

Champions



Special Olympics **Bharat** Newsletter April 2023

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

Dear Dr Ajit Kumar

National Coaching Camp in preparation of the Berlin Game

Over 380 Campers including 177 Special Athletes, from 23 States of India participated in 15 sports at the National Coaching Camp held from 24-29 April 2023, supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Sports Authority of India. The Camp was held at the Amity University UP, NOIDA with all the sport disciplines organised within the sprawling campus of the University and Golf at the NOIDA Golf Course.



The Athletes and (L-R) Air Cmde Sharma, Executive Director SO Bharat; Dr Chaudhari, Gen. Sec. SO Bharat; Rani Rampal, Indian Hockey Player; Dr Nadda, Chairperson SO Bharat & Dr Shukla, Vice- Chancellor, Amity University UP NOIDA

This was the third preparatory Camp organised for India's participation at the Special Olympics World Summer Games being held in Berlin, Germany in June 2023. Dental screening was organised for the Athletes and Coaches on 28 April as part of regular medical screenings that aims to maintain health parameters for an enhanced quality of life. While the practises went on morning and evening every day, several additional activities were organised to keep the Athletes occupied meaningfully throughout the day. The Amity University organised a Unified Art activity with approx. 60-70 students of the university combined with the Athletes. A Press Conference was held to announce India's participation at the Special Olympics

World Summer Games.

The Indian Women's Hockey Team player, Padma Shri Rani Rampal, chief guest at the conference, gave her best wishes to the athletes: "I feel elated to be a part of such a beautiful endeavour that is showcasing the true beauty of human spirit at a global stage. Only sports have the power to bring all of us together and shatter down any existing barriers. It is great to see the level of facilities that are being provided to the athletes at the National Camp at the Amity University before the World Games as it will not only boost the confidence of our esteemed group of special athletes, but also motivate them to achieve their best results." The NCC concluded with a cultural evening that demonstrated the Athletes and Coaches' additional talent of dance and song



Building friendship and long-lasting bond



Left pic: Ranveer & Ankush at the driving range; Right Pic: (L-R) Lt Col Saha, Coach; Ankush & Ranveer, Golfing Athletes & Rahul Agarwal, Unified Partner

Ranveer Singh Saini and Ankush Saha, both golfing Athletes, got yet another opportunity to practise together and be each other's critique, at the preparatory Camp. The duo got to know each other through Golf in 2014, continuing to golf along across several Camps held thereafter. It is interesting to see Ankush admire Ranveer's game and cheer him, especially when he feels that he has under-performed. Taking care and giving company to each other has grown naturally against the scenic backdrop of different golf courses which they have traversed together.



It may be known, Ranvir brought SO Bharat on the map by entering the Golfing arena at the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Golf Master's tournament in 2013, held in Macao. Joining him in 2014 was Ankush Saha, and since the two have been the face of Golf that SO Bharat is proud of. Ankush Saha is a passionate runner as well, having run several Marathons under the meticulous supervision of his father, Lt Col Saha, also a certified Coach. At the Preparatory camp, Lt Col Saha ensured that he guided them through the game as well as make them independent in their day-to-day management.

The Preparatory Camps, while focussing on sports training sessions, spontaneously helps bring the Athletes and the volunteers together, at times forging friendships or even imprinting a long-lasting memory, in both cases, bringing immense joy. The Camp held from 24-29 April at Amity University once again revealed the power & joy of sports to leave an impression and initiate a changing approach.

Regularising Unified Sports for development and Inclusion



Through the Unified Champion School programming supported by MBZ a regular routine of practising Unified Sports has established at the Rural Development Trust (RDT) located in Ananthapuram Andhra Pradesh. Sports practises are a routine in conjunction with the approach of the organisation for enhancing rural development through sports amongst many other initiatives. As sports thrive, Unified Sports too has occupied a spot of significance. Every week Unified sports is conducted combining 40-80 Athletes with unified partners from the academy itself. Several sports are conducted here including Badminton, Football, Table Tennis, Cycling, Handball etc. adding the Unified Sports approach in nearly all. Sports is conducted daily in two batches

Since 2007 RDT has been associated with Special Olympics Bharat – Andhra Pradesh, having 8-10 Coaches trained. 72 Medals have been won by the Special Olympics Athletes trained at the institute, in various National and International events, so far. The institution has offered space for conducting several Special Olympics competitions, including the third South Asia Unified Cricket tournament, organised by Special Olympics - Asia Pacific Region. As the association continues to grow in strength and mission, four

