

TOPS approves proposal of Manu Bhaker, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa to engage sports psychologist for better preparation

New Delhi, January 19: Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) sanctioned the proposal from two Olympic-qualified shooters Manu Bhaker and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa to engage the services of sports psychologist Sanjana Kiran to assist them in their preparation for the Tokyo Olympics that are scheduled for later this year. The proposal was sanctioned last week at the Mission Olympic Cell meeting.

Sanjana Kiran is a Singapore-based High performance expert in the field of sport psychology and performance psychology and has provided support to elite athletes and elite coaches in preparation for major events and international competitions.

Speaking about the role of a sports psychologist as part of her preparation for the Olympics, Manu Bhaker who is eligible to participate in both the women's 10m air pistol and women's 25m pistol at the Olympics said, "Being in a sport that requires vigorous mental strength and stability to be able to perform flawlessly, getting Sanjana Kiran's guidance will help me to prepare better for the Olympics."

Olympian and medalist at the Asian and Commonwealth Games Suma Shirur who is currently the High Performance Specialist coach of the Indian Junior Rifle Shooting team, welcomed the decision to have a psychologist working with shooters, "Sport is getting more professional. If we have to put our best foot forward, why not engage experts. In our time, we learnt through experience but nowadays shooters begin early so experts will expedite their learning curve."

Shirur added that given that most of the Olympic-bound shooters are teenagers or in their early 20s and have gone through a long period out of competitive action due to the coronavirus pandemic, having a psychologist help them is even more important.

Sanjana Kiran's engagements with Bhaker and Bajwa include online sessions, travelling to competitions to offer her inputs and the travel expenses involved while going for competitions.

The total cost of Kiran's engagement with the two shooters, starting from January 2021, is approximately Rs. 29 lakh.

Prior to sanctioning this amount to the two shooters, TOPS had sanctioned Rs. 68.39 Lakhs for Angad Vir Singh Bajwa who has qualified for the Olympics in men's skeet on international training, ammunition and out of pocket allowance. For Manu Bhaker, TOPS had sanctioned Rs. 21.49 Lakhs for ammunition, equipment and out of pocket allowance.

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