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In a different LEAGUE

CHATLINE Industrialist and owner of Hyderabad Hotshots, Prasad V. Potluri talks about his plans in the new terrain. J.R. SHRIDHARAN listens in

We are all part of a technology-driven age where staying connected 24x7 is the mantra. Courtesy our affinity to mobile phones, tablets, laptops and computers, most of our conversations hover around hi-tech jargon. Prasad V. Potluri is no exception.

Entrepreneur, film producer and owner of Hyderabad Hotshots, a franchise of Indian Badminton League (IBL), Prasad was in the city recently when he made his maiden public appearance in Vijayawada at the inaugural function of AP State Badminton Tournament. It was homecoming for *mana* 42-year-old Bejawada man who did his schooling at N.S.M. Public School where he played badminton for recreation. Prasad made his initial fortune through e-business and uses the e-jargon quite liberally.

"We need both software and hardware for the success of information technology. Similarly, we need infrastructure (hardware) and quality coaches (software) for success of any sport," he says referring to Hyderabad Hotshots, which won the first edition of IBL in Mumbai.

Many faces lit up when Prasad disclosed his plans to make inroads into Indian sports in a big



WEARING MANY HATS Prasad V. Potluri

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way. "We at PVP Group are looking at the Indian sports market as the most thriving business proposition. We entered badminton with utmost commitment and have similar plans for cricket and tennis

too," he says.

The man is apparently attached to his new-found love (badminton). He travelled with the team to all the six venues to experience the gamut of emotions the team members experi-

ence in victory and defeat. "I have realized the importance of the role of a coach in modern badminton. Infrastructure alone cannot produce a champion shuttler, it is the coach who propels a player to the pin-

nacle. My association with the league made me realise the significance of a coach," says Prasad, who plans to set up PVP Gopichand Badminton Academy in Vijayawada.

Maintaining that several Indians have benefited from the IBL and the league, he feels that as a brand, it will strengthen further. "Of the 60-odd players, who went down the hammer, 42 were from India. They have made big money, something which was unheard of in the Indian badminton earlier".

He says he will retain the same team for the next two years and will only look into any removals or additions later.

Prasad foresees more highs and lows for the League. "It will have its share of controversies and moments of ecstasies, but as a brand, it will prosper. In the next 10 years, I don't foresee any failure for IBL; it is an astutely conceived product," he reiterates.

The socio-economic changes that swept the country in the last couple of decades have taken the sheen off two-tier and three-tier cities, he opines. "The rapid urbanisation and creation of wealth in major cities triggered an exodus from the small cities. But now things are changing as we see a gradual distribution of wealth owing to emerging business opportunities in smaller cities", he says.

Even parenting has undergone a sea change, says Prasad. Modern-day parents are showing more eagerness and interest in allowing their children to pursue sports and games for a profession.

Apart from badminton, Prasad has contributed to other sports too. The entrepreneur had donated Rs. 2 lakh for World Under-10 chess champion Nutanki Priyanka, who went on to win the National Under-11 title at New Delhi recently.