

***Australia and India come together to make India a sporting nation***  
**Time to skill workers to meet rising demand in sports related professions**

***Booming sports sector offers great business opportunity to Indian industry***

**NEW DELHI, 19 June 2017:** India by 2022 would require around 4 million skilled workers to fill sports related professional vacancies in diverse capacities. This provides a great opportunity to industry to skill workers to meet the rising demand, said **Ms Harinder Sidhu, Australia's High Commissioner to India**, at the '**Australia-India Sports Partnership Meet**' on the theme '**Importance of Sports Education**' organized by FICCI jointly with the Australian Government.

Ms. Sidhu said that India was at the cusp of a boom in the sports arena as the country had begun appreciating the importance of promoting and encouraging sports at the grassroots level. Development of industry in sports would not only provide economic but social opportunities. The need was for the government, industry and the youth of the country to work in tandem.

Referring to the sports agreement between the prime ministers of India and Australia, Ms. Sidhu said that it would enable India to develop opportunities through connecting Australia's global reputation for sports excellence and expertise with India's ambition to improve its sports administration and infrastructure.

The aim of this partnership is to build capacity in the sports sector in India around the skills enhancement framework established by the Indian Government and learn from the experience and expertise of Australia which has done tremendously well in these areas. The outcome of today's meeting would be linked with FICCI's Sector Skills Council in Sports, Physical Education, Fitness and Leisure for skilling development in India.

The Guest of Honor from Australia, **Mr. Adam Gilchrist AM, Australia India Education Ambassador & Former Australian Cricketer**, said that sports was a burgeoning sector in India. Citing the example of the Indian Premier League (IPL), he said that other countries were replicating the model but the success India had no other nation has been able to achieve it. Therefore, the India-Australia partnership aimed at promoting sports and especially at the grass root level and enhancing business opportunities. He added that the integration of education and sports would enable youth to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The Guest of Honor from India, **Mr. Ajay Jadeja, Former Indian Cricketer**, said that sports was an essential aspect of learning and education but in India it was being treated as an extracurricular activity and this needed to change. Sports help in the overall development of a person and enables them to lead a healthy and active life. He added that there were almost 1.5 million schools in India but only a handful of them encourage students to take up sports. Thus, there was a huge opportunity, which needed to be harnessed.

**Ms Ambika Sharma, Director General (International), FICCI**, said that for making India a sporting nation, there was a need for a strong sporting culture and creation of a robust ecosystem. Indian government was fully committed to this task as also the private sector. FICCI was working with sports legends to push sports as a career and was promoting the business of sports where all the key stakeholders could come together for development of sports in the country.