

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

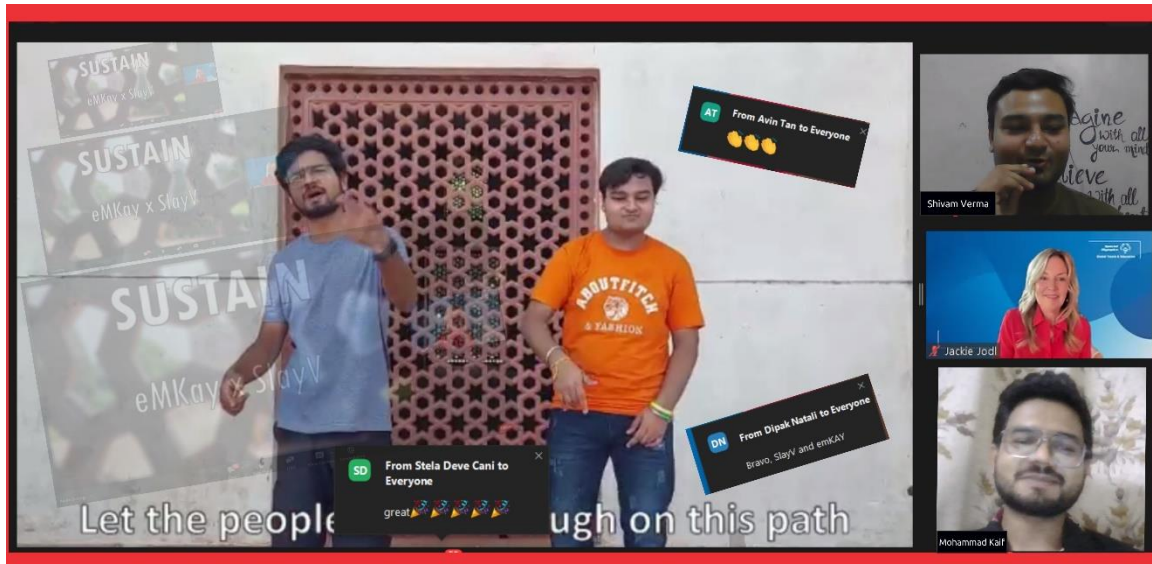
The Prime Minister's *Mann Ki Baat* highlights the Special Olympics Bharat Athletes



The 106th edition of Man Ki Baat aired on 29 October 2023 had the hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi speak about the Special Olympics Bharat Athletes, positioning their achievements alongside more stories of national interest. The episode highlighted the achievements of the SO Bharat Athletes at the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in June 2023 in Germany and of others too who continue to push their limits to achieve a higher acceptance in sports and in their communities. The Prime Minister lauded the role of Special Olympics in bringing the abilities of Special athletes to the fore. The episode highlighted the SO Bharat athletes through the persistent follow up of Dr Mallika Nadda, President, SO Bharat

Mann ki baat is a monthly radio program of PM Narendra Modi, where he interacts with the citizens of India on themes and issues that matters to the nation. The first edition was aired in October 2014. As per a study commissioned by Prasar Bharati and conducted by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Rohtak, published earlier this year, over 100 crore people have listened to PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' at least once. [More on the study](#)

The Unified pair that 'Raps' to relay messages



Shivam Verma and Mohammad Kaif got an opportunity to work together during the very first National Youth leadership Summit held in May 2019, and a natural bond developed later. They got an opportunity to play football together. While engaging repeatedly they realised that they harboured a unique and a common interest. They naturally churned out Raps around specific topics. The first spoke about SO Bharat and its foundation by Air Marshal Keelor and the second about the UN SDGs specifically about Inclusion in Education.

Shivam and Kaif were invited by the Special Olympics International at their monthly global webinar held in October 2023 to speak about their learnings through this experience. The Webinar presented the timeline of the inception and growth of Unified Champion Schools that promote & encourage Unified sports in schools and colleges while allowing the youth to engage inclusively and take the lead in spreading the impact from schools to communities.

