

**Creation of infrastructure for qualifying in 2026 Football World Cup**

370. SHRIRITABRATABANERJEE: Will the Minister of SKILL DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any plans to create infrastructure so that India can qualify in the 2026 Football World Cup;
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL) : (a) No, Sir. However, the Government of India and Sports Authority of India regularly invests in creation of infrastructure for various sports disciplines including Football.

- (b) Does not arise.

**Developing Olympian sports skills amongst rural and tribal youths**

371. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI : Will the Minister of SKILL DEVELOPMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether youths of Jharkhand in particular and rural India at large have more potential of developing Olympian sports skills, if so, the measures thought of to promote such youths at national and international level.
- (b) whether Government has a comprehensive plan to promote and develop rural and tribal youths exclusively in athletics, gymnastics, wrestling and other such sports; and
- (c) how many sportsmen other than cricket, particularly from Jharkhand and other States in general who performed well at national level and represented country at international level have been rewarded and employed/settled respectfully by Government in last five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL) : (a) No criteria have been laid down to judge the comparative sports potential between youths of rural India and youths from other parts of the country.

- (b) The promotion and development for sports of various sportspersons including rural and tribal youths for various disciplines including gymnastic, athletics, wrestling, etc., is the responsibility of the National Sports Federations (NSFs). The Government only supplements their efforts in this direction by providing financial assistance for organizing national/international tournaments in the country, participation of Indian teams

for training/tournaments abroad, coaching camps, engagement of foreign coaches, support for sports equipment, etc. in accordance with the approved norms under the Scheme of Assistance to NSFs. The Central Governments was also implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme named Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) for the purpose of promoting sports in the rural areas of the country (including tribal areas) since 2008-09 and upto 2013-14 which catered to the entire rural population including youths. The PYKKA Scheme has, since, been revamped and revised and named Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA). Annual competitions under the RGKA cover 21 sports disciplines which includes athletics, gymnastics, and wrestling. Details of the RGKA Scheme is given in the Statement (*See below*).

(c) The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports does not maintain data about sportspersons employed in Central Government officers and State Governments against the vacancies reserved for meritorious sportspersons.

### ***Statement***

#### *Details of the RGKA Scheme*

Under the RGKA Scheme, it is proposed to construct a sports complex in each block, both for outdoor and indoor sports disciplines, through convergence of funds from Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) of the Ministry of Rural Development, Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR-Central) of the Ministry of Development of North-East Region, Additional Central Assistance (ACA) Scheme for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas of the Planning Commission, and Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Thus, the RGKA also caters to the entire rural population of the country, including youths, both tribal and non-tribal. The development of village playfields is to be taken up under the MGNREGS.

The various sports disciplines for which facilities are to be created under the RGKA are listed below :

- (i). Outdoor sports disciplines: Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Basket-ball, Foot ball, Handball, Hockey, Kabbadi, Kho-Kho, Tennis and Volley ball.
- (ii). Indoor sports disciplines : Boxing, Wrestling, Table Tennis, Weightlifting, Provision for a Multi-gym

Annual Sports competitions *viz.*, Rural Sports Competitions, Women Sports Competitions, North-East games and Special Area Games (for LWE affected regions) shall be held under RGKA upto the National level. The grants for holding the above competitions have been enhanced.