

Government of Goa felicitates Goan Contingent returning from Special Olympics World Summer Games

~ Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant announces cash awards of Rupees 5 lakhs for gold, 3 lakhs for silver and 1 lakh for bronze medallists for the Goan medallists~

Panaji, 5th July' 2023: The Chief Minister of Goa, Dr.Pramod Sawant honoured the extraordinary achievements and felicitated the successful Goan contingent that recently returned to Goa after a glorious medal haul at the 2023 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Berlin from [June 17-25](#).

At a special felicitation function organised to congratulate the 15 athletes and 8 coaches, Chief Minister,Dr.Pramod Sawant said: "Our special athletes have made us all proud with their medals. They have shown great courage, determination and skill in the Olympic Games. I am delighted to announce that we will reward each of them with a cash prize of 5 lakhs for gold, 3 lakhs for silver and 1 lakh for bronze. The prize money will be given to them within two months. Moreover, we will offer them a chance to work in the government sector in the future. They deserve this recognition and support."

He added that unlike other ministers who only attend the opening and closing ceremonies, "Our Social Welfare Minister, Subhash Phal Desai and Commissioner for Persons with disabilities, Guruprasad Pawaskar stayed with the athletes throughout the games. They motivated them, cared for them and ensured that they felt at home in a foreign country. Minister Subhash Phal Desai has set an example of dedication and compassion that will always be remembered in Goa."

The medal winners felicitated at the function were: Venson Paes, Joel Rodrigues, Francis Parisapogu and Aman Nadaf (Gold, 7-a-side football),Manfil Ferrao (Gold, Basketball), Veena Naik (Gold, Volleyball unified), Geetanjali Nagvenkar (Gold, 800 mts, Silver, 400 mts),Aslam Ganjanawar (Silver, Judo), Aayush Gadekar (Silver, Volleyball unified) Taniya Usgaonkar (Silver and Bronze, Skating), and Siya Sarode (Gold, Deadlift & Squat, Silver, Combine Lift, Bronze, Bench press), Gayban Mulla (Bronze, Mini Javelin), Gayatri Fatarpekar and Kajal Jadhav (Bronze, 7-a-side football) and Asif Malani (4th place 4x400 mts relay).

The eight coaches from Goa Varsha Naik, Prakash Velip, Gautami Dessai, Samantha D'Costa, Saffira D'Costa, Kazmiro Fernandes, Sr. Monica Coelho and Prashant Tari.

Minister of Social Welfare Subhash Phal Dessai speaking during the grand felicitation that was held in a starred resort on the outskirts of Panaji said: "These athletes who have brought laurels to Goa, worked very hard to reach this pinnacle of success. But, with or without a medal, each of you who have participated at the Special Olympics World Summer Games is indeed special and winners in your own right. Our Government is working on implementing policies that will benefit persons with disabilities and this will be in the right direction to empower PwD and to motivate them to do better in various spheres of their life."

Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities had organised a grand welcome for the Goan contingent earlier. They have facilitated support and guidance to Special Olympics Bharat and the Goan contingent.

Mr. Guruprasad Pawaskar, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities expressing joy said: "It is inspiring to be among such talented persons who have brought laurels to our state and country by winning a haul of 19 medals which is highly commendable. A total of 15 athletes and 8 coaches from Goa were part of the Indian squad. This clearly shows that our Goan athletes are highly competitive and are of international standard. The Special Olympics witnessed extraordinary performances by our talented athletes, who displayed unmatched skill, indomitable spirit, and unwavering dedication throughout the competition."

National Sports Director of Special Olympics Bharat, Victor Vaz expressed his joy. He said "This year's medal tally is the best in Goa's history. With 9 gold medals, 5 silver and 5 bronze this is the first by far the best ever gold haul. And with this performance goa has now crossed the three figure medal mark with the tally of 102 medals in the 8 editions of the games that we participated so far. None of this success came easy, it took months and months of accurate planning. Infact we had the core of our team ready at least 2 years back. All this dedication has led to the medal haul that we see [today](#)."

The efforts and relentless pursuit of excellence have resulted in an outstanding medal tally, bringing home numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals across various disciplines.

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, Luis Fernades, Vrushali Cardozo and others in making this tour a grand success.

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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