

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

Shining once again at the Asian Powerlifting Championship 2023



T Vishal , powerlifter from Puducherry, India, soon after having celebrated his victory at the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Berlin Germany in June 2023, turned his attention to the National Powerlifting Championship held at Kashipur in Uttarakhand in August 2023. 14 Athletes with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities participated there. At the Championship T Vishal got selected, along with 6 powerlifters in the special category for the 2023 Asian Classic Powerlifting Championship Johor Bahru Malaysia held in December 2023. Joining them there were more Special Olympics Athletes from other parts of the world. [T Vishal at the Championship](#) (at 13.06)

Vishal won four gold medals across all three routines, bench press, squat, deadlift, and combo, in the senior category. There was also an Athlete, Prithvi, with Down Syndrome, who won four gold in the sub-junior category. The event and its preparation has brought Prithvi closer to Special Olympics and he is all set to join the organisation soon. The event featured Athletes from Special Olympics (from other programs as well) for the first time with the next step for all being the International Powerlifting Championship to be held in Iceland in November 2024

New Year Message from the President of SO Bharat



“I am delighted to reach out at the end of yet another year of achievements that we have accomplished together. Special Olympics is, every year, adding new dimensions in its efforts of bringing about the inclusion of persons with Intellectual disabilities, world over. With placing sports in the heart of the movement, the commitment to mainstream the Athletes is spreading beyond limitations” – Dr Mallika Nadda, 31 Dec 2023 [Read More](#)

While recounting the achievements of the year 2023 she launched a booklet that documents stories of 75 athletes, in celebration of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav that upheld 75 years of independence and development. The booklet titled, ‘Shining leaves’ maps the impact of the movement in India through individual experiences. [Shining leaves](#)

The Athletes spend an evening with the volleyball champions



Shivaprasad, an SO Bharat volleyball athlete from Gulbarga, Karnataka, enjoyed a memorable moment of exchanging jersey with a player from Sir Safety Perugia. It brought him joy, taking him away from the daily toil of his parents who are labourers. The event transported him from dreadful squalor to a colourful splash and hardcore sport. It has made him take his regular volleyball practises more seriously.

The FIVB (International Volleyball Federation) and Special Olympics (SO) once again joined forces during the Volleyball Men's Club World Championship 2023 in Bengaluru, India with an aim of promoting inclusion and unity through sports. Ten exceptional Special Olympics Bharat athletes joined the formidable team from Brazil, Itambé Minas and the World Club Champions – Sir Safety Perugia from Italy, to engage in a symbolic jersey exchange ceremony. According to FIVB the event established an important follow-up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between FIVB and Special Olympics International during the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023 in June.

FIVB President Dr Ary S. Graça F^o said: "The commemorative jersey exchange ceremony, held in collaboration with Special Olympics Bharat during the Volleyball Men's Club World Championship in India, demonstrated our shared values of inclusivity, empowerment and promoting a healthy lifestyle, and we look forward to expanding this collaboration over the coming years."

Sports and celebration in Chandigarh



Special Olympics Bharat Chandigarh, Special Olympics Himachal Pradesh, Rotary members, and the Social Welfare Department of Chandigarh jointly organised the North Zone Mega Sports event, RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) at the Punjab University from 11-13 December 2023. A total of 177 athletes and coaches from 6 states, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh, participated in a multitude of games including badminton, bocce and athletics. Dental and Eye check-ups were conducted on the sidelines of the event.

The grand event was inaugurated by esteemed dignitaries including Sh. Ojaswee Sharma, a renowned film director, producer, and screenwriter of India, Mr. Nalin, International Gold Medallist and Special Athlete, and Mr. Navin Kumar, Joint Director SDM South with the closing ceremony presided by, Dr Malika Nadda, the President of Special Olympics Bharat

National Championship for figure and speed skating

The National Championship cum selection trials for figure and speed skating was held at the iSkate, Ambience Mall, Gurugram, Haryana from 1 - 6 December 2023. The event, in preparation of the upcoming world winter games to be held in Italy in March 2025, witnessed participation of 49 Athletes from seven states of India. Supported by the Govt of Haryana, the campers represented the states of Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, and Uttar Pradesh.



The first three days were dedicated to individual skills and acclimatizing to the sport and the arena that maintains a temperature of minus 7 to minus 8° Celsius. Kerala participated in speed skating for the first time, represented by the enthusiastic and surprising skill demonstrated by Appu K. Neha Kumari, Skater from Himachal Pradesh, after having attempted the Kazan Games, returned to demonstrated her upgraded skills alongside her co-Athletes, Deepanshu from Delhi and Tanshu from Haryana. The Camp even had the Coaches showcase their skill alongside mentoring the Athletes.

In her address Dr Nadda, recounted the past achievements of the Special Athletes, underscoring their abilities and determination to attempt any sport.

