

UP's role crucial in making India a sports superpower, says Thakur

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: Union minister of state for sports and youth welfare (independent charge) Anurag Thakur said that the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to make India a sports superpower of the world.

He added that UP's role in fulfilling this vision would be a game-changer.

Addressing a session on 'Decoding the investment potential of sports sector in Uttar Pradesh and its role in \$1 trillion economy' during the Global Investors Summit, Thakur said the budget for sports had been increased by three times in eight years.

"Encouragement to sports is visible in the outcome of policies like Khelo India and Prime Minister's interaction with players going to every important sporting event. Our players are doing well at the international level," he said.

"The efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are commendable. He is the only CM in India who not only encourages the players of his state but also from other parts of the country. He has proved his commitment to sports by adopting wrestling and badminton. He is trying to improve infrastructure related to sports through corporate and private sectors," he added.

"UP government has taken initiative to include sports sector in the investors summit. No other state has ever done that," Thakur said.

UP sports minister Girish Chandra Yadav spoke about infrastructure facilities being provided by the state government to sportspersons.

"The state government is dedicated to ensuring the welfare of sportspersons. Stadiums have been established in all the 75 districts. Three



(Top) Participants during a session on sports during GIS; Union sports minister Anurag Thakur, Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra and cricketer Suresh Raina at the session

sports colleges have been established which will pave the way for players to move forward. New Sports Policy takes care of the needs of players. Under 'One District, One Sports' scheme, one coach has been appointed in each district. A sports university is also being built in Meerut. UP will soon become a sports hub," he said.

Additional chief secretary, sports, Navneet Sehgal said that PM Narendra Modi laid emphasis on sports which were neglected earlier. "UP government also came up with a new sports policy. We have a large number of youths and 30,000 sports grounds in the state," he said.

Olympic gold medallist in shooting and founder of Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance Centre, Abhinav Bindra, said: "Sports play an

important role in overall development of the state and economy. There has been a substantial increase in budgetary allocation for sports this year. Abhinav Bindra Foundation will support athletes who have suffered injuries."

Chief strategy officer, Dorna (MotoGP), Carlos Ezpeleta congratulated the UP government for successful organisation of the investors summit. "MotoGP will showcase all the tourist destinations of UP to the world. We will invest Rs 472 crore in UP," Ezpeleta said.

Cricketer Suresh Raina appreciated the efforts of CM Yogi Adityanath in the sports sector and said that UP had a lot of potential. Raina said organizing MotoGP was a good initiative by the state government.

Former national basketball play-

Consensus on new investment proposals

Many new trade agreements were also formalized on this occasion. The UP Cricket Association will build an international cricket stadium in Varanasi for Rs 350 crore. Other investments are MotoGP (Rs 472 crore), TransStadia (Rs 1000 crore), JSW Sports Wing (Rs 500 crore) Abhinav Bindra (Rs 100 crore), HCL Foundation (Rs 50 crore) for identifying players, training, providing better infrastructure for them. The World Bank project will be implemented after government approval.

er and founder of Fancode, Yannick Colaco, said sports sector had huge economic potential but also helped in job creation.

MD, European Business and Technology Centre, Poul V Jensen said it called for incredible effort to organise an investors summit. Lead economist in social protection and job practice, World Bank, Benedicte de la Briere, said: "Sports can be a foundation for sustainable development of UP. Sports can help make schools more engaging."

Vice-president, Global CSR, HCL Foundation, Nidhi Pundir said: "Sports for Change is a pan-India initiative. Each child must have access to all kinds of sports. We will provide state of the art infrastructure and nutrition support."

Speaking in Hindi, head of political affairs, British High Commission, Richard Barlow, said he learnt the language in Kashi. "UP has produced some of the most successful athletes. I appreciate the efforts of UP government in maintaining law and order in the state," he said.