

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

## The ADP 2023 Global HR Summit – a life transforming experience



Advaith , the Swimmer



Advaith and his mother Ms. Indira at the HR Summit 2023

A new chapter opened in the life of KA Advaith on 22 Jan 2024 when he joined ADP as a Process Associate in Captiva Garnishments. In this role he processes checks, identifying reasons for non-payment of debts. His timings are quite comfortable from 11am to 8 pm. ADP has been very considerate in giving him cab conveyance both ways. He works off line on three days and works from home on two.

The ADP HR Summit held in mid of December in 2023 was an opportunity for Advaith, athlete from Telangana, to share his life journey and the world games story with a global audience. He is a silver medallist in swimming at the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Abu Dhabi in 2019. At the Summit he caught the attention of the audience, beginning with the meaning of his name- 'Advaith' that means 'Unique'. He went on to detail the challenges he and his family faced, in his early childhood. [Full story of Advaith](#)

Shortly after the HR Summit he received a job offer from ADP that ignited a combination of joy and anxiety in his parents. Delightfully, just a few days into his job were enough to comfort them.

“Advaith was elated with his first pay check. His positive experience at ADP, coupled with the caring and supportive atmosphere, has significantly boosted his confidence. While some specifically have played a crucial role in integrating him into the system, it is the whole team that has extended the necessary assistance and understanding. It seems like a promising journey for Advaith” says his mother, Ms Indira

The ADP induction has been a meaningful gift, especially cherished by both of Advaith's grandmas; as for Advaith he speaks excitedly about Special Olympics, “For me Special Olympics has been nothing short of ‘transformative’. The Athlete oath describes the very spirit of how we achieve excellence”

Dipak Natali, Regional President and Managing Director, Special Olympics Asia Pacific explains, “We tackle the issues of exclusion through playing sport, bridging our common humanity through the challenges and triumphs of sports and competition, and also beyond – in education, in health and workplaces.” He applauds progressive employers like ADP, even as he acknowledges that the road to

inclusion continues to be an uphill one, requiring a whole-of-society commitment. *“A truly inclusive workplace is one where People with Intellectual Disabilities (PWIDs) are able to learn, thrive, and be respected. Embracing diversity isn't just a moral imperative; it's the catalyst for innovation and creativity in workplaces, and a brighter, more inclusive future for all,”* he stresses.

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## Online Coaches training, a precursor to the Sports Centres in Kerala



23 Sports centres thrive across 9 states providing regular opportunities to approx. 1400-1500 Athletes across India, allowing sporting activities throughout the week. These are localised venues that open doors to the Athletes of SO Bharat and others as well, to access regular sports experiences, as an important part of their lives. The activities here focus on general fitness and sport specific training through appointed coaches, not for any specific event, but to develop, be meaningfully occupied and enable them to achieve their personal best; while being sport-ready always

50 more promise to open doors in the state of Kerala itself. The month of Feb witnessed a delightful interest in the state leading to an online Coaches training for 50 coaches from 40 schools, who were introduced to the SOI online courses and explained how to navigate through the same. Completing the course was the action plan for the trainees who were offered to reach out to the training facilitator, Mr Khurram and IT support, Mr Shivam Nautiyal, in case of need, supervised overall by Mr Jay Kapoor who is leading the Sports Centre program.

The roadmap is to open the centres in five phases beginning June 2024 and, completing the process by end of the year 2024

Looking forward to the centres in Kerala, Sister Rani, Program Manager, SO Bharat Kerala said, “Each of the centres will be well- positioned to provide year-round sports access to approx. 50 Athletes. The coaches’ trainings will steer the coaches systematically to learn new and different approaches and ensure a quality sports experience for persons with Intellectual and developmental disabilities. The state will have plenty ‘healthy and fit’ athletes trained well. The regular engagements would maintain the Athlete’s mental and physical health leading to their social inclusion.”

