**Beat: News**

# “˜Rio Paralympic Medal Winners´ Felicitated

**Calls For Equal Status To All Sports**

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**USPA NEWS -** “˜Rio Paralympic Medallists, T-20 Asia Cup Indian Blind Cricket Team and Indian Blind & Para Judo Team´ Felicitated

Minister Of State For Youth Affairs And Sports Vijay Goel Calls For Equal Status To All Sports

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment felicitated the Rio Paralympic medallists, members of T-20 Asia Cup Indian Blind Cricket Team and Indian Blind Para & Para Judo Team at a function in Vigyan Bhawan on Oct 28. The Department presented Cash Awards of a total of Rs. 90 lakhs to the Rio Paralympic medallists and Rs. 28.5 lakh to 19 members of the Indian Blind Cricket team under Awareness Generation and Publicity (AGP) scheme.

The felicitation programme was held in the august presence of the Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Mr. Thaawarchand Gehlot who was also the Chief Guest of the programme. Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) Mr. Vijay Goel presided over the function. Minister of State for Planning (Independent Charge), Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and President of Paralympic Committee of India Mr. Rao Inderjit Singh, Ministers of State for Social Justice & Empowerment Mr. Ramdas Athawale and Mr. Krishan Pal Gurjar also graced the occasion.

Addressing the gathering Mr. Thaawarchand Gehlot congratulated the Rio Paralympic medallists, the members of T-20 Asia Cup Indian Blind Cricket Team and Indian Blind & Para Judo Team on their recent performance in their respective games. He also announced setting up five National Level Disability Sports Centres for Players with Disability in five zones of the country.

“I believe that such events will encourage participation of Divyangjan in sports and I promise all possible help to players with disabilities in future,“ said Mr. Thaawarchand Gehlot.“I fully agree with Mr. Rao Inderjit Singh and extend my full support to organise Paralympics in India,“ Mr. Gehlot added.

Addressing the cheerful audience, Mr. Rao Inderjit Singh, who is also the President of Paralympic Committee of India, called for reforms in Indian Sports and emphasised that along with winners, the participants have to be encouraged and supported.

“Recognising these players for the achievements, they have done is great, but I feel, we should use them as a nucleus to prepare for the Japan Olympics in 2020,“ suggested Rao Inderjit Singh. Before this, Mr. Singh also proposed to organise Paralympics in India.

Recollecting words of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) Mr. Vijay Goel called for equal status to all sports. He also extended his full cooperation for organising Paralympics in India. He declared all sports facilities and stadiums will be thrown open to encourage sports in the country.

Mr. Goel also announced a dedicated portal for young budding players.“Very soon we will launch a web portal for young players, if you find any talent around yourself, please upload his/her video clip on the portal and if we will definitely help such players“.

Expressing his pleasure, Minister for State for Social Justice & Empowerment Mr. Krishan Pal Gurjar proposed vote of thanks to dignitaries and players while Minister for State for Social Justice & Empowerment Mr. Ramdas Athawale congratulated Rio Paralympic medallists, members of T-20 Asia Cup Indian Blind Cricket and Indian Blind Para Teams.

Under AGP, Gold medal winner Mr. MariyappanThangavelu and Mr. Devendra Jhajharia were awarded Rs. 30 lakh cash prize, Silver medallist Ms. Deepa Malik was felicitated with Rs. 20 lakh and Mr. Varun Singh Bhati was honoured with Rs. 10 lakh for winning bronze medal at the Rio Paralympics 2016.

The 19 members Indian Blind Cricket Team consisting of 17 players, 1 Team Manager and 1 coach were awarded cash prize of Rs.

1,50,00 each for winning the first ever T-20 Asia Cup Cricket Tournament for the Blind.

It is worth mentioning that It was India´s best ever performance in Parlympics history. Mariyappan Thangavelu made a leap of 1.89 metres to bag the gold medal while Bhati jumped his personal best of 1.86m to finish third and won Bronze. Devendra Jhajharia clinched Gold in Javelin throw while Deepa Malik bagged Silver in historic short put (first ever Indian women to win a medal at the Paralympics Games).

More than 4400 athletes from 160 countries participated at the Rio Paralympics 2016 held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from Sep 7-18, 2016.

On the best ever performance of Indian Paralympians, the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has already hailed the efforts of para-athletes in his monthly radio programme "˜Mann Ki Baat´ on 25th September, 2016.

Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Dr. Vinod Aggarwal, Joint Secretary Mr. Awanish Kumar Awasthi and Deputy Director General Mr. TusharRanjanMohanty were also present during the event including other officials of Department and National Institutes.

Picture: The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Mr. Thaawar Chand Gehlot felicitated the "˜Rio Paralympic Medal Winners´, at a function, in New Delhi on October 28, 2016. The Minister of State for Planning (Independent Charge) and Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Mr. Rao Inderjit Singh, the Ministers of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, Mr. Ramdas Athawale and Mr. Krishan Pal are also seen.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
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