



## Press Release

**New Delhi: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

### **Government of India approves financial assistance for 20 boxers to compete in Strandja 2022**

**February 17, New Delhi:** The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports have sanctioned the participation of 8 men boxers and 12 women boxers at the Strandja Memorial tournament 2022 in Bulgaria at full cost to the Government of India. Five support staff from the women's team and four from the men's team have also been cleared to travel at cost to the Govt.

The tournament will start February 18 and Senior Women's Boxing National coach Bhaskar Bhatt has mentioned that the tournament will act as a good litmus test ahead of the World Championships, the Commonwealth Games as well as the Asian Games this year.

"Strandja is one of the oldest and toughest boxing tournaments. It is a development tournament for us before the Worlds and we hope to check those few things that we are expecting to witness from this competition," Bhaskar Bhatt told the Sports Authority of India.

"We are focused on three parameters – physical preparation, technical preparation and the ring craft. Our boxers will be playing 4-5 days continuously and we will monitor how they perform in the rounds. From a technical standpoint, we want to see where the boxers stand now and how we can make them better ahead of the upcoming tournaments. Similarly, we want to focus on the ring tactics and how the boxer is implementing what she is taught in the training," Bhatt added.

India won two medals – silver by Deepak Kumar and a bronze by Naveen Boora – in the last edition of the Strandja. Bhaskar Bhatt remains a content man as he comments on the evolution of Indian boxing over the years and the assistance from the Sports Authority of India as well as the Boxing Federation of India.

"SAI has given us all facilities possible including scientific support. We have been given complete directions to cater to the athlete in the best ways. The BFI, too, has been supportive in our day to day working," the coach said from the IG Stadium, Delhi. "We have core group boxers as well as TOPS development boxers today. All these groups have been made so that the boxers can get all the possible facilities and it is also the boxers' hard work that results in them getting all the support.



“From the last 4-5 years, SAI has supported the boxers in such a big way. They always have eyes on what an athlete needs, right from how their workout is going to their every single movement in the ring. All of these right now have resulted in a major mindset shift among the athletes. They don’t just go to participate in a competition.

“They go to win medals. They are hungry for medals. This change in mindset will deliver in the long term. Even the athletes have become conscious now,” Bhaskar Bhatt mentioned.

Turning focus to the flurry of competition this year, the coach added, “There are so many tournaments with short gaps this year and we have many upcoming boxers. Even if they don’t perform this year, I feel the batch which started in 2017 in Rohtak has a big potential. By 2024 Olympics, they will be polished and improved and we really hope we can see a big result.”

**EOM**