

Smt. Raksha Khadse Conducts Review of SAI LNCPE, Trivandrum; Inaugurates Medical Centre Extension

Commended Sports Authority of India for advancing athlete development; compares National Centres of Excellence to IITs in their role in nation-building

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The Sports Authority of India, Regional Centre at LNCPE, Kariavattom, Thiruvananthapuram, hosted Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. She was welcomed by Dr. G. Kishore, Principal, LNCPE & Regional Head, SAI RC.

Smt. Khadse inaugurated the Medical Centre Building after a ceremonial reception and tribute to Rani Lakshmibai. The new facility adds to SAI LNCPE's capacity to deliver athlete-focused medical care and performance support.



The formal event at the Assembly Hall began with a welcome address by Dr. Kishore and a presentation on the Medical Centre extension by Sh. C. Dhandapani, Director, SAI RC.

Dr. Kishore also felicitated the Minister. In her address, Smt. Khadse underscored the importance of medical infrastructure in supporting athlete health and performance. She stated that the new centre integrates medical services, recovery facilities, and sports science, providing comprehensive care under one roof.

Smt. Khadse described the Sports Authority of India as a leading institution in sports development. She noted that this expansion enhances SAI's ability to deliver scientific and structured support to athletes.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Sh. Ravi N.S, Director, SAI LNCPE.

A key part of the event was the felicitation of eminent Indian sports personalities:

- Shri S. Gopinath IPS (Retd.) – Former Indian Volleyball International
- Shri Saji Thomas – Arjuna Awardee & Rowing Coach, NCOE Alleppey
- Smt. Omana Kumari – Arjuna Awardee and former Volleyball Player

Outstanding performers from SAI NCOE were also honoured:

- Subha Venkatesan, Jisna Mathew, Kunja Ranjitha – Gold in 4x400m Relay at the 26th Asian Athletics Championship 2025
- Nithya Gandhe, Abinaya Rajarajan, Sneha S.S. – Silver in 4x100m Relay
- Rince Joseph, Manu T.S. – Silver in Men's 4x400m Relay
- Niraimathi J. – Bronze in Cycling at the Asian Track Cycling Championship

- Volleyball and Para-Taekwondo athlete Luv Gocher – Selected for international competitions

The Minister also led a plantation drive under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' initiative. As part of the campaign, 1000 saplings have been planted across SAI STCs under the LNCPE Regional Centre, promoting environmental sustainability.



The visit included an inspection of key facilities including the 300-bed Girls Hostel, sports grounds, gym, and dining halls. The Minister observed demonstrations in Kalaripayattu, Taekwondo, Yoga, and Volleyball at the Multipurpose Hall, showcasing the range of disciplines supported at the centre.

Smt. Khadse also reviewed the ongoing work of the E-Khel Pathshala initiative, which offers structured, online sports training at the grassroots level. She participated in a high-level meeting with coaches, faculty, and sports science professionals to assess current programmes and priorities.

The visit concluded with a stop at the Trivandrum Golf Club, adding a cultural dimension to a day focused on infrastructure, training, and athlete development. This visit reinforces SAI's role in developing sporting talent across the southern region.

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