

## **North Korea says likely to join Winter Olympics in South: Reports**

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**Tokyo:** North Korea's IOC representative on Saturday said his country is likely to compete in figure skating in next month's Winter Olympics in South Korea, according to Japanese media reports.

Asked by reporters at Beijing airport, Chang Ung said the participation of a North Korean figure skating pair will probably happen, the reports said.

Citing unnamed sources, Japan's Kyodo News service and broadcaster NHK said Chang was headed to Switzerland, where he could meet with International Olympic Committee officials.

Footage on NHK showed Chang pushing a luggage cart in Beijing airport and talking briefly to media. North Korean officials typically fly abroad through Beijing.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un offered to send a delegation to the Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in a New Year's Day speech. It wasn't clear whether that meant athletes or just officials. North and South Korea have agreed to discuss cooperation on the Olympics, as well as other issues, in rare talks at the border starting Tuesday. They come just one month before the Feb. 9 opening ceremony for the Winter Games.

Figure skating pair Ryom Tae Ok and Kim Ju Sik are the only North Korean athletes who have qualified. The duo won North Korea's first medal — a bronze — at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan, last February.

Asked if other North Korean athletes would compete at Pyeongchang, Chang said only that time would tell.

- AP