

# **India will be Badminton superpower by 2020 Olympics: Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, BAI President**

- **BAI fraternity is looking for an Olympic Gold, so we have prepared a roadmap taking into consideration all the views of top players, coaches and also taking the game to grassroots.**
- **Dr. Sarma praised the efforts of Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta, former President of BAI in bringing the sport of Badminton to the forefront of India's consciousness & assured that his primary goal would be to carry forward the legacy that has been created by his predecessor.**
- **After interaction with top Indian Shuttlers Dr. Sarma said they have agreed to participate in one of the domestic events in a year.**
- **BAI disbursed a sum of Rs 1.07 Cr as Prize money to top Indian Shuttlers.**
- **Every State Badminton Association will be given the responsibility of developing and promoting the Sport in their region in a transparent way for best results.**
- **Gopichand spells out "a System driven, Coach led and Athlete centric" scenario would be the ideal way to progress.**
- **Chief National Coach and Players appreciated the contribution of Late Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, former President of BAI for the growth of Badminton at an enormous pace in India in the recent years.**

**PTI May, 05 2017**



The Badminton Association of India President Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday laid out his vision to make India a world superpower of the game by next the Olympic Games, with plans of setting up of five new National Academies and making the domestic circuit stronger.

Dr. Sarma, who was appointed the interim head last month, following the sudden demise of former President Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, also touched upon issues such as age fraud, team selection, dearth of infrastructure and lack of participation of top players in the domestic circuit.

**Dr. Sarma praised the efforts of Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta in bringing the sport of Badminton to the forefront of India's consciousness, saying that his primary goal would be to carry forward the legacy that has been created by his predecessor.**

**"Our players have already brought immense laurels to the country. We are probably the most successful sports associations in India, having won two individual medals at the Olympics and innumerable title across the world," he pointed out. "We, as a federation, want more though. We want to set yardsticks for all the other associations when it comes to sport," he added.**

**"BAI fraternity is looking for an Olympic Gold, so we have prepared a roadmap taking into consideration all the views of top players, coaches and also taking the game to grassroots," he said at a conclave organised by BAI.**

**"Badminton is one of the easiest sports to indulge in and you play it anywhere, even outdoors," he pointed out. "While we want to encourage every child to pick up a racquet and hit a shuttle every day, we also want to provide them the right technical support so that they take it up as a competitive sport," he said.**

The President announced his plans after a daylong brain storming session with all the stakeholders in the sport, including coaches, players and top administrators.

**"We have discussed with the players about the issue. If Saina or Sindhu or Srikanth can play in say Srinagar or Patna or Guwahati that will create a lot of positive impact for the games because they are not only players but role models," Sarma said.**

**"So the players have agreed in principle but you have to look at their International Calender. So today a decision has been taken that the players will discuss among themselves and suggest us a Calender where they can be seen more in the domestic circuit," he added.**

Responding to a query on the same topic, Saina Nehwal said that the top players were competing for about 18 weeks internationally and were in the constant race for keeping their rank up to be eligible for the mega-events like the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and the Olympics. The former World No.1 said that efforts were being made to find a slot so that top players could all be present for one event in a season, and compete energetically as well.

"We do play the PBL, the Syed Modi tournament in Lucknow, the Indian Open Super Series. It is not easy to manage the programme. Some times you get injured. When you come back you have to focus even more on international events. When you work at a higher level, it is not easy to come back."

"It is not that we don't want to play events at home. We will try to find a slot for one tournament when all of us can play," she said.

Dr. Sarma said BAI has formed a Committee to 'Standardise' the National Academy and plans to set up five new Academies across the four zones and Northeast by the end of this year.