The passion of an Athlete that promises to deliver



It is not easy to meet the President of a sports association. But Shrey Kadian, our Athlete leader did it, all on his own. Following a long persistence, Shrey, a Gold Medallist in Softball from the World Games LA USA 2015, got to meet Ms Neetal Narang, President of the Softball Association of India (SFAI) in September of 2023. Without any reference and depending only on his passion for the sport, he reached out to her for the first time in March 2021 and the follow ups went on. The meeting in September provided him with an opportunity of explain Unified sports to her and its application to softball. He enlightened her on the achievement at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in 2015, in softball. They discussed the readiness of the SO Bharat Athletes to play softball at all levels in the country.

The discussions were holistic covering training of the Coaches in Unified softball and the existing infrastructure.

For Shrey there is no looking back, having received a Softball Coaches training certificate by a SAI (Sports Authority of India) supported program this year. He plans to leverage his youtube channel for spreading information about the sport in India; intends meeting various school administration officials to explore its possibility in schools, as well as have softball e-gaming too. He certainly hopes and is working on entering an MoU with the Softball Association of India soon

Quiz-abled highlights another dimension of the abilities of the Athletes

Quizabled returned to Delhi running its second edition in the state on 7 Oct 2023. The curtains went up at the Shaheed Hemu Kalani Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya, Inclusive Education Branch, DOE, GNCT Delhi bringing back the excitement that touched over 650 attendees. From 40 schools approx 280 children with intellectual disabilities, autism & cerebral palsy, hearing impairment and visual impairment participated pushing their thoughts to respond to questions posed by the Quizmaster, Mr Himadri Banerjee, related with Sports, Bollywood, current affairs and more.



The Chief Guest, Mr Himanshu Gupta, Director Education, Govt of NCT (National Capital Territory of Delhi) witnessed the occasion with much enthusiasm appreciating the initiative as another step towards mainstreaming the marginalised. Mr Mallikarjuna lytha, Founder & CEO, Inclusive Divyangjan Entrepreneur Association (IDEA), special invitee joined Dr Mallika Nadda, President, SO Bharat, Ms Upasna Arora, Treasurer SO Bharat, Ms Ruma Banerjee, Vice-President Seva-in-action, and Mr Vignesh from LTIMindtree. Speaking on the occasion Mr Gupta said, *“Events, out-of-the-ordinary such as Quizabled create an environment where children with special needs look forward to attending school. They enjoy and develop a sense of belonging that makes them feel included. Having such activities is the need of the hour”*

Quizabled is a distinctive quiz competition for children and youngsters with disabilities, organized by Seva-in-Action and powered by LTI Mindtree. The event was organized in collaboration with SO Bharat to realize a common vision, which is that of Inclusion of the marginalized sections of the society.

Discussion on setting up Unified Fitness Clubs



The concept of a unified fitness club was opened to discussion, for the first time at Amity University UP NOIDA, led by Ms Sulekha Rana, Director Sports SO Bharat. A group of about 35 youth including sports students, athlete leaders and volunteers, including those from Amity and Jaypee Public School, attended the session.



The Club follows the Unified Sports Recreation Model and focuses on participation rather than competition. The session had a few unified activities along with discussions on the same. The structure of the program was discussed along with a regular and monitored regime of fitness that is set to enhance friendships as well. A parent present at the session even volunteered to organise the activity in her neighbourhood, sparking an idea of taking it to the community level as well. The discussions have paved the way to pilot the program across various schools and colleges in Delhi , later spreading it across India.

The Special Athletes take on WWF's Tide Turner Challenge



21 unified pairs representing 17 schools and colleges from the Delhi NCT for the first time participated in an environment awareness initiative of the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) in Delhi. The one-day master class turned the attention of the athletes and the youth leaders towards uncommon concepts of environment and plastic pollution. The session added fun activities and interactions enabling a better understanding of the concepts. The athletes enthusiastically participated as they found the discussions relatable. Following this session there will be few more activations to complete the challenge, throwing in an element of unified sports that would blend sports with social responsibility.

