and to be eligible for the grant from the Sports Ministry, the Goa government will have to hire past 'Champion Athletes' as coaches and mentors for young trainees at these centers.



A one-time initial grant of Rs 5 lakh each will be provided for the preparation and upgradation of sports fields, purchase of sports equipment, sports kits, and so on. The annual recurring grant for every centre is also Rs 5 lakh each for a period of four years, which can be extended further for remuneration of the past champion athlete as coach, support staff, purchase of equipments, sports kits, consumables, participation in competition and events.

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