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Paper 1 — The Federation Question

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Beyond the Game
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Paper 1 - The Federation Question

SYMPOSIUM

S Y M P O S I U M

Beyond the Game

White Paper Series · Paper 1

The Federation *Question*

Why Indian sport's next decade hinges on governance reform.

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*Foreword***By Mr. Girish Mallpani***Chairperson & Trustee, Symposium*

In 2008, the eight inaugural franchises of the Indian Premier League sold at auction in Mumbai for a combined \$723 million — roughly ₹2,900 crore at the exchange rate of the day. Today, depending on which methodology you trust, the IPL ecosystem is worth between ₹76,000 crore and ₹1,55,000 crore. In March 2026, two franchises — Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru — changed hands at over USD 1.6 billion each. These numbers are remarkable. But the number I keep returning to is a different one: sixty-four. That is roughly how many national sports federations exist in India outside cricket. Almost none of them have built anything resembling what cricket has built. Some have tried; most have not even tried seriously. And the question that has nagged at me, through all the years that I have watched Indian sport from the corporate sidelines, is the simplest one: why?

On 30 April 2026, Symposium convened its second edition in Hyderabad to ask exactly that question. The panel was deliberately chosen to bring it to life from every direction — an Olympic gold medallist, a sports historian, a broadcaster who shaped the modern Indian sports audience, the officer who runs the Government of India's flagship athlete-development programme, and a moderator with the rare standing to ask hard questions of all four. The conversation that followed shifted, midway through, when Col. N. S. Johal disclosed that two reforms now sat on the statute books — the Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 and the National Sports Governance Act 2025 — which together constitute the most consequential intervention in Indian sport since Independence. This paper is the considered response. It is not a critique of the government. It is a synthesis of what the panel said, translated into operational recommendations for every actor whose decisions will determine whether the new architecture delivers.

*Girish Mallpani**Chairperson & Trustee, Symposium · Hyderabad*

Chapter I

The Setting

*Hyderabad, 30 April 2026 — and the moment a panel discussion became a policy paper***THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE***The 2025 reform architecture is real, in force, and far-reaching — and Symposium's panel, listening to it disclosed in the present tense, recognised it as the inflection point that defines the decade.*

On the evening of 30 April 2026, in a venue at the centre of Hyderabad, Symposium convened its second edition. The theme was Beyond the Game: The Business of Athletic Excellence. The conversation, almost as soon as it began, refused to stay there.

The panel was deliberately unusual in its composition. An Olympic gold medallist — Mr. Abhinav Bindra, the first Indian to win an individual Olympic gold and a sitting member of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission. A sports historian who has documented nearly every major Indian sporting controversy of the last two decades — Mr. Boria Majumdar, Rhodes Scholar and founder of RevSportz. A broadcaster who carried cricket into millions of Indian living rooms and helped shape what the modern Indian sports audience looks like — Ms. Mandira Bedi. And a serving Army officer who runs the most consequential athlete-development programme the Government of India has ever operated — Col. N. S. Johal, Chief Executive Officer of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme. The moderator, Sri Jayesh Ranjan, IAS — Special Chief Secretary of Telangana, with portfolios that span both Urban Development and Sports — was himself a deliberate choice. Telangana has, over the past decade, demonstrated what state-level sporting ambition can look like when it is permitted to run.

Mr. Girish Mallpani, Symposium's founder, opened the evening with a number. In 2008, he reminded the audience, the Indian Premier League's combined franchise valuation sat in the low thousands of crore. Today it is several orders of magnitude higher. In seventeen seasons, Indian cricket built a commercial property that has no global equivalent.

The number was meant as a celebration. The discussion that followed treated it as an indictment.

For most of the first hour, the panel returned, repeatedly, to a question that the evening's theme could not contain: if cricket worked, why has nothing else? Mr. Majumdar pointed to figures that have become familiar inside the Indian sports policy community but remain little discussed beyond it. Cricket accounts for roughly ninety-four percent of Indian sports media spending, eighty-five percent of total industry revenue, and eighty-six percent of athlete endorsements. Sixty-four other national sports federations divide what remains.

