

## **Govt. puts its weight behind AIFF in hosting FIFA U-17 World Cup**

### ***Private sector urged to contribute more to National Sports Development Fund***

**NEW DELHI, February 12, 2105.** FICCI's 'Goal 2015', the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Convention on Football Business, was kicked off here today with Mr. Kushal Das, General Secretary, All India Football Federation (AIFF) describing three monumental events -- the strengthening of the I-League, launch of the Indian Super League and planning under way for India to host the FIFA U-17 World Cup – as “game changers” for Indian football.

On its part, the Government of India pledged full support to supplement the efforts of AIFF in hosting the World Cup for which it has earmarked Rs 95 crore, said Mr. Vivek Narain, Director, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Mr. Narain said that the Government was looking for more active participation from the private sector for beefing up the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF), using the vehicle of CSR.

NSDF has been established for mobilizing resources from non-government resources, including private/public sector and non-resident Indians for the promotion of sports and games in the country. The funds available under NSDF are mainly used towards supplementing government assistance to the elite sportspersons who are medal prospects at major international events, for meeting their specific coaching/training requirements by way of provision of scientific support and training within the country and abroad, purchase of equipment, participation in international competitions etc. The objectives of the fund also include construction of sports infrastructure, taking up research projects and development studies and promotion of international cooperation.

Mr. Sanjiv Paul, Chairman, FICCI Sports Committee, said that Indian football is ushering in a new dawn. The Indian Super League seemed to inject fresh energy into the system and the country is witnessing unearthing of talent like never before. FICCI, he said, salutes this new found fervour for sport in general and football in particular amongst fans whose passion is driving these to new heights.

He said that the corporate sector has shown a lot of confidence by investing incrementally year-on-year. The efforts are visible at the state and district level that has helped increase the number of participants and supporters of the sport within regions. “As per our estimates, more than 20 lakh players play the game across the country. Thus lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs present in this room to reach out and connect,” he pointed out.

Mr. Tim Vine, Head of Public Affairs, Premier League, said that there was huge potential for football to grow in India and his organization was keen to assist in every aspect of the game.

The Premier League, he said, was conducting a series of workshops on football across India on topics such as governance, youth development, stadium management and media relations, etc., and added that it was crucial that the game develops from grassroots upwards.

Dr. A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI, in his remarks, pointed out that the export of sports goods from India is valued at Rs. 1100 crore and the country is today counted among one of the largest football manufacturers and exporters in the world. It could well become the largest exporter with greater effort provided that there is a conducive environment available. 'Invest India' for attracting FDI and 'Make in India' for making India a global manufacturing hub provide ample opportunities for catapulting the sports goods industry, especially the football business, to another orbit.

Mr. Abhijit Sarkar, Co-Chairman, FICCI Sports Committee, delivered a vote of thanks.

On the occasion, the 'India Football Yearbook 2014' brought out by FICCI and Libero Sports, was released. The yearbook highlights some of the key events, achievements and innovations experienced within the football industry throughout 2014. It gives insights into India's rapidly growing football industry and is aimed at helping decision makers to shape the future of India's football ecosystem.

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