Athletes and a Head Coach (Powerlifting) have a strong chance of participating in the upcoming Special Olympics World Summer Games to be held in Berlin in June 2023

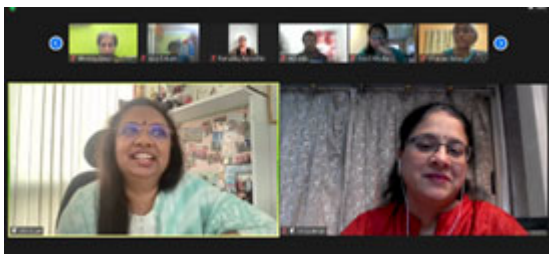


A small step towards a huge goal

It may sound trivial but what Divyanshu Vats does is just what everyone could do to bring us that much closer to Inclusion that we all strive for. He is a graduate from the Amity School of Physical Education, Amity University UP and a certified fitness trainer from the Gold Gym. He became active with Special Olympics about two years back. As part of the Human Value Community Outreach program (HVCO) volunteering his time in CHIME, which

is a research project undertaken by the university to assess child & maternal health. During the project, he volunteered across various Special Olympics events and interactions.

Despite having a distant relative with special needs, his interaction with him was minimal as he felt inhibited. Supporting the Young Athletes program, he feels that his hesitation has reduced. He feared interacting with persons with Intellectual Disabilities earlier. Spending time with the athletes has helped him overcome his fears, in fact has changed his perception about them. He is responsible to bring about a change in the outlook of his family members too. They earlier used to insist that he focussed only on studies, but now encourage him to contribute in areas such as the Special Olympics. Divyanshu insists that there is a need to understand them, to make them feel happy and secure. As he attends sports camps, he opines that a regular fitness regime and a healthy diet must become a way of life with all the athletes irrespective of all categories & sports disciplines



Family Café adds regular master sessions for specialised knowledge and awareness

When a parent says, “My adult son is not independent. How will he go for his job independently, run his life? Even legally he is not allowed to operate a bank account; are there books for training them in money matters; is there a pension plan for my child? “; these are a few concerns

that bind the café members. What follows is deliberations and exchange of experiences and suggestions. To make the sessions more relatable and relevant there is a brainstorming team called “The Coffee Brewers’ who this year has regularised ‘Master Sessions’. After every two sessions there will be a Master Session that will have an expert in a lead. This expert could be one who educates the members on ‘Inheritance needs of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities’ or a financial Coach etc. who would lead the group to think of the kind of money and assets that can be planned, the instruments of investment etc. The Café also helps throw light on talents of the athletes outside the sports field, like Alankar Gupta’s expertise in ‘Fluid Painting’. The Family Café that commenced in May 2021, continues to run with new features evolving, through feedback taken from the members from time to time

Youth Conclave to join the dots in schools and colleges

A Youth Conclave, Supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the U.A.E., Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Supreme Commander of the U.A.E. Armed Forces, was held at the Tagore International School Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. 13 schools in the Delhi NCR were represented by youth leaders and school coordinators, who would together see a regularised implementation of Special Olympics activities throughout the year.

The sessions were led by the members of the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) members, demonstrating Inclusive youth engagement at all levels. The Conclave ran sessions which were combined as well as separate for the youth leaders & coordinators, to allow free flow of Questions and answers and discussions.



SO Bharat Goa Chapter participates in the college festival – UDAAN

After a pause of three years, Udaan 2023, the sports festival, organized by Nirmaan Organisation, BITS Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus, had the athletes of Goa participate in March 2023. The event was organised in collaboration with the SO Bharat Goa Chapter and Spree 23. Dr. Suman Kundu, the director of the BITS Goa Campus, inaugurated the event that witnessed participation of 87 students from 7 special schools across Goa. Their participation was seen across 100m Sprint, 50m Walk-Run, Javelin Throw, Shot Put, and Standing Long Jump athletic events.

In the words of Pranav Garg, President, '22-23 Nirmaan Organization, Goa Chapter, *“All the students gathered at the Birla Institute of Technology Student Activity Center (SAC) early Sunday morning with contagious enthusiasm and excitement! We want to host Udaan every year and hope to have the support of SO Bharat Goa each time”*



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