

State Commission for Persons with Disabilities greets Goan Contingent returning from Special Olympics World Summer Games

Panaji, 28th June' 2023

To honour the extraordinary achievements and celebrate the success of the Goan contingent returning home after participating at the 2023 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Berlin from June 17-25, the Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities organised a grand welcome ceremony at Dabolim Airport today evening.

To the beats of the dhol, tasha and cheering, to honour the 23-member strong squad from Goa, including the proud medal winners Venson Paes, Joel Rodrigues, Francis Parisapogu and Aman Nadaf (Gold, 7-a-side football), Aslam Ganjanawar (Silver, Judo), Manfil Ferrao (Gold, Basketball), Taniya Usgaonkar (Silver and Bronze, Skating), Geetanjali Nagvenkar (Gold, Athletics) and Siya Sarode (Gold (2), Powerlifting) were congratulated on their arrival.

The function was graced by Subhash Phal Dessai, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare, Reginald Lourenco, MLA, Curtorim, Carlos Alvares Ferreira, MLA, Aldona, Guruprasad Pawaskar, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Taha Haaziq Secretary, Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and Ajit Panchwadkar, Director, Department of Social welfare. Others present included government officials, sports enthusiasts, friends, and family members of the athletes.

The ceremony that saw over 200 people gather to welcome the Goan contingent even as it rained, is a testament to the nation's admiration and appreciation for the athletes' exceptional accomplishments, as well as a platform to acknowledge their hard work and perseverance.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Subhash Phal Dessai, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare speaking at the ceremony said: "I am proud of what our Goan athletes have achieved in Berlin. Being a witness to their skill and hardwork, I can definitely say that they have made us realise that the power of self determination and positivity. Goa is proud of the athletes, the coaches and support staff who have tirelessly worked to get us these results for Goa and for our country."

Mr. Guruprasad Pawaskar, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities expressed joy over the success achieved by Goan para-athletes. "The Special Olympics witnessed extraordinary performances by our talented athletes, who displayed unmatched skill, indomitable spirit, and unwavering dedication throughout the competition. Their efforts and relentless pursuit of excellence have resulted in an outstanding medal tally, bringing home numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals across various disciplines."

He added that the Office of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities is proud of its athletes. "Many returned back home with medals, but the entire contingent has won our love and respect for their unbeatable confidence and determination. Our office will leave no stone unturned to facilitate opportunities, training to athletes so that our medal tally increases next time."

The welcome function served as a great opportunity for those present to express their deep appreciation and admiration for the athletes who participated in the Special Olympics.

State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Guruprasad Pawaskar appreciated the untiring efforts put in by Victor R. Vaz, National Sports Director of Special Olympics Bharat, President of Special Olympics Goa Shri. Luis Fernades, Vrushali Cardozo and others in making this tour a grand success.

The unwavering determination, unyielding spirit, and incredible talent of the athletes are a testament to the fact that with perseverance and dedication, one can achieve the unimaginable.

13 athletes from Goa were part of the Indian team participating in unified Football (male and female), Futsal (male), Athletics (male and female), Roller Skating (Female), Basketball (male and female), Judo (male and female), Powerlifting (female), unified Volleyball (male and female) and Handball.

Over 7,000 athletes representing 190 delegations participated in the Special Olympics World Games 2023.

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Department of Information & Publicity,
Government of Goa,
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