



SPORTS SCHEMES 2026 PRELIMS

1. **National Sports Policy 2025** (also known as **Khelo Bharat Niti – 2025**),

Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 (National Sports Policy 2025) is India's comprehensive roadmap to transform the country into a global sporting powerhouse by 2047, specifically targeting excellence for the **2036 Olympic Games**. Approved by the Union Cabinet on July 1, 2025, it replaces the National Sports Policy 2001.

Core Framework & Governance

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (MoYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** Operates through a **multi-stakeholder approach** involving the Sports Authority of India (SAI), National Sports Federations (NSFs), State Governments, and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
- **Scheme Type:** It is an **Umbrella Policy** that governs and integrates several individual schemes.
- **Funding Mechanism:** While the policy itself provides the framework, funding is executed through the **Khelo India Programme** (a [Centrally Sponsored Scheme](#)) and other Central Sector Schemes. It leverages Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to attract private investment.

Aims and Objectives

The primary vision is "**Sports for Nation Building**":

- **Global Excellence:** Strengthening early talent identification (via programs like KIRTI) and world-class training systems.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring equitable access to infrastructure for women, rural areas, tribal communities, and persons with disabilities.
- **Economic Growth:** Positioning sports as an industry through sports tourism, startups, and manufacturing.
- **Mass Participation:** Promoting a national fitness culture by integrating sports into the school curriculum under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

Key Features

- **Talent Pathways:** Holistic athlete support including coaching, sports science, medicine, and post-retirement assistance.
- **Governance Reforms:** Enhancing transparency and accountability within National Sports Federations (NSFs).
- **Technology Integration:** Using AI and data analytics for performance tracking.
- **Indigenous Sports:** Reviving and promoting traditional Indian games.

Update as of 2026

As of May 2026, the government has further scaled up its commitment to these goals:

- **Budgetary Boost:** The Union Budget 2026–27 increased allocation for the Ministry to **₹4,479.88 crore**, a significant jump from ₹3,346 crore the previous year.



- **Implementation Focus:** Priority has been shifted to the **North Eastern Region (NER)** to build inclusive sports ecosystems.

Achievements and Criticisms

Category

Details

Achievements Established over **1,045 Khelo India Centres**; supported **2,845 elite athletes** with monthly allowances; approved 326 infrastructure projects worth ₹3,124.12 crore.

Criticisms Some experts point to **on-ground execution gaps** in rural infrastructure and the continued challenge of professionalising physical education. Coordination with States remains a hurdle since "Sports" is a State subject.

2. Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports:

Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports is a **Central Sector Scheme** under the [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#). As of 2026, it has been transitioned into a decade-long, outcome-driven "**Khelo India Mission**" to transform India into a global sports power.

Core Details

- **Ministry & Agency:** Administered by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**; the [Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#) is the primary implementing agency for various verticals.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government) and serves as a **Flagship** initiative.
- **Funding:** The 2026–27 Union Budget allocated a record **₹4,479.88 crore** to the Ministry, with a specific focus on the new Khelo India Mission. This includes a ₹500 crore boost for domestic sports goods manufacturing.

Aims, Objectives, and Features

The programme focuses on twin goals: **Mass Participation** and **Promotion of Excellence**.

- **Grassroots Talent:** Identifying and nurturing talent through the [National Sports Talent Search Portal](#).
- **Scholarship:** Deserving athletes receive an annual scholarship of **₹6,28,400**, including a ₹10,000 monthly out-of-pocket allowance.
- **Infrastructure:** Building world-class training centres and upgradation of existing facilities.
- **Inclusivity:** Dedicated verticals for Women in Sports, Persons with Disabilities, and Rural/Indigenous/Tribal Games.



2026 Updates & Achievements

- **Khelo India Mission:** Launched in the 2026 Budget as a **10-year roadmap** focusing on integrated talent pathways (foundational to elite levels) and the integration of sports science.
- **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026:** Hosted by Chhattisgarh to integrate tribal athletes into the national ecosystem.
- **Network Growth:** Over **1,045 Khelo India Centres (KICs)** and **34 State Centres of Excellence (KISCEs)** established nationwide.
- **Athlete Support:** Currently supporting over **2,905 athletes** across 22 disciplines.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Budgetary Gaps:** Critics point out that despite the mission's high ambitions (e.g., hosting the 2036 Olympics), actual expenditure sometimes falls short of Budget Estimates—utilising only **68.97%** of funds in recent cycles.
- **Infrastructure Access:** While 326+ projects were approved, access remains uneven across different states, requiring more focus on disadvantaged regions.
- **Transition to Professionalism:** Some experts argue for faster development of high-quality coaches and support staff (physiotherapists, sports scientists) to match international standards

3. Khelo India Centres (KICs):

Khelo India Centres (KICs) are the grassroots-level hubs of the [Khelo India Scheme](#), designed to provide low-cost, effective sports training by utilizing existing infrastructure and local expertise.

As of the **Union Budget 2026–27**, the government has elevated the program into the **Khelo India Mission**, a 10-year roadmap aimed at making India a top 10 sporting nation by 2036 and a top 5 nation by 2047.

Core Identity & Administration

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Sports Authority of India (SAI).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded by the Union Government.
- **Classification:** It is a **flagship scheme** of the MYAS, functioning as an **umbrella scheme** that merged three previous programs: Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS), and National Sports Talent Search System (NSTSS).

Aims, Objectives & Features

- **Primary Aims:** To achieve mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports.
- **Grassroots Focus:** KICs specifically aim to identify talent at the district level and provide them with professional coaching.
- **Champion Mentors:** A key feature is the engagement of "**Champion Athletes**" as trainers, providing them with a steady livelihood while leveraging their expertise to mentor young athletes.



- **Integrated Pathway:** The 2026 update introduces a "foundational-intermediate-elite" development framework, moving beyond just talent identification to systematic long-term nurturing.

Funding Mechanism

- **Direct Support:** The Union Government provides financial assistance for recurring and non-recurring costs (coaches' salaries, equipment, and sports science support).
- **Scholarships:** Identified talented athletes (KIAs) receive financial support of **₹6,28,400 per annum**, including a monthly Out-of-Pocket Allowance (OPA) of ₹10,000.
- **PPP Model:** The scheme encourages **Public-Private Partnerships**, allowing private sponsors to contribute to infrastructure and events.

2026 Update & Achievements

- **Budget 2026–27:** The Ministry received its highest-ever allocation of **₹4,479.88 crore**.
- **Expansion:** As of early 2026, **1,067 KICs** have been notified across 768 districts in 36 States/UTs.
- **Athletes Supported:** Over **28,000 athletes** are currently training across KICs in 41 sports disciplines.
- **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026:** Inaugural games held in Chhattisgarh (March-April 2026), featuring over 60,000 participants from 30 States/UTs.
- **Infrastructure:** 326 new sports projects worth over ₹3,100 crore have been approved.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Funding Gaps:** Despite record allocations, there are reports of **under-utilization of funds** in previous cycles (e.g., only 68.97% utilized in FY 2024–25) and delays in releasing funds to states.
- **Infrastructure Quality:** Many regional centers still face a shortage of modern equipment and suffer from outdated or dilapidated facilities.
- **Career Insecurity:** Outside of cricket, parents often discourage children due to a lack of professional career paths and job security.
- **Coaching Standards:** Some critics point to a lack of high-level training for coaches at the grassroots level, which limits the development of athletes beyond a certain stage.

4. State Centres of Excellence (KISCES):

The **Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE)** is a key component of the [Khelo India Scheme](#) designed to upgrade existing state-run sports facilities into world-class training centers. As of May 2026, the programme remains the government's primary vehicle for nurturing elite talent at the state level to achieve Olympic success.

Core Details (Updated 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** in collaboration with the sports departments of respective [State/UT governments](#).



- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% central funding for specified components).
- **Classification:** It is a **Flagship** scheme under the broader umbrella of the *Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports*.



ONLINE COURSE DETAILS

Duration : 12 months

Mode : Through online class

Timing : 9.00 p.m to 10.30 p.m

Total Fees structure income slab wise:

Below ₹1 lakh per annum	: ₹3000/-
Between ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh pa	: ₹6000/-
Between ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh pa	: ₹12000/-
Between ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh pa	: ₹24000/-
Between ₹7 lakh to ₹8 lakh pa	: ₹36000/-
Between ₹8 lakh pa to ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹50000/-
Above ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹60000/-

Course include:

- Inclusive coverage of all Preliminary subjects (includes CSAT)
- Inclusive coverage of all Mains subject (includes Ethics subject)
- Monthly preliminary mock test

NOTE: Income here include individual's self income and family income

OFFLINE COURSE DETAILS

Duration : 12 month (paid) + Free access to all till succeeding in civil service exam

Mode : Physical classroom+ Online

Timing : 7.30 a.m to 9.30 p.m

Total Fees structure income slab wise:

Below ₹1 lakh per annum	: ₹6000/-
Between ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh pa	: ₹12000/-
Between ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh pa	: ₹24000/-
Between ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh pa	: ₹36000/-
Between ₹7 lakh to ₹8 lakh pa	: ₹50000/-
Between ₹8 lakh pa to ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹60000/-
Above ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹80000/-

Course includes:

- Includes above all Online course features
- Regular mains writing practice and mock test
- Regular mock interviews
- Regular intensive current affairs discussion
- Skill development course includes spoken English)
- Topic wise group discussions
- Ethics based leaders stage talk
- Real time one to one mentorship
- Regular Subject wise seminars
- Access to library and books

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Aims and Objectives

- **Olympic Excellence:** To strengthen India's pursuit of medals in the Olympic Games by providing elite training.
- **Infrastructure Upgradation:** Scale up the best existing state academies to international standards.
- **Gap Filling:** Address critical deficiencies in existing state facilities, specifically in high-performance management and sports science.



