

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

Special Athlete assumes chair of the Chief Field Officer of UNICEF for a day



In celebration of the World Children's Day 2022, Ittesama Khatun, footballer from SO Bharat (Special Olympics Bharat)- West Bengal was invited to symbolically assume the chair of the Chief Field Officer, UNICEF, West Bengal for a day. She led her co-residents from the Asha Bhavan Centre Kolkata to the UNICEF office and was the celebrated Chief Guest there. [Read More](#)

Ittesama was also presented the 'Best Sports person (Special Category)' award by the State Government in observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022. Her achievements in the sports field motivate many residents who share space with her at the center and in the sports field. Ittesama is a cheerful and expressive person with an Intellectual Disability and hearing impairment. Says Ms Arunima Jasu, Superintendent, Asha Bhavan Centre, "We feel proud when we see how the Unified Cup 2022 has made a difference to

Ittesama. Her body language has changed, she looks cheerful and confident. She has become a source of inspiration to the other residents who too want to participate in sports. We currently have six athletes preparing for the Berlin Games 2023 in Handball and Football"

It may be recalled that Ittesama was the goal keeper with the Unified football female team that participated in the Unified Cup 2022 held in Detroit, Michigan, USA earlier this year. She was commended for having made more than 23 saves during the tournament.

A wide-ranging exchange nurturing advocates for inclusion



Photo Credit: Special Olympics -Asia Pacific Region

One of the most enriching learnings come from exchanging experiences and ideas with each other. Leveraging the fact SOAP(Special Olympics-Asia Pacific Region) organised a virtual 'Best Practise Workshop 2022' recently, preparing the youth to welcome the new year with a refreshed approach. 21 youth leaders from 10 countries across the region shared their projects across three main themes: start, scale, and sustain.

Pairs from SO Bharat who have been engaged at the core of Youth Activation for several years presented their initiatives across each of the three themes. While Gayatri Pore and Saloni Mhapsekar presented Typed tales which is a digital platform that converts opinion and experiences of Athletes into stories, Kalash Kaushal and Yashika Bhatt spoke about thir activations in schools and colleges and Aarushi Sharma and Mahi Dheri detailed out Pratishtha, a flagship initiative of the youth that encourages community awareness and sports participation. [Read More](#)

The experience is unmatched as virtual changes to physical engagements



The Unified Champion School program supported by MBZ (Mohammad Bin Zayed) re-connected the Odisha Football Club (OFC) with the SO Bharat Odisha Chapter. Last month revived the connection with OFC on Children's Day with recreational football amidst much fervor. It may be recalled that SO Bharat-Odisha had signed an MOU with the club in 2019 for the development of grassroots football, coaching and training programs. The developing bond that was rudely interrupted by the pandemic, revived recently. In the words of the President of the Club, Mr. Raj Athwal, "I see a lot of talent in the youth who have come here and think that they can reach the stars if groomed properly. We will work together to take this forward"



Adding another layer to the event, Indramani Kandi and Kalpana Jena SOB-Odisha Youth leaders with and without Intellectual Disability, were the spokespersons at the event including confidently appearing before Media interviews. Indramani Kandi, Athlete leader came back in the program after a long spell of battling COVID 19-related challenges within his family. Indramani represented SO Bharat at the Global Youth Summit held during the Abu Dhabi World Games and had engaged with Youth Activation actively until the pandemic. [View here](#)

Adding a splash of color to ability



A splash of color on a wide span of wings was one of the pieces of art that beautified the National Gallery of Modern Art Delhi on 3 December 2022. 75 Special Olympics Athletes created art and interacted with Dr Mallika Nadda, Chairperson of SO Bharat along with several esteemed representatives of the Government of India and renowned artists.

This initiative of the Art Gallery in collaboration with SO Bharat and 'Citizens for Welfare' highlighted the occasion with encouraging creativity amongst Persons with Intellectual Disability. Everyone won prizes and were offered a continuing platform for attending classes of art/ painting at the Art Gallery. [Read More](#)

The SRM University signs an MoU with SO Bharat to build capacity



The SRM University Sonipat, Haryana and SO Bharat inked an MoU recently, jointly committing to build capacity by educating and training more and more people to fuel sustained quality growth. The support of the SRM University would re-start a modified PG (post graduate) Diploma in Special Olympics. The course will continue the legacy established by the Rama Krishna Mission University at Coimbatore which ran the course for many years churning out several trained Master trainers and Coaches in the subject.

