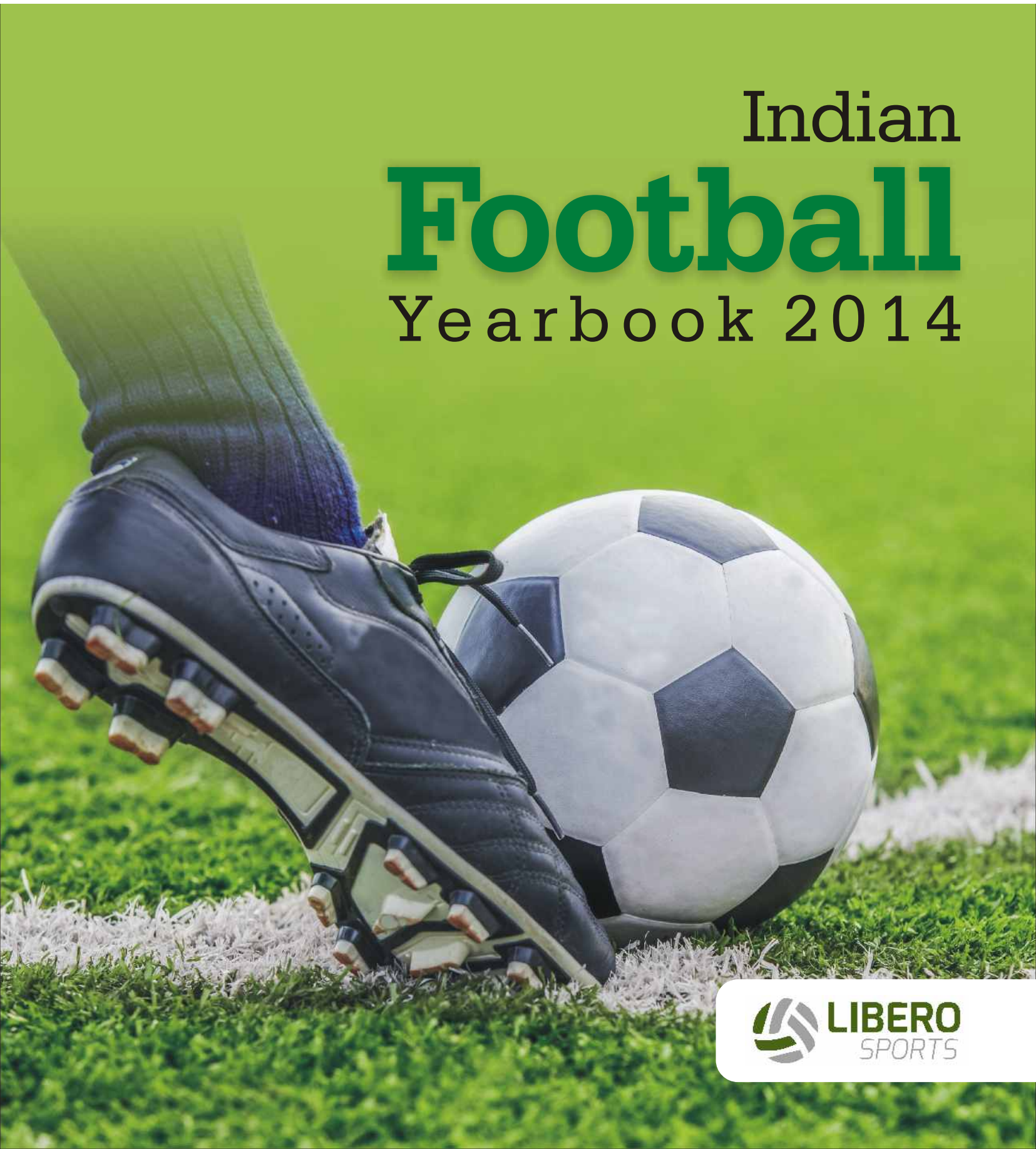
Indian Football Yearbook 2014



LIBERO SPORTS

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Foreword

I applaud FICCI and Libero Sports for taking the initiative to put together this "Indian Football Yearbook" as 2014 was clearly a monumental year for our industry full of many notable events, achievements and innovations.

Whether it was the launch of the Indian Super League which took the country by storm, the rise of Bengaluru FC, our Women's National Team making the country proud by winning the SAFF Cup, preparations for India to host the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup, or the countless grassroots programs which were established during the year, we, as the Indian football industry, have plenty to celebrate, analyse and build upon as we look towards 2015 and beyond.

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading through this report and learning about some of the key highlights which took place over the past year. I look forward to working with each of you as we look to build off of the momentum gained in 2014 to help India fully reach its potential as a leader in global football.



Kushal Das
General Secretary
All India Football Federation

Acknowledgement

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) is committed to educating and empowering existing and potential Indian football industry stakeholders through the development and distribution of knowledge. With this intention at the forefront, the FICCI Sports Committee chose to create a knowledge report which serves to highlight some of the key events, achievements and innovations which were experienced within the Indian football industry throughout 2014.

We are pleased to release this sixth in series of FICCI-Libero Sports Knowledge Reports entitled, "Indian Football Yearbook" at FICCI GOAL 2015. We are confident that this report will not only spread timely and relevant knowledge about India's rapidly growing football industry, it will also help decision makers who continue to shape the future of our football ecosystem.

We are confident that the future of Indian football is bright as the sport is becoming a staple within Indian culture especially through the growing interest for the game amongst corporates, media and, most importantly, India's youth.