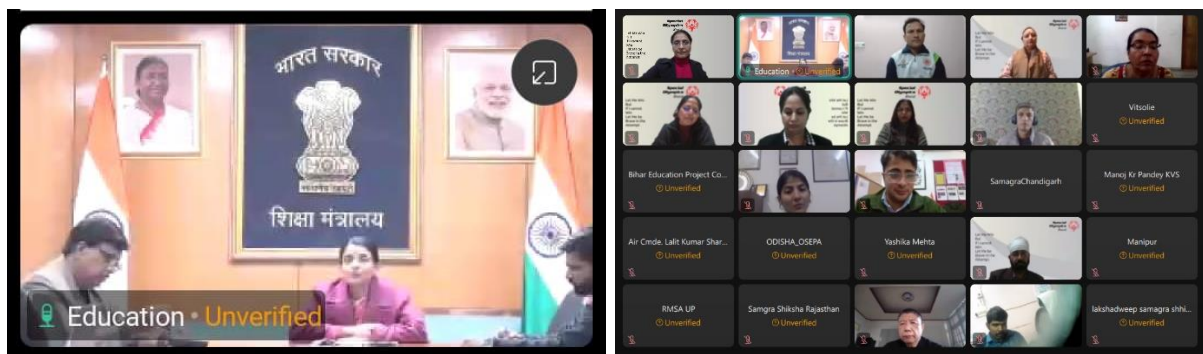
Pratishtha 5.0, a youth initiative to take inclusion beyond boundaries



'Pratishtha 5.0' (fifth edition of Pratishtha) was held in December at a public park in South Delhi bringing together approximately 200 people including special athletes, officials in an open format of unified sports. Relay Race, Football, Baggo along with art activity and a Zumba session had the evening walkers join the special athletes as they got introduced to Special Olympics unconventionally.

It was for the first time that WWF (World Wildlife Fund) partnered with SO Bharat at an event. They specifically led the art activity drawing attention of the participants to a more global objective of saving the environment. Being part of their 'Tide Turner Plastic Challenge' the athletes too gave thought to the harmful effects of single use plastic and the urgency curtailing its usage.

Virtual orientation session of unified sports for the Inclusive education coordinators of the state



The Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Govt of India, hosted a virtual session for the Inclusive education coordinators of all the states of India on 22 December 2023. The objective was to introduce the Special Olympics unified sports outlining its relevance in Inclusive education. The notification was extended to the State education secretaries, Commissioner KVS (Kendriya Vidyalaya) and NVS (Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti)

The session served the purpose of creating the first link between the SO Bharat State Chapter and the Education Department of the States. The session opened with the remarks of Dr Mallika Nadda; followed by Siddhant Nath and Kalash Kaushal (previously a youth leader) speaking about the impact of the program in their lives. They were joined by officials from the National and state offices, and those from unified champion schools who shared their experiences and procedures of implementing Special Olympics

The session was open to questions by the participants throughout, covering the practical aspects of applying unified sports in inclusive education, specifically.

The 24th edition of the Punjab Chapter State Games



Special Olympics Bharat (Punjab Chapter) organized the 24th Punjab State Special Olympics Games hosted by the District Special Olympics Association (DSOA) Ludhiana from December 8 to 10, 2023, at Guru Nanak Public School, Ludhiana. The event saw participation of 42 special schools of Punjab, 5 teams from different districts of DSOA Punjab & 10 teams from Samagra Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) from different districts of Punjab. Approximately 500+ athletes and 200 coaches, officials and volunteers participated in these three days sports extravaganza. The athletes participated in Athletics, Bocce, Badminton, Roller Skating, and Table Tennis.

The State games is an annual event being committedly followed by Punjab but, the true value is seen in the awareness that it spreads year after year about the abilities of persons with intellectual disabilities with a renewed hope and positivity.

The impact of sports spreads beyond the Athlete



At a Family Café session, Ms Rama Sita shared her overwhelming journey holding her son, Anil, no lesser than a hero. She recalled her not so bright academic past, attributing her achievements to date to Anil, a Special Olympics Athlete from Puducherry, India. Had it not been for him, she would not have completed her education. Neither did she have an inclination towards technology nor did they possess a laptop. Insisting on her doing so, Anil insisted that she did a course in computers, to stay 'updated'. Finances were always a strain, even to this date. He, however, helped her acquire a second-hand laptop. His mother completed the course with his help. It pains her to reminisce a time when the community Anil with her twin son, Akhil, who is neurotypical. The constant comparison somewhere hardened her to support Anil, who apart from participating in sports, demonstrates exceptional confidence and curiosity to promote the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities. As Anil's interest in learning increases, he keeps encouraging his mother to upgrade herself too. [Read More](#)

Champions



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