



Sports Ministry gives go-ahead to open up 31 Khelo India Centres in Karnataka; Ashwini Ponnappa lauds the move

Bangalore: The Sports Ministry has approved 31 Khelo India Centres (KICs) across multiple districts in Karnataka, at a cost of Rs 1.55 crores. Setting up of KICs in Karnataka 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 31 centers in Karnataka are part of 143 new centers 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 grassroots-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, Indian national badminton player and CWG Gold medalist Ashwini Ponnappa says "I feel this is a wonderful initiative by our visionary sports minister Shri Kiren Rijiju. The only way India can become a sporting nation is if a lot of people play the sport and with these Khelo India Centres across the country, this objective can be achieved."

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 Karnataka 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 a coach, support staff, purchase of equipments, sports kits, consumables, participation in competition and events.

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