We express our gratitude to all individuals and organizations who have helped us in making this report by their direct and indirect involvement. My special acknowledgement to the FICCI and Libero Sports team, comprising of Mr. Ahetesham Khan, Mr. Amit Mantri, Mr. Neel Shah and Mr. Sweekar Kapoor under the able guidance and leadership of Mr. Rajpal Singh and Mr. Sukhvinder Singh for their efforts in developing this paper. Also, special thanks to Ankan Banerjee for his contribution to this project.



Mr. Sanjiv Paul
Chairman
FICCI Sports Committee



Mr. Abhijit Sarkar
Co-Chairman
FICCI Sports Committee



Introduction



CHAPTER 1



Introduction

2014 was a memorable year for Indian football. In this year, the football fans of the country witnessed the launch of a multi-billion dollar sports property, the Indian Super League (ISL), which not only attracted football icons from different countries, but also expanded the commercial opportunities for the sport. The franchisees, which participated in the inaugural edition of the event, have promised strategic investment for developing football talent from the grassroots level in addition to delivering high quality football to the masses each year. ISL, undoubtedly, introduced a new era in Indian football which has the potential to serve as a catalyst for the overall development of the sport within India over the coming years.

The success of Indian football in 2014 was not limited to the inception of the ISL. The women's National football team made us proud by winning the 3rd SAFF Women's Championship which took place in Pakistan between 11th and 21st November 2014. The success of the women's team shows the immense talent that our female footballers have, offering hope for a bright future for women's football in the country.

The entry of Bengaluru FC in the I-League has already increased the professionalism and competitiveness of the League and other major events participated by them. Inspired by the success of Bengaluru FC, the AIFF has introduced another franchisee in the I-League, named 'Bharat FC,' which is the initiative of the Kalyani Group. The Kalyani Group is an Indian multinational which has expertise in the areas of high technology, engineering and manufacturing. It may be expected that the AIFF will continue its efforts to attract corporate sector in launching new teams in I-League and other tournaments.

It was a proud moment for the nation when football icon and the former captain of the men's National football team, Baichung Bhutia, was honoured with the 'AFC Hall of Fame Award' at the Asian Football Confederation's Annual Awards Night on the occasion of AFC's 60th Anniversary. On the same evening, the AFC also recognized India's national initiative for developing football at the grassroots level by awarding the country the prestigious AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football.

The women referees of the country created history by officiating the Semi-final match in the Asian Games between Women's World Champions Japan and Vietnam in Incheon. It was the first instance when Indian referees officiated a match featuring the present World Champion.

2014 was a significant year for Indian football in the area of grassroots development as well. In this year, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) organized its first ever grassroots course in Guwahati, Assam on August 29, 2014. The Course was attended by 32 coaches. In addition, some of the top clubs in global football, including Liverpool FC, Arsenal FC, Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan, have either started their initiatives in India for the development of football or have expanded their programme.

Apart from these initiatives, the AIFF established a partnership with Atletico Paranaense of Brazil for the development of football of this country, especially for building a strong team for the U-17 FIFA World Cup to be held in India in 2017. AIFF was instrumental in launching a strategic plan on 15th October 2014 which is meant to provide a roadmap for the overall development of football in India.

2014 was a landmark year for Indian football. The developmental and commercial activities of football in 2014 will play an important role in shaping the future of the sport in this country. Thus, it is important to examine these activities in more detail.



Baichung Bhutia with the AFC Hall of Fame Award



India's Women's squad celebrating their success in the final of SAFF Cup



Indian Super League (ISL)



Major Competitions in 2014

LIBERO SPORTS

CHAPTER 2

Major Competitions in 2014

2.0 Indian Super League

The most important event that took place in 2014 which has already impacted the way football is produced and consumed in India, is the Indian Super League (ISL). The concept of ISL was introduced by IMG- Reliance, a joint venture between IMG, a subsidiary of the world's biggest Sports and Entertainment Company, and Reliance, the biggest and one of the most successful conglomerates of the country. The AIFF extended its support to ensure the successful organisation of the innagural edition of this high profile sports property.

ISL is unique in many aspects. First, it has implemented the franchisee system in Indian football for the first time and has attracted the corporate sector, glamour industry and icons from other disciplines of sports to become the proud owners of these franchisees. Second, it has roped in the football icons of the world to take part in this football extravaganza as coaches, players and ambassadors. Third, through various promotional and marketing initiatives, this event has successfully combined football with entertainment and has, thus, created the concept of 'footballtainment', which is indeed an innovation in Indian football. The result of all these efforts was reflected in the on-field and off-field successes of the inaugural edition of the event.

2.0.1 ISL- The concept of 'Footballtainment'

The inaugural edition of ISL kicked off on 12th October 2014. It featured eight franchisees from different cities of India. It should be noted that the concept of IPL-style football event was first introduced by the Indian Football Association (IFA) on 25th April 2011. The names of the six franchisees were announced as well. All of them were from the state of West Bengal. However, in February 2012, it was announced that the league was postponed to an undecided date.

The ISL was officially launched on 21st October 2013 by IMG- Reliance, Star Sports and the AIFF. Initially, the league was scheduled to take place between January 2014 and March 2014. However, on 29th October 2013, it was announced that the league would be postponed to September 2014. The bidding of the franchisees, which was initially planned to complete before the end of 2013, but eventually took place on 3rd

March 2014. Professional Service Corporation and Ernst & Young were given the responsibility of evaluating the bidding forms submitted by the interested bidders.