- **Broad-basing Talent:** Identify and develop a pool of talent in specific disciplines (usually 3 per centre).

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Viability Gap Funding:** The Centre provides funding for "critical gaps" including expert coaches, high-performance managers, sports science support, and international-standard equipment.
- **State Responsibility:** Respective States/UTs are responsible for the daily management, including boarding, lodging, and infrastructure maintenance.
- **Specialization:** Each KISCE typically focuses on **three Olympic sports** to ensure concentrated resource allocation.
- **MoU Structure:** SAI enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each state to finalize operational and financial arrangements.

Achievements as of 2026

- **Scale:** Approximately **34 KISCEs** have been notified/approved across nearly all States and UTs.
- **Infrastructure:** Facilitated the approval of over 320 sports infrastructure projects worth over ₹3,000 crore.
- **Athlete Support:** Over **2,800 Khelo India Athletes (KIAs)** are receiving specialized training, equipment, and a monthly out-of-pocket allowance through these integrated systems.
- **Recent Milestones:** The inaugural **Khelo India Tribal Games** (March–April 2026) saw participation from over 60,000 athletes, leveraging the expanded ecosystem.

Criticisms

- **Regional Imbalance:** Early phases were criticized for favoring certain regions; for example, the first phase notably lacked centers in Northern and Western India.
- **Utilization Gaps:** Some reports highlight that while infrastructure is upgraded, the utilization of advanced sports science equipment remains low due to a lack of trained technicians at the state level.
- **Funding Delays:** States have occasionally cited delays in receiving "gap funding" from the Centre, impacting the continuity of high-performance training cycles

5. Talent Search & Development:

The **Talent Search and Development** vertical (most notably the **Khelo India Talent Search and Development** or **National Talent Search Scheme**) focuses on identifying and nurturing young talent across various domains such as sports and academics.

As of **May 2026**, the key details for the major scheme in this category—specifically the **Khelo India** (Sports) and **National Talent Search** (Education)—are as follows:

Overview of Major Talent Schemes

- **Ministry:** **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** for sports or **Ministry of Education** for academic talent.
- **Implementing Agency:** **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** or **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.



- **Scheme Type:** These are primarily **Central Sector Schemes**, meaning they are 100% funded by the Central Government.
- **Umbrella/Flagship Status:** **Kheiro India** is an **umbrella scheme** that includes "Talent Search and Development" as a core component. The **National Talent Search Scheme (NTSS)** is a **flagship activity** of the NCERT.

Aims and Objectives

- **Identification:** Spotting talent at an early age (e.g., 8–12 years for sports) through scientific battery of tests.
- **Nurturing:** Providing financial assistance, specialized training, and academic equivalence to vocational or artistic qualifications.
- **National Pride:** Preparing talent to excel in national and international competitions.

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Financial Support:** Direct scholarships (e.g., ₹1,250/month for Class XI-XII or up to ₹3,600/year for cultural talent).
- **Portal Integration:** Applications are centralized through the National Talent Search Portal.
- **Inclusivity:** Reserved slots for traditional artist families, tribal communities, and differently-abled students.

Update (As of 2026) & Achievements

- **Expansion:** The scheme was recently **redesigned** to ensure better tracking and nurturing after the initial identification phase.
- **Digitalization:** Full online registration and tracking via the National Scholarship Portal (NSP).
- **Achievements:** Over **1.7 million individuals** have accessed the search portals, with tens of thousands of active scholars receiving direct financial aid to pursue professional courses.

Criticisms

- **Redesign Delays:** Some components faced uncertainty during transitions or redesign phases, leading to temporary halts in new awards.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Challenges in rural outreach and the lack of research/innovation in certain educational institutions participating in the scheme.
- **State Alignment:** Issues with the timely submission of utilization certificates from states for the managed components

6. Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs):

The **Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs)** is a primary funding mechanism under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) designed to support the training and participation of Indian athletes in national and international events. As of 2026, it remains a **flagship Central Sector Scheme**.

Core Framework (as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** Department of Sports and the Sports Authority of India (SAI).
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Category:** It is a **flagship scheme**.



- **Total Outlay (2021-2026):** ₹1,575 crore for the XV Finance Commission cycle.

Aims and Objectives

1. **Preparation for Mega Events:** Support national teams for the **2026 Asian and Commonwealth Games** and the **2028 Olympics**.
2. **Performance Excellence:** Enhance athlete competitiveness through scientific training, international exposure, and professional coaching.
3. **Bench Strength:** Improve the pipeline of Indian athletes through talent identification and grassroots development.
4. **Hosting Capacity:** Strategically position India to host major events, specifically the **2036 Olympic Games**.

Funding Mechanism & Key Features

Funding is channeled through the **Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC)**, where each NSF's budget is finalized based on their roadmap.

- **Grassroots Mandate:** NSFs must now earmark at least **20% of their annual budget** for grassroots development through affiliate units.
- **Coaching & Support:** 10% of funding is dedicated to developing local coaches. Salary for Chief National Coaches has been increased to **₹7.5 lakh per month**.
- **Administrative Support:** Funding covers up to 10% for professional personnel like CEOs or High-Performance Directors (HPDs) for NSFs with budgets over ₹10 crore.
- **Athlete Welfare:** Diet charges for senior athletes have been increased to **₹1,000/day** and junior athletes to **₹850/day**.
- **Digitalization:** The **NSF Portal** provides a single-window system for paperless administrative tasks, recognition, and NOC issuance.

Achievements (Updated 2026)

- **Budgetary Growth:** The 2026-27 Union Budget saw an 18% increase for the Sports Ministry, totaling **₹4,479.88 crore**, with direct funding to NSFs rising to **₹400 crore** for FY 2025-26.
- **Record Medals:** Continued support led to India's highest-ever tallies in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (7 medals) and Paralympics (19 medals), and significant performances in subsequent Asian Games.
- **Inclusivity:** Expanded support for women's sports through the Khelo India Women's League across 29 disciplines.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Governance Issues:** Some NSFs face criticism for lack of transparency and non-compliance with the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011.
- **Misuse of Logos:** Recent government directives in 2026 highlight that some NSFs have been using official government emblems without authorization to create a false impression of being government entities.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Despite funding, critics argue that specialized state-of-the-art infrastructure remains concentrated in a few hubs rather than being equitably distributed across all states



7. Sports Authority of India (SAI) Promotional Schemes:

As of **May 2026**, the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** continues to be the primary engine for athlete development in India, operating under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**. Its promotional schemes are structured to scout talent at the grassroots level and nurture it into international excellence.

Key SAI Promotional Schemes (2026)

SAI implements several interconnected schemes designed for different age groups and skill levels:

- **National Centres of Excellence (NCOE):** The premium high-performance layer that provides specialised training to elite athletes. As of 2026, many older individual schemes operating in the same premises have been merged into the NCOE framework to ensure uniform training and facilities.
- **SAI Training Centre (STC) Scheme:** Targets juniors (age 10–18) to provide scientific training and academic support.
- **National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC) Scheme:** Focuses on scouting very young talent (age 8–14) through schools and extension centres.
- **Extension Centres of STCs:** Established in schools and colleges that already have basic sports infrastructure to widen the talent net.
- **Special Area Games (SAG):** Nurtures natural talent from specific geographic areas (e.g., coastal, hilly, or tribal regions) for specific sports disciplines.

Scheme Framework & Governance

Feature	Details
Ministry	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
Implementing Agency	Sports Authority of India (SAI) via its Operations Division
Funding Mechanism	100% funded by the Central Government
Scheme Type	Central Sector Schemes (directly funded and implemented by the Centre)
Flagship/Umbrella	The Khelo India Programme is the flagship umbrella scheme under which SAI's training centres often operate as delivery hubs

Aims and Objectives

- **Talent Scouting:** Identifying promising athletes at a micro level across India.
- **Excellence:** Providing world-class coaching, scientific support, and international exposure to win medals at the Olympics and Asian Games.



- **Broad-basing:** Expanding the reach of sports to rural and tribal areas.
- **Infrastructure:** Building and maintaining high-quality sports stadia and residential training facilities.

Update 2026: Achievements & Progress

- **Record Budget:** The Union Budget 2026–27 allocated approximately ₹4,479.88 crore to the Sports Ministry, with ₹917.38 crore specifically for SAI.
- **Expanded Network:** SAI now operates 23–24 active National Centres of Excellence and over 67 Training Centres across India.
- **Integrated Science:** Widespread adoption of **Sports Science** (biomechanics, nutritionists, and psychologists) at all NCOEs to minimize injury and maximize performance.
- **Youth Support:** Over 9,400 talented sportspersons are currently being trained across 187 functional centres.

Criticisms and Challenges

- **Regional Imbalances:** Despite efforts, critics note that elite infrastructure remains concentrated in a few states, leading to uneven talent development.
- **Fund Diversion:** A Parliamentary Committee recently raised concerns over the "unhealthy" practice of diverting funds from the Khelo India scheme to SAI's NCOEs, reflecting potential planning gaps.
- **Infrastructure Delays:** Some sanctioned projects (like athlete hostels) have faced audits and delays, hindering the scaling of residential programs.
- **Governance Issues:** Ongoing debates regarding the need for more transparency in fund utilization and athlete welfare policies

8. National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC)

The **National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC)** is a grassroots sports promotion scheme in India launched in **1985**. It is designed to identify "genetically gifted" children and groom them into future international medalists through scientific training within school environments.