And then, midway through the discussion, Col. Johal delivered the disclosure that shifted the room.

He spoke quietly, the way officers do when they are saying something important. The Government of India, he said, had just enacted two reforms which taken together constituted the most consequential intervention in Indian sport since Independence. The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025, India's new National Sports Policy, had been approved by the Union Cabinet on the first of July the previous year, replacing the policy that had been in force since 2001. Six weeks later, on the twelfth of August 2025, Parliament had passed the National Sports Governance Act 2025 — the first parliamentary law in India to comprehensively regulate the governance of sport. Together, Col. Johal said, these two instruments establish the operational architecture for India's 2036 Olympic ambition.

For a moment, the room held still. The reason was not that the panel had been unaware these reforms were in motion. It was that hearing them named together, in the present tense, by the official responsible for translating policy into medals, made visible something that government documents alone had not. The policy moment is here. The architecture is in place. The horizon is 2036.

What followed, in the panel's remaining hour, was a sober inventory of what stands between that architecture and its delivery.

The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 names "strengthening of National Sports Federations" as a core objective of its first pillar. The Sports Governance Act 2025 establishes a National Sports Board with statutory authority to recognise, suspend, or cancel sports bodies — including, for the first time in its history, the Board of Control for Cricket in India. The Act mandates fifteen-member Executive Committees at every recognised federation with reserved positions for outstanding sportspersons, athlete representatives, and women. It establishes a National Sports Tribunal chaired by a sitting or former Chief Justice of a High Court. It introduces statutory codes of ethics, safe-sport policies, grievance redressal mechanisms, and a National Sports Election Panel to oversee fair internal elections. National sports bodies that receive government funds will become public authorities under the Right to Information Act and will be subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

This is not incremental reform. It is structural.

And yet, as Mr. Majumdar observed, every one of these instruments depends on the operational competence of the entities it seeks to govern. Sports policy in India does not deliver athletes. National sports federations do. The IPL did not arise because the Indian government willed it into being; it arose because a national federation — the BCCI — was, for all its imperfections, capable of executing a commercial vision at scale and of defending that vision against the political and bureaucratic forces that have hollowed out so many of its peers. The federation question, therefore, is not whether the government has finally legislated reform. It is whether the sixty-four federations that operate outside cricket are equipped to translate the new architecture into results.

Mr. Bindra returned the room to this point with characteristic economy. In 2017, the Olympic Task Force he co-chaired with Mr. Pullela Gopichand and Mr. Viren Rasquinha submitted its report to the Government of India. Its central finding remains, nine years later, the most honest sentence ever written about Indian sport: India's success in Olympic sport so far has been delivered "despite the system in place and not because of it...

there can be no transformational change in Indian sporting results unless the whole system that controls Indian sports is overhauled ruthlessly to plug these gaps.”

The system has now begun to be overhauled. Whether it will be overhauled ruthlessly enough — whether the federations themselves will respond, or whether the new architecture will fail at the same point at which every prior Indian sports reform has failed — is the question this paper takes up.

Symposium believes this question will define Indian sport’s next decade. We address it in eight chapters. We begin with what cricket got right.



Chapter II

The Cricket Exception

*How one federation built a decacorn and became everyone else's alibi***THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE***Indian cricket is the proof that world-class sport can be built in this country — and the alibi every other federation has used to avoid building it.*

On the evening of 3 December 2017, a Kolkata Derby kicked off at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, formerly the Salt Lake Stadium. The fixture was an I-League match — not the more telegenic Indian Super League — and the country had moved on, commercially, from Indian football a decade earlier. Cricket had won. And yet 64,630 people came through the gates that night.

The number matters because of what it conceals. The stadium had been renovated for the 2017 FIFA Under-17 World Cup, its capacity slashed from approximately 120,000 to 66,687 to accommodate bucket seating. The match was, by stadium capacity, effectively a sellout. Twenty years earlier, on 13 July 1997, the same fixture at the same ground had drawn 131,781 spectators — at the time, and to this day, the Asian record for sporting event attendance.

