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Football's Global Players

Indian Football to have major national and international corporate involvement

- *The International Football Arena Roundtable focuses on the Indian football market*
- *Indian & International corporations and clubs discuss the future of Indian Football*
- *Infrastructure key to development of football*

New Delhi, September 09, 2010: At the International Football Arena (IFA) roundtable today, industry representatives, club representatives and football experts exchanged views on how to take Indian football to the next level. The roundtable was organised with the aims of finding solutions for the holistic development of Indian football and marketing of Indian football.

Alberto Colaco – All India Football Federation (AIFF) General Secretary, told the gathering “India’s immediate aim is to be in the top 10 teams in Asia. The football association in tandem with various partners are working towards training and development of the current Indian team and the junior team.”

Speaking at the roundtable, Ben Wells, Head of Marketing – Chelsea FC, reiterated the fact that Chelsea is closely watching the Indian market and is scouting for like-minded corporate partners. He said, “We want to enter the Indian market with grassroots level engagement. Chelsea FC does not want to come to India just to play a match as we are committed to development of football in this country.”

While deliberating on the marketing of football on the lines of the English Premier and the Indian Premier League (cricket), Joy Bhattacharya, Team Director – Knight Riders, opined “India has to allow international clubs to enter the market to develop football. It is the onus of AIFF to create a channel so that it helps both foreign and Indian clubs to infuse training facilities and also create a healthy infrastructure.”



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The gathering discussed at length of how to increase awareness level across India in order to make football viable for investments, merchandising and international partnering. The roundtable also focussed on team India versus clubs in India. Bob Houghton, Manager – India Football Team, said, “In order to develop and train our team, it is imperative that we infuse technical knowhow from international teams and not from international clubs. We also need to consolidate our existing calendar of tournaments to make the same more competitive.”

While short term commercial gains will not help Indian football, the country needs to scout and hone for young talents. As Marcel Schmid, Founder & Chairman – International Football Arena, said, “To create the right product, India needs the infusion of good professionalism, sponsorship, investment and above all infrastructure. And for good infrastructure, the public – private partnership is necessary.”



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