

Enter the field to win: Rathore

Sports Minister exhorts u-17 team to be an inspiration to the nation

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NEW DELHI

The kick-off for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup is just 70 hours away and for the Indian team, it is a dream that has been a long time in the making. The host takes on USA in its opening game on Friday and the players couldn't have asked for better inspiration ahead of the tournament than the country's first-ever silver medalist in the Olympics.

"Each and every one of you can inspire this nation by what you do on the football field. You are going to play the game of your life and every moment counts. When you enter the field, you should enter to win," Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, now the country's Sports Minister, told the Indian squad members at a felicitation function here on Tuesday.

Organised by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), the felicitation was part of the FIFA U-17 World Cup, India Industry



Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore with the Indian squad at a felicitation session on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Discussion & Felicitation Session here.

Adding that the tournament was of historic importance as the first time an Indian team would be participating in a FIFA tournament, Rathore insisted that sports was not just play and fun but also a very strong medium for breaking boundaries and communications, both within and outside the country.

Declaring that 24000 tickets have been sold out for the opening day of the tournament, Rathore said the

sale was held back to ensure there were enough reserved for school children.

"The Prime Minister certainly sees sports as something that unites the country. The way we look at sport in India needs to change. Every stakeholder has to become part of it and that includes the federations, corporates, parents, schools, colleges and the media," he said.

Promoting the ambitious Khelo India programme of the government that seeks to provide a platform to children from across the coun-

try highlight their talent and seek government assistance, Rathore said the government was also planning to launch the Khelo India School Games by December this year.

"The Khelo India School Games will be held every year, in partnership with corporates houses and broadcasting channels, so that we can deliver in these categories. We will try and raise it to the level of Asian games and American games so there is provide platform for children who are studying in school to come and play and participate in that platform. The government would also hold the Khelo India College Games in January 2018," he said.

Saying the Indian team was ready and raring to go, All India Football Federation general-secretary Kushal Das said, "Hosting the FIFA U-17 World Cup in India will prove to be a watershed event. We are ready for the event and this is just the beginning for Indian football, there is a long way to go."

World Cup an opportunity to prove our mettle: Sports Minister



The Indian U-17 football squad poses with Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore during a function in New Delhi on Tuesday. While wishing the team good luck for the marquee event, the Minister said it was a good opportunity for the country to prove its mettle in one of the biggest football events of the world. PTI

Boost for school, college games

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 3

Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore today announced the launch of National School and College Games in December and January, respectively, to tap talent from every nook and corner of the country. Delivering his speech at a felicitation function for the Indian U-17 football team, Rathore said the youth of this country will have to be provided platforms to show their talent.

"The way we look at sports will have to be

changed. All the stakeholders will have to be involved in taking Indian sports to a new level. The government will provide the platform for the young people to take up sports," he said.

"In this regard, the government has decided to start for the first time the Khelo India National School Games in December and Khelo India National College Games in January 2018. These will be annual events. This we are doing to tap talent at the school and college levels. Without doing this

we will not be able to nurture talent," he added.

He said corporate houses will be involved in this endeavour and the Games will be telecast live.

Elaborating the plan of the government, the Sports Minister said, "We want to hold these Games in a big way like the Asian Games or Pan American Games. From these Games, 1000 children will be selected and be given Rs 5 lakh for eight years for their training and each year 1000 children more will be added." — PTI



The Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (I/C) and Information & Broadcasting, Col Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore felicitating the Indian Squad for U-17 World Cup, at a function, organised by the ASSOCHAM, in New Delhi on Tuesday.



U-17 COLTS MEET SPORTS MINISTER

NEW DELHI: The Indian Under-17 football squad on Tuesday met Union Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore along with All India Football Federation (AIFF) General Secretary Kushal Das. Addressing the colts, Rathore, an Olympics shooting medallist in 2004, said: "The FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 is a very important occasion as for the first time an Indian team will participate in a FIFA tournament and thus it is a great pleasure to be amongst them. Every game you play in the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 will be the game of your lives and the games will be etched in your memory forever, so play for your life and play to win," he added.

Agencies