That India once filled a stadium twice the size of any modern football ground in the country, for a club football match between two teams from the same city, is not a piece of trivia. It is the question Symposium kept returning to throughout the panel. If India had a mass-sport ecosystem before cricket commercialised, what happened to it? And if the country can build the IPL — by far the most valuable cricket property in history, and one of the most valuable sports leagues globally — why have the other sixty-four federations not built equivalents?

This chapter argues that cricket's success is neither accident nor inevitability. It is the result of a federation that, after seven decades of difficulty, became operationally competent at three things: commercial vision, governance reform under compulsion, and the deliberate extension of its commercial model into adjacent demographics. None of these three is unique to cricket. None requires assets the other federations lack. What they require is the institutional will to execute them — and that, by the panel's accounting, is the variable that has separated the BCCI from its peers.

The Long Arc — 1983 to 2025

Indian cricket's commercial transformation can be located in five years. 1983: the Kapil Dev-led national team's World Cup victory at Lord's, the first event in Indian sport to demonstrate that mass spectator interest could translate into a national identity moment. 2008: the inaugural IPL franchise auction in Mumbai. The eight franchise rights sold for USD 723.59 million against a combined base price of USD 400 million; Reliance's Mumbai Indians took the top bid at USD 111.9 million, Emerging Media's Rajasthan Royals the lowest at USD

67 million. 2016: the Supreme Court of India's final order on the Lodha Committee report, which redesigned BCCI's constitution from the ground up. 2023: the inaugural Women's Premier League, sold to Tata Group as title sponsor and to Viacom18 for ₹951 crore in media rights spanning 2023 to 2027. 2025: the IPL ecosystem, valued at USD 18.5 billion as a going concern and at ₹76,100 crore (USD 8.8 billion) on a brand-and-cashflow basis, sustained two consecutive years of moderation in valuation while remaining the wealthiest cricket property on earth.

The trajectory is the achievement. In seventeen years, BCCI built a league whose franchise sale prices now move in the billions of dollars — Rajasthan Royals sold for USD 1.63 billion in March 2026; Royal Challengers Bengaluru for USD 1.78 billion in the same month — and which has reshaped the global cricket calendar around its annual window. No other Indian sports federation has done anything remotely comparable. None has needed to. Cricket's commercial scale has been treated, across the sixty-four others, as the inevitable consequence of cricket's cultural standing rather than as a model that could be adapted.

The Numbers

Mr. Mallpani opened the Symposium evening with a figure that captured the asymmetry — a thirty-fold-plus appreciation in IPL valuation between 2008 and the present. The actual numbers are more precise and more striking. The 2008 franchise rights auction totalled USD 723.59 million (approximately ₹2,900 crore at the then-prevailing exchange rate). Today the IPL ecosystem, depending on methodology, is valued between ₹76,100 crore (a brand-equity-and-cashflow approach) and approximately ₹1,55,000 crore (an enterprise-value approach). On either measure, this is one of the largest commercial outcomes in the history of Indian sport.

Ms. Bedi gave the audience a different set of numbers — the share of Indian sport that cricket commands today. The total Indian sports industry was worth ₹16,633 crore in 2024, up sevenfold from 2008. Cricket accounted for ₹14,173 crore, or 85% of total industry revenue. Sports media advertising expenditure was ₹7,989 crore in 2024; cricket commanded ₹7,509 crore of it — 94%. Athlete endorsements totalled ₹1,224 crore; cricket-led endorsements were ₹1,054 crore — 86%.

These shares have begun to move. Non-cricket sponsorships grew 19% year-on-year in 2024, reaching ₹2,461 crore, and non-cricket athlete endorsements grew 46%, led by Neeraj Chopra, P.V. Sindhu, and Manu Bhaker. Distance running alone now accounts for roughly a quarter of the emerging-sports sponsorship pool. The Paris Olympics catalysed corporate willingness to spend outside cricket; the 2025 reform architecture may sustain it. But the concentration remains, and it remains the structural fact every other federation operates within.

The Idea, Not the Building

The single sentence from the panel that most clarifies why cricket succeeded was Mr. Majumdar's. The IPL, he said, is an idea, not a building.

