A RALLY FOR RECOGNITION: TENNIS NEEDS TO EMBRACE ASIA.

In the last couple of years, tennis in Asia has started to feel more alive than ever. Naomi Osaka has made her long-awaited return. Qinwen Zheng isn't just a rising star anymore, she is a top name in women's tennis. With a historic Olympic gold in women's singles and a surge into the WTA Top 5, she's carrying the dreams of a continent. Alexander Bublik made a thrilling run to the quarterfinals at Roland Garros and, with three ATP titles already this year, is playing the most confident tennis of his career. A former World No. 17 (achieved in 2024), he stunned World No. 1 Jannik Sinner in Halle before going on to lift the title. Since then, he has added two more titles on clay in back-to-back weeks after Wimbledon — underlining his evolution into a genuine threat on all surfaces.

Elena Rybakina, the former Wimbledon champion and a former World No. 3 (June 2023), has shown consistent form throughout 2025. Now ranked No. 12, she captured the WTA 500 title at Internationaux de Strasbourg just before Roland Garros. Her Grand Slam campaign in 2025 has been steady, featuring fourthround runs at both the Australian Open and Roland Garros, along with a third round showing at Wimbledon. Her movement and ball striking this season have offered glimpses of the Rybakina who once ruled Wimbledon — calm, powerful, and composed.

Naomi Osaka made her Grand Slam return at the Australian Open and has looked more focused and sharper with every match since. A former World No. 1 and four time Grand Slam winner (twice in Melbourne and twice in New York), she lifted the WTA 125 title in Saint-Malo earlier this year. A good sign in her comeback journey. Her Grand Slam runs in 2025 haven't been deep so far, but her game still shows flashes of the champion we all remember.

In doubles, Rohan Bopanna made history by climbing to World No. 1 as the oldest player in history. A moment of pride not just for India, but for all of Asia. Alongside him, a group of Indian doubles specialists are making deep runs on the tour.

Even the next wave is already here. India's Maaya Revati, is emerging as one of Asia's brightest young hopes. Aryan Shah's rapid rise in the juniors has caught the eye of many. From Japan to Kazakhstan, young talents like Rei Sakamoto and Amir Omarkhanov are pushing forward with quiet determination.

"The stories are there. The talent is here. But probably the stage is still missing. If we look at the tennis calendar, we will find four Grand Slams. Nine ATP Masters. Ten WTA 1000s. But how many of those are in Asia? No Grand Slam, just one ATP Masters, and a few WTA 1000s, not nearly enough for a region that holds more than half the world's population.

And that gap matters. Because in tennis, big tournaments bring big things. They bring the best players, the most media attention, the biggest crowds. That means higher viewership. Which brings in better sponsors, more broadcast money — and in the long run, more financial strength for everyone. Players, federations, organisers. For a young Asian player struggling with travel costs to Europe or the US, having more top level tournaments at home could be the difference between making it or quitting early.

Take a look around. Asia is already home to some of the world's best sporting infrastructure. Qatar hosted a successful and most memorable FIFA World Cup. Japan has hosted multiple Olympic Games — the most recent being Tokyo 2020 (held in 2021). China's cities are great for mega events. And Kazakhstan, too, has rapidly become a tennis force, both in facilities and player development.

In India, for example, Davis Cup ties often get limited attention unless there's a big name involved. But when Wimbledon or the US Open is on, the buzz is real. Because people want to see quality. They want to see stars. They want to feel part of something big. That's where more ATP 500s, Masters 1000s, WTA 1000s or even a 5th Grand Slam some day in near future could change everything.

Tennis in Asia needs more local heroes. Leander Paes, who recently entered the ITF Hall of Fame alongside compatriot Vijay Amritraj, inspired generations. Kei Nishikori was once World No. 4, won 12 ATP titles, and even beat Nadal to win an Olympic bronze. Players like Lina, Naomi Osaka or someone like Sania Mirza have inspired entire generations of young girls across Asia to pick up a racquet and believe in their dreams.

It's not just about rankings and results. It's about building an ecosystem. When big tournaments come to Asia, it's not just players who benefit. Coaches, ball kids, line umpires, event managers, everyone gets exposed to world class tennis. That exposure builds knowledge. It builds a culture. And then there's the other side we don't talk about enough. Its sports tourism.

Every year, thousands travel to Wimbledon, Roland Garros, or New York to watch matches. Those events bring in millions for local economies. Hotels, restaurants, transport — all of it gets a boost.

Places like Bangkok, Seoul, Tokyo, and Almaty have everything it takes to become a tennis hub in the global tennis calendar. The interest is growing. The passion is already strong.

Asia is still building its base in the world of tennis, but the progress is clear. Players are rising. Crowds are showing up. The sport is spreading.

With more ATP Masters, WTA 1000s, and maybe even a higher level mega event, tennis in Asia can become more than just a part of the tour. It can shape the direction of the sport. This region is ready. Ready to host, to shine, and to grow into a real tennis force.