

Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, announced **"Players Benefit Fund" of Rs 25 lakhs for** **former Badminton Players – Ms. Meena Shah.** **the first recipient**

Lucknow: Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, President, Badminton Association of India has set up a special BAI fund of Rs 25 lakhs for the benefit of former Badminton Players' having played at National and International level and shall be in need of financial assistance.

Announcing the action plan of the BAI of India after being re-elected its President for a second term, Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta admitted the sum is "not a big amount" but maintained that "it could help some former Champions and players who need it."

This is one of the 'first-of-its-kind' concrete step taken by BAI under the leadership of Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta. "The fund we have constituted is one of our effort to help former players who need financial assistance," Dr. Gupta said and specified that every year Rs. 25 lakhs will be allocated to this Fund which shall not lapse if the complete amount is not donated in an year. The amount of the Fund will be carry forward and add to the next year's fund.

Ms. Meena Shah from Uttar Pradesh, born on 31st January 1936 and now aged about 78 years, former Badminton queen of the 1960's is the first recipient of the financial assistance of Rs. 2.51 lakhs out of this fund for her medical treatment as she is suffering from spinal canal stenosis.



Meena Shah dominated the Indian Badminton scene for long— winning the Singles title in the Senior National Badminton Championships for seven years in a row (from 1959 to 1965) besides winning the Women's Doubles title thrice (in 1956, 1964 & 1965), the Mixed Doubles crown twice (in 1958 & 1965) and having performed well at the International level as well.

Meena Shah is honored with the Arjuna Award in 1962 and the Padma Shri Award in 1993 for her achievements at National and International level. She is also recipient of Laxman Award, the highest State Sports Award. She has also been honored with 'Life Time Achievement Award' by UP Badminton Association in recent past.

Meena Shah worked as an enquiry officer with the North Eastern Railways and took voluntary retirement in 1988.

Those who knew her well recall her tremendous fighting quality and grace of movement on court. They were amazed at her fluidity of movement and repertoire of strokes.