Scheme Overview

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** [Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#).
- **Target Group:** School children in the age group of **8–14 years**.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded and implemented by the Central Government through SAI.
- **Classification:** It operates as a distinct scheme under the **Umbrella Scheme** of "Sports Promotional Schemes" managed by SAI (which also includes STC, SAG, and COE).

Aims and Objectives

- **Talent Scouting:** Identifying budding athletes with physical and physiological potential from schools across India.



- **Scientific Training:** Providing structured coaching and scientific support to nurture natural talent into medal prospects.
- **Education-Sports Synergy:** Adopting schools with good infrastructure so students can pursue academics and high-level training in the same institution.
- **Inclusive Reach:** Reaching rural, tribal, and backward areas through specialized sub-schemes like Akharas and Indigenous Games & Martial Arts (IGMA).

Funding Mechanism and Features

- **Funding:** Trainees receive financial assistance for sports kits, insurance, and competition exposure. Most trainees are **non-residential**, though a few residential spots exist where boarding and lodging are provided.
- **Sub-Schemes:**
 - **Regular Schools:** SAI adopts schools with existing sports facilities.
 - **Indigenous Games & Martial Arts (IGMA):** Focuses on traditional sports.
 - **Akharas:** Supports traditional wrestling hubs.
- **Disciplines:** Covers major sports like Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Swimming, Table Tennis, Volleyball, and Wrestling.

2026 Status & Achievements

- **Recent Update (2026):** As of early 2026, the scheme remains a core component of SAI's talent identification pipeline, now increasingly integrated with the **Khelo India** ecosystem for advanced progression.
- **Achievements:**
 - Successfully created a "feeder system" for senior SAI Training Centres (STCs).
 - Operates over **61 centres** nationwide.
 - Has consistently identified thousands of athletes (over 14,000 across all SAI schemes collectively) from diverse geographical backgrounds.

Criticisms

- **Limited Residential Capacity:** Critics point out that being primarily a non-residential scheme, many talented rural children cannot participate unless they live near an "adopted" school.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Some adopted schools lack the high-end scientific equipment required for modern "scientific training" despite the scheme's stated objectives.
- **Talent Migration:** Concerns that once talent is identified, they often move to private academies or overseas due to lack of advanced career pathways within the school system



9. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons:

The **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS)** is a dedicated welfare mechanism aimed at providing financial security and medical support to outstanding athletes facing hardship.

Core Framework (As of 2026)

- **Aims & Objectives:** To provide financial assistance to former and current outstanding sportspersons living in **indigent circumstances** (distress/poverty), support those injured during training or competition, and assist families of deceased athletes.
- **Ministry & Agency:** Administered and implemented directly by the [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (MYAS) through a General Committee chaired by the Minister-in-charge.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Operates as a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded and managed by the Central Government.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **welfare-focused scheme** and is considered part of the broader **umbrella of National Welfare Schemes for Sportspersons**.

Key Features and Assistance Limits

The scheme provides demand-driven, lump-sum ex-gratia aid based on specific needs:

- **Indigent Circumstances:** Up to **₹5 lakh** for athletes with an annual family income below ₹4 lakh (standard) or ₹8 lakh (extended definition in some 2023 updates).
- **Medical Treatment:** Up to **₹10 lakh** for the athlete or their family members.
- **Injuries:** Up to **₹10 lakh** for injuries sustained during training or competitions.
- **Bereavement:** Up to **₹5 lakh** for families of deceased outstanding sportspersons.
- **Support Personnel:** Up to **₹2 lakh** for coaches, referees, and match officials in need.

2026 Status and Achievements

- **Digital Integration:** Applications are now primarily processed through the [National Sports Development Fund \(NSDF\) portal](#) to ensure a time-bound disposal (target within 45 working days).
- **Reach:** The scheme has successfully provided emergency relief to hundreds of athletes, including critical medical support during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery periods.
- **Discretionary Power:** The Minister can now sanction up to **₹20 lakh** in exceptional, deserving cases, even if technical eligibility isn't fully met.

Criticism

- **Awareness Gaps:** Many retired athletes in rural areas remain unaware of the fund, leading to cases of "forgotten heroes" living in poverty until their plight is highlighted by media.
- **Income Ceiling:** Critics argue that the current income criteria (approx. ₹4–8 lakh per annum) are too restrictive given the rising costs of specialized sports medical treatments.



- **Reactive Nature:** As a "demand-driven" scheme, it requires athletes to apply first; critics suggest a more proactive government tracking system for retired national stars

10. National Sports Development Fund (NSDF):

The **National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)** was established in **November 1998** under the Charitable Endowments Act, 1890, to mobilize non-government resources—including corporate contributions (CSR), PSUs, and NRIs—to supplement government efforts in promoting sports.

Core Identity & Administration

- **Ministry: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS).**
- **Implementing Agency:** Managed by a **Council** chaired by the **Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports.**
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, as it is fully managed and funded by the Central Government and its mobilized resources rather than shared with state budgets.
- **Status:** While NSDF itself is a dedicated fund, it acts as an **umbrella-style funding mechanism** that powers specific flagship initiatives like the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).**

Aims and Objectives

The primary goal is to provide **momentum and flexibility** to Indian sports through:

Elite Athlete Support: Funding for specialized training under international coaches, scientific support, and international competition exposure.

- **Infrastructure:** Financial assistance for constructing and maintaining modern sports facilities.
- **Talent Scouting:** Identifying and nurturing "medal prospects" for major international events.
- **R&D:** Funding research projects and development studies to improve performance standards.

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** Mobilizes funds from PSUs, private corporations, and individuals.
- **Tax Benefit:** All contributions to the NSDF receive **100% Income Tax exemption.**
- **Government Match:** The Central Government typically provides a matching contribution to the amounts mobilized from other sources.
- **Direct Support:** Funds are used for "customized training" that standard government budgets might not cover quickly.

2026 Update & Achievements

- **TOPS Focus:** As of 2026, the fund is heavily geared toward the **Los Angeles 2028 Olympic cycle**, focusing on a "Developmental Group" of younger athletes.
- **Budgetary Shift:** In the 2026–27 budget, direct allocation to NSDF was approximately **₹15 crore**, reflecting a trend where the government relies more on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** contributions to sustain the fund.
- **Recent Successes:** Significant MoUs with PSUs like **NTPC** (₹115 crore for Archery) and **REC** (₹100 crore for Women's Hockey, Athletics, and Boxing) have bolstered specific disciplines.
- **RESET Programme (2024):** A newer initiative funded to empower retired sportspersons through education and internships for careers in coaching and administration.



Criticism & Challenges

- **Inconsistent Contributions:** Not all PSUs and banks contribute regularly, leading to periodic calls from the Ministry for more active participation.
- **Fund Utilization:** Critics often point to delays in the disbursement of funds for infrastructure, with many projects facing "technical feasibility" hurdles.
- **Concentrated Funding:** There is frequent criticism that the fund (and TOPS) is heavily skewed toward a small group of "elite" athletes, sometimes at the expense of broad-based grassroots development

11. Scheme of Cash Incentives and Pension for Meritorious Sportspersons:

The **Scheme of Cash Incentives** (officially the Scheme of Cash Incentive to Medal Winners in International Sports Events and their Coaches) and the **Sports Fund for Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons** are two distinct but complementary welfare initiatives.

As of **May 2026**, they remain cornerstone programs under the [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (MYAS) to support elite Indian athletes.

Core Framework (Status as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (Department of Sports).
- **Implementing Agency:** [Department of Sports](#) in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) (for pension disbursements).
- **Scheme Type:** These are **Central Sector Schemes**, meaning they are 100% funded and implemented by the Central Government.
- **Classification:** They are part of the **Umbrella Scheme for Promotion of Excellence in Sports**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Incentivize Excellence:** Reward outstanding performance in international events to motivate further achievement.
- **Financial Security:** Provide a "safety net" for athletes after retirement, ensuring they have an assured income for life.
- **Attract Talent:** Encourage younger generations to take up sports by demonstrating it as a viable long-term career.

Key Features & Update 2025-2026

Effective **February 1, 2025**, the government revised these schemes to streamline delivery through the DBT-MIS Portal.

- **Cash Incentives:**
 - **Direct Application:** Athletes can now apply directly online within 6 months of an event (previously required Federation routing).



- **Coaches' Share:** Coaches receive 50% of the athlete's incentive.
- **Event Scope:** Covers Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, World Cups, and specific Para-events.
- **Pension Scheme:**
 - **Eligibility:** Life-time pension begins at **age 30** (or retirement, whichever is later).
 - **Rates:** Pensions range from **₹12,000 to ₹20,000 per month** depending on the medal (e.g., Olympic Gold earners receive the maximum).
 - **Parity:** Para-athletes now receive pensions at par with able-bodied athletes for corresponding medals.

Funding Mechanism

- **Primary Source:** Annual [Government Grants](#) allocated in the Union Budget.
- **Secondary Source:** Contributions from the **National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)**, which includes CSR funds from PSUs and private companies.
- **Annuity Model:** The pension is managed as a fund operated through an agreement with LIC.

Achievements and Criticisms

Achievements:

- **Reduced Bureaucracy:** The move to a DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) portal has significantly reduced disbursement delays from years to months.
- **Expanded Eligibility:** Inclusion of more international tournaments and better parity for para-sports and coaches.
- **Indigent Support:** The associated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Fund has successfully provided emergency medical aid to former stars in financial distress.

