



Olympic ranking points up for grabs, Indian Judokas to head to Israel for Tel Aviv Grand Slam

New Delhi, February 11: With less than six months to go before the Tokyo Olympics, Indian judokas will get the opportunity to gather crucial ranking points which will help them in their qualification efforts as a six-member team comprising five players and a coach will head to Israel to participate in the Tel Aviv Grand Slam which will take place from February 18-20. The contingent will comprise of Avtar Singh (Men's 100 kg), Vijay Yadav (Men's 60 kg), Jasleen Singh Saini (Men's 66 kg), Shushila Devi (Women's 48 kg) and Tulika Mann (Women's 78 kg). They will be accompanied by chief coach Jiwan Sharma. The same five judokas had represented India at the Budapest Grand Slam in October last year. Their participation in this tournament has been supported by the Government.

Jasleen Singh Saini who is a part of the TOPS Developmental group is looking forward to the chance of playing in this tournament, "All of us have medal expectations from this tournament, players are in their peak condition." Saini with 850 points (the most by an Indian) is currently in with a chance of earning a continental quota for the Olympics, but he is more looking forward to winning a medal as it will give him direct entry to the Olympics. He added, "Last year there were a lot of problems because of the coronavirus pandemic and the suspension of tournaments. Government has been sending us to play tournaments, we can play with a free mind."

A total of 512 competitors from 73 countries will be playing in this tournament. Following this event, the Indian judokas are next due to participate in Grand Slams to be held in Uzbekistan and Georgia in March, which are both Olympic ranking tournaments.