The winning bidders for the ISL teams were announced on 13th April 2014. The base price for each team was set at INR 12 crores, while Kolkata emerged as the most expensive team, which was bought by the former captain of Indian cricket team Sourav Ganguly, businessmen Harshavardhan Neotia, Sanjiv Goenka, Utsav Parekh, and Spanish La Liga side Atlético Madrid, at an approximate amount of INR 18 crores.

A list of the franchisees, their cities, owners and the home grounds is given below:

Table 1: List of Franchisees, city, owners and home grounds

Franchisees	City	Owners	Home Ground
Atlético de Kolkata	Kolkata, West Bengal	The team is owned by Kolkata Games and Sports Pvt. Ltd., which consists of: i) Sourav Ganguly ii) Harshavardhan Neotia iii) Sanjiv Goenka iv) Utsav Parekh v) Atlético Madrid	Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata
Chennaiyin FC	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	This franchisee is owned by: i) Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan ii) Indian cricket team Captain, Mahendra Singh Dhoni iii) Vita Dani	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Chennai
Delhi Dynamos FC	Delhi	DEN Networks	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Delhi
FC Goa	Goa	This franchisee is owned by: i) Businessman Venugopal Dhoot ii) Cricketer, Virat Kohli iii) Goan businessmen Dattaraj Salgaocar and Shrinivas Dempo	Fatorda Stadium, Goa

Franchisees	City	Owners	Home Ground
Kerala Blasters FC	Kochi, Kerala	This franchisee is owned by: i) Former cricketer, Sachin Tendulkar ii) Prasad V Potluri: entrepreneur, philanthropist and educationist	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Kochi
Mumbai City FC	Mumbai, Maharashtra	i) Ranbir Kapoor ii) Bimal Parekh	DY Patil Stadium, Mumbai
North East United FC	Guwahati, Assam	i) John Abraham ii) Shillong Lajong	Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium, Guwahati
Pune City FC	Pune, Maharashtra	i) Hrithik Roshan ii) Wadhawan Group iii) ACF Fiorentina	Balewadi Stadium, Pune

2.0.2 ISL- Concept of 'Marquee Players'

An important innovation in the ISL is the addition of marquee players with each team. These marquee players not only improved the quality of the games in the inaugural year, but also attracted the viewers towards the league. In other words, it can be said that these marquee players played an instrumental role in making the league successful. The attraction was not limited to the marquee players, but the presence of eminent coaches and the master strategists of the world increased the interest of the fans.

A list of marquee players and the coaches of the franchisees is given in the following table:

Table 2: List of Marquee Players and Prominent Coaches of the Franchisees

Franchisees	Marquee Players	Head Coaches
Atlético de Kolkata	Luis Garcia (Spain)	Antonio López Habas (Spain)
Chennaiyin FC	Elano (Brazil)	Marco Materazzi (Italy)
Delhi Dynamos FC	Alessandro Del Piero (Italy)	Harm van Veldhoven (Netherlands)
FC Goa	Robert Pirès (France)	Zico (Brazil)

Franchisees	Marquee Players	Head Coaches
Kerala Blasters FC	David James (Engalnd), Coach and Marquee Player	
Mumbai City FC	Fredrik Ljungberg (Sweden)	Peter Reid (England)
North East United	Joan Capdevila (Spain)	Ricki Herbert (New Zealand)
Pune City FC	David Trezeguet (France)	Franco Colomba (Italy)

2.0.3 ISL- Competition Format

The first match of ISL was played on 12th October 2014. During the regular season, the teams played against each other on a home and away basis. The top four teams qualified for the semi-final, which was played in a two-legged format with the winners moving onto the one-leg final. The final match was played on 20th December 2014 between Atlético de Kolkata and Kerala Blasters at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai. The franchisee from Kolkata won the final by a solitary goal scored by Mohammed Rafique.



Atlético de Kolkata- Winners of the inaugural edition of ISL

2.0.4 ISL- Attendance

The inaugural edition of ISL has registered high level of attendance throughout the league which is a rare phenomenon in Indian football. ISL is considered as one of the best attended football leagues of the world. The match between Atlético de Kolkata and Mumbai City FC on 12th October 2014 registered the highest attendance, while the match between Pune City FC and Chennaiyin FC on 11th November 2014 registered the lowest attendance.

The following table represents the attendance record of each franchisee:

Table 3: Attendance Record of the franchisees of ISL

Name of the Franchisee	Total attendance	Highest Attendance	Lowest Attendance	Average Attendance
Karala Blasters	392,886	61,323	34,657	49,111
Atlético de Kolkata	316,195	65,000	21,550	45,171
North East United	200,296	31,770	25,530	28,614
Mumbai City FC	158,142	28,000	18,197	23,098
Chennaiyin FC	176,757	25,317	16,567	22,095
FC Goa	144,524	19,752	16,652	18,066
Delhi Dynamos FC	109,993	18,268	13,000	15,713
Pune City FC	55,015	8,427	7,243	7,859

2.0.5 Sponsorship and Media Coverage

All the matches of the first edition of the ISL were shown live by Star Sports, which was a member of the group that founded the ISL. The live streaming of the matches was available on starsports.com. It helped to spread the league to millions of households. This was essential in making the league commercially viable. This initiative not only enhanced the reach of the league, but also created a hype among the fans.

On 15th September 2014, Fox Sports made an announcement that they would telecast the matches of ISL in Australia. Eurosport 2 showed the matches in Europe, except the United Kingdom (UK). Star TV UK telecast the matches in UK. Thus, the popularity of the ISL was not limited to India, but expanded to the other countries of the world through television broadcasting.