Criticisms:

- **Strict Deadlines:** The mandatory **6-month application window** is often cited as harsh for athletes who may be focused on training or recovering from injuries.
- **Narrow Discipline Scope:** Some athletes from non-Olympic/non-Asian Games disciplines argue they are excluded despite high-level international success.
- **Inflation Concerns:** While pension amounts were doubled in 2018, critics suggest they have not kept pace with the rising cost of living through 2026

12. RESET Programme:

The **Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training (RESET) Programme**, launched on National Sports Day (August 29, 2024), is a initiative designed to empower retired athletes by providing them with the necessary skills and education to transition into second careers.

Core Overview (as of May 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#).



- **Implementing Agency:** Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education (LNIFE) serves as the lead institute for the pilot phase.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded and directly implemented by the Central Government.
- **Classification:** It is currently a specific welfare initiative rather than a broad umbrella scheme like *Khelo India*, though it acts as a critical sub-component of the government's sports ecosystem.

Aims and Objectives

- **Career Transition:** Facilitating post-retirement career development for athletes through tailor-made education.
- **Skill Bridging:** Addressing the human resource gap in the Indian sports sector by training retired athletes for roles like coaching, mentoring, and administration.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Harnessing the experience of veteran athletes to mentor young aspiring talents.
- **Employability:** Empowering retired sportspersons (aged 20–50) with certifications in specialized fields like sports nutrition, yoga training, and sports entrepreneurship.

Funding and Features

- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Union Budget. Funds are managed centrally and released to the nodal agency (LNIFE).
- **Hybrid Learning:** Courses are offered in a hybrid mode—combining self-paced learning via a dedicated portal with on-ground training and internships.
- **Specialized Tracks:** Offers 16 specialized courses, including Strength & Conditioning, Sports Nutrition, and Sports Entrepreneurship.
- **Eligibility:** Open to retired athletes (20–50 years) who were international medalists/participants or national/state-level medalists.

Achievements (2024–2026 Update)

- **Pilot Launch:** Successfully moved from the initial launch to active course implementation across multiple batches.
- **Digital Integration:** Creation of the RESET Portal for application tracking and self-paced learning.
- **Internship Partnerships:** Integration with sports organisations and leagues to provide mandatory practical exposure for participants.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Limited Reach:** Critics often point out that the pilot phase is restricted to a few institutions (primarily LNIFE), which may limit access for athletes in remote regions.
- **Eligibility Thresholds:** Some argue the age cap (50 years) and specific competition level requirements (National/International) exclude a large pool of grassroots athletes who also need career support.
- **Market Absorption:** Concerns persist regarding whether the private sports sector can absorb all certified trainees into meaningful, high-paying roles immediately after the program.



13. Sports and Games for the Disabled:

The **Scheme of Sports & Games for the Disabled** is a government initiative focused on broad-basing sports participation among persons with disabilities (PwDs) at the grassroots level. As of 2026, it operates as a specialized component under the broader **Khelo India** framework to ensure inclusive sporting development.

Core Framework & 2026 Update

- **Ministry:** Under the [Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports \(MYAS\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Primarily the [Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded by the Union Government.
- **Classification:** It is currently a sub-component within the **Khelo India** programme, which is India's **flagship/umbrella** sports initiative.
- **Target Population:** Covers 21 types of disabilities as recognized under the **RPwD Act, 2016**.

Aims & Objectives

- **Broad-basing:** To increase mass participation in sports among the disabled at the grassroots level.
- **Talent Identification:** Locating talented para-athletes early through schools and district competitions.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** Promoting the development of barrier-free sports facilities.
- **Social Empowerment:** Using sports as a tool for physical and emotional development and to reduce social stigma.

Funding Mechanism & Features

The scheme provides financial grants directly to schools, institutions, and training centers:

- **Coaching Grants:** Schools receive approximately **₹10,000 per month** to hire specialized coaches for up to five years.
- **Equipment Grants:** Financial assistance ranging from **₹30,000 to ₹75,000** for purchasing consumable and non-consumable sports gear.
- **Elite Support:** High-performing athletes are shifted to the [Target Olympic Podium Scheme \(TOPS\)](#) for personalized international-standard training and a monthly allowance.
- **Competition Support:** Funding for holding district, state, and national level competitions specifically for the disabled.

Achievements (as of May 2026)

- **Khelo India Para Games:** Successfully held two major editions (2023 and March 2025) with over 1,200 para-athletes competing in the latest edition.
- **International Performance:** India topped the medal table at the **World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026** in New Delhi with **208 medals**.



- **Infrastructure Growth:** Establishment of Bharat's first international-level **Centre of Excellence for Para-Athletes** (formerly Centre for Disability Sports) with dedicated accessibility features like tactile paths and special elevators.
- **Athlete Enrollment:** Over **2,000 para-athletes** have now gained national-level exposure through the dedicated para-sports vertical of Khelo India.

Criticisms

- **Resource Inadequacy:** Critics argue that despite funding increases, budgets remain inadequate for maintaining high-quality programs across rural India.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many new facilities lack "universal design" mandates, making them parallel rather than truly integrated with mainstream sports.
- **Inclusivity Omissions:** Concerns have been raised that the policy fails to adequately protect or include gender-diverse (transgender/non-binary) athletes.
- **School-Level Stigma:** Low investment in inclusive Physical Education (PE) means many disabled students still face exclusion at the school entry level

14. Promotion of Rural and Indigenous/Tribal Games:

The **Promotion of Rural and Indigenous/Tribal Games** is a dedicated sub-component (vertical) of the [Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports](#), which is a **Central Sector Scheme**. It serves as a flagship umbrella initiative under the [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (MYAS) to revive India's traditional sporting heritage.

Core Framework

- **Aims & Objectives:** To popularize, disseminate information about, and pique curiosity in rural and tribal games among the youth. It aims to integrate these sports into the national ecosystem through talent identification and structured competitions.
- **Implementing Agency:** Primarily the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)**, in collaboration with recognized National Sports Federations (NSFs) and state governments.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Central Government. Grants are sanctioned for infrastructure development, equipment, coach training, and scholarships for identified athletes. Financial assistance is also provided to NGOs and NSFs for conducting competitions.
- **Key Features:** Focuses on games like **Mallakhamb, Kalaripayattu, Gatka, Thang-Ta, Silambam, and Yogasana**. It includes these disciplines in major events like the Khelo India Youth and University Games.

2026 Updates & Achievements

As of early 2026, the scheme reached a historic milestone with the **inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026:**

- **Launch:** Held from **March 25 to April 3, 2026**, in Chhattisgarh (Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Surguja).



- **Scale:** Witnessed participation from over **60,000 tribal athletes** across 30 States and UTs, competing for 338 medals.
- **Infrastructure:** Over **344 projects** sanctioned with an investment exceeding **₹3,158 crore**, including 258 Khelo India Centres in priority tribal districts.
- **Innovation:** Introduction of the **Indigenous Games League** to create a structured competitive platform.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Limited Reach:** Critics argue that despite massive participation, many remote tribal belts still lack permanent, high-quality infrastructure beyond the "tournament venues".
- **State Subject Constraints:** Since sports is a **State subject**, the central ministry only supplements efforts; variations in state-level interest often lead to uneven development across different regions.
- **Sustainability:** Concerns exist regarding the long-term career pathways for athletes in niche indigenous games compared to mainstream Olympic sports

15. Khelo India Mission

The **Khelo India Mission** was officially launched in the **Union Budget 2026–27**, marking a shift from a basic scheme to a comprehensive, 10-year long-term roadmap. It is a **flagship Central Sector Scheme** designed to transform India's sports ecosystem and position the nation among the **Top 10** sporting powers by 2036 and **Top 5** by 2047.

Core Identity and Administration

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Department of Sports.
- **Type of Scheme:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Nature:** It serves as an **umbrella and flagship mission**, integrating several previously separate initiatives into a single framework for national sports development.

Aims and Objectives (2026 Update)

The mission focuses on five primary pillars:

- **Integrated Talent Pathways:** Creating seamless transitions for athletes from grassroots school games to elite Olympic competition.
- **Infrastructure Upgradation:** Building foundational, intermediate, and high-performance training centres across every district.
- **Coaching Excellence:** Systematic professional development for coaches, physiotherapists, and support staff.
- **Sports Science Integration:** Using modern technology, medicine, and data platforms for real-time athlete monitoring.
- **Mass Participation:** Promoting a vibrant sports culture through regular national-level competitions and leagues.



Funding Mechanism (2026–27)

- **Total Ministry Budget:** A record ₹4,479.88 crore for the [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) for FY 2026-27.
- **Specific Allocation:** The [Khelo India Mission](#) itself received approximately ₹924.35 crore for 2026-27.
- **Manufacturing Push:** An additional ₹500 crore is dedicated to boosting domestic sports goods manufacturing to create a "Make in India" sports hub.

Key Features and Updates

- **KIRTI Program:** Targetted at school children (ages 9–18) to identify talent and reduce gadget/drug distractions.
- **District Presence:** A goal to establish [Khelo India Training Centres](#) in every district of the country.
- **Athlete Support:** Currently supports over 27,500 athletes across notified centres with annual training packages.

Achievements (As of 2026)

- **Training Network:** Notification of 1,067 Khelo India Centres across 730 districts.
- **Specialised Hubs:** Establishment of 34 State Centres of Excellence (KISCEs) and over 300 accredited academies.
- **Infrastructure:** Approval of over 320 new sports infrastructure projects worth over ₹3,000 crore.
- **Elite Success:** Integration with the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** to support prospects for upcoming global games.