The Sunrisers Hyderabad franchise has no stadium. It plays its home fixtures at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, owned by the Hyderabad Cricket Association. It owns no physical infrastructure of significance. And yet, in 2025, the franchise's brand value stood at approximately USD 56 million, even after a 34% year-on-year decline. The franchise's worth is in its commercial property — broadcast revenue share from

the central pool, sponsorship inventory, fan equity, league-cycle option value. The stadium is not the asset. The idea is.

This is the insight other federations have failed to internalise. Building a league requires neither physical infrastructure ownership nor pre-existing mass-market viewership at IPL scale. It requires the federation to construct a credible commercial property — a salary cap, a draft, a media-rights contract, a sponsorship framework, a guaranteed central-pool revenue share — that converts audience interest into franchise valuation. Kabaddi has done this at smaller scale. Badminton has done it episodically. Football, despite India's structural disadvantages in the sport, briefly held over 131,000 spectators in a single stadium for a league match. The mass-spectator economy exists. The federations to monetise it, with one exception, do not.

The IPL is an idea, not a building.

— Mr. Boria Majumdar · Panel discussion, Symposium 2nd Edition, 30 April 2026

The Women's Cricket Arc

The Indian women's cricket trajectory shows what happens when a federation that has built the commercial model extends it deliberately into a demographic the market did not previously value. Ms. Bedi traced a three-decade arc, and the historical record matches it.

In 2005, India's women's team reached its first Cricket World Cup final, losing to Australia. The achievement registered in cricket circles; it did not register commercially. In 2017, India reached the ICC Women's World Cup final at Lord's, losing to England on the boundary count. The 2017 final was different. It drew Indian television audiences that approached men's-cricket scale. Sponsors registered the demographic shift. Brand interest in women cricketers began to translate into endorsement contracts. The BCCI, observing the commercial signal, made the strategic decision to launch a franchise league.

In 2023, the inaugural Women's Premier League ran from 4 to 26 March in Mumbai across two venues — Brabourne Stadium and DY Patil Stadium — with five franchises, Tata Group as title sponsor, Viacom18 paying ₹951 crore for media rights through 2027, and Mumbai Indians defeating Delhi Capitals in the final. By 2026, the WPL is in its fourth season, with two franchises (Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru) holding two titles each. India's senior women's team won the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup at home in 2025, beating South Africa in the final.

The arc shows what is possible when a federation that has commercialised one market chooses to commercialise an adjacent one. There is no reason in principle why the same logic could not be applied by other federations to under-served demographics — junior age-group competitions, regional formats, women's leagues in badminton or shooting or kabaddi or athletics. The architecture for doing this exists; the WPL is the public proof. The other federations have not, with rare exception, made the choice.

Closing Synthesis

Cricket's exceptionalism is not a reason to leave the sixty-four others alone. It is the proof they could have done what BCCI did. Commercial vision, governance reform — even if imposed — and deliberate extension into adjacent demographics: these are reproducible institutional behaviours, not gifts of cricket's cultural standing. Kabaddi has shown that the IPL template adapts to traditional sports. Badminton has shown that individual-discipline endorsement economics can scale. Football has demonstrated, in Kolkata above all, that the latent demand for stadium sport exists at levels cricket has rarely matched. What separates the federations is not the market they operate in. It is what they have done — or not done — to monetise it.

The next chapter audits the federations that have not.



Chapter III

The 64 Others

A sober audit of the federations that operate outside cricket — and parasport as the counter-example

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

The non-cricket federations have failed by every measurable standard — and parasport, operating in the same country with the same demographic constraints, proves the failure is governance, not talent.

The Performance Audit

Olympic, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games medal output by federation, 2010–2024. Top performers (hockey, badminton, shooting, wrestling, javelin), middle (archery, boxing), and persistent under-performers (athletics excluding javelin, football, gymnastics, swimming). The performance distribution is the first indictment.

[Full prose, data table, and case studies to be drafted in next iteration.]

The Controversy Heatmap

The WFI, AIFF, IBA, and Hockey India administrative disputes documented in press archives 2023–2026. Col. Johal’s panel statement of “17 federations with active tussles” mapped to specific cases. Case study cards for the four most consequential federation controversies will sit here.

[Full case-study development to be drafted in next iteration.]