On 18th July 2014, it was announced that the Hero MotoCorp entered into a three-year agreement with the ISL and became the title sponsor of the league. Thus, the tournament is officially known as Hero Indian Super League. The title sponsorship

was secured at an approximate price tag of INR 20 crores per annum.

Furthermore, the sports goods, footwear and apparel brand, Puma, became the official ball partner of the league. Muthoot Capital Services has partnered with the league as the sponsor of the referee's jersey. The other prominent brands, such as Dr. Reddy's Nise Gel, Amul, Maruti Suzuki and PepsiCo are also associated with the league as the official partners.



Hero Indian Super League

Maruti Suzuki became the associate sponsor at an approximate amount of INR 8 crores per year, while the other associate sponsors have agreed to invest about INR 3-5 crores per year as sponsorship fees.

2.0.6 ISL- Success in terms of numbers

ISL is undoubtedly a revolution in Indian football, not only for its unique concept, but also for the success that it has secured in terms of viewership and attendance. It was reported that ISL was watched by 429 million viewers across the country, which is just a shade lower than the viewership of the Pro-Kabaddi League (435 million), but almost two and half times more than the Indian viewership of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The organizers said that 57% of the viewers of ISL were women and children.

The online broadcaster of the league, starsports.com, recorded more than 32 million visits during the tournament, which was more than the number experienced during the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

The success was not limited to the viewership of the event, but was also extended to the high level of attendance which made the league as the most attended league of Asia and one of the top leagues of the world.

2.0.7 ISL- The Way Forward

The organizers and the franchisees of ISL do not restrict their activities only in organizing and playing the league, but have assured to expand their investment for

the development of football of this country at the grassroots level. The first initiative is the 'ISL Grassroots Football Movement' which aims at reaching to millions of football talent of the country and providing them the best practice available in global football. According to Mrs. Nita Ambani, founder and chairperson of Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), "Sport is essential for the holistic development of youth, which is a must for building a strong nation. Thus, this kind of initiative, which will promote football among the youth, is important." She described this programme as the soul of ISL.

This long term grassroots initiative will be a joint effort of the following organizations:

i) Indian Super League

ii) The eight ISL Teams

iii) Reliance Foundation

iv) Magic Bus (NGO) in Mumbai, Delhi, Raigad and Bangalore;

v) Slum Soccer (NGO) in Nagpur, Thane and Navi Mumbai

vi) Yuwa (NGO) in Jharkhand.

The first phase of this programme will start in the first half of January 2015 and will target approximately 500,000 children through in-schools and maidan initiatives. The programme will focus on introducing the children to football, training and talent-scouting through a series of selection modules across the country.



Nita Ambani launching ISL Grassroots Football Movement along with Bollywood star Salman Khan

As a part of the programme, the league organizers will distribute 100,000 footballs in the targeted areas of towns and villages across the country.

The top talent that emerge from this programme, will undergo another screening to be qualified for Reliance Foundation's YoungChamps scholarship.

2.1 I-League: 2013-2014

I-League is the top tier football league of India. The 2013-2014 season, which was the seventh edition of I-League, kicked off on 21st September 2013 and ended on 28th April 2014. The league was known as the Airtel I-League as Airtel came in as the title sponsor before the start of the season. Bengaluru FC, the new entrant into the league, emerged as the champions with one game remaining. By winning the title, Bengaluru FC qualified to participate in the 2015 Champions League Play-off Round and in the AFC Cup, while Kingfisher East Bengal, the runner-up, qualified to participate in the AFC Cup.



Bengaluru FC: Champions of I-League 2013-2014 Season

The seventh edition of the I-League registered an average attendance of 5,618. The derby between East Bengal and Mohun Bagan on 14th November 2013 registered the highest attendance. Total number of goals scored in 156 matches of this league was 402 (2.58 per match). Mohammedan SC was the only club, out of 13, which was relegated to the second division.

Sunil Chhetri of Bengaluru FC was awarded the best player of this I-League. Chhetri, along with Darryl Duffy of Salgaocar FC, became the top scorers of the league with 14 goals.

2.2 Federation Cup: 2014-2015

The Federation Cup is the main national football cup competition of India which was introduced in 1977. The 36th edition of the Federation Cup was played in 2014 in Goa with ten I-League teams. A list of the participating teams of 2014-2015 season of Federation Cup is given below:

- Bengaluru FC
- Dempo SC
- East Bengal FC
- Mohun Bagan AC
- Mumbai FC
- Pune FC
- Royal Wahingdoh FC

- Salgaocar FC
- Shillong Lajong FC
- Sporting Clube de Goa

The Federation Cup was known as the Hero Federation Cup as Hero came on board as the title sponsor of this property.

The 36th edition of Federation Cup offered a total of 23 matches in which 61 goals were scored (2.65 goals per match). The final match was held on 11th January 2015 between Dempo SC and Bengaluru FC in which the latter emerged as the winner by a 2-1 margin.



Bengaluru FC: Champions of the Federation Cup of 2014-2015 Season

Sunil Chhetri of Bengaluru FC and Tolgay Özbey of Dempo SC became the top scorers of the tournament by scoring six goals each. Romeo Fernandes of Dempo SC was crowned as the 'Best Player' of the tournament.



Salgaocar FC- Winners of the Durand Cup 2014

2.3 Durand Cup: 2014

The Durand Cup, which was first held in 1888, is the oldest football tournament of India and the third oldest football tournament in the world.

The 127th season of the tournament was organized between 20th October and 8th November 2014 in Goa with 12 teams. Salgaocar FC won the cup by defeating Pune FC by a solitary goal in the final match.



