



## Platform for young talent

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**Akshay Kumar's first invitational Open National Karate Championship saw its finale recently at the Andheri (Mumbai) Sports Complex.**



This championship was started to expose budding talent to a world-class fighting event. It is the brainchild of **Shihan Mehul Vora**, a martial arts practitioner for over 27 years and an international teacher for 15 years and marks the presence of the world's most renowned martial artists.

The championship bouts were held right from the tender age group of six years, in all weight categories for both men and women.

Over 2000 athletes from all over India attended this event that was sponsored by Akshay Kumar. International grandmasters and observers also attended the tournament from Japan, Holland, Italy and many others.

Said Shihan Mehul Vora, "I have worked with Akshay on the 7 Deadly Arts series for the National Geographic channel, several years ago. I remember him going all out for it; he was constantly shooting back-to-back at timings as early as 4 am for the series. He managed all this without disturbing his other schedules and never allowed his film shoots to suffer. That's Akshay Kumar for you — that's his passion for martial arts."

Akshay Kumar himself personally awarded trophies to the top five demonstrators and winners of the championship. The winners were also awarded an all-expense-paid scholarship to study martial arts in Japan.