

## PRESS RELEASE – PAKISTAN OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION

1. Pakistan Olympic Association, on 10 July 2020 held a Press Conference via the web. It started with the recitation of the Holy Quran after which the Secretary General POA welcomed the participants, briefed them about the methodology to be followed and handed the proceedings to the President POA.
2. The President welcomed the participants and started the proceedings with appreciation for all the Healthcare Workers who have worked tirelessly to bring relief to the population. They sacrificed everything to ensure the best care possible to all those who needed it putting their own life at stake. We salute them and are proud of them. Let us all support them in every way we can specially by observing the SOPs laid down by the government. This is the message that we have already sent to the sporting fraternity. We appreciate the efforts of the National Federations who held online activities to engage their athletes and officials.
3. The President then briefed the Press regarding the activities carried out during this period of lockdown.
  - a. COVID-19-Its impact. Explaining the global impact of Covid-19 on sports, he stated that the impact on us were no different. However our appreciation to the Federations who took advantage of the available technology and organized on line activities.
    - i. Taekwondo, Karate, Boxing, Volleyball, Wushu, Baseball, Handball all devised on line competitions and fitness programmes for their athletes.
    - ii. POA celebrated the Olympic Day by participation in the IOC programme for on line fitness programme. Must be mentioned here that Pakistan had the unique honour of being one of the 23 countries (out of the 202 members) selected to participate. We were represented by Aisam-ul-Haq who gave a fantastic job in front of a world audience.
    - iii. The President spoke on the need of resumption of sports activities in the country. He stated that the government should allow opening of certain facilities subject to certain conditions in which social distancing would be mandatory. Sports like Golf, Tennis Singles, Table Tennis Singles, Archery, and other non contact sports can easily be played. On line competitions however will continue.
4. The President addressed certain observations which have been raised recently:-
  - a. Selection of Contingent for Participation in Multi-Discipline Games. The President termed the points raised by certain quarters and termed them as erroneous. It was stated that POA does not select the teams. These are and can only be selected by the Federations and no one else. It was also wrong to say that the PSB has no role to play and that POA does not coordinate. The procedure was explained by giving the example of South Asian Games (SAG):-
    - i. POA held its first in house preliminary meeting on 11 Oct 2018. The recommended list disciplines to be participated in along with numbers were sent to PSB for their consideration.
    - ii. The second meeting of all stake holders was held on 8 Nov 2018 at PSB presided by the DG PSB.

iii. The third meeting was held on 9 Oct 2019 at POA Office in Lahore. DG PSB, Mr Arif Ibrahim and Raja Zulfiqar Akhtar Director Training PSB attended the meeting. The contingent, after presentation by the concerned Federations, was finalised after mutual consultation.

iv. The list was finalised after sent to PSB. The numbers were reduced again.

b. However no camps were organized by PSB as is usually done before any major International Games. However the dates of the National Games proved to be a blessing. It was evident during the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Games, 2019 that mutual efforts of KP Government, KPOA, POA, Army Wapda, and all the Federations helped to stage not only one of the best National Games in the history of Pakistan but their preparations for the Games helped in an enhanced performance at SAG.

**5. Therefore to say that PSB has no role to play and that POA does not cooperate or consult is factually incorrect.**

**6. Roles and Responsibilities.** All over the world the stakeholders work in harmony within their respective spheres, mutually cooperating towards the common goal i.e. enhanced performance. The President emphasized that we have always followed the principle of cooperation and would continue to do. The stakeholders MUST work together. He assured that POA will always fully cooperate with the Ministry and work with them as whole heartedly. He elaborated on the Roles of each stake holders:-

a. Pakistan Sports Board is responsible to promote and develop standards of national fitness as well as standards of competition, comparable to international standards, and for the development of sports infrastructure and training of athletes.

The constitution of Pakistan Sports Board needs representation from the relevant stakeholders like representation of Contact / Martial Arts Sports, Power Sports, Olympic & Non – Olympic Sports. This will enable informative decision and policy making. We are also made aware through media reports that National Sports Policy is under review. We will request PSB to get input from all stakeholders to make Policy more inclusive, effective and acceptable.

b. National Sports Federations are responsible to promote and develop the elite training programs of their respective sports, ensure the technical conduct of their respective sports in accordance with international standards and rules and to take measures necessary to participate in international competitions. NSFs have to ensure development of sports at grass root level i.e. clubs and schools with the help of Provincial Sports Boards through Provincial Sports Association.

The evaluation of National Sports Federations should be based on parameters of promotion and development of their respective sports and overall performance. Unfortunately instead of focusing on performance, NFs are forced to implement governance models which are almost obsolete in global sports system. The funds given to Federations are inadequate, and without understanding Elite Sports System, expecting performance from National Federations is not justifiable. POA organized seminars and wrote papers to stakeholder over this essential aspect of sports system.

- c. Pakistan Olympic Association is entrusted to promote and develop the Olympic Movement in Pakistan, ensure participation of Pakistani athletes in international multi sports Games and assist in technical aspects of development of sports.

**7. Budget**

- a. The President highlighted an anomaly wherein it is being said that due to devolution the Federal Government has no role to play. This he said is not correct as the elite training and development will always remain with the Federal government in the present scenario. We must understand elite sports development and what all it entails. This entail a host of measures for the elite like high quality coaches, Medical sciences and support to the athlete (Physio, nutritionist, sports injuries specialists) etc, participation in International competition etc, and this too all year round. To expect the Federations to do all this in the Rs. 1.5 million (average) is fallacy.
- b. POA in its limited capacity has been providing support from the IOC. Shooting is one such example where POA got three years scholarship from the IOC and their shooters as a result qualified.
- c. It is important to study what other countries are doing for sports development. India reportedly allocated 17000 million towards sports development all funded by the government. POA in its humble capacity can provide whatever help is required.

**8. 14<sup>th</sup> South Asian Games, Pakistan**

- a. The next chapter of the Games have been allocated to Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has in principle agreed to organize the Games. We are expecting to hold meetings with various quarters including South Asian Countries soon after the situation, due to COVID – 19, normalizes.

**9. 34<sup>th</sup> National Games, Quetta**

- a. The 34<sup>th</sup> National Games have been allocated to Quetta and POA shall hold meetings with Government of Balochistan as soon as the situation normalizes.

**Muhamad Khalid Mahmood**  
Secretary General  
Pakistan Olympic Association