Criticisms and Challenges

- **Budgetary Gaps:** Analysis by firms like [NIPFP](#) suggests that while overall ministry funding is high, actual yearly allocations for the Khelo India Mission have seen occasional reductions or under-utilisation compared to the ambitious hosting goals for 2030 and 2036.
- **Infrastructure Pace:** Concerns remain regarding the speed of project completion and the quality of maintenance at rural training facilities compared to urban hubs

16. Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS):

The **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** is a flagship initiative of the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**. Launched in September 2014, it is a **Central Sector Scheme** funded primarily through the **National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)**.

Core Information (Update as of 2026)

- **Aims & Objectives:** To identify and groom potential medal winners for the Olympics and Paralympics by providing world-class training, coaching, and international exposure.
- **Implementing Agency:** The **Sports Authority of India (SAI)**.
- **Monitoring Body:** The **Mission Olympic Cell (MOC)**, which evaluates athlete proposals and monitors progress weekly.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **flagship program** and a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% central funding).



Key Features & Funding Mechanism

- **Tiered Support:** Athletes are divided into two groups:
 - **Core Group:** Elite athletes targeting the immediate next Olympics.
 - **Development Group:** Junior athletes identified as future prospects (e.g., for 2028 or 2032 Games).
- **Financial Stipend:** Selected athletes receive an "Out of Pocket Allowance" (OPA):
 - ₹50,000/month for Core Group athletes.
 - ₹25,000/month for Development Group athletes.
- **Holistic Support:** Funding covers foreign coaching, international training camps, purchase of specialized equipment, and hiring support staff (physiotherapists, psychologists, etc.).
- **High-Priority Sports:** Targeted focus on disciplines where India has high medal potential, including Archery, Badminton, Boxing, Hockey, Shooting, and Wrestling.

Latest 2026 Updates

- **Strength Expansion:** As of April 2026, the TOPS pool has reached **399 athletes** (up from 245 in early 2024), including 51 in the core group and 62 in para-sports.
- **Proposed Overhaul:** The Ministry is moving toward **quarterly evaluations** (instead of half-yearly) to ensure performance benchmarks are met.
- **New Target:** The government aims to increase the TOPS pool to **3,000 athletes by 2032** to build a deeper talent pipeline for the 2036 Olympic bid.
- **Sector Focus:** Increased emphasis on high-medal-yielding sports like **aquatics and cycling**.

Achievements

- **Olympic Success:** Contributed significantly to India's record-breaking performance at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (7 medals) and consistent success in Paralympics (e.g., 4 medals in Rio 2016 from TOPS athletes).
- **Commonwealth Gains:** In the 2018 Commonwealth Games, **47 out of 70** Indian medalists were supported by TOPS.
- **Institutionalization:** Successful transition of junior athletes into **National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs)** across 14 disciplines.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Resource Allocation:** Concerns regarding the **equitable distribution** of funds across different sports, often favoring established "high-priority" disciplines over emerging ones.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** While elite training is funded, there is still a lack of world-class **grassroots infrastructure** to feed the scheme.
- **Transparency:** Periodic criticism regarding the **selection/exclusion process** of athletes by the Mission Olympic Cell, leading to demands for more objective criteria



17. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare for Sportspersons:

The **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS)** is a **Central Sector Scheme** established to provide financial security and medical support to outstanding sportspersons of yesteryears who are now living in indigent (extremely poor) circumstances.

Core Details (As of 2026)

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** Department of Sports under MYAS, managed by a General Committee chaired by the Minister-in-charge.
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Central Government).
- **Classification:** It is considered an **Umbrella Scheme** component under the broader "National Welfare Schemes for Sportspersons".

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim is to alleviate distress among former and current sportspersons who brought glory to India but face financial or physical hardships.

1. **Financial Aid for Indigence:** Provide lump-sum ex-gratia assistance to those living in poverty.
2. **Medical Assistance:** Support for medical treatment of the sportsperson or their family members.
3. **Injury Support:** Financial help for injuries sustained during training or competitions.
4. **Training & Equipment:** Assistance for active sportspersons in need to procure equipment or participate in events.
5. **Family Support:** Aid for families of deceased outstanding sportspersons in distress.

PIB +1

Key Features & Funding Mechanism

- **Funding:** The fund is **demand-driven**; assistance is provided based on individual applications rather than state-wise allocations.
- **Financial Limits:**
 - **Indigent Circumstances:** Up to **₹5 Lakh**.
 - **Medical Treatment/Injuries:** Up to **₹10 Lakh**.
 - **Coaches/Support Personnel:** Up to **₹2 Lakh** for those in distress.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** Funds are transferred directly to bank accounts to minimize delays.

Achievements (Updated 2026)

- **Increased Budget:** The Ministry's allocation for FY 2025-26 rose by **17%** to ₹3,794 crore, bolstering welfare sub-schemes like PDUNWFS.
- **Wider Coverage:** In recent years, the scheme has been expanded to include support staff (coaches, referees, and physiotherapists).
- **Rapid Disbursement:** During the 2020-2022 period alone, over ₹2.54 crore was released to 78 athletes, including those affected by COVID-19 related hardships.

Criticism & Challenges



- **Information Gap:** Many eligible sportspersons in rural areas remain unaware of the application process, leading to under-utilization in certain regions.
- **Procedural Delays:** Despite DBT, there have been parliamentary inquiries regarding delays in the disbursement of funds and complex application verification.
- **Narrow Eligibility:** Critics argue the definition of "outstanding sportsperson" (often requiring international representation) excludes talented state-level players who face similar indigent conditions

18. Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons:

The **Sports Fund for Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons** is a central government initiative designed to provide lifelong financial security to Indian athletes who have achieved high-level success in major international sporting events.

Core Details (As of 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** The **Department of Sports** under the MYAS. Actual monthly payments are disbursed through the **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India**, for which the Ministry purchases annuities.
- **Scheme Type:** This is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Status:** It is an **Umbrella Scheme** component under the broader "Welfare and Support Schemes for Sportspersons".

Aims and Objectives

- **Financial Security:** Provide a safety net to athletes who spend their prime years in intensive training, often at the cost of other career opportunities.
- **Incentivization:** Act as an incentive for current athletes to reach the highest levels of excellence in international competitions.
- **Recognition:** Formally recognize and reward the pride and glory brought to the nation by medal winners.

Key Features & Pension Structure

- **Eligibility:** Must be an Indian citizen who has won a medal (Gold, Silver, or Bronze) in the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, World Cups/Championships (Olympic/Asian disciplines), or Paralympic Games.
- **Age Criterion:** Pension begins after the athlete attains **30 years of age** and has **retired from active sports**.
- **Monthly Pension Rates (Current 2026 Status):**
 - ₹20,000: Olympic/Para-Olympic/Deaflympic Medallists.
 - ₹16,000: Gold Medallists at World Cup/World Championships.
 - ₹14,000: Silver/Bronze at World Cup/Championships & Gold at Asian/Commonwealth/Para-Asian Games.
 - ₹12,000: Silver/Bronze at Asian/Commonwealth/Para-Asian Games.

Funding Mechanism



- **Primary Source:** Government of India grants.
- **Secondary Sources:** Contributions from the **National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons** and private/corporate donations through CSR.
- **Payment Model:** The Ministry makes a one-time lump sum payment to **LIC** to purchase an annuity, which then pays the monthly pension to the athlete.

Achievements & Recent Updates (2024–2026)

- **Digital Transformation:** Applications are now processed via a dedicated online portal, eliminating physical submission and reducing administrative delays.
- **Reach:** As of recent reports leading into 2026, over **820 retired sportspersons** are receiving lifelong benefits under the scheme.
- **Parity:** Para-athletes now receive pension amounts at par with their counterparts in the Olympic and Asian Games categories.

Criticisms

- **Discipline Exclusions:** Athletes from non-Olympic or non-Asian Games disciplines (like non-Olympic World Cups) often do not qualify, leading to claims of elitism in certain sports.
- **Fixed Rates:** Despite inflation, the pension amounts have not seen a major revision since 2018, which critics argue diminishes the value of the "security" over time.

19. Strict Retirement Rule: The **Strict Retirement Rule**, primarily governed by **Fundamental Rule 56(j)** and **Rule 48 of CCS (Pension) Rules**, is a provision that allows the Government of India to "pre-maturely" or "compulsorily" retire employees in the public interest. This is not a social welfare "scheme" for the public, but a regulatory mechanism for the central bureaucracy.

Aims and Objectives

The core objective is to improve administrative efficiency by "weeding out" employees who have become ineffective, inefficient, or whose integrity is doubtful. It ensures the government maintains a lean and productive workforce.

Key Features

- **Absolute Right:** The government has the absolute right to retire a servant if it is deemed in the "public interest".
- **Thresholds:** It typically applies to employees who have attained the age of **50/55 years** or have completed **30 years** of qualifying service.
- **No Show-Cause:** According to Supreme Court precedents, the government is not required to issue a show-cause notice before issuing a retirement notice under FR 56(j).
- **Notice Period:** A notice of at least three months (or pay and allowances in lieu) is mandatory.

Implementation and Classification



- **Ministry:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- **Implementing Agency:** The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), in coordination with the respective cadre-controlling authorities (ministries/departments).
- **Classification:** It is part of the **Central Civil Services (CCS) Rules**. While not a "scheme" in the traditional sense, it functions as a **Central Sector** regulatory framework because it is fully funded and managed by the Central Government.
- **Umbrella/Flagship Status:** It is **neither**. It is a statutory rule rather than a developmental flagship program like MGNREGA.