Mizoram- Winners of the Santosh Trophy 2013-2014

2.4 Santosh Trophy: 2014

The Santosh Trophy is one of the major annual tournaments of India which is

played between the states and the government institutions.

The 68th edition of Santosh Trophy was held in 2014. The zonal matches were held between 26th January and 4th February 2014, while the final phase was held in Siliguri, West Bengal, between 24th February and 9th March 2014. Mizoram emerged as the winners of the tournament by beating Railways convincingly by scoring three goals.

The winners of the tournament received prize money of INR 500,000 and the runners-up received INR 300,000.

2.5 Subroto Cup: 2014

The Subroto Cup, established in the country in 1960, is one of the most popular inter-school football tournaments in India. The tournament is named after the Indian Air Force Air Marshal Subroto Mukerjee.

The 55th edition of Subroto Cup was held in New Delhi between 16th September and 20th October 2014 in the following three age categories:

i) Sub- junior boys (U14)- 16th September to 30th September 2014

ii) Junior Girls (U17)- 25th September to 10th October 2014

iii) Junior Boys (U17)- 5th October to 20th October 2014

These competitions, especially the sub junior boys (U14), were helpful for the AIFF with selecting football talent who may represent India in the FIFA U-17 World Cup which will be held in 2017 in India.

Age Category	Winning Team
Sub- junior boys (U14)	Greenwood High School, Dimapur, Nagaland
Junior Girls (U17)	GGSSS Mangali. Dist:- Hisar. Haryana
Junior Boys (U17)	Colegio Estadul Santo Antonio, Rio De Jenerio, Brazil



Subroto Cup

2.6 Coca Cola Cup: 2014-2015

The Coca Cola Cup can be summarized as a talent hunt to uncover the young talents of football in India from the grassroots level. This is an initiative of the Coca Cola Company to strengthen AIFF's objective of building a strong team for the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup.

The six teams that have qualified for the Final Round of the Sub-Junior Coca Cola Cup for the season 2014-2015 are West Bengal, Mizoram, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Chandigarh and Haryana.

Jharkhand won this year's edition of the Coca-Cola Cup beating Goa 8 – 3 in the final.

2.7 Men's and Women's National Football Teams: 2014-2015

The Indian Men's National team participated in a number of friendly matches and tournaments in 2014. The major one was the 17th Asian Games which took place in Incheon, South Korea, between 19th September and 4th October 2014.

Team India ended their journey in the tournament after losing to a superior Jordan by two goals to nil. In their first match, India lost to United Arab Emirates by five goals to nil.

On 6th October 2014, India faced AFC Challenge Cup Champions Palestine in an International Friendly, which was held at the Kanchenjunga Stadium in Siliguri. Despite their first half lead, team India lost the match by three goals to two. Sunil Chhetri and Francis Fernandes scored for India, while Ashraf Alfawaghra, Wridat Ahmed, Khader Abuhammad scored for Palestine.

In another International Friendly, on 5th March 2014, India clashed against the neighbour Bangladesh. The match ended in a draw. Each team scored two goals. Sunil Chhetri scored both the goals for India, while Mithun Chowdhury and Hemanta Biswas scored for Bangladesh. The match was significant as Sunil Chhetri, the present football icon of India, became the highest goal scorer in the history of Indian football by scoring his first goal of the match in the 14th minute. Before Chhetri, Baichung Bhutia was the top scorer of Indian football, scoring 43 goals for the country.



India in the Asian Games 2014

The Women's Senior National team made us proud by winning the third SAFF Women's Championship which was held in Pakistan between 11th and 21st November 2014. This was the third time when India lifted the trophy. In the final match, which took place in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 21st November 2014, India clinched the title by defeating Nepal by six goals to nil. Indian National Team Striker, Bala Devi became the top scorer of the tournament by scoring 16 goals. She also scored four goals in the final match against Nepal.



Women's Senior Football Team: The winners of the SAFF Women's Championship 2014

It can be expected that more support will be extended to the women's team for achieving greater success in near future.





FIFA Secretary General in India

CHAPTER 3

FIFA Secretary General in India

3.0 India as the host of the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup

6th December 2013 was a historic day in Indian football as on that day the FIFA Executive Committee in its meeting at Salvador de Bahia in Brazil decided to award the country the right to host the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup. Uzbekistan, South Africa and Ireland were the other countries in the running for obtaining the right to host the tournament.

By virtue of serving as the host country, the Indian U-17 team will also participate in this prestigious tournament. However, this is only the beginning. The major stakeholders of Indian football will join hands to make this global event a grand success. Initiatives are already in planning stages or underway in the areas of infrastructural development, building a strong team to compete against the superpowers of world football, and marketing and promotional campaigns.

3.1 Progress so far

Three officials representing the World Governing Body of Football, FIFA, visited India on 20th February 2014 for a period of 10 days with the purpose of inspecting the shortlisted stadiums for the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup. The stadiums they visited are listed below:

i) Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Delhi)

ii) Ambedkar Stadium (Delhi)

iii) Salt Lake Stadium (Kolkata)

iv) KSFA Stadium (Bengaluru)

v) Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at Margao, Kochi and Guwahati (Goa, Kerala, Assam)

vi) Balewadi Stadium (Pune)

Only six stadiums, out of these eight, will be selected for holding the tournament.

The Central Government has already extended their support to the AIFF by allocating INR 95 crores for the upgradation of the six venues which will be shortlisted for holding the event. The Government is also keen on developing football talent for the event and may allocate some more funds for this purpose if deemed necessary.

