

PRESS RELEASE

Khelo India looking at recognising Sesa Football Academy as a partner: Sports Minister

Goa, November 20, 2018: Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) Youth Affairs and Sports, was the special guest at an event organised by SESA Football Academy at their Sankhali Campus in Goa today.

Speaker of Legislative Assembly Goa, Mr. Pramod Sawant and the President of Vedanta Football Project, Mr. Annanya Agarwal were present during his visit to the Academy.

Speaking at the event, the Hon'ble Minister emphasised on the need for stronger alignment with private academies in India and said Khelo India is looking at officially recognising SESA Football Academy as a partner for the programme.

Col. Rathore on his maiden visit to the SESA Football academy at the Sankhali campus said, "We have started a programme called Khelo India that is the vision of the Prime Minister, where he feels that anyone who plays has a distinct personality. Sports is also a place where you forget about your caste, creed and religion and where you become one team."

"Hopefully we will very soon be recognising Sesa Football Academy as a partner in Khelo India. My team will come here and see the infrastructure and the training that is happening," he added.

Annanya Agarwal, President of the Vedanta Football Project also spoke on the occasion: “It will be an honour to support Government initiatives like Khelo India and we will be extending all possible support to our young athletes. At Vedanta, we want to take Indian football forward and remain committed to the upliftment of football from the grassroots levels.”

SESA Football Academy is one of the first residential academies in India. Established in 1999, with currently two running campuses, the academy has the unique distinction of developing the highest number of players for the national team, the ISL teams, the I-League teams and the Goa Pro League from the state of Goa.

The minister met with the players of the academy and also addressed the gathering. He talked about the academy and its work on improving football at the grassroots level. He also honoured Bosco Monteiro, Nicholas Pereira, Salvador Fernandes and Issac D’Souza – former players of the SESA Goa Football Club.

The minister was full of praise for the impressive effort put forth by the Vedanta Group to build the SESA Football Academy. “I must congratulate the Vedanta staff and the entire team for allowing me the privilege of coming here and meeting all the wonderful teams here that are preparing for the various tournaments ahead,” he said.

SESA Football Academy has 2 fully equipped and state of the art campuses – one at Sankhali and another at Sirsaim – that employs highly capable and licensed technical experts.

The SESA Football Academy in Sankhali was created on a reclaimed mine and is a great example of sustainability and responsibility towards the environment by Vedanta Group. Keeping this great endeavour in mind, the minister explained “I think it’s a wonderful opportunity for me to be here, in this place which would normally be a mine bereft of any green leaves. But it’s amazing to see the sort of work that Vedanta has done to convert the mines into the lovely forest that is here.”

“This is a great example to the rest of the country and it’s also an example that mining can co-exist with environmental protection,” he added.

Speaking on the efforts of the Vedanta Group to support women’s football, Col. Rathore said, “It’s also wonderful to see that a Vedanta Women’s Football League

has been started here. I would love to see these girls play for India and I would love India to dominate the world with our girls,” the minister told the gathering.

The Union minister also gave special mention to Vedanta’s interest in developing sports. “I compliment Vedanta for putting their CSR money and passion into sports. This is not just about sports; it is also about developing communities and personalities and is therefore helping to develop the nation. In our life, we have many boundaries. The moment you enter the playing field, no other boundary exists there. That is the speciality of sport,” he concluded.

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About SFA: Vedanta – Sesa Goa Iron Ore as part of its commitment to serve the community established Sesa Football Academy (SFA) in the year 1999, with the prime objective of nurturing young football talent from Goa. SFA is built on the reclaimed mine at Sankhali-Goa and is run on a residential basis and imparts systematic and scientific training and lays emphasis to develop the potential and grooms the youngsters to become full-fledged professional players. SFA takes care of the formal education of the trainees during the four year training period. Within a span of 17 years, SFA has made tremendous impact on the football fraternity in Goa and across the nation. Young football enthusiasts aspiring to become professionals show keen interest to join the academy. From the inception of SFA around 123 trainees benefitted from the Academy. The Academy is proud of the budding sportsmen who passed out from the institution and are most sought after with some of them playing for India’s senior team, I-League clubs of India and local clubs in Goa. SFA patronized and mentored the sportsmen even during the critical times of the mining ban.

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Vedanta Limited is the Indian subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Plc, a London-listed, 6th largest natural resources company, globally. Governance and Sustainable Development are at the core of Vedanta's strategy, with a strong focus on health, safety and environment and on enhancing the lives of local communities. The company is conferred with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) ‘Sustainable Plus Platinum label’, ranking among the top 10 most sustainable companies in India. To access the Vedanta Sustainable Development Report 2016, please visit <http://sd.vedantaresources.com/SustainableDevelopment2015-16/>

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