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## Spreading joy at the Lions Global Service Week



The Athletes of Kolkata enjoyed the morning of 8 Feb 2024 at the Lions Children's Corner celebrating the Lions Global Service Week. It was a bright morning bringing joy to the Athletes, all dressed in colours to match. 37 Athletes between ages 12 & 15 played with the officials and members of Lions Club. Bocce along with other recreational events including Skittles Bowling, Obstacles & Cross & Nots, Hoops & Cups and Egg-tray with ping pong balls.

Eye screenings were organised for the athletes following the games. The event was graced with the inspiring presence of International President Dr. Patti Hill, International Vice- President A. P Singh, PID Sangeeta Jatia, & many other distinguished guests.

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## The Champion in Powerlifting as much as in baking



At a tender age of 15, Prithvi, a keen powerlifter, has decided to make sports his future. He is an athlete with Down Syndrome and is a slow learner. He is also determined to win when he enters the sports arena. His smile and friendly demeanour which is hard to cover, can be safely attributed to his doting mother, maternal grandparents and his coaches Sanket Arekar & Aman Vohra. All of them created a world of acceptance and achievement for Prithvi, helping him navigate through a broken family and his personal challenges.



Ms Niyateey Shah, a single mother, had a flying career in marketing when Prithvi was born. An immediate diagnosis of Down Syndrome created a sudden pause in her fast-paced life throwing her into a storm of questions that received no answers.

Some family members supported them heart and soul while few others abandoned them. The struggle to get things 'corrected' began queueing up massages, therapists etc. Lack of acceptance and subject to judgement by most, were the tougher challenges to be overcome or simply overlooked

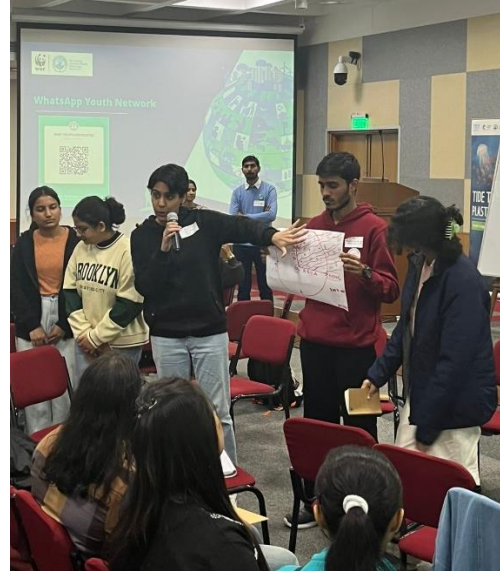
Prithvi participated at the National Powerlifting Championship held in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh from 25-29 Feb 2024, winning two gold (Bench press and squat) and a silver in Deadlift. Prithvi 'loved' the event that combined 110 Athletes and 29 Coaches from 18 States of India. He enjoyed being one of the walkers at the 'Walk for Inclusion' organised during the event. He enjoyed with his co-athletes, tying someone's belt, patting another, cheering and bonding, all the way. Last year, Prithvi also won four gold in the sub-junior category 2023 Asian Classic Powerlifting Championship held in Johor Bahru Malaysia.



National Championship – Powerlifting , held in CSJM University Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

**Unified Pairs participate in the Youth Advocacy Program organised by World Wildlife Fund -India**





WWF- India organised a **two-day Youth Advocacy Workshop** exclusively for youth leaders in February 2024, aiming to enhance their advocacy, leadership, communication and policy skills around environmental causes. From SO Bharat, the NYLC (National Youth Leadership Council) members, Aditi Sabherwal, Pulkit Chaudhary, Khushi Grover and Siddhant Nath joined the program for the first time, gaining valuable insights into environmental advocacy. The session sensitized Pulkit on knowledge of his rights and responsibilities as a citizen of India. Aditi, an athlete leader and a basketball player, was astonished to learn about the ocean's role in oxygen production and the detrimental effects of plastic on marine ecosystems. Khushi and Siddhant engaged in discussions on effective communication strategies and the impact of clear messaging. People were different as was a lot of the content but, an effective approach to gain a suitable impact seemed common and likely to be applicable within Special Olympics as well

It is pertinent to note that the NYLC had previously as well, attended an awareness workshop organized by WWF in 2023.