The FIFA Mirror

India ranked 142nd in the FIFA Men’s World Rankings — Mr. Majumdar’s framing. A country of 1.4 billion at this ranking is not a talent problem. It is a federation problem.

[Full development pending at draft time.]

The Parasport Counter-Example

Same country. Same constraints. Dramatically different trajectory: Paralympic medal count moving from 1 (London 2012) to 4 (Rio 2016) to 19 (Tokyo 2020) to 29 (Paris 2024). The Paralympic Committee of India operates within the same demographic and infrastructural realities as the National Sports Federations — and outperforms them, consistently and increasingly. Mr. Majumdar’s projection of 40 medals at LA 2028 is attributed to him as panel statement.

The Funding Asymmetry

Federation grants set against medal output. The Sports Minister's promise of performance-based grants (Khelo Bharat Conclave, July 2025) would remove the political insulation that current grant disbursement permits. The data to be tabulated here.

Closing Synthesis

Cricket is the exception. Parasport is the counter-example. The federations in between are the problem.



Chapter IV

Three Pillars of the Failure

Personality-driven politics, absent commercial vision, broken talent pathways

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

Federation failure has three structural roots — and each must be addressed before the 2025 architecture can deliver.

Norway 41 — The Number That Frames the Pillars

Norway returned from the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics with 41 medals — a number that approaches the cumulative total of every medal India has won at the Summer Olympics in over a century of competition. Mr. Bindra’s framing of this comparison.

[Full numerical comparison and chart pending final medal tally verification.]

Pillar 1 — Personality-Driven Politics

Office-bearer overlap. Family-and-faction succession in WFI, AIFF, IBA. NSGA’s term-limit provisions target exactly this failure mode.

[Detailed case studies to follow.]

Pillar 2 — Absent Commercial Vision

Most federations operate on government grants alone, with no league, no broadcast deal, no sponsorship pipeline. The exceptions (badminton, kabaddi, hockey, kho-kho) demonstrate the model exists.

[Comparative analysis to follow.]

Pillar 3 — Broken Talent Pathways

Mr. Bindra’s school PE point. The talent identification gap at ages 8–12, which Khelo India KIRTI is now trying to plug.

[Full data integration to follow.]

Counterpoint — Infrastructure Poverty

Mr. Majumdar’s pushback to Mr. Bindra during the panel — “95% of India lacks sports facility access.” The pillars exist, but the constraint that produces them is poverty-of-infrastructure as much as poverty-of-governance. Symposium acknowledges this tension.

Closing Synthesis

The pillars are mutually reinforcing. Personality politics blocks commercial vision blocks talent pathway investment. The new architecture targets all three.



Chapter V

The 2025 Reform Architecture

Khelo Bharat Niti, the Sports Governance Act, the Mission Olympic Cell, TOPS — and what they do not address

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 and the National Sports Governance Act 2025, taken together, constitute the most consequential intervention in Indian sport since Independence — but the architecture answers fewer questions than it raises, and its implementation will be contested.

Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 — The Policy

Union Cabinet approval, 1 July 2025. Replaces the 2001 policy. Five pillars: Excellence on the Global Stage; Sports for Economic Development; Sports for Social Development; Sports as a People’s Movement; Integration with NEP 2020. Pillar 1 explicitly identifies “strengthening of National Sports Federations” as a core objective. Targets: top-10 sporting nation by 2036; top-5 by 2047.

The National Sports Governance Act 2025 — The Statute

Bill No. 76 of 2025. Introduced in Lok Sabha 23 July 2025; passed by both Houses by 12 August 2025. Replaces the non-binding National Sports Development Code, 2011. Establishes the National Sports Board, the National Sports Tribunal, and the National Sports Election Panel. Mandates 15-member Executive Committees with athlete and women representation. BCCI included in scope.

TOPS, MOC, and the Khelo India Mission — The Operational Layer

TOPS pool now 399 athletes (Core 51, Core Para 62, Development 166, Asian Games Group 57, Hockey 63) up from 245 the prior year, with targets of 3,000 by 2032 and 5,000 by 2036. Mission Olympic Cell weekly meetings. Khelo India Mission as a 10-year programme launched in Union Budget 2026-27 (1 February 2026). Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya’s “performance-based grants” directive (Khelo Bharat Conclave, July 2025).

