

## Parsons and Fitzgerald, Global Para Organisational Heads, Impressed with India's Growth in Para Sports, Hail the Ongoing WPAC in New Delhi

When the leader of the country takes interest, it's a good thing - Andrew Parsons

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India's paralympic movement has made significant strides in recent years. The nation is currently hosting the Indian Oil New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, which stands testament to India's growth and aspirations.

On Wednesday, two distinguished individuals in the para-athletic organisational world – Paul Fitzgerald, head of World Para Athletics, and Andrew Parsons, president of International Paralympic Committee, addressed the media at the iconic venue. In their interaction, they expressed their admiration for the growth that India has shown in recent years in sports, including para sports.



Fitzgerald believes the ongoing event is a great opportunity on multiple fronts. “Every world championship that we have is an opportunity to show the entire world what is possible for 1.2 billion people around the globe with disabilities. Further, it is also an occasion to show excellence, high performance as well as connect with each other as a community,” he said.



“Last year in Kobe, India won 17 medals. At the Doha World Championships in 2015 they had won two. In the ongoing one there are already quite a few, the medal table is really ticking.

“The Indian government has been very supportive. Renovations are underway across sports facilities. The event is a great opportunity to inspire the next generation,” he added.



Fitzgerald, who has been in his WPA role since 2022, also asserted that the ongoing event was not a one-time occasion. “It is