



SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC
**UNIFIED BADMINTON
CHAMPIONSHIP**
THAILAND 2019

Inaugural International Badminton Championship for athletes with and without intellectual disabilities off to a smashing start in Bangkok



More than 150 delegates from 14 countries will take part in the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Unified Badminton Championship held in Bangkok, from 13 November to 16 November 2019.

Hosted by Special Olympics Thailand, and supported by the Badminton Association of Thailand, the Sports Authority of Thailand and Plan B Media, **the event is a showcase of the power of sport to foster mutual understanding, respect and acceptance for people with intellectual disabilities.**



The championship will welcome athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to display their courage, passion and skills as part of a global movement to create positive change and drive social inclusion.

Thailand will welcome teams from countries across both the Asia Pacific and East Asia regions including Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka.

Mr Dipak Natali, Acting President and Managing Director of Special Olympics

Asia Pacific, said: "I am hopeful that this inaugural unified championship will foster deeper understanding and friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities across the region. It confirms what millions of badminton fans across Asia already know – the power of sport to elevate, unite and include."



The result of a global partnership between Special Olympics and the Badminton World Federation (BWF), this is the first unified badminton championship to be held in Asia since the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was announced during the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, UAE, held in March 2019. The long-term alliance aims to create growth opportunities and enhance participation in badminton events throughout the world.

In the Asia Pacific region, Special Olympics has collaborated with Badminton Asia and Badminton Oceania since 2018 to equip coaches with resources and skills to deliver inclusive, high-quality badminton training to athletes with and without intellectual disabilities. Between 2017 and 2018, there was a



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25,000 increase in the number of Special Olympics athletes taking up the sport across the Asia Pacific region. Special Olympics Bharat will be represented by a team of four male and four female athletes.

Quote from Head of the Delegation: Mr Victor R Vaz National Sports Director, SO Bharat:

Events like this help in building confidence of our Athletes, motivating them to achieve greater heights. Dynamic collaborations like the one between SO Thailand and the Badminton Association of Thailand, are a doorway for maintaining superior quality sport specific standards for both Athletes and Coaches. This international event speaks louder about Inclusion as it provides a platform for Unified pairs (players with and without Intellectual Disabilities) to coordinate and bond on and beyond sports

More than 2,300 spectators are expected to attend the Opening Ceremony of the badminton championship, which will be graced by some of Thailand's biggest music and sports stars. They include Special Olympics Thailand's brand ambassadors, popular girl group BNK48 and singer Ada Chuhavajira. National badminton champion Boonsak Polsana will also lead the parade of athletes. Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports Mr Pipat Ratchakitprakan will attend as Guest of Honour.

About Special Olympics Bharat

Special Olympics Bharat is a National Sports Federation supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt of India and accredited by Special Olympics Inc. to conduct sports and development programmes all over India. It organizes Olympic-type sports opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities whilst also providing a full range of off the field activities and initiatives that are geared towards supporting and improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics is a global inclusion movement using sport, health, education and leadership programs every day around the world to end discrimination against and empower people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1968, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 6 million athletes and Unified Sports partners in more than 190 countries. Special Olympics works through seven regions, out of which India falls under the Asia Pacific Region. In the Asia Pacific region, Special Olympics has touched the lives of more than 1.7 million athletes across 34 countries.

Let's Cheer the Unified pairs:

Pravat Baral & Bibeka Nanda from Odisha

Tanveer Singh & Sanyam Grover ; Kalpana & Arpita Malik from
Chandigarh

Vijaylakshmi and Subhalakshmi from Puducherry