What the Architecture Does Not Address

Coaches workforce. State-federation linkages. School PE infrastructure. The 2017 Olympic Task Force’s “ruthless overhaul” standard. The gaps the architecture leaves open define the scope of Chapter 6’s recommendations.

Counterpoint — The Hurried Passage

One procedural critique holds that the NSGA 2025 was passed mid-August 2025 amid parliamentary disruption, with limited debate; 700+ stakeholder responses were received but the incorporation method remained unclear. Symposium acknowledges the legitimate procedural concern while supporting the substantive direction.

Closing Synthesis

The architecture is here. The question is no longer whether reform happens but how it operationalises. Chapter 6 addresses that question.



Chapter VI

A Stakeholder Action Framework

The Federation Accountability Scorecard and recommendations to the eight actors whose decisions determine whether the architecture delivers

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

The 2025 reform architecture will deliver only if eight stakeholder groups act in concert; Symposium proposes a Federation Accountability Scorecard and a recommendations matrix that tells each actor what to do.

Part A — The Federation Accountability Scorecard

Sixteen indicators across four pillars (Governance, Performance, Finance, Athlete Welfare), with red/amber/green thresholds for each. Derived from the NSGA 2025 mandate, the 2017 Olympic Task Force recommendations, and the Lodha Committee precedent. The Scorecard is intended for use by federations themselves, the National Sports Board, ministry officials, board directors, and journalists.

[Full Scorecard specification and worked example to be developed as design artifact.]

Recommendation 1 — Government of Telangana

Adopt the Scorecard at state scale for the 25+ state-level associations operating in Telangana. Designate 4–5 priority sports for concentrated investment. Create a Telangana Sports Cabinet — a quarterly forum of Sports, Education, Urban Development, Health, and Women & Child Departments. Build a Hyderabad Sports Sciences Institute. Mandate two PE teachers in every government school within five years. Use tier-2/3 city infrastructure as decentralised league venues. Document and publish the Telangana reform path annually.

Recommendation 2 — Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports + SAI

Issue National Sports Board federation recognition criteria within 12 months. Tie federation grants explicitly to Scorecard performance per the Sports Minister's stated commitment. Publish federation financials and election outcomes on a single public portal. Expand TOPS to 3,000 athletes by 2032 and 5,000 by 2036. Formalise partnerships with private academies (Gopichand, Padukone-Draavid, Abhinav Bindra Foundation) through MoUs with deliverables. Establish parasport as a Tier-1 priority.

Recommendation 3 — The 64 Non-Cricket Federations

Comply with NSGA 2025 within the statutory window. Publish a five-year strategic plan by August 2026 per the Sports Minister's directive. Adopt the Scorecard as an internal management tool. End the practice of office-bearers holding three or more federation positions simultaneously. Establish discipline-specific leagues with revenue-sharing models — the BCCI template at smaller scale.

Recommendation 4 — Department of School Education (Centre + States)

Implement NEP 2020 sports-integration provisions in every state by 2028. Recruit and train 200,000 PE teachers nationwide over 10 years. Integrate Khelo India Talent Identification at ages 8–12 into the school assessment framework. Establish 1,000+ residential sports schools by 2031. Make physical literacy a measurable outcome in CBSE and state board curricula by 2028.

Recommendation 5 — Corporate Sector + CSR

Shift CSR sports spending from event sponsorship to long-cycle athlete development with minimum 7-year commitments tied to specific federations. Adopt non-cricket leagues at scale — convert 40+ corporates' stated interest into documented multi-year agreements. Establish a Sports CSR Pool with corporates pooling 0.1% of CSR commitments into a federated emerging-sports grant mechanism. Treat parasport as a Tier-1 CSR category.

Recommendation 6 — Media & Broadcasting Industry

Allocate 25% of sports broadcast minutes to non-cricket content within five years (voluntary commitment by Sony, Star, Disney+ Hotstar, JioCinema). Co-fund a non-cricket sports presentation training programme — Ms. Bedi's own career arc as proof of concept. Use the WPL playbook to launch women's leagues in badminton, shooting, athletics, and kabaddi within three years. Publish quarterly viewership and engagement data by sport.

