

UP is steadily becoming India's sports hub: Shri Anurag Thakur

Hon'ble Union Minister, Shri Anurag Thakur addresses session on 'Decoding the investment potential of the sports sector in Uttar Pradesh and its role in 1\$ trillion economy'

UP is building a strong foundation for athletes to bring medals to the country: Shri Thakur

Sports sector will provide employment to the youths of the state: Shri Girish Chandra Yadav

Lucknow, February 12, 2023: Hon'ble Union Minister Shri Anurag Thakur on Sunday said that Uttar Pradesh is steadily becoming a hub of sports in India as the state is building a strong foundation for athletes to bring medals to the country.

Hon'ble Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports was addressing a session on 'Decoding the investment potential of the sports sector in Uttar Pradesh and its role in 1\$ trillion economy' held at the Bhardwaj Hanger in GIS.

Praising the Yogi government for organising this Global investors summit, Shri Thakur said, "It is the UP government that has taken the initiative to include the sports sector in the investor summit. No other state has ever done that."

He added: "In 2021, the UP Government felicitated the Tokyo Olympic medallist. It is common that the states felicitate the players of their own, but for the first time, the UP government, under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath, took the initiative of felicitating the Olympic medallists of the entire country, which is commendable."

The Union Minister said that it is from rural India that the players have done really well. "We need more competitions, coaches and trainers in India. UP has a population of 25 crore and its requirements are huge. We need size and scale to attract more investment and we need speed to deliver infrastructure", he pointed out.

Speaking during the session, Shri Girish Chandra Yadav, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Sports, Youth Welfare Department, said, "The country is touching a new dimension in the field of sports. Sports is the means of good health and along with enhancing intellectual ability, it also awakens the spirit of patriotism and physical fitness."

The Uttar Pradesh government is dedicated to the development of sportspersons. Stadiums have been established in all the 75 districts. There were no stadiums at 4 district headquarters, for which Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath gave his approval, he added.

He said: "Uttar Pradesh is a state with a large population. Three sports colleges have been established which will pave the way for the players to move forward. Besides, the new sports policy takes care of the needs of the players. Under One District One Sports, a coach has been appointed in each district. A sports university is also being built in Meerut. UP will soon become a sports hub. Sports will provide employment to the youths of the state."

He assured that the UP government will extend full support to the investors investing in the state.

During the session, the panelists shared their experiences also. Shri Abhinav Bindra, Olympic Gold Medallist and Founder of Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance Centre said: "For the first time a session is being held on sports in an investors summit. Sports play an important role in overall development of the state. Sports can also play a vital role in the economy by generating revenue. There has also been substantial increase in the budgetary allocation for sports this year. Abhinav Bindra Foundation will support athletes who have suffered injuries."

Shri Carlos Ezpeleta, Chief Strategy Officer, Dorna (MotoGP), congratulated the Government of UP for the successful organisation of the investors summit. MotoGP will showcase all the tourist destinations of UP to the world. MotoGP will invest Rs 470 crores in Uttar Pradesh.

Shri Suresh Raina, Indian cricketer, said that this state has a lot of potential and appreciated the efforts of CM Yogi Adityanath in the sports sector.

Shri Yannick Colaco, Former National Basketball player and Founder Fancode remarked that sports has vast economic potential not just for athletes but also for job creation.

Shri Poul V Jensen, MD, European Business and Technology Centre said that it called for incredible effort to organise an investors summit.

Shri Benedicte de la Briere, Lead Economist in the Social Protection and Job Practice, World Bank, remarked: "Sports can be a foundation for sustainable development of Uttar Pradesh. Sports can help make schools more engaging."

Ms Nidhi Pundir, Vice President, Global CSR, HCL Foundation, said: "Sports for Change is a Pan India initiative. Each child must have access to all kinds of sports. We shall be providing state of the art infrastructure and nutrition support."

During the session, ACS Sports Shri Navneet Sehgal, said that PM Modi laid emphasis on sports which was neglected earlier while the UP government came up with a new sports policy. "We have a large number of youths and 30,000 sports grounds in the state", he said.

Shri Richard Barlow, Head of Political Affairs, British High Commission, while speaking in Hindi, said that he learnt the language in Kashi. "UP has produced some of the most successful athletes of India. I appreciate the efforts of the UP government in maintaining law and order in the state", he said.