According to an official of AIFF, FIFA has already made a plan to invest US $38 million for the organization of this marquee event.

Apart from these initiatives, the government and FIFA have assured all support to the AIFF for organizing this mega event successfully.

As a part of building a strong team for the tournament, which will compete with the top youth players of global football, AIFF is planning to start the U-15 I-League. This league will begin after the completion of the Coca Cola Cup in January 2015 and would consist of 10-12 I-League teams, ISL teams and a few academies. The league may involve 24-28 teams.

On 13th November 2013, the AIFF signed a historic agreement with the professional Brazilian football club, Clube Atlético Paranaense (CAP), for the overall development of Indian football and also for making a strong team for the U-17 FIFA World Cup. As a part of this agreement, technical knowledge will be exchanged between these two organizations of football.



India will host the FIFA U-17 Football World Cup in 2017

This preparation was consolidated with the visit of the Secretary General of FIFA, Mr. Jerome Valcke, to India between 14th and 16th October 2014.

3.2 Visit of Secretary General of FIFA to India

It was indeed a proud moment for Indian football when the Secretary General of FIFA, Mr. Jerome Valcke, visited India between 14th and 16th October 2014. The purpose of his visit was to strengthen the tie-up between India and FIFA. Mr. Valcke provided his valuable inputs for successfully organizing the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup.

On 15th October 2014, Mr. Valcke said to a packed media gathering in the capital of the country that the world body of football, FIFA, is committed to develop the beautiful game in India and their initiative has already kicked off with India winning the

right to host the 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup. He gave credit to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for introducing various other developmental initiatives for football in India. The Secretary General of FIFA set the goal of establishing football as the number two sport of the country after cricket.

According to Mr. Valcke, after 2017 U-17 FIFA World Cup, India should host U-20 FIFA World Cup and both these events will create a football culture in the nation. He also credited the Hero Indian Super League for drawing attention throughout the world. However, he put stress on making the grassroots developmental programmes more comprehensive for providing a pathway to the young talent of football of the country.

15th October 2014 was also important for Indian football as on that day Mr. Jerome Valcke, Secretary General of FIFA, officially launched the 'Strategic Plan' of AIFF which will provide a direction for the development of football in India. While launching the 'Strategic Plan', Mr. Valcke asserted that India is a 'priority country' for FIFA for football development and FIFA is committed to nurture the football talents of the country by making substantial investment.

This Strategic Plan will help AIFF to achieve 13 clearly defined and time bound goals till 2017. This plan is developed after detailed consultation with the major stakeholders. Some of the key areas in this plan are grassroots development, youth development and coaching education. We may expect that this 'Strategic Plan' will make a change in the developmental pattern of Indian football.



FIFA Secretary General, Mr. Jerome Valcke, in India



Awards, Honours and Events in 2014

CHAPTER 4

Awards, Honours and Events in 2014

4.0 Awards, Honours and Events in 2014

In 2014, the initiatives of the AIFF and its players and officials were recognized by the world bodies of football. The players, who excelled in the domestic circuit, were awarded by the AIFF as well.

India's national initiative for developing football at the grassroots level was recognised by the AFC. The country, along with Philippines and Tajikistan, won the AFC President Recognition Award for Grassroots Football during the AFC Annual Awards 2014 gala in the Philippines on Sunday, 30th November 2014. The nomination for the award is based on a number of criteria which include the following:

i) Structure and management of grassroots football

ii) Philosophy and policy of grassroots football

iii) Promotional, educational and social responsibility activities

iv) Exchange activities with the schools, regional football associations, communities, clubs etc.



Grassroots football in India

Baichung Bhutia, the football icon of the country and the former captain of the men's national team, was awarded with the 'AFC Hall of Fame Award' at the Asian Football Confederation's Annual Awards Night on the occasion of AFC's 60th Anniversary. The event was held in Manila on 30th November 2014. This was indeed a great achievement by an Indian footballer. FIFA President, Joseph S Blatter, handed over the Award to the 'Sikkimese Sniper' in the presence of AIFF President Mr. Praful Patel and other dignitaries.

Baichung, who was famous for his shooting, dribbling and scoring skills, was the flag bearer of Indian football in over 100 international matches. He became the first Indian footballer who was awarded with the 'AFC Hall of Fame Award'.



Baichung Bhutia was awarded with the 'AFC Hall of Fame Award'

History was created by two Indian women referees, Maria Rebello Piedade and Uvena Fernandes, when they officiated the Semi-final match of the Asian Games between Women's World Champions Japan and Vietnam in Incheon on 29th September 2014. It was the first time in the history of Indian football when Indian referees officiated a match involving the present world champion side. Maria was the referee of the match, while Uvena was serving as the assistant referee.



Indian Women Referees created history at the Asian Games

Sunil Chhetri, the Captain of the men's National Team of India, was declared as the 'AIFF 2014 Player of the Year' due to his outstanding performance throughout the year. Chhetri was chosen as the conqueror of the title on the basis of votes from Coaches from I-League Clubs. He was presented INR 2 lakhs and a trophy for this award. Chhetri had won this 'Best Player' award earlier in 2007, 2011 and 2013.

Chhetri surpasses the achievement of I.M. Vijayan of winning this award for three times (1992, 1997 and 2000).

In 2014, Chhetri was the top scorer of the I-League by scoring 14 goals, while he became the highest ever goal scorer for India in International Football. His achievements in 2014 were recognized by AIFF by giving him this prestigious award.



