

The second edition of Rendez-Vous à Roland-Garros in partnership with Longines kicks off on new DLTA clay courts

- *Tournament to be played from 8th to 12th February on newly-laid clay courts*
- *French tennis legend Marion Bartoli visits as ambassador of the tournament*
- *The French Open Trophies come to India*

New Delhi, 8th February 2016: The Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA) will play host to the second edition of Rendez-Vous à Roland-Garros in partnership with Longines from 8th to 12th February this week. The French Tennis Federation (FFT), organisers of the world's premier clay court event - Roland-Garros (a.k.a. The French Open), in association with All India Tennis Association (AITA) today also announced Ms. Marion Bartoli, former tennis star, as the ambassador of the second edition of 'Rendez-Vous à Roland-Garros' in India.

The tournament will see the best U-18 Indian players (boys and girls) compete for a chance to enter the Roland-Garros Junior draw in Paris in May 2016. The winners of the Indian leg will go on to face competitors from Brazil, Japan, South Korea and China in the playoffs in Paris and the eventual champions will get a wild card entry to the French Open Junior. Two new clay courts have been laid down by AITA, especially timed to aptly launch with a Roland-Garros tournament. These new courts underline FFT's and AITA's commitment to develop a clay court culture tennis in India. Clay is considered to be the most suited surface for the all round development of a player and the clay courts at DLTA are sure to help the players in their development.

Speaking about the initiative, Mr. Sam Primaut, Director of Development- FFT, said, "We are delighted to be back with the second edition of Rendez-Vous à Roland-Garros and believe that initiatives like these will prove beneficial in encouraging better talent to emerge and have an opportunity to achieve their potential on a global platform like Roland-Garros. Better infrastructure was at the centre of the MOU signed last year between AITA and FFT and the new clay courts launched at DLTA today are a step towards helping players to be better prepared for bigger tournaments. I would like to specially thank Mr. Anil Khanna and the All India Tennis Association for their constant support."

"We at AITA are committed to the cause of Tennis in India and the new clay courts are a step in the same direction. It will not only prove beneficial for upcoming talent, but it is also a major step forward in ensuring that DLTA remains at the forefront of international sporting events and player development. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards FFT for all their support", Mr Anil Khanna, President - AITA said. He further added, "Our players were close to getting the wild card for the French Open Junior in the last edition of Rendez-Vous à Roland-

Garros; which shows that they have what it takes to perform at the highest level. We are confident of a good show from them this time around as well.”

In another major boost to the programme, Marion Bartoli has specially been invited to be part of the event to motivate and pass on her valuable experience to the participating players. She will also be part of the ‘Trophy Tour’. The historic French Open Trophies - ‘Mousquetaires Cup’ and ‘Suzanne-Lenglen Cup’ will be in India from 8th to 12th February. The Trophies will travel to India’s most iconic destinations, providing fans and tennis lovers an opportunity to get a first-hand experience of the French Open trophies.

Defending champion Sathwika Sama will be looking for an encore at the DLTA. However, she is expected to face a tough challenge from Mahak Jain and Jennifer Luikham. In the boys section, last year’s runner-up Alex Solanki along with Vasisht Vinod Cheruku and, BR Nikshep are expected to headline the event.

Walter von Känel, President of Longines, said: “As the Official Partner and Timekeeper of Roland Garros since 2007, Longines is proud to extend its support to the young generation of players with “Rendez-Vous à Roland-Garros in partnership with Longines”. To encourage promising sportsmen and women to fulfill their dream of participating in this prestigious tennis tournament is one of the most rewarding efforts a brand can make and we look forward to the second edition of the programme.”

About Roland-Garros

Both committed sports fans and the general public alike have come to love Roland-Garros. Some 463,328 spectators flocked to the highly prestigious French Open in 2015, and the tournament was also broadcast in 224 territories across the world, making it an event of truly global significance. Roland-Garros is run by the French Tennis Federation and held every year at the Porte d’Auteuil in Paris. It is the only Grand Slam to be played on clay – one of the oldest and most noble surfaces in the history of tennis.

About All India Tennis Association

All India Tennis Association is the National Federation for development and promotion of Indian Tennis. It has a very strong and tiered junior tournament & ranking structure and a sound professional tournament structure for Men & Women. AITA also has a sound coach’s education programme and is the only recognized nation in Asia to have the ITF Silver Certification.

About Longines

Longines has been based at Saint-Imier in Switzerland since 1832. Its watchmaking expertise reflects a strong devotion to tradition, elegance and performance. Longines has generations of experience as official timekeeper of world championships and as partner of international sports federation. Known for the elegance of its timepieces, Longines is a member of the Swatch Group Ltd, the World’s leading manufacturer of horological products. With the winged hourglass as its emblem, the brand has outlets in over 150 countries.