



PRESS RELEASE

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BWF MOURNS VISIONARY DR. GUPTA'S PASSING



(Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta (right) and BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer shake hands after signing the Host Agreement for the BWF World Senior Championships 2017 last November in Bilbao, Spain)

The Badminton World Federation is shocked and saddened by the death of Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta in Lucknow, India, earlier today.

A BWF Council member since 2013, Dr. Gupta was also President of Badminton Association of India (BAI) and Vice-President of Badminton Asia at the time of his sudden passing.

Reacting to the news, BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer paid tribute to his colleague, noting Dr. Gupta's passion for Badminton as well as his determination to develop the sport further in India.

“Having been an International Badminton player himself, Dr. Gupta’s influence on Badminton when he became President of BAI has seen positive results in the sport in India. Certainly, one of the highlights during his tenure as President has to be the unprecedented boom in the level of interest in Badminton as a sport and the enhanced pathway for the development of India’s most talented players,” noted Høyer in a letter of condolence to the BAI.

“This was seen with the recent achievement at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games where India proved worthy of a place in the showpiece event when Puserla V. Sindhu did her Country proud, winning the Silver Medal in the Women’s Singles final. It is noteworthy that, during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, Badminton recorded the highest television figures in India for an Olympic sport.”



(Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta is flanked by Women’s Singles stars at the Press Conference for the YONEX-SUNRISE India Open 2017 at New Delhi)

L to R are Puserla V Sindhu (India), Carolina Marin (Spain) and Saina Nehwal (India)

The BWF President also highlighted Dr. Gupta’s vision for the all-round development of Badminton in India, citing the implementation of BWF’s schools-based, grassroots programme, Shuttle Time, as well as that Country becoming part of the BWF World Superseries tour as examples of the Badminton administrator’s accomplishments.

“It was also during his presidency that India hosted the BWF Annual General Meeting and the LI-NING BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals in 2014, giving the Badminton family a glimpse of the Badminton landscape in India.

“I recall fondly our most recent meeting in Bilbao, Spain, and the signing of the host agreement for the BWF World Senior Championships 2017. When that event takes place later this year, it will be another tribute to the stellar legacy of Dr. Gupta.”

At the time of his passing, Dr. Gupta was preparing to vie for a second successive term on the BWF Council and would have been standing in the election next month in Gold Coast, Australia. Only two weeks ago, the 56-year-old presided over the YONEX SUNRISE India Open 2017 tournament in New Delhi; the second stop on the MetLife BWF World Superseries tour.



(Indian Badminton reached new heights during Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta's tenure)

In his lifetime, Dr. Gupta wore many hats – he was a Member of Parliament, an educationist, industrialist, publisher and sports administrator. As a former Badminton player for India between 1977 and 1983, he had first-hand experience of International Badminton, which helped him in his administrative efforts when he took over as President of BAI in 2011. He initiated projects to develop the sport in the Country, both at the elite and grassroots levels. As Chairman of the UP Badminton Academy, Dr. Gupta created a well-regarded training facility in Lucknow for aspiring youngsters.

As BAI President, he hosted the LI-NING BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals in 2014, the annual YONEX-SUNRISE India Open (World Superseries) and the Syed Modi International Badminton Championships (Grand Prix Gold). BAI's winning bid to host the BWF World Senior Championships 2017 for the first time in India was initiated under Dr. Gupta's presidency.

Indian Badminton reached new heights during Dr. Gupta's tenure. Indian players started to win Medals at the Olympics and BWF World Championships, besides producing consistent displays at World Superseries tournaments. Dr. Gupta orchestrated one of the biggest game-changers in the sport in India – the launch of the Premier Badminton League, which catapulted Badminton into prime-time television slots and enhanced the marketability and brand perception of badminton players.

Dr. Gupta was elected to the BWF Council in 2013. He was a member of three committees on the Council – Events; Development and Sport for All; and Marketing. His experience as a Member of Parliament and acumen as a successful entrepreneur were valued by fellow Council Members. Within Badminton Asia, he served as Chair of the Para-Badminton Committee.

Regards

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