Sunil Chhetri: 'AIFF 2014 Player of the Year'

Bala Devi, the striker from Manipur was honoured with the 'AIFF Woman Footballer of the Year' in 2014. In this year, Bala Devi scored 16 goals in the SAFF Women's Championship which helped India to retain the title in Islamabad. 24 years old Bala Devi was awarded with a trophy and INR 1 lakh.



Indian delegates at UK during the 2014 Soccerex Global Convention

2014 was significant for Indian football for another initiative which was jointly taken by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Libero Sports during the event 2014 Soccerex Global Convention, which was held in Manchester, United Kingdom. The initiative was taken with the purpose of educating and empowering the global football community on the past, present and future of Indian football to generate additional investment. A Knowledge Report, named 'Building Football's Sleeping Giant' was released during the event.



Grassroots Developmental Initiatives in Indian Football in 2014

CHAPTER 5

Grassroots Developmental Initiatives in Indian Football in 2014

5.0 Grassroots Developmental Initiatives in Indian Football in 2014

The grassroots development plan is a strategic framework to select, nurture and launch the budding talents of sports across the country. It is an essential element for establishing a supply line of players from the local level to the national level. The grassroots developmental initiatives are set up by the technical experts and are often evaluated for measuring the outcome against the outlined objectives. The involvement of major stakeholders is a prerequisite for introducing a comprehensive grassroots development programme in sports in a country.

2014 was an important year for Indian football in the area of grassroots developmental initiatives as in this year the AIFF introduced its first ever grassroots course in Guwahati, Assam on August 29, 2014. Famous football clubs of the world, including Liverpool FC, Arsenal FC, Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan, have either started their activities in India for the development of football or have expanded their programme. The initiatives of the clubs and the state associations should also be considered.

We cannot expect the results of these initiatives readily, but in future the impact of these grassroots developmental activities will be immense on Indian football.

5.1 First ever Grassroots Course by the AIFF in Guwahati, Assam

The AIFF conducted its first ever grassroots course in Guwahati, Assam on August 29, 2014. The three-day course was attended by 32 coaches. At the end of the course, the participants were awarded with the AIFF Grassroots Leaders Certificate. The representatives of the Sports Authority of India, Guwahati, were also present during the course. The objective of this course was to educate the coaches so that they can reach out to more number of kids.



First ever Grassroots Course by the AIFF in Guwahati, Assam

5.2 Liverpool FC Football Academy in India

Liverpool Legend Jamie Carragher opened the club's International Football Academy in Pune on 3rd June 2014. The Academy is situated at the DSK International Campus at Loni, on the outskirts of Pune. The Liverpool international Football Academy, DSK Shivajians, is India's first residential football academy which is set up in partnership with a leading EPL club.

The establishment of this academy was announced in October 2013. Since then, a three-month scouting programme was organized in six places in India which were Aizawl, Shillong, Goa, Mumbai, Delhi and Pune. From this scouting programme, sixty four talented players were selected to make up the U-17 and U-19 squads of the academy.



Liverpool Legend Jamie Carragher opened the club's International Football Academy in Pune

5.3 Arsenal Soccer School expanded to Kerala

The Arsenal Football Club, one of the leading football clubs of the world, has set up Arsenal Football School in major centres of India in collaboration with India On Track (IOT). These soccer schools will provide the participants unique opportunity to learn football from the experts of Arsenal along with the coaches and trainers approved by them.

In the end of 2014, this Soccer School has expanded their activities to the football loving state of India, Kerala. Sportico Ventures Pvt Ltd., a Sports Management company, in association with India on Track, the official partner of Arsenal Soccer Schools in India, has launched the academy in Kerala.

The first programme in Kerala kicked off in Choice School, Thrippunithura, with more than 100 students from grade 3 to grade 12. Rafael Fernandez Martin, a UEFA certified coach, has been appointed to look after the first centre of Arsenal Soccer Schools of the state. The programme will not only help the kids to learn football, but also help them in leading an active life.



Arsenal Soccer School kicked off in Kerala

5.4 Launching of Paris Saint-Germain Academy in India

On 24th September 2014, the legend of Paris Saint- Germain and Portugal, Pauleta officially launched the prestigious Paris Saint- Germain Football Academy in Delhi-NCR. The officials of the club revealed that there is plan to kick start such centres in different cities of the country.

The Paris Saint- Germain Foundation, in collaboration with the Teach for India NGO, launched a football league for the kids of the under-served communities in Delhi-NCR. This league is known as the 'Khel Khel Mein Football League'. The second edition of the league was held in December 2014 at the historic Thyagraj Stadium. 511 boys and girls from 29 schools from Delhi- NCR took part in this competition. 50 participating teams were segregated in four age and gender categories which were:

i) U-10 Boys

ii) U-10 Girls

iii) U-14 Boys

iv) U-14 Girls

A total of 8 teams qualified for the final round which was held on 14th December 2014.

This is indeed a great initiative to empower the children of the underprivileged communities through football.



