

## **The BAI President acknowledges the importance of -Yonex Sunrise BWF Metlife India Open Super Series from April 1 in the development of Indian badminton**

- All top-10 women to be seen in action at Siri Fort**
- World women champion Ratchanok Intanon and world number one Lee Chong Wei to be main attraction**
- Indian challenge to be led by Saina Nehwal, P V Sindhu, P Kashyap and K Srikanth**

New Delhi: The fourth edition of the Yonex Sunrise BWF Metlife India Open Super Series kicks off at the Siri Fort Sports Complex on April 1 and has attracted the who's who of the badminton world.

India has established itself as an important destination for the top badminton players and this year's event is all the more important for the players as well as the organisers since it is also a dress rehearsal for the Thomas and Uber Cup team championship, one of the most prestigious event in the badminton calendar.

The upcoming event also begins the next three year cycle of the Super Series circuit and the prize money for this year has also been increased from \$200,000 to \$250,000.

This year, the women's singles event will see all the top-10 women shuttlers including India's Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu in action, while seven of the top-10 men's singles players including world number 1 Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia have confirmed their participation in the tournament.

**Speaking about the upcoming edition, Badminton Association of India President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta, said,** "The strong field and the fact that BWF has chosen India as the hosts for the Thomas and Uber Cup is a proof that we have been successfully organising international events and this year would be an important milestone for the Association as well as the players.

"Many Indian players have got an opportunity to test their mettle against the world's best on home turf and have made the successful transition on the international stage," he added.

It was at this very tournament that men's singles star P Kashyap and women's doubles combination of Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa qualified for the 2012 London Olympics, while it was the victory over world number 7 Jan O Jorgensen of Denmark that kicked off a fantastic season for K Srikanth last year. He is now the highest ranked Indian in the men's singles ranking.

**The BAI President also acknowledged the importance of the tournament in the development of Indian badminton and said,** "The Yonex Sunrise India Open has been a fantastic platform for younger players to showcase their skills and gain the confidence that they can challenge the best in the sport. We have had many examples of our upcoming players upsetting the international stars and also improve the profile of the sport in the country."

**London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal said,** "Performing in front of your supporters is a big high for any player and the Yonex Sunrise India Open has provided all of us the opportunity to showcase our skills in front of the home crowd. This tournament is extremely important for me and I always look forward to give my best here."

Saina is seeded eighth in the competition this year and will face Austria's Simone Prutsch in the opening round. World championship bronze medallist P V Sindhu will begin her women's singles campaign against second seed Shixian Wang of China.