Dr Mallika Nadda, Chairperson SO Bharat and Mr Ravi Pachamotoo, Chancellor of SRM University signed the MoU in the presence of the several distinguished guests at the University campus. Mr Pachamotoo expressed a deep desire of the SRM group to recognise spaces of need in the society and support with relevance

The PG Diploma course will be conducted in conjunction with the Special Olympics global strategy, for a duration of 6 weeks, training a cadre of Master trainers in Special Olympics Sports, Unified Sports, Youth Activation, Young Athletes, Healthy Athletes along with leadership training. The modules would include both, theory and practise with the participation of the Athletes, wherever required. [Read More](#)

A small package of ceaseless energy

Delhi, New Delhi



The 3rd of December 2022 saw all of 8 yr old Avnish Tiwari, a Special Olympics Athlete from Madhya Pradesh standing next to the President of India at the Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. While pursuing sports at Special Olympics, Avnish continues to explore his abilities with a passionate and overwhelming support of his father, Mr Aditya Tiwari. At the age of 7 he scaled the base camp of Mt Everest, a tough feat by itself, with an additional tag of being the youngest to do so. The achievement booked his entry in the Golden Book of World Records being the youngest differently abled child to trek the Himalayan Kala Patthar' with his father. In recognition of his work at such a young age the

National Award for Individual Excellence 2022 under the category, 'Shreshtha Divyang Bal/Balika' was presented to him on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, by Smt Droupadi Murmu, the hon'ble President of India. [View here](#)



Sports resonates across the state of Punjab with the 23rd State Games



The 23rd Punjab State Special Olympics were held at the Guru Nanak Public School Ludhiana from 18 Nov to 20 Nov 2022 witnessing participation of over 400 Special Athletes from 22 districts. Since 1998 these games have been continuously held except during the pandemic. The Games featured Athletics, Badminton, Bocce and Roller Skating along with a Coaches Clinic training 53 Coaches from 45 Special Schools. Through the long-standing partnership between SO Bharat Punjab & FICCI Flo Ludhiana, a camp for eye screenings of the special athletes was organized by Vision Spring during the State Games [News](#)

Expanding Awareness of Abilities at the FICCI 'TURF'

On 26 November 2022, at the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industries) Annual Sports event, TURF, SO Bharat marked its entry showcasing talents of Special Athletes beyond sports. The residents of the Asha Kiran & the Asha Jyoti Home, Delhi presented a colorful and foot-tapping dance performance in between the multiple award announcements. It was for the first time that SO Bharat was highlighted at the prestigious convergence of distinguished sports stakeholders.



Ms Mukta Narain Thind, National Director -OD,SO Bharat participated in the Panel Discussion providing inputs on 'India's Special Sports Strategy, explicating how we reach the grassroots with the sports program as it brings about development and change in the lives of persons with intellectual disability. Mr Gautam Gambhir, Indian politician and former cricketer, also present at the occasion, said that when an Indian coaches another Indian, the emotion and the equation is very connecting and unmatched. Ms Thind, taking reference and relating with the quote expressed that when an Athlete would train another, that would spell success in terms of Special Olympics Athlete development. The evening felicitated SO Bharat as the 'Best NGO promoting Sports' and Mr Shrey Kadian as 'Sportsperson of the Year (Special)' for his achievement in the LA World Games 2015 in Softball.

The first ever Young Athletes Pediatric Screening piloted in Haryana



On 22 November 2022 SO Bharat conducted health screenings of the young athletes at the DAV School Gurgaon, Sector 10A, Haryana. 15 Special Athletes from the school were examined across key parameters in conjunction with the Special Olympics guidelines. Dr Puja Kapoor, Clinical Director, Pediatric Screening, SO Bharat supervised the screenings which were carried out by 20 Clinical volunteers from the SGT University and the Civil Hospital Sector 10 Gurgaon, assisted by 13 non-clinical volunteers from the Amity University UP, NOIDA. The Volunteers

made sure to keep the Young Athletes fruitfully occupied in between the screenings, as approx 45 mins



were spent on examining a single athlete. The screening trajectory of every Athlete ended with Dr Puja Kapoor who engaged with the Athletes and their families, often spending time in one-on-one counselling.

Dr Puja Kapoor is a Pediatric neurologist, having a vast experience of working with persons with Autism, hyperactivity, behavioral problems etc. *"With Children with Intellectual Disability we have to be sure that they have all the sensory needs met, to be able to mainstream them"*. Further commenting on the parents of persons with Intellectual Disabilities she said, *"I carry nothing but appreciation and admiration for the parents who so selflessly continue to flex their lifestyles to bring the best for their children with special needs. Their sacrifice, patience and determination surpass anything else."*

Regular sports activity gets rolling in Assam



Three Sports Centres were launched in Assam on 9 November, through the support of NHPC. *NHPC Limited is an Indian government hydropower board under the ownership of Ministry of Power, Government of India.* Ms Rinki Bhuyan Sharma, Social Activist & Businesswoman (wife of the hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma) convened the event that followed a hybrid mode of reaching out to a larger audience virtually while also congratulating the Athletes and guests who had gathered at the three centers across the districts of Jorhat, Goalpara and Kamrup

The Sports centers in Assam have started to create spaces of sports, boosting energy and environment. Since the launch, there have been over 170 Athletes who have availed the three facilities playing Athletics, Football, Bocce, Badminton. Two-hour sessions are held five days a week. The Centres have come alive with sporting activity with a Head Coach at each center and two assistant coaches (Special Athletes) at the Kamrup district. All the three head coaches are currently completing the third level of the Special Olympics training, ensuring to deliver at the grassroot with quality. Sports here is not an event but a way of life that

encourages development and change. Three more centres are in the pipeline, to take the program to the districts of Morigaon, Dibrugarh & Darrang

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