

Road to 2036 Olympics

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Road to 2036 Olympics : Historic Sports Governance and Anti-Doping Reforms

Context

India's sports governance has long faced challenges such as political interference, lack of transparency, weak institutional frameworks, and insufficient compliance with **global sporting norms**. Multiple reform attempts since **1975** failed due to political and administrative hurdles. As India prepares to bid for the **2036 Summer Olympics**, strengthening sports administration and anti-doping measures has become a strategic necessity.

Introduction

The **Lok Sabha** has passed two landmark legislations — the **National Sports Governance Bill 2025** and the **National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill 2025** — marking a comprehensive overhaul of the sports administration and anti-doping system. Union Sports Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** described these as the “*single biggest sports reform since independence*”, aimed at building a **transparent, accountable, and high-performance sports ecosystem**.

National Sports Governance Bill 2025

- Establishes new sports bodies, including the **National Olympic Committee**, **National Paralympic Committee**, and **National and Regional Sports Federations** for designated sports.
- Creates the **National Sports Board (NSB)** to grant recognition to sports bodies, register affiliated units, and monitor compliance, with powers to **de-recognise federations** for unfair elections, fund mismanagement, or serious irregularities.
- Sets up the **National Sports Tribunal** with **civil court powers** to resolve disputes related to selection, elections, or governance of federations; its decisions can only be challenged in the **Supreme Court**.
- Introduces **accountability measures**, bringing all recognised sports bodies receiving government funds under the **RTI Act**, except entities like the **BCCI** unless substantially

government-funded.

- Relaxes the leadership age limit, allowing administrators aged **70-75 years** to contest elections if permitted by their international federations.

National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill 2025

- Grants **operational independence** to the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)**, addressing concerns of the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** over autonomy.
- Retains the **National Anti-Doping Board**, but removes its authority to influence NADA operations.
- Aligns India's anti-doping framework with the **WADA Code** and the **UNESCO Convention**, ensuring athlete rights, fair play, and global compliance.

Significance

- Aligns India's sports administration with the **Olympic Charter** and international best practices, strengthening its **2036 Olympics bid**.
- Closes a reform gap that persisted for nearly **five decades**.
- Promotes **gender inclusion** through increased representation of women in sports bodies and leadership roles.
- Enhances India's ability to improve performance in **international competitions** by ensuring transparency and reducing political influence.

Conclusion

The passage of these Bills represents a historic turning point in India's sports policy, addressing structural weaknesses while aligning with **global governance and anti-doping standards**. Successful implementation will depend on **effective enforcement**, **institutional autonomy**, and **sustained investment in athlete development**, which together can transform India into a competitive global sporting nation.