



NAGALAND OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS HILL, KOHIMA 797001

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Press Release

Advisor to Chief Minister, Nagaland and Associate Vice President of the Athletics Federation of India, Abu Metha was invited to speak at the 1st Sportstar National Sports Conclave in New Delhi. The conclave was organised by India's only sports periodical magazine The Sportstar and The Hindu.

The keynote address of the Conclave was delivered by Shri. Anurag Thakur, Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports.

Other participants included current and former Olympians, corporate representatives, officials of the Government of India sports administrators. World champions Nikhat Zareen, Marabai Chanu, Sarita Devi, cricketer Harbhajan Singh, Presidents of national federation of Athletics and Football Adille Sumariwala and Kalyan Chaubey and current sportspersons Rani Rampal and senior journalists and sports writers were some of the other participants at the conclave.

Abu Metha in his addresses called for a change of narrative towards the northeastern states in the field of sports and games. He said that the Government of India must make more investments in sports in the region in the fields of infrastructure, Human Resource and development programmes for sportspersons. "The northeast is a talent bank of sports for the country and the fact that people of the region are naturally athletic does not need elaboration" he said, adding that sports and games is a way of life for the northeastern people. Everywhere you go, you will find people, young and old, playing different sports, but unfortunately the lack of good infrastructure, quality Human Resource and an eco-system of sporting development were the hurdles restricting the youth from performing better.

Metha emphasised that the youth of the region are greatly challenged by many factors including insurgency and violence, however sports provided a platform for the youth to contribute towards nation building. He called for a rethink on the part of the Government of India on the funding pattern for sports infrastructure which was earlier 90:10 supported by the Centre. Those in positions in Delhi must not have a one size fits all approach for the whole country but understand the dynamics of the region and formulate policy accordingly.

Metha further called upon the corporate and industries sector to increase its support for the sports sector in the north east. The corporates should not only view it from the angle of optics and eyeballs on televisions but also look at it from the perspective of nation building and contributions towards bringing the region closer to the mainstream through sports, he stated.



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Metha also called upon the national federations to do more in the northeast. Towards this end, he expressed satisfaction that the BCCI was doing excellent work while the Athletics Federation of India has undertaken several initiatives in the northeast by way of bringing national and international events to the NE, education programmes and capacity building. He highlighted that the South Asian Cross Country Championships hosted in Nagaland was a grand success with athletes from the region winning medals.

Metha expressed confidence that if given the appropriate infrastructure and support system, the success rate of the north east would greatly increase and youth of the region would make India shine brighter.

(Issued by Nagaland Olympic Association)