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Iran's Soraya Aghaei Becomes First Female Member Elected to International Olympic Committee (IOC)

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Soraya Aghaei Hajiagha, an Iranian badminton player, was elected as a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) during the 145th IOC Session held in Milan, Italy.

She became the first female IOC member from Iran and one of the youngest members of the Committee.

Voting & Membership Details

Aghaei secured her position by a 95-2 vote.

She is the 107th member of the IOC; this body includes former athletes, sports administrators, diplomats, and other distinguished figures.

Her term is for eight years, during which she will participate in key decisions such as selecting the host city for the 2036 Summer Olympics

Historical Significance

Aghaei is the third Iranian ever to join the IOC and the first Iranian member since 2004.

She joins the IOC at a time when the organisation is headed by its first female president, Kirsty Coventry, reflecting broader gender inclusion. Women now make up about 45% of IOC members

Athletic Background

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Soraya Aghaei represented Iran in badminton at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, becoming Iran's first female badminton Olympian.

Before her, the only Iranian badminton player at the Olympics was Kaveh Mehrabi in 2008

Importance for Women & Sport

This election is seen as a step toward enhancing female representation in global sports leadership, especially from countries with historically low women's involvement in international sport.

It also aligns with broader IOC reforms emphasising gender balance and athlete representation.

About the International Olympic Committee (IOC):

The IOC was founded in 1894 and is responsible for the organisation and governance of the Olympic Games.

IOC membership includes former Olympic athletes, sports federation chiefs, political leaders, and other influential individuals.

The IOC has been taking steps to improve gender parity, with nearly half its membership now women following recent reforms.