WWF- India in partnership with UN Environment Programme has conceptualized the Tide Turners' Plastic Challenge 2023, a global movement of committing youth and citizens to act on the cause of plastic pollution. Tide -Turners is extending its resources to youth from diverse backgrounds and communities, giving them a platform to lead the change as advocates for a better environment.

In discussion on urban accessibility for persons with invisible disabilities



SO Bharat participated in a multi-stakeholder discussion organised by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy on the topic- 'Imagining Urban Accessibility for Persons with Invisible Disabilities'.

Over the past few months, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy (Vidhi) has been conducting research to identify how best to imagine the accessibility of urban spaces for persons with invisible disabilities, and has sought to start the conversation with a particular focus on psychosocial disabilities and mental illness, intellectual disability and the autism spectrum. The research drove them to deliberate on the subject jointly, with stakeholders from diverse and related fields, including Special Olympics Bharat.

The session held at the India International Centre, Delhi was opened with insightful inputs shared by Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, in his keynote address. The day witnessed a confluence of stakeholders spanning the fields of disability, law and policy, education, architecture and urban planning, social work etc. The various aspects of living in a city with invisible disabilities, and the ground realities of existing accessibility practices and barriers were

discussed and possible solutions were shared through experiences of the representatives and their respective endeavours to make 'accessibility' in cities and urban spaces holistically inclusive.

Induction Training for the officials of SO Bharat



SO Bharat conducted an induction training for officials from seven states of India at the Amity University UP NOIDA on 11 and 12 October 2023. The training took them through various operational aspects leading to the Special Olympics global strategy 2021-2024. The training was led by the officials of the National office and youth leaders, opening with the remarks of the leadership.

The trainees were familiarized with the ongoing programs and projects to enable their successful implementation in their respective states. Unified Bocce created a sports experience that demonstrated the spirit of sports as an effective tool for development and inclusion

Increased number of Athletes enter the SO Bharat Board amplifying Athlete Leadership



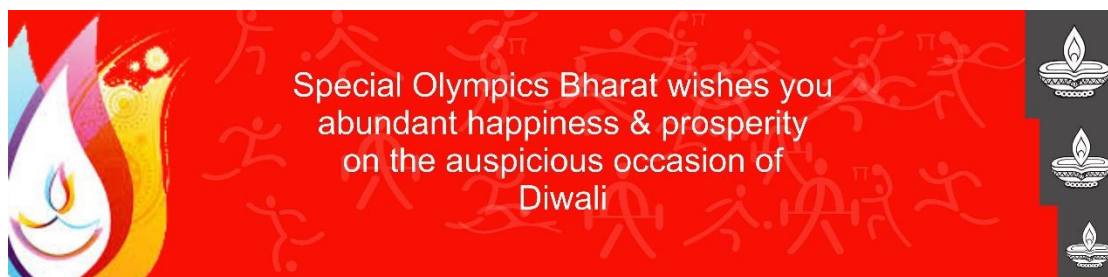
The newly elected SO Bharat board has three special athletes as members who will continue to serve for a term of four years. They are happy to be part of a platform that would help them voice their opinions and suggestions.

Shivani, Cyclist from Delhi, won three gold medals in cycling at the Special Olympics World Summer games held in 2023 in Berlin Germany. Having overcome several personal challenges, she stood tall on the victory stand symbolising her achievements beyond the sports field as well.

Anurag Prasad, powerlifter from Chattisgarh, settled for nothing less than 3 gold and 1 silver medal at the World Games this year. His victory overcomes bullying and hardships that come with an underprivileged background, making him resilient and fearless.

Aaynu Sharma, Badminton player from Rajasthan, won a silver and a bronze medal in the Abu Dhabi World Games held in 2019. He is currently a Badminton Coach in an academy and a school. In this role as a board member, he wishes to draw attention towards employing Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities. Inclusion, he feels, comes through awareness, and wishes to push that through as well.

The Athletes are confident to assume the role of a board member and the enormous responsibility, after having demonstrated their resolve to win in the sports arena.



PARTNERS IN INCLUSION



www.specialolympicsbharat.org | [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [You tube](#), [Linkedin](#)