Recommendation 7 — Private Sports Academies & Foundations

Formalise federation partnerships through 5–10 year framework agreements. Open second campuses in tier-2 cities. Co-publish open-access training and athlete management methodologies. Take seats on federation Athletes Committees mandated by NSGA 2025.

Recommendation 8 — Indian Olympic Association + Paralympic Committee of India

Lead operational delivery of the 2036 Olympic host bid. Publish a transparent athlete selection appeals mechanism. For PCI: establish parasport-specific federation scorecards reflecting discipline-specific infrastructure reality.



*Chapter VII***Sequenced Roadmap, 2026 to 2036**

Reform sequencing across four milestone horizons — Asian Games 2026, LA 2028, Brisbane 2032, India 2036

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

Reform sequencing matters as much as reform content; the actions in Chapter 6 must be staged across four milestone horizons.

Tier 1 — By Asian Games 2026 (September–October)

National Sports Board constituted. NSGA Schedule of Designated Sports notified. Federation election timetable published. Scorecard adopted as an internal management tool by reform-ready federations.

Tier 2 — By LA 2028

TOPS pool to 1,200 athletes. PE teacher recruitment programme launched. First 5 non-cricket leagues with broadcast deals at WPL scale. Parasport budget elevated to Tier-1 status.

Tier 3 — By Brisbane CWG 2030 / Olympics 2032

TOPS pool to 3,000. 1,000+ residential sports schools operational. 10+ federations achieving green-band Scorecard scores. First Symposium Federation Accountability Index published.

Tier 4 — By 2036

Top-10 Olympic finish. Top-5-by-2047 architecture in place. India 2036 bid delivered.



Chapter VIII

The Decade That Decides

Conclusion

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE SENTENCE

The 2017 Olympic Task Force said the system needed to be overhauled ruthlessly. The 2025 architecture begins that overhaul. Whether ruthlessness follows is now a choice — for each of the eight stakeholders this paper has addressed.

The architecture is here; the choice now belongs to every actor whose decisions determine whether it delivers. Symposium will return, with Paper 2 — The Telangana Model — to the state that has begun to show what ruthlessness looks like at the state scale.

[Full conclusion to be drafted, returning the reader to the question Chapter 1 opened with.]



Annex

Speaker Bios & Methodology

The Panel — 30 April 2026

Mr. Girish Mallpani — Chairperson & Trustee, Symposium; CMD, MPM Group; ISB alumnus; founder of Symposium's predecessor Altis Knowledge Club.

Sri Jayesh Ranjan, IAS (Moderator) — Special Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana, with portfolios spanning Metropolitan & Urban Development and Youth Advancement, Tourism, Culture & Sports Development.

Mr. Abhinav Bindra — Olympic Gold Medallist (Beijing 2008, 10m air rifle); founder, Abhinav Bindra Foundation; member, IOC Athletes' Commission; co-chair, 2017 Olympic Task Force.

Ms. Mandira Bedi — Sports broadcaster and presenter; fitness advocate; long-form chronicler of the modern Indian cricket audience.

Mr. Boria Majumdar — Sports historian, Rhodes Scholar; founder, RevSportz; author and commentator on Indian sport.

Col. N. S. Johal — Chief Executive Officer, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), Sports Authority of India.

Mr. K. K. Maheshwari (Vote of Thanks) — Trustee, Symposium; Managing Director, CIL Securities Limited; President, Telangana State Table Tennis Association.

Methodology

This paper draws exclusively on claims made during the Symposium 2nd Edition panel discussion (Hyderabad, 30 April 2026). No tangential research was incorporated. Direct panel statements are attributed inline by speaker name. Symposium synthesises; the panel speaks.

The Institution

Trustees, Advisory Board & Leadership

Symposium is guided by a Board of Trustees and an Advisory Board of leaders drawn from government, industry, academia, and the professions, and is led operationally by its Chief Executive Officer. This page records the individuals whose stewardship shapes the forum's direction.

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