

# CSS chosen as Centre of Excellence

First facility in the sub-continent to receive the honour

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

It's a big moment for Indian football, opening up opportunities for research in the game, injury prevention and the lifting of standards.

Sri Ramachandra's Centre for Sports Science (CSS) here has been chosen as a Centre of Excellence by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

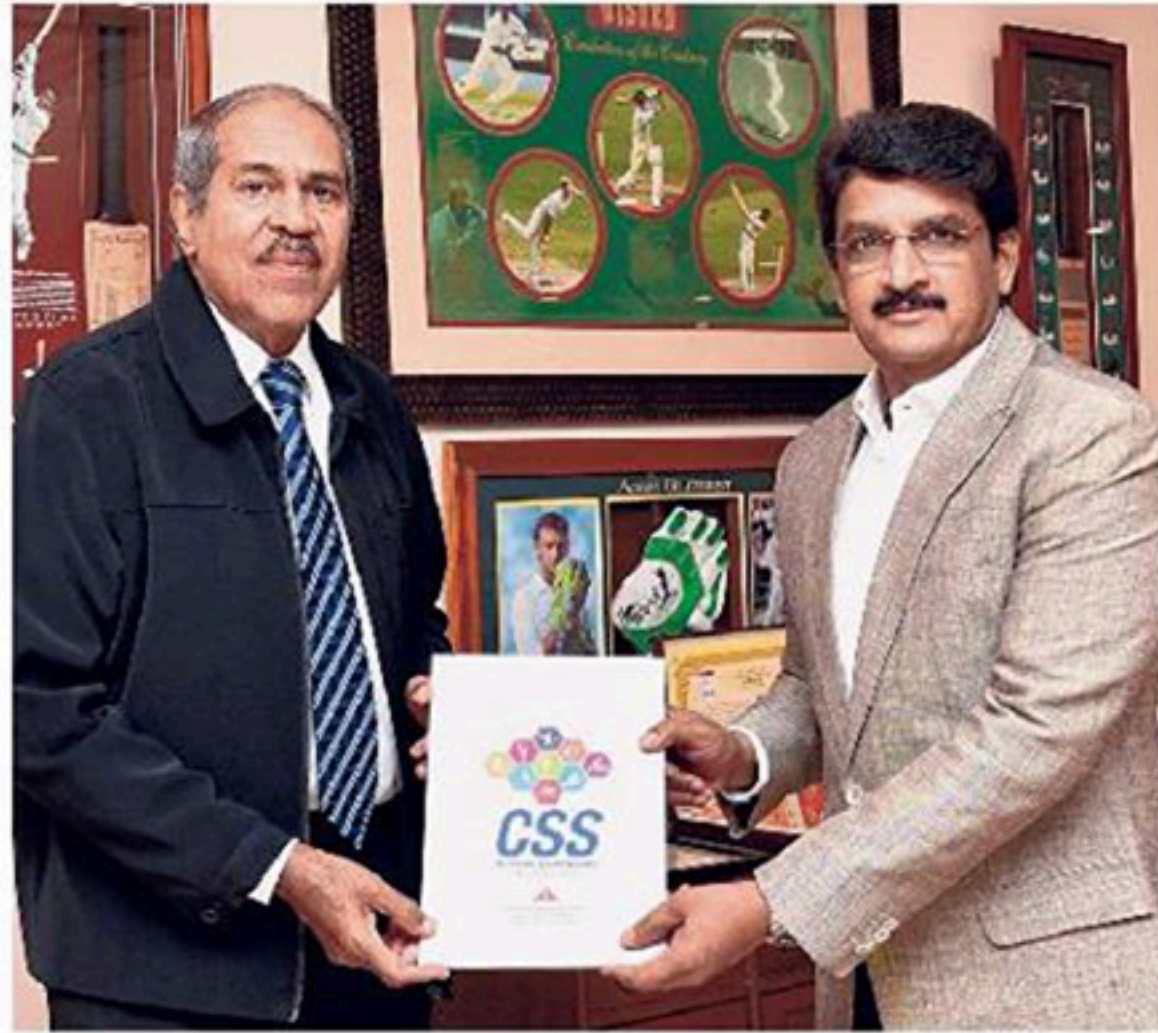
CSS is the first facility in the country and the sub-continent to receive the AFC honour.

Breaking the news to *The Hindu*, Dr. Gurcharan Singh, chairman, AFC medical committee and member, FIFA medical panel, said here on Saturday, "From today, CSS will be a Centre of Excellence for AFC, as it has met all the yardsticks. And the AFC guidelines are the same as that of the FIFA."

The Malaysia-based Dr. Gurcharan inspected the facilities and was pleased with what he saw.

He said, "You have everything under one complex here. A hospital, a University where research is bound to be under sharp focus, and advanced sports training and treatment facilities. It's state-of-the-art."

Dr. S. Arumugam, Direc-



**Recognition:** Chairman of AFC medical committee Dr. Gurcharan Singh, left, with S. Arumugam, director of Centre for Sports Science. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

tor, CSS, told this newspaper, "The AFC recognition is a dream come true for us and is in line with the vision of Ramaswamy Udayar, the founder Chancellor of the Sri Ramachandra University, who only wanted excellence."

Receiving the nod as a FIFA Centre of Excellence is CSS' next goal.

"We are confident of achieving that too," said Dr. Arumugam.

Dr. Gurcharan said, "The CSS has committed to us on

pursuing research in football, particularly in the areas of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries. On certain programmes, the AFC and collaborate and share funding."

He said, "It's great that the Sri Ramachandra University has a Master's course on sports medicine. That will help."

## Lot of potential

Dr. Gurcharan said, "I think teams from neighbouring countries can come to CSS

for training and evaluation. The ISL sides can also coordinate through their team doctor with CSS on the fitness front. I see a lot of potential."

A FIFA instructor in sports medicine who has been a part of several World Cups and Olympic Games, Dr. Gurcharan has held many anti-doping workshops.

He said, "The FIFA conducts around 30,000 drug tests a year that is more than in any other sport. Only 0.5% have tested positive and 80% of them were using recreational drugs."

Dr. Gurcharan felt India could play in the World Cup finals some day but needed to set several things right. "I saw the Indian team in the under-17 World Cup and it had everything, speed, skill and tactical sense."

## Lack of experience

He added, "All it lacked was experience against bigger teams."

"If you have another 10 teams like that, India could play the World Cup. But you need to play more matches, have a stronger league with several divisions."

And a Centre of Excellence like the CSS could play a crucial role.