



Press Release - Bihar CM Nitish Kumar opens bigger and better NIDJAM; Rural Electrification Company supports event through CSR funds

Patna, February 15: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) marks the return of its flagship grassroots talent search programme, National Inter-District Junior Athletics Meet (NIDJAM), after a two-year gap to ring in changes in the competition rules to prevent early specialisation and over-training of teenage athletes. The event is also being supported by the Rural Electrification Company (REC) as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. REC has contributed to the Sports Ministry's National Sports Development Fund.

The 18th edition of NIDJAM, which was declared open by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at a simple but colourful opening ceremony at the Patliputra Sports Complex last week, will go down in history not only as the first to be held on a synthetic track but also as the one in which AFI usher significant changes.

AFI President Dr. Adille J. Sumariwalla said “AFI was delighted that it could get NIDJAM back in its annual calendar after a two-year gap. Due to the circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we could not conduct the meet in 2020 and 2021. We are extremely happy that we are back with a bigger and better version now,” he said.

He also thanked the Bihar Government for hosting NIDJAM and the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) for underwriting the cost of travel of the teams from across the country. “I am hoping that NIDJAM will be the first milestone in Bihar’s journey to becoming a powerhouse in track and field sport.”

A total of 5482 athletes from 599 districts across the country have entered the competition for boys and girls in two age groups, under-14 and under-16. A good measure of the enthusiasm can be had from the fact that there could be as many as 56 heats in the boys under-16 80m sprint and 39 heats in the girls under-16 80m sprint.

It is a maiden National-level exposure even for many of the under-16 boys and girls who entered in the competition here. They missed the experience of taking part in NIDJAM since the Covid-19 pandemic prevented the flagship talent search competition from being held for two years after the last edition in Tirupati in November 2019.

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