

# **Maharashtra BA: Captain changed after 11 years, State Badminton poised for a leap**

[Aashay Khandekar](#) | Pune | October 21, 2015



**Arun Lakhani, an active member of MBA's Executive Committee, has been associated with Badminton since his college days. When Pradeep Gandhe, the former President of MBA, decided to step down from his position after spending 11 years in charge, Lakhani was chosen as his successor. Unlike Gandhe, who has represented India at international level as a player, Lakhani has the reputation of a capable Administrator who has been a part of Planning Commission Committee as well as FICCI's Water Mission Steering Committee.**

**"I am honoured to be chosen to lead Maharashtra Badminton. My immediate focus will be to get this infrastructure functional. Our aim is to offer talented players from Maharashtra infrastructure and facilities at par with any international level academy or club," Lakhani said.**

After taking charge at MBA, Lakhani has formed a short-term action plan, according to which he will concentrate on improving ties with all the District Associations, especially the ones in semi-urban and rural areas. **“The urban Associations like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik have good set-ups. They have good coaching facilities and mental counselling sessions which have not reached the rural Associations so far. We will first establish a dialogue with these Associations, asking them to tell us their top three problems and opportunities. In some places, Government has already invested money, built stadiums and other facilities, but they are largely in disuse,”** Lakhani says.

He says that emulating the example of Hyderabad will be more beneficial for the local players rather than chasing foreign models. “The Association often calls Indonesian, Malaysian coaches to guide players. No doubt they are Coaches of high standards. However, in the long run, the foreign emulation is not a good option. Indian conditions are different, techniques are diverse. If we’re going to emulate someone, it should be Hyderabad. We can benefit maximum from collaborations inside India,” Lakhani says.

Asked if any of the urban centres in Maharashtra will be developed into the powerhouse of Badminton like in Hyderabad, Lakhani said that MBA would rather pursue uniform growth in different centres.

The outgoing President Pradeep Gandhe’s resignation from the post was accepted after much reluctance by MBA’s Executive Committee. However, he will now accept the role of MBA’s Senior Vice-President to focus more on the players and the game. **“I felt it was the right time for me to pass the torch to the new leadership and devote my energies on other aspects of the game. Given Lakhani’s administrative prowess and love for Badminton, he would definitely excel in this role,”** said Gandhe.

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