2026 Update and Achievements

- **Retirement Age Status:** As of **April 2026**, the official retirement age for central government employees remains **60 years**, despite repeated rumors of changes.
- **New NPS Rules (2026):** The [All India Services \(Implementation of NPS\) Rules, 2026](#) were notified to streamline contributions and withdrawals for officers appointed after 2004.
- **Achievements:** The government has reportedly reviewed thousands of files in 2025-26, leading to the compulsory retirement of several high-ranking officials to maintain administrative hygiene.

Criticism

- **Subjectivity:** Critics argue the "public interest" clause is vague and can be misused for political vendettas or to target whistleblowers.
- **Lack of Recourse:** Since no formal inquiry or show-cause is required, employees often find it difficult to challenge the decision except through prolonged litigation in Central Administrative Tribunals (CAT).
- **Morale Issues:** Frequent use of "strict" rules can create a climate of fear, potentially stifling honest feedback from career bureaucrats

20. RESET (Retired Sportspersons Empowerment Training) Programme:

The **Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training (RESET) Programme** is a central initiative launched on **August 29, 2024** (National Sports Day), to empower retired athletes by providing them with the necessary skills and education for a second career.

Core Identity & Administration

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports](#) (MYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** The **Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education (LNPIE)** is the lead institute for implementation.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded and implemented by the Central Government through its agencies.
- **Classification:** It is generally considered an **umbrella-style support initiative** under the government's broader welfare and rehabilitation efforts for sportspersons, similar to how TOPS supports active athletes.



Aims and Objectives

- **Career Transition:** Facilitating smooth professional shifts for athletes (aged 20–50) into non-sporting or sports-support roles.
- **Employability:** Bridging the skill gap by providing specialized training in fields like sports management, nutrition, and entrepreneurship.
- **Generational Bridge:** Enabling retired athletes to mentor younger talents, leveraging their experience to foster future champions.
- **Resource Management:** Enhancing financial literacy and mental health support for post-retirement stability.

Funding & Features

- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports; there is no cost to the retired athletes for the training.
- **Two-Level Structure:** Programs are divided based on education: **Level 1** (Class 12th and above) and **Level 2** (Class 11th and below).
- **Hybrid Learning:** Combines self-paced online modules with on-ground training and **internships** in sports organisations or leagues.
- **Specialised Courses:** Offers 16 tracks, including Strength & Conditioning, Sports Nutritionist, Yoga Trainer, and Sports Entrepreneurship.
- **Placement Assistance:** Includes job placement support and guidance for starting entrepreneurial ventures upon completion.

Update (As of 2026)

- **Achievements:** Since its pilot launch in late 2024, the program has expanded its course offerings and successfully established a dedicated application portal. It has been cited as a critical "human resource" filler for India's growing sports ecosystem.
- **Criticism:** Some observers note that while the age bracket (20–50) is broad, the eligibility is strictly tied to recognized medals or participation, which may exclude talented local-level athletes who lacked access to top-tier federations. Additionally, the reliance on a single lead institute (LNIFE) has raised questions about the speed of scaling to meet the needs of thousands of retired athletes nationwide

21. Sports Goods Manufacturing Initiative:

In the **Union Budget 2026–27**, the Government of India announced a dedicated **Sports Goods Manufacturing Initiative** with an initial allocation of **₹500 crore**. This initiative aims to transform India into a global hub for high-quality and affordable sports equipment by focusing on innovation, research, and MSME growth.

Overview of the Initiative (as of 2026)

- **Ministry: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.**
- *Update:* As of September 2025, sports goods manufacturing was formally incorporated into the Ministry's **Allocation of Business Rules**, moving from its previous status under general industrial policy.



- **Implementing Agency:** The **Department of Sports** under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in collaboration with **NITI Aayog** for strategic planning.
- **Nature of Scheme:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, as it is a dedicated initiative launched and funded directly by the Central Government via the Union Budget.
- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It is a **flagship initiative** launched alongside the broader **Khelo India Mission**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Domestic Capacity:** To strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce reliance on imported high-end sports gear.
- **Innovation & Design:** To advance research in **Material Sciences** and equipment design to create lighter, stronger, and more ergonomic gear.
- **Global Hub:** To position India as a competitive global supplier of affordable, high-quality sports goods.
- **Economic Growth:** To leverage sports as a driver for **jobs, skilling**, and economic expansion.

Key Features & Funding Mechanism

- **Direct Funding:** An initial **₹500 crore** allocation for 2026–27 dedicated to manufacturing.
- **Cluster Revitalisation:** A scheme to revive **200 industrial clusters** (like Jalandhar and Meerut) through technology and infrastructure upgrades.
- **MSME Support:** Integration with a **₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund** to provide equity and scaling support to the micro and small enterprises that comprise 90% of the sector.
- **Fiscal Incentives:** NITI Aayog has proposed a roadmap involving approximately **₹7,500 crore in incentives** through 2031.

Achievements (2025–2026)

- **Policy Formalisation:** Successful amendment of Business Rules to give the Sports Ministry direct oversight of the sector.
- **Export Growth:** India's sports goods exports are projected to reach **\$500 million by FY26**, up from approximately \$275 million in previous years.
- **Strategic Roadmap:** NITI Aayog released a comprehensive report titled "*Realising the Export Potential of India's Sports Equipment Manufacturing Sector*" in March 2026 to guide future investments.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Raw Material Costs:** High duties on critical raw materials continue to impact the cost competitiveness of local manufacturers.
- **Certification Hurdles:** High costs and limited access to international certification facilities remain a barrier for small-scale exporters.
- **Logistics Inefficiency:** Structural constraints in logistics and lack of integration with global value chains hinder rapid export expansion.
- **Sectoral Demand:** Some critics argue the current allocation of ₹500 crore is modest compared to the **\$700 billion global market opportunity**



22. Project KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification):

Project KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification), launched in **March 2024**, is a nationwide talent-scouting initiative under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**. It operates as a part of the broader **Khelo India Scheme**, which is a **Central Sector Scheme**.

Core Objectives

- **Talent Discovery:** Identifying young sporting talent (aged 9-18) from every corner of India, including remote areas, through standardized assessments.
- **Societal Impact:** Using sports as a tool to curb addiction to drugs and excessive gadget use among children.
- **Excellence Pipeline:** Creating a "cradle of talent" to ensure India becomes a global sports superpower by 2047.

Institutional Framework

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** **Sports Authority of India (SAI)**.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a component of a **flagship umbrella scheme** (Khelo India) and is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Central Government).
- **Funding:** Funded through the annual budget of the Khelo India Programme. For FY 2025–26, the Ministry received a record allocation of **₹3,794 crore**, with Khelo India specifically receiving ₹1,000 crore.

Key Features (As of 2026)

- **Digital Infrastructure:** Utilizes a dedicated **KIRTI portal** with AI and data analytics to predict athletic acumen and ensure transparent selection.
- **Wide Coverage:** Assessments conducted in 11 disciplines, including Athletics, Football, Hockey, and Boxing.
- **Decentralised Approach:** Uses **Talent Assessment Centres (TACs)** (over 170 nationwide) and treats districts as the basic unit of assessment.

Achievements & Current Status

Metric	Update (2024-2026)
Launch Phase	Launched in Chandigarh (March 2024); Phase 2 launched in New Delhi (July 2024).
Assessment Goal	Targeted 20 lakh assessments for FY 2024-25.
Early Success	Over 51,000 assessments completed across 28 states in the first phase alone.
Rapid Growth	Aimed to identify 1 lakh athletes within a 100-day intensive drive in 2025-26.

Criticism & Challenges



- **Implementation Gaps:** Concerns regarding the maintenance of uniform scouting standards across all 170+ Talent Assessment Centres.
- **Inclusion Hurdles:** While aimed at "every nook and corner," critics highlight that students in rural areas with poor digital literacy may face barriers in using the IT-driven portal.
- **Transition to Training:** Some experts argue that identifying talent is easier than ensuring long-term elite training, which requires more permanent infrastructure beyond the initial assessment centers

23. Sports and Games for the Disabled:

The **Scheme of Sports and Games for the Disabled** is a **Central Sector Scheme** introduced in 2009–10 by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**. Its primary goal is to "broad-base" participative sports among persons with disabilities (PwDs) at the grassroots level.

As of **2026**, the scheme has been largely integrated into the **Khelo India Programme**, specifically under the vertical "**Promotion of Sports among Persons with Disabilities**", which is a **Flagship** initiative.

Key Scheme Details (Updated to 2026)

Feature	Details
Ministry	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)
Implementing Agency	Sports Authority of India (SAI)
Type of Scheme	Central Sector Scheme (100% funded by Central Government)
Structure	Part of the Khelo India umbrella/flagship program
Funding Mechanism	Direct grants to schools, coaches, and for holding competitions (District to National level)

Aims and Objectives

- **Mass Participation:** Reviving sports culture at the grassroots level for PwDs.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring PwDs have equal access to training, infrastructure, and competition.
- **Talent Identification:** Using schools and district competitions to find talent for high-performance training.
- **Broad-basing:** Shifting from elite-only focus to community-wide participation.