An initiative for the kids of the under-served communities

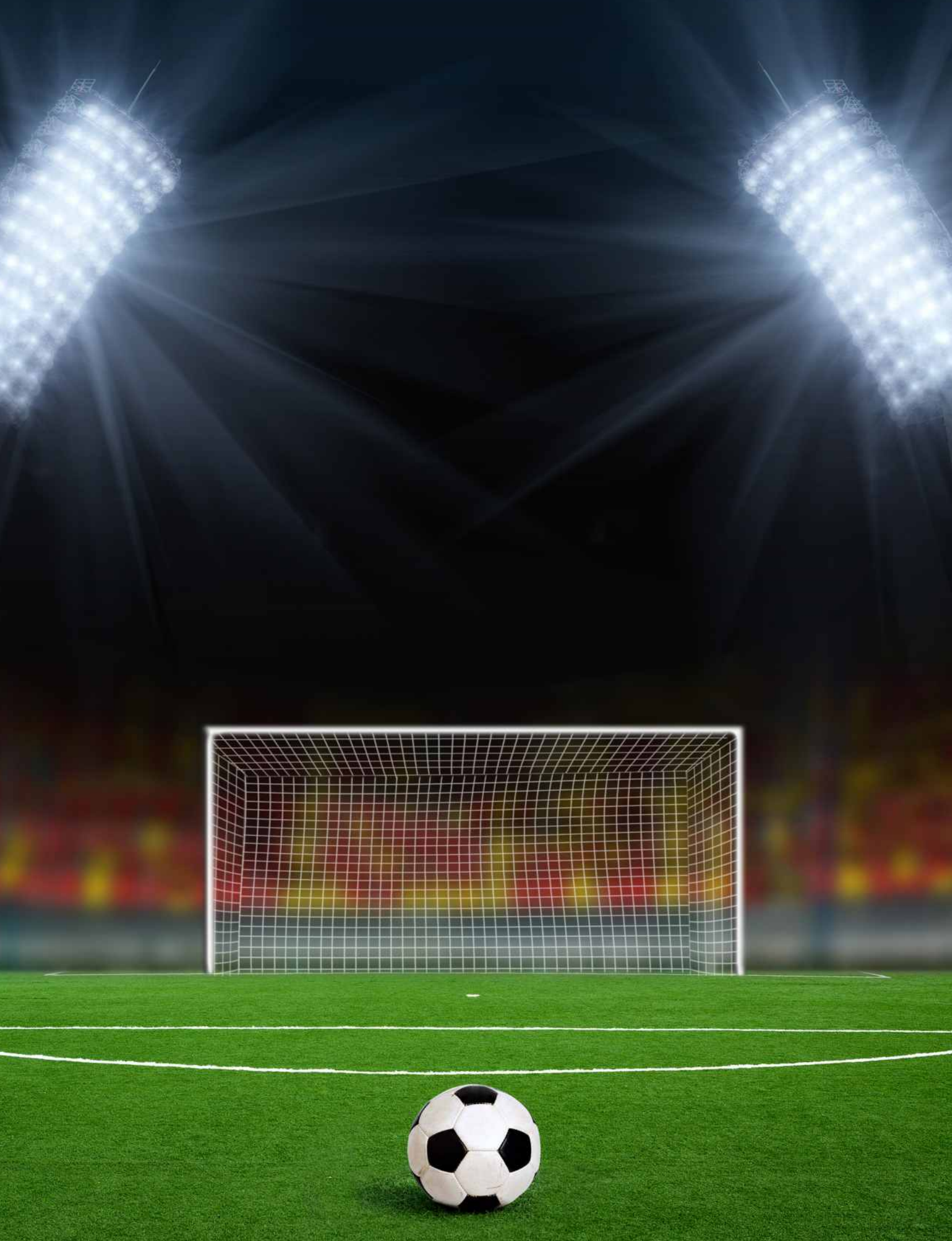
5.5 Inter Milan Football Academy in Bengaluru

Inter Milan FC, which is regarded as one of the most prominent clubs of the world, has partnered with Playon Skills Pvt. Ltd., a firm based in Bengaluru, to set up their first football academy in the city. Playon is a firm which promotes sports education among the children.

There are multiple objectives of the academy which include enhancing the technical knowledge of the local coaches, coaching the young football talents, organising coaching clinics etc.

It may be expected that this academy in Bengaluru will play an instrumental role in selecting and nurturing football talents of the country, which will benefit Indian football in the long run.







Conclusion

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The year 2014 was historic for Indian football in many aspects. The introduction of the Hero Indian Super League successfully combined glamour and entertainment with football and created the concept of 'Footballtainment', which is unique in football in India. ISL not only explored the commercial side of football, but also attracted the icons of world football which was essential to enhance the fan base of football of this country. The success of the ISL will surely motivate the major stakeholders of Indian football to package the existing events in a different format to make them more attractive as well as commercially viable.

2014 showed that, not only men, but the women footballers of the country have the talent to make us proud. They demonstrated their athletic prowess while winning the 3rd SAFF Women's Championship. Now, they can expect more attention from the sponsors and the stakeholders which will enable them to attain greater success at the international stage.

In 2014, the AIFF was awarded by the AFC for their constant efforts for developing football of this country. Indian football legend, Baichung Bhutia, was also awarded for his contributions. These achievements will surely inspire the organizations and the individuals, involved in Indian football, to contribute more towards the development of football of the country.

2014 was remarkable for the grassroots development of football as well. The immense talents available in football of this country have attracted the major clubs to start or expand their initiatives in India. The results of these efforts will surely be visible in the long run.

In the end, it can be said that the innovations, achievements and developmental activities in Indian football in 2014 will surely help in molding the future of football of this country. The results of these activities may not be realized in immediate future, but its impact will be immense for the benefit of Indian football in the long run.



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Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Tansen Marg, New Delhi-110001, India
T-91-11-23738760-70, 23487283/561/400
F: +91-11-2372-1504

www.ficci.com



Libero Sports India Pvt Ltd

C8/19, DLF Qutab Plaza, Phase-1
Gurgaon-122002, Haryana, India
T- +91-124-4276749

www.liberosports.com