

FICCI announces 'All Women Trans Himalayan Car Rally'
National Fitness Index Programme also launched
National Sports Day celebrations flagged off across the country

NEW DELHI, August 28, 2014. FICCI today kicked off celebrations across India for the National Sports Day on August 29, which coincides with the birth anniversary of the hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. The chamber brought together some of the eminent personalities from the government, sports fraternity and India Inc. to demonstrate the country's commitment to promote sports culture.

FICCI in association with the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, All India Council of Physical Education (AICPE) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) organized the programme to promote sports culture and to create awareness about the essence of the '**National Sports Day**'.

On the occasion, the launch of '**All Women FICCI Trans Himalayan Tour de Endurance Car Rally**' was announced. The objective of the rally is to empower women in adventure sports, test the endurance of women against machine, an acid test of the cars manufactured in the country, promote cars propelled by eco friendly fuels for the future survival of the planet earth, showcase the prowess of the Indian automotive sector to the world, promote the thrill of adventure and bring it within the reach of everyone, expose the magnificence and beauty of the Himalayas to the world, boost tourism to the surrounding areas as well - Incredible India and promote natural beauty, traditions and cultures of the Himalayan states of India. The rally will cover a distance of 5000 Kms on highest altitude roads, starting from Delhi to Chandigarh, J&K via Leh, Manali in Himachal, Uttarakhand, UP, entering Nepal to West Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam to Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland to Manipur to concluded at Tripura.

Also, a '**FICCI National Fitness Index Programme (NFP)**' was launched. The programme will be conducted by Fitness365, under the aegis of All India Council of Physical Education to perform evidence-based health-related fitness assessment in schools. It is a voluntary programme for school that focuses on three areas – empower, assess and applaud. The tools and resources for building active schools and active children will be provided, then a battery of assessment tests in the participating schools including physical and motor fitness, BMI and lifestyle awareness tests will be conducted and finally schools and students will be applauded for adopting and maintaining an active lifestyle and for being physically fit.

All those present and those who participated in the celebrations took an oath to encourage and motivate fellow citizens and children to take part in sports and contribute in making of a strong and healthy nation.

In his Special Address, **Brig. K.P Singh Deo, AVSM, ADC, TD (Retd.), former Union Minister, Government of India**, said that sports is an integral part of student's life and to flourish it requires patronage from various stakeholders such as school, parents, teachers, industry and associations like FICCI. He added that there were many policies and schemes in the country to support and encourage students to take up sports but India lacked scientific monitoring to gauge the success rate of these schemes and policies.

Mr. Neeraj Kansal, Secretary, Sports Authority of India, said that there was an urgent need to spread awareness about sports and the benefits it brings to students. Sports is for all and it is the responsibility of each individual and not just the government or sporting authorities to encourage youth to take up sporting activities.

In a nation like India, a sport becomes a means for development and peace.

Mr. Sanjiv Paul, Chairman, FICCI Sports Committee and Managing Director, Tata Metaliks, said that the programme is a precursor to the National Sports Day, which will be celebrated on August 29 across 1000+ organisations in the country. Under this, we requested our partners that depending upon their budget and availability of play fields or ground, the institutions could organize mass participation sport like a small 1-2 Km walkathon, friendly matches, blood donation camps etc for parents, teachers and elderly people and also run for school children and youngsters in all parts of India. An overwhelming response to this initiative testifies that the attitude towards sports is now changing.

Mr. Deepak Jolly, Co-chairman, FICCI Sports Committee and Vice President, Public Affairs and Communication, Coca-Cola, said that it is important that there is a change in the perception that those who take part in sports or games would be no good at studies. "Let us all start with a small change by encouraging and motivating fellow citizens and children to take part in sport. On this day, let us pledge to promote the culture of sports in our society, after all only a healthy citizen can have an active mind who will then contribute in the creation of a better nation," he added.

Dr. Arbind Prasad, Director General, FICCI, said that FICCI's vision is to facilitate and encourage development of sport in India by, proactively, engaging with identified stakeholders and getting them to commit resources for such development. Like last year, National Sports Day Celebrations organised by FICCI is an attempt not only to acknowledge the role of sports in bringing pride to the nation but also to promote broad range of sports to create awareness about the importance of sports and physical education for nation and its citizens.

FICCI MEDIA DIVISION