

## Press Release

Centre, states will work together and mobilise 1 crore volunteers to help in India's fight against Covid 19: Kiren Rijju

New Delhi, July 15, 2020: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri. Kiren Rijju has called upon ministers and senior officers in charge of Youth Affairs and Sports departments from all states and UTs, to mobilise a large number of volunteers as part of the Youth Ministry's flagship schemes Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS) as well as from Bharat Scouts and Guides to intensify India's fight against Covid 19, as well as to create awareness about Atmanirbhar Bharat among the lowest strata of the society. The Union Minister was holding a two-day video conference with all states and UTs to create a collaborative roadmap for sports and youth affairs-related issues.

Speaking about the need to enhance the pool of volunteers across the country, Shri. Rijju said, "More than 60 lakh volunteers of NYKS and NSS were engaged as frontline Covid warriors as they created awareness, made and distributed masks and assisted citizens during the pandemic. Their active contribution has been richly lauded by representative of all states during the conference, and it has been jointly decided by the centre and all states that we will massively scale up the number of volunteers in the coming months. We have set a target of mobilising 1 crore plus volunteers under the Youth Ministry schemes. The volunteers will not only continue their fight against Covid 19 but will also help citizens gain benefit from Honourable PM's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. There are various provisions under Atmanirbhar Bharat that will directly help the poorest of the poor with free ration, medical assistance and more... our volunteers will create awareness about the provisions that have been earmarked for them. Access to the information will help many families survive with dignity in these trying times."

Immediately after the announcement of the first lockdown, 24.17 lakh NYKS and 18.01 lakh NSS youth volunteers were pressed into service at the field level. Further, the number of volunteers were increased by 19.27 lakhs to ensure wider coverage across the country. More than 60 lakh volunteers have been trained to assist in various activities pertaining to the war against Covid 19.

During the conference, Shri. Rijju also spoke of the relevance of the Fit India Movement during Covid times since staying fit and building immunity are two key factors in defeating the virus. "I urge all states to continue with Fit India activities online during Covid and include common people in fitness-related activities. Enrolling schools as Fit India schools can also help to make fitness a way of life for students. There are a lot of parameters for a school to qualify as a Fit India school, but primary among them is the inclusion of mandatory fitness activities in the daily curriculum. Everyday fitness can help school-going children to build up their immunity in a big way," he said.

Reviewing the possibility of resumption of sporting activities in the states, Shri. Rijju said, "The states will have to independently decide when they can start sports activities and training. However, I would urge all states to start some kind of sporting activities after 2 or 3 months, depending on the situation. We can start sporting events in a limited manner and for non-contact sports. There are some states

that have opened up their sporting facilities and started some sports training. As the situation improves, we must attempt to bring on-field sport back.”

Of the states/UTs who participated on Day 2 of the conference, several have resumed sporting activities, while others are planning for it. Delhi, Sikkim, Lakshwadeep, Chandigarh, Goa have already resumed sporting activities with non-contact sports like table tennis, badminton, archery, shotput, javelin throw, among other. Nagaland is drawing up plans to start district-level tournaments in football and indigenous games, Jharkhand plans to start sports in September, while Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar and Mizoram are putting a SOP in place to resume sports.

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