

Foreign boxers to spar with Indian Olympic qualifiers

Indian boxers will be training for the first time with two Olympic teams -- Algeria and Sri Lanka- to sharpen their skills before the Beijing Olympics in August.

A ten-member Algerian team along with four officials will arrive in India Friday, followed by a six-member Sri Lankan team. As many as eight Algerian boxers have qualified for the Olympics while Sri Lankan Anuruddha Rathnayake has made the cut.

According to Indian Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF) secretary P.K. Muralidharan Raja, the Algerian and the Sri Lankan boxing squads approached IABF to train with Indian boxers before the Olympics.

India will be sending its largest ever-boxing contingent to Olympics this year. Akhil Kumar, Vijender, Dinesh Kumar, Jitender Kumar and Antharish Lakra made it to Olympics.

The foreign pugilists will be practicing with the Indian boxers in the ongoing training camp in Patiala.

'They will spar with Indian boxers. It will be a good preparation for our boxers as they will get to know different styles. The Algerian boxers are quite good and it will be a good stint,' Raja told IANS Tuesday.

The Indian team has recently returned after a successful stint in the training-cum competition event in Germany and coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu said the boxers are toiling hard to make a mark in the mega sporting event.

'The camp in Patiala will go on till Indian team's departure to Beijing in first week of August. These foreign players will stay here from July 5-18,' said Sandhu.

The Indian team which participated in the German event won two golds, one silver and three bronzes.

'Some of the matches were against the Olympic qualifiers from the other countries, so it is a creditable performance,' Sandhu said.

Eight boxing coaches, including Cuban B. I. Fernandez, have been working with the Indian contingent.

'We are focusing on individual training and we have chalked out individual plan for each of our players. We are doing our best to polish their skills,' said Sandhu.

(© IANS / India eNews)