

Press Release No: 1419

Date: 11.09.2024

Hon'ble Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Thiru.Udayanidhi Stalin inaugurated SAAF Junior Athletics Championship - Chennai 2024

Hon'ble Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Thiru.Udayanidhi Stalin today inaugurated South Asian Athletic Federation (SAAF) Junior Athletics Championship - Chennai 2024 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The championship scheduled from September 11 to 13 will see 174 athletes from seven South Asian countries from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participating in 28 events in both Boys and Girls categories. The Indian contingent of 62 athletes, including nine athletes are competing in this championship.

The Hon'ble Minister spoke on the occasion,

அனைவருக்கும் வணக்கம்,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the South Asian Junior Athletic Championship 2024, here in Chennai. It is truly an honour to host this prestigious event after a long gap of 29 years with Chennai last hosting a multi-national athletics event way back in 1995. Our Dravidian Model Government under the leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru.M.K.Stalin committed to promoting sports has contributed Rs.3.67 Crores to ensure the success of this event. Tamil Nadu has emerged as a vibrant hub of sports, hosting numerous international and national events in the last two years.

From the Chess Olympiad, Asian Champions Trophy Hockey, Squash World Cup, Chennai Chess Grandmaster 2023, World Surfing League, Cyclothon, National Hockey Championship, and to the Khelo India Games. We have become the preferred destination for sports in India. In 2024, January, we proudly hosted the Khelo India Youth Games, India's biggest sporting event, where athletes from Tamil Nadu won 98 medals, securing the 2nd place in the medal tally. We also made history recently by organizing the first ever Night Street Formula 4 Race in South Asia, the Formula 4 Chennai Street circuit Night Race. Beyond hosting events, Tamil Nadu deeply committed to supporting our athletes. We provide high cash incentives, players support schemes such as Elite Athlete scheme, Mission International Medal Scheme, and the Champions Development Scheme to ensure that our players are fully equipped to excel in the international stage. Additionally, through the innovative Tamil Nadu Champions Foundation, we are empowering marginalized and underprivileged athletes to compete at the global level. Tamil Nadu takes pride in having sent 11 athletes to the Paris Olympics, making us the third highest contributor from India. In the Paris Paralympics, 4 out of 6 para athletes from Tamil Nadu won medals, showcasing their exceptional talent and dedication.

To encourage more youngsters to choose sports as a carrier. Our government is offering a 3% reservation for athletes in the government jobs. We are currently working to provide government jobs for 100 athletes across various departments, and this will be completed in a few months. Additionally, we are building and renovating stadiums and providing new sports infrastructure in all districts of Tamil Nadu at a cost of approximately 100 crores. The government has started preliminary works to build a second international cricket stadium in Tamil Nadu, which will be in Coimbatore. A World-Class Sports City will also be developed in Chennai to provide top-notch sports infrastructure for the state. Also, we have been distributing Kalaignar Sports Kit, which contains 33 types of sporting equipment to every village in Tamil Nadu. I am proud to say that the efforts of Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu have been recognized widely. We received the Best State for Promotion of Sports

Award from the Hindu Sportstar last year, and we were also honoured with the Best State Promoting Sports Award at the CII Business Sports Award. Today, we are excited to host the South Asian Junior Athletics Championship in Chennai, with 174 athletes from seven countries competing.

I'm thrilled to share that nine athletes from Tamil Nadu are representing our nation in this prestigious event. I extend my heartfelt best wishes to all the players, and I invite everyone to enjoy the spirit of competition and solidarity that sports bring. Welcome to Tamil Nadu, the emerging sports capital of the Indian subcontinent, and have a great stay in Chennai.

நன்றி வணக்கம்,

The event was attended by Dr.Atulya Mishra I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary, Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Thiru.Meghanatha Reddy I.A.S., Member Secretary, Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, Thiru.Adille Sumariwalla, President, Athletic Federation of India, Dr.Lalit K.Bhanot, President, South Asian Athletic Federation, W.I.Davaram, President, Tamil Nadu Athletic Association, Tmt.C.Latha, Secretary, Tamil Nadu Athletic Association and other senior government officials were present.

Issued By: - DIPR, Secretariat, Chennai – 9

For Latest Government News, Follow Us on :

 [tndiprnews](#)  [tndipr](#)  [tndipr](#)  [TN DIPR](#)  www.dipr.tn.gov.in  [TNDIPR, Govt.of Tamil Nadu](#)