



Press Release - Athletes from 21 SAI centres set for competition at All-India Inter SAI Taekwondo Championship 2023; Gala opening ceremony celebrating 50th year of India-Korea Diplomatic Relations

SAI Media Team

24th Feb, New Delhi: A total of 265 male and female Taekwondo athletes are set for competition at the All-India Inter SAI Taekwondo Championship 2023 which started off with a gala event on Friday at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex. The athletes are part of 4 Sports Authority of India National Centres of Excellence in Lucknow, Bangalore, Guwahati and Trivandrum as well as 17 SAI Training Centres.

The tournament, to take place until February 26, is being organized in commemoration of the 50th year of India-Korea Diplomatic Relations. Present at the opening ceremony on Friday was Smt Sujata Chaturvedi, Secretary, Sports, Sh Sandip Pradhan, Director General, SAI, Mr Yong-gyu Ahn, Korea National Sport University Chancellor, Mr Chang Jae Bok, Korean Ambassador to India, Mr Sang-hwa Lee, Deputy Minister & Ambassador for Public Diplomacy of Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as other dignitaries.

The three-day Taekwondo Championship event will be competed in the Cadet (U-14), Junior (U-17) and Senior age Groups. The competition is divided in two parts: Poomsae and Sparring called Kyorugi. The sparring, Kyorugi division is divided according to the competition rules of the World Taekwondo Federation in players` age and weight and Poomsae division will be divided into men's and women's divisions only. The 10 Kyorugi and 2 Poomsae winners, who will win gold medals in each category, will visit Korea National Sport University with the support of Korean government and receive an education and training program for about 3 weeks from the best professors as prize.

The opening ceremony was an energetic affair from the start to finish. Students from the Korea National Sports University, which has obtained a total of 126 Olympic medals so far, performed high-adrenaline martial arts feats like breaking of wooden dummies as well as warrior katas. There were also K-Pop inspired dance performances by the students and Indian traditional arts of Mallakhamb and traditional dance forms were also on display.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Yong-gyu Ahn, who was also the Guest of Honour, mentioned, "This event would not have been possible without the help of Sports Authority of India and Korean Culture Center India as well as the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. This event will play an important role in



development of Taekwondo in India as well as cultural exchange of Korea and India. It would be great to see an Indian Taekwondo athlete obtain a gold medal in Olympic Games in near future and I hope this event becomes the stepping stone for Taekwondo to be loved by the people of India, as a martial art- sport and I will do my best for India's development in Taekwondo.”

EOM