

[Sport](#) » [Other Sports](#)

## Saina aims to be number one by year-end



PTI TAAS Chairman R.S. Paroda felicitates badminton player Saina Nehwal for her triumphs in the Singapore and Indonesia Super Series, during a function organised by ICAR in New Delhi on Thursday. Photo: PTI

Happy to have achieved her targets "very fast", badminton icon Saina Nehwal on Thursday said she was now aiming to be number one by the end of the year.

"I was aiming to be in the top-five bracket this year and I can't believe that I have already reached the number three ranking. I reached my targets very fast in my career. I worked very hard for it. Number one target is also not very far. I would love to reach there by this year-end," she said at a felicitation function organised by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR).

On the occasion, Director-General of ICAR S. Ayyappan invited Saina to become the Brand Ambassador for ICAR "to encourage more youth to join the farm sector", which she graciously accepted. Saina's father, Harvir Singh, a principal scientist with the Directorate of Oilseeds Research (an ICAR lab) in Hyderabad, was present.

Speaking to a jam-packed hall of distinguished farm scientists, 20-year-old Saina said after the hat-trick, her aim was to do well in the World Championships, Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. "I have to put in a lot of hard work and I am confident of doing well."

Saina caught the nation's imagination with her impressive successive wins at the Indian Open Grand Prix Gold, the Singapore Open Super Series before defending her Indonesian Open Super Series title in Jakarta last fortnight.

"It was not easy winning 15 matches on the trot, but I did it. I am happy to get this entire media attention but I will not get distracted and will stay focused," a beaming Saina assured senior scientists.

She also assured her father of winning the Olympic gold in 2012. "My father wanted me to become a doctor, but I chose badminton. He told me 'do whatever you want but give it your 100 per cent'. In 2008 he wanted me to win the Olympic gold but I lost."

### Credit to parents

Giving credit to her parents for her success she said they had sacrificed a lot for her. "It is only now that I have learnt that my father took loans to buy me expensive racquets costing about Rs. 15,000 each, which I lost many times on a train or in an auto-rickshaw."

She had a word of special praise for her mother, Usha, a former Haryana badminton champion. "My father is emotional but my mother is very strong. She used to tell me that I should never be afraid and should think I am the Roger Federer of badminton. This has helped me a lot in my career. I never get bogged down by the ranking of my opponent and feel I can take on anyone."

She said her coach Gopi Chand would train her very hard. She practised for eight hours a day and would eat lunch and sleep during training and return home late evening. "I have been training since the age of nine without any rest."

Keywords: [Saina Nehwal](#), [Indian badminton champ](#), [ICAR](#)