Key Features & 2026 Updates

- **Khelo India Para Games:** Now a regular annual feature. The 2nd edition in March 2025 saw **1,233 athletes**.
- **Nodal Centres:** [NCOE Gandhinagar](#) has been designated as the dedicated nodal centre for Para Sports.
- **Financial Support:** Schools can receive up to **₹10,000/month** for coaches and **₹75,000** for specialized equipment.
- **Budget 2026:** Record allocation of **₹3,794 crore** to the Ministry, with **₹1,000 crore** specifically for the Khelo India flagship.

Achievements (as of 2026)

- **Athlete Growth:** Over **2,000 para athletes** have received national exposure through Khelo India games by early 2026.
- **Specialized Centers:** The [Atal Bihari Vajpayee Training Centre for Disability Sports](#) in Gwalior has trained over 3,000 athletes.
- **Success on Global Stage:** Indian para athletes topped the medal table at the **World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026** in New Delhi with **208 medals**.
- **Institutional Reservations:** 5% and 3% of coaching posts are now reserved for Olympians/Paralympians respectively to ensure specialized mentorship.

Criticisms

- **Infrastructure Accessibility:** Despite improvements, many grassroots schools and public facilities still lack disabled-friendly infrastructure and ramps.
- **Social Stigma:** Critics argue that students with disabilities are still often the "last to be picked" in school teams or discouraged by untrained staff.
- **Recognition Gap:** While elite medalists get fame, grassroots para-athletes remain largely unknown compared to their non-disabled counterparts.
- **Inclusivity vs. Segregation:** Some argue that creating separate "Para" events might lead to a "separate but unequal" system rather than making all traditional sports fully inclusive.

24. Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat):

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is an **autonomous body** established on 31st October 2023 to serve as a technology-driven "phygital" (physical + digital) platform for youth development and youth-led development.

Core Identity & Administration (Update 2026)

- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**.
- **Implementing Agency:** Operates as an **Autonomous Body** registered as a society; the Department of Youth Affairs implements its programs.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded and managed by the Central Government.



- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It acts as an **umbrella enabling mechanism** or "one-stop-shop" that converges existing youth programs (like the National Service Scheme - NSS) onto a single digital platform.

Aims and Objectives

- **Equitable Access:** Providing 15–29 year-olds (10–19 for adolescents) equal access to opportunities regardless of location.
- **Leadership Development:** Shifting youth from "passive recipients" to "active drivers" of development.
- **Experiential Learning:** Bridging the gap between classroom theory and practical work through industry and community exposure.
- **Viksit Bharat 2047:** Aligning youth energy with the national vision of a developed India by 2047.

Key Features (MY Bharat 2.0)

- **AI-Enabled Platform:** Includes features like **AI-based skill mapping**, a **Smart CV Builder**, and voice-assisted navigation.
- **Interoperability:** Integrated with **National Career Service (NCS)**, **DigiLocker**, and **UMANG** for seamless employment and certification.
- **Youth Leadership:** Partnerships to train over **1 lakh youth leaders** from diverse backgrounds.
- **Phygital Ecosystem:** Combines a digital portal with physical community engagement and volunteering.

Achievements (As of 2026)

- **MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026:** Engaged thousands of youth in understanding the Union Budget through quizzes and essays (nearly 47,000 essay submissions recorded).
- **VBYLD 2026:** Successful hosting of the **Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue**, including hackathons for social causes and cultural tracks.
- **Flood Rescue:** Mobilization of **MY Bharat Aapda Mitras** (trained by NDMA) for rescue operations in flood-affected regions like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Massive Participation:** Millions of youth registered on the portal to access UGC-certified experiential learning.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Digital Divide:** While intended to be inclusive, critics point out that the platform's heavy reliance on technology may still disadvantage youth in areas with poor internet connectivity.
- **Private Sector Integration:** Some observers note that the success of "Experiential Learning" depends heavily on the voluntary participation of businesses, which may vary by region.
- **Complexity:** Converging multiple existing schemes into one platform can sometimes lead to administrative overlaps during the transition period.



25. National Sports Governance Act, 2025:

The **National Sports Governance Act, 2025** is a comprehensive legislative framework enacted on **18 August 2025**. It replaced the ad-hoc National Sports Development Code of India, 2011, to establish a legally binding and uniform structure for sports administration in India.

Core Details

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** The **National Sports Board (NSB)**, a new central regulatory body headquartered in Delhi, acts as the primary authority for recognition and oversight.
- **Scheme Type:** This is a **Central Sector** initiative rather than a scheme in the traditional "centrally sponsored" sense, as it is a legislative mandate primarily funded and managed by the Central Government. It serves as an **umbrella framework** that governs various sports bodies and existing schemes like Khelo India.

Aims and Objectives

- **Unified Governance:** Creating a single legal framework to replace fragmented codes.
- **Ethical Standards:** Ensuring alignment with the Olympic and Paralympic Charters, focusing on fair play and ethical conduct.
- **Athlete Welfare:** Prioritising the rights, mental health, and career transitions of sportspersons.
- **Global Aspirations:** Preparing India's governance for major future events, including the 2036 Olympic bid.

Key Features

- **National Sports Board (NSB):** Responsible for recognizing National Sports Bodies. Recognition is mandatory to access government funding.
- **Governance Bodies:** Mandates the establishment of one National Olympic Committee, one National Paralympic Committee, and specific National/Regional Sports Federations.
- **National Sports Tribunal:** A three-member body chaired by a former Supreme Court or High Court judge to settle sports-related disputes efficiently.
- **National Sports Election Panel:** Oversees free and fair elections for the executive committees of sports bodies.
- **RTI Compliance:** Recognized bodies receiving central grants are considered "public authorities" under the [Right to Information \(RTI\) Act, 2005](#).

Funding Mechanism

- **Eligibility:** Only bodies recognized by the NSB can receive central government grants and financial assistance.
- **National Sports Board Fund:** A dedicated fund established to manage grants, fees, and administrative expenses (salaries and allowances) of the NSB.



- **Private Participation:** Encourages innovative financing through **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** and **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**.

2026 Update and Achievements

- **Enforcement:** Key provisions were partially enforced as of early 2026, with the National Sports Board (Search-cum-Selection Committee) Rules, 2026 officially notified.
- **Compliance:** Major bodies, including the **BCCI**, are now required to obtain NSB recognition, marking a shift toward total regulatory inclusion.
- **Dispute Resolution:** The establishment of the **National Sports Tribunal** has begun streamlining internal grievances, reducing the burden on high courts.

Criticisms

- **Autonomy Risks:** Concerns exist that government powers to issue directions may interfere with the autonomy of federations, potentially leading to sanctions from international bodies like the IOC.
- **Limited Athlete Rights:** While it mentions welfare, critics argue it lacks concrete, legally enforceable rights regarding data security and specific safe-sport protections.
- **Centralisation:** Some experts point out that the high level of central control could create new accountability blindspots if oversight is not strictly independent

26. National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) 2025:

The **National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) 2025** is a comprehensive regulatory framework introduced by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** to eliminate age-related cheating and restore integrity to Indian sports. It replaces the previous 2010 code after a 15-year gap to align with modern medical and digital standards.

Core Identity & Implementation

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS).
- **Implementing Agency:** **Sports Authority of India (SAI)**, which manages the centralized database and issues QR-coded IDs.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector regulatory code** (100% funded and managed by the Union Government) rather than a welfare scheme. It serves as an **umbrella framework** under which National Sports Federations (NSFs) and state-level bodies must align their own policies.

Aims and Objectives

- **Fair Competition:** Protecting genuine young athletes from being sidelined by overage competitors.
- **Ethical Governance:** Aligning Indian sports with international best practices and enhancing global reputation.



- **Transparency:** Creating a permanent, unalterable digital record of athlete ages to prevent future manipulation.

Key Features

- **Mandatory Digital Registration:** Athletes must submit three documents (birth certificate, school leaving certificate, and a government ID) to be "digitally locked" in a central database.
- **Medical Verification:** Uses the **TW3 bone scan**, MRI, and AI-based bone assessments for discrepancies.
- **Strict Penalties:**
 - **1st Offence:** 2-year ban and forfeiture of all medals/titles.
 - **2nd Offence:** **Lifetime ban** and potential legal prosecution under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).
- **Amnesty Window:** A one-time, 6-month period for athletes to voluntarily declare their true age without penalty.
- **Whistle-blower System:** A secure platform for anonymous reporting with a potential reward system.

Update as of 2026

As of May 2026, the code has moved from the draft phase to active enforcement.

- **Achievements:**
 - **Database Integration:** Successful linking with the **National Sports Repository System (NSRS)** and DigiLocker for QR-enabled ID cards.
 - **Pilot AI Programs:** Implementation of AI-based bone assessment tools to reduce human error in medical age determination.
 - **Wide Adoption:** Mandatory adoption by all recognized National Sports Federations (NSFs) and Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- **Criticisms:**
 - **Administrative Burden:** Small state-level associations have reported difficulties in implementing expensive medical tests like MRIs.
 - **Privacy Concerns:** Data security questions regarding the permanent digital "locking" of personal medical and identity data.
 - **Official Immunity:** Critics note that while athletes face lifetime bans, the draft code was initially soft on coaches and officials who often facilitate the fraud

27. Sports Startup & Entrepreneurship Accelerator Program:

As of 2026, the **Sports Startup & Entrepreneurship Accelerator Program** is a key initiative integrated into the broader **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** framework and supported by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** to foster a "Sports-Tech" ecosystem in India.

Core Details (Update 2026)



- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** in collaboration with **NITI Aayog** through the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**.
- **Implementing Agency:** **NITI Aayog** (specifically the AIM division), often partnering with specialized accelerators like **Startup Réseau** and academic/industry partners like the **International Institute of Sports Management (IISM)**.
- **Scheme Type:** It operates as part of a **Central Sector Scheme** under the **Atal Innovation Mission**, meaning it is 100% funded by the Union Government.
- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It is a targeted program under the flagship [Atal Innovation Mission](#).

Aims and Objectives

- **Ecosystem Building:** Creating a structured platform for "Sports-Tech" startups to access industry experts, markets, and investors.
- **Global Positioning:** Transforming India into a global hub for sports innovation, moving beyond traditional athlete development into the "experience-led fitness" economy.
- **Tech Integration:** Fostering startups in areas like performance analytics, fan engagement, smart equipment, and venue management.

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Funding Tiers:** Eligible startups can access capital through the [Startup India Seed Fund Scheme \(SISFS\)](#), which provides up to **₹20 Lakhs** for proof of concept and up to **₹50 Lakhs** for commercialization.
- **Cohort-Based Support:** The program operates through "thematic bootcamps" (e.g., the 6th edition focused on "Innovations in Sports-Tech") providing 1:1 mentorship and investor networking.
- **Market Access:** Startups gain direct visibility with leagues, teams, and corporates seeking early access to innovative technology.

Achievements and Impact (as of 2026)

- **Capital Growth:** Investor interest in the sports segment peaked in 2024 with **\$6.5 million** raised, followed by sustained interest through 2025-26.
- **Regional Expansion:** Approximately **50%** of recognized startups now originate from Tier-II and Tier-III cities, signaling a democratization of sports entrepreneurship.
- **Niche Markets:** Rise of successful startups in experience-led formats like Padel centers (e.g., JSW-backed ventures) and grassroots training programs.

Criticism & Challenges



- **Niche Focus:** Critics argue that the program heavily favors "Tech" and "Venture-backable" models, often neglecting traditional sports equipment manufacturing or rural sports infrastructure that doesn't fit the "startup" mold.
- **Funding Gaps:** Despite government seed funds, private venture capital for sports-specific startups remains small compared to FinTech or EdTech, leading to a "valley of death" for mid-stage sports ventures.
- **Sustainability:** Some experts question the long-term viability of IP-led models (like marathons or leagues) that require heavy initial subsidies before reaching profitability

28. National Award for Innovation:

The term "National Award for Innovation" refers to a family of specific awards rather than a single unified scheme. As of **2026**, the two most prominent government-led innovation awards are the **National Startup Awards (NSA)** and the **National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG)**.

1. National Startup Awards (NSA) 2026

This is a **flagship initiative** under the **Startup India** program, designed to recognise high-impact ventures that drive economic wealth and social impact.

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- **Aims & Objectives:** To reward startups and enablers building innovative, scalable solutions with high potential for employment and wealth creation.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Winners often receive **cash prizes** (typically ₹5 lakh for startups) and access to exclusive networking, mentorship, and investor platforms.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** as it is fully funded and managed by the Central Government.
- **Update 2026:** The **5th edition** (NSA 2025-2026) is currently active, with expanded categories including **Fintech Revolution Catalyst, Agri Innovation, and Health-Tech Excellence**.

2. National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2026

This award recognises excellence in digital transformation and innovative technology use in public administration.

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG).
- **Funding Mechanism:** Incentives of **₹10 lakh** for Gold awardees and **₹5 lakh** for Silver awardees, intended to be used for project scaling or public welfare.



- **Features:** Includes 7 categories in 2026, such as **Innovation by Use of AI** and **Best e-Gov Practices in Cyber Security**.
- **Scheme Type:** Central Sector Scheme.

Other Key Innovation Awards (2026)

- **National Awards for MSME:** Managed by the [Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises](#) to motivate innovative product and process development.
- **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) 2026:** A new **umbrella award** for science and technology, including a category for **Technology & Innovation**.

Achievements and Criticisms

Feature	Achievements (as of 2026)	Common Criticisms
Reach	Over 2,300 applications for the latest NSA edition; high participation from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.	Geographic Bias: Critics argue that despite efforts, a large share of winners still concentrate in major tech hubs like Bengaluru or Delhi.
Impact	Past winners have influenced national policy and secured major international grants.	Access to Funding: Some small-scale winners report that the award recognition does not always translate into immediate private venture capital.
e-Governance	16 awards conferred in 2026 for transformative digital tools used by Gram Panchayats and Districts.	Sustainability: Projects awarded for innovation sometimes struggle with long-term maintenance once the initial incentive funds are exhausted.

29. ASMITA

The **ASMITA** (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action) initiative, rebranded from the *Khelo India Women's League* in 2023, is a women-centric sporting framework. It serves as a specialized vertical under the broader **Khelo India Mission**.

Core Identity & Administration



- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Sports Authority of India (SAI).
- **Scheme Classification:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Type:** It is a **flagship scheme** component within the **Khelo India Mission** (which acts as the umbrella for national sports development).

Aims and Objectives

- **Grassroots Scouting:** Identifying young female talent from rural, tribal, and remote areas to create a pipeline for international competitions like the [Olympics](#).
- **Mass Participation:** Encouraging nationwide involvement to break gender stereotypes and improve the physical/mental well-being of women.
- **Empowerment:** Increasing the number of female coaches, technical officials, and competition managers to ensure women lead the sports ecosystem.

Key Features & Funding

- **Mechanism:** Direct central funding to National Sports Federations (NSFs) and state associations to conduct leagues.
- **Age Categories:** Structured into three tiers: **Under-13**, **13–18 years**, and **Above 18**.
- **Broad Reach:** Covers over **30 sports disciplines** including athletics, swimming, and football.
- **Digital Integration:** Leverages the MY Bharat Portal to connect youth with opportunities.

2026 Status and Achievements

- **Participation Milestones:** As of March 2026, the league has seen nearly **3 lakh women** participate in over **2,600 leagues** since its inception.
- **2025-26 Season:** In this season alone, approximately **1.59 lakh women** have competed across 1,287 leagues.
- **International Women's Day 2026:** A nationwide athletics league was held at **250 locations**, engaging roughly **2 lakh girls** in a single day through 100m, 200m, and 400m races.
- **Geographic Expansion:** Active presence across **550 districts** and **700 cities**.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Infrastructural Gaps:** While leagues are hosted nationwide, consistent access to high-quality training facilities in rural areas remains a bottleneck for identified talent.
- **Sustainment Post-League:** Critics often point to a "drop-off" after age 14 due to social pressures, despite the scheme's efforts to provide pathways.
- **Awareness:** Limited visibility of smaller disciplines in remote regions can lead to uneven talent scouting compared to popular sports like athletics.



Note: Khelo India Winter Games 2026: Held in Leh and Gulmarg, featuring ice and snow sports for over 700 athletes.

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OFFLINE COURSE DETAILS

DURATION : 12 MONTHS + FREE ACCESS TO ALL TILL SUCCEEDING
IN CIVIL SERVICE EXAM
MODE : HYBRID (PHYSICAL CLASSROOM + ONLINE)
TIMING : 7.30 A.M TO 9.30 P.M

TOTAL FEES STRUCTURE INCOME SLAB WISE

BELOW ₹1 LAKH PER ANUM	: ₹ 6000/-
BETWEEN ₹1 LAKH TO ₹ 2.5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 12,000/-
BETWEEN ₹2.5 LAKH TO ₹ 5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 24,000/-
BETWEEN ₹5 LAKH TO ₹ 7 LAKH PA	: ₹ 36,000/-
BETWEEN ₹7 LAKH TO ₹ 8 LAKH PA	: ₹ 50,000/-
BETWEEN ₹8 LAKH TO ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 60,000/-
ABOVE ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 80,000/-

COURSE INCLUDE

- INCLUDE ABOVE ALL ONLINE COURSE FEATURES
- REGULAR MAINS WRITING PRACTICE AND MOCK TEST
- REGULAR MOCK INTERVIEWS
- REGULAR INTENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION
- SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSE INCLUDE SPOKEN ENGLISH
- TOPIC WISE GROUP DISCUSSIONS
- ETHICS BASED LEADERS STAGE TALKS
- REAL TIME ONE TO ONE MENTOR SHIP
- REGULAR SUBJECT WISE SEMINARS
- ACCESS TO LIBRARY AND BOOKS

ONLINE COURSE DETAILS

DURATION : 12 MONTHS
MODE : ONLINE
TIMING: 9.00 P.M TO 10.30 P.M

TOTAL FEES STRUCTURE INCOME SLAB WISE

BELOW ₹1 LAKH PER ANUM	: ₹ 3000/-
BETWEEN ₹1 LAKH TO ₹ 2.5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 6000/-
BETWEEN ₹2.5 LAKH TO ₹ 5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 12,000/-
BETWEEN ₹5 LAKH TO ₹ 7 LAKH PA	: ₹ 24,000/-
BETWEEN ₹7 LAKH TO ₹ 8 LAKH PA	: ₹ 36,000/-
BETWEEN ₹8 LAKH TO ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 50,000/-
ABOVE ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 60,000/-

COURSE INCLUDE

- INCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF ALL PRELIMINARY SUBJECTS (INCLUDE CSAT)
- INCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF ALL MAINS SUBJECT (INCLUDES ETHICS SUBJECT)
- MONTHLY PRELIMINARY MOCK TEST

NOTE: SEVAKAR'S APPLYING FOR THE COURSE FEES BELOW 10 LAKH PER ANNUM HAVE TO SUBMIT
1. INCOME CERTIFICATE
2. SEVAKAR IAS INCOME DETERMINATION FORM