**"We need to standardise the national academy in the country because all players cannot travel to Hyderabad to train," he said. "What I understood is if a player from Northeast has to stay in Hyderabad then he has to change his entire culture, food habit and also stay away from parents, so today a committee has been formed.**

**"This committee will set a standard as what a National Academy looks like. Then we will work with the Govt of India and State Government to get at least five Centres to that level and BAI will get coaches and other support systems. If the top coaches like Mohd Arif and Vimal Kumar can travel and oversee then it will be great. That is what we plan to do."**

**"Another issue is that of medical insurance. We want to have good medical insurance scheme for the players so that if a player gets injured and is out of a long time it can be of some help."**

**Stressing on the importance of the use of services of retired players, Sarma said: "Around 200 players play in different levels and once they leave active sport they want to still contribute. This huge talent pool has to be utilised for the betterment of the game."**



On this occasion Badminton Association of India disbursed a total sum of Rs 1.07 Cr as Prize money for top Shuttlers of the Country that include Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu. Saina was awarded with a cheque of Rs 25 lakhs while Sindhu received Rs 20 lakhs.

**Players recognized the contribution of Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, former President of BAI for his support behind their achievements.**

Saina grabbed the Australia Super Series in 2016 while became the first Indian to become World No. 1 and also reached the finals at All England Championship in 2015.

PV Sindhu on the other side won 2016 Malaysia Masters, 2015 Macau Open, clinched a Bronze Medal at 2014 Commonwealth Games and a Silver at Rio 2016 Olympics. Earlier Sindhu was given Cash award of Rs.50 lacs in January'2017 by the then BAI President Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta.

**Sindhu said "After Akhilesh Sir (late BAI President Akhilesh Das Gupta) took over, Badminton really grew in India. Very sad that he is no more with us. However, the new President has come up with some really good ideas.**



Apart from it Parupalli Kashyap was given a cheque of Rs 30 lakhs after he won a Gold Medal in 2014 Glasgow Games and for winning the Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold in 2015. Gurusaidutt got Rs 5 lakhs.

Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa received prize money of and 10-10 lakhs respectively. Gutta and Ponnappa had earlier won Silver Medal in Women's Doubles category at Glasgow.



Former All England Champion and Chief National Coach P. Gopichand spelt out the way forward for Indian Badminton, but warned that the next one or two steps would be difficult as the game had progressed much already.

Addressing the gathering at the Badminton Conclave, Gopichand said, "Our system needs to be integrated. We are not in control of the government mechanism. We have to sit together and take suggestions. We don't have to agree on everything, but we need to agree on something."

**Gopichand was very particular that "a System driven, Coach and Athlete centric" scenario would be the ideal way to progress.**

Gopichand said the efforts of the coaches and support staff working behind the players need to be acknowledged. He further said "There is no classification here. In education system, you have KG, graduation and PG but here since coaching recognition is linked to players' performance so sometimes coaches hold on to the players for way too long than they are capable of.

"It is important to integrate the systems together, we take suggestion, sit together and device a plan. We will differ on many issues but we have to agree on something. Independently we can't work. Only together we can make that jump to make India a super power in world Badminton."

The Chief Coach said the Indian Badminton will have to move together as a system if the country has to win at least two medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

**Appreciating the efforts of Late Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, former President of BAI, he said "Badminton has grown a lot in the last few years. It is one of the biggest sports in the Country.**

"It is important that we celebrate the wins, we celebrate that our players who are in top 50, we celebrate that two Indians played in the finals of a Super Series event, we celebrate that we won two medals at Olympics.

**BWF had awarded "Meritorious Service Award" to Shri S. A. Raval, Chairman, Coaching & Development Committee and Ex Officio Vice President, BAI , Shri Arvind Singhal, Vice President, BAI, Shri Pullele Gopichand, Chief National Coach and Shri U. Vimal Kumar, National Coach for their contribution to the development of Sport of Badminton on the recommendation of the then President, BAI Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta. The BWF citation and mementos were also presented to them in the Conclave.**



Present on this occasion Ms. Mastoora Arezoo, President, Afghanistan Badminton Federation facilitated Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma, President, Badminton Association of India.



The conclave concluded after 'Open House Question - Answer Session' by the media.

---