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## Youth Activation at Kirorimal College, Delhi University



It was a break through entry into a new college with the NYLC (National Youth Leadership Council) opening Youth Activation in the Kirorimal College (KMC) early in the month of February. As we engage more youth, we are proud to be able to enter new institutions through their lead, which is the case here. The orientation was attended by 30-35 persons including the Principal and the Head of the Department Sports. The attending faculty expressed interest in conducting more of these sessions from April 2024 and would like more students of the college to join in. The concept of the Sports Centers reverberates their aims and objectives and is under consideration as well, by them. It is noteworthy that right from outreach to planning, executing and reporting, all these stages have the youth engage and lead - INCLUSIVELY

Special Olympics encourages Inclusive youth leadership globally. The strategy combines young people of all abilities giving them opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities. These leadership activities help students find their voices and teach them to become change agents in their communities by promoting equity and acceptance. Social inclusion is best fostered when activities within the classroom, school, and community are designed and implemented by a diverse group of students within a school. To reiterate the tenets of the program and importance of a unified generation, a National level Youth Summit is organised by SO Bharat, every year. [Report of the National Youth Leadership Summit 2023](#)

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## Rosemary Collaboratory spins action in Health systems for persons with Intellectual & developmental disabilities

Special Olympics (SOI) 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 and developmental disabilities (IDD). Sports being the mainstay, SOI offers a vast array of health interventions, creating a world where people with IDD have every opportunity to be healthy.

Rosemary Collaboratory is a new initiative of SOI that aims to accelerate country/local-level research, policy, and practice for ID-inclusive health through connections to and support from a global network and social movement. The 3-year project divided into several phases, is being carried out across a few



Special Olympics National programs, through consultants. In India, SO Bharat is collaborating with the SRM Medical College Hospital and Research, Tamil Nadu, for participating and fulfilling the deliverables including assessment of the health system in the country as well as designing an advocacy plan for achieving a change that stands to improve health access for persons with IDD



It may be pertinent to note, as per an article published in Jan 2024, in the Journal of policy and practise in Intellectual Disabilities, by Amitav Mishra and Jayanti Narayan, there are no exclusive policies for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Different government departments and non-government organisations provide services including centrally sponsored programmes to persons with disabilities and enable them to exercise their rights. [Read full article here](#)

To draw the attention of the nation and to advocate the urgency of the health of persons with Intellectual Disabilities, SO Bharat, under the initiative of Dr Mallika Nadda, President, SO Bharat, held the National Health Fest for Divyangjan , on 7 April 2022, World Health day. Over 100,000 medical screenings of persons with Intellectual Disabilities were carried out across 139 locations spread all across the country. [Full Report](#)

## Special Olympics Stadium in Daulatabad hosts its first National level sports event.



The Stadium located in Daulatabad Haryana makes history as it becomes the first 'Special Olympics Stadium' in India. As a result of years of follow up and the determination and leadership of Dr Mallika Nadda, President SO Bharat, the stadium inaugurated its very first Special Olympics event with a National Championship – Badminton Female. 47 Athletes from 15 States participated in the tournament held between 25 & 29 February 2024

It is pertinent to recall, on 15 July 2022, the state Govt of Haryana announced its decision to assign the Daulatabad Stadium, Gurugram, to Special Olympics Bharat. Supporting the State Govt, different communities like the panchayat (village council), gaushala association (Animal Protection organisation) present at the event, readily confirmed (enthusiastically & aloud in unison) their support to the cause, awarding additional space for sports, thereby increasing the allotted area from 8 to 15 acres (6.07 hectares).

While the opening brought thrill, it also left the herculean task of overhauling the expanse to enable sporting activities for the athletes. Journeying through diverse methods of raising funds, the state chapter of Haryana has delivered a success story with the conduct of a National level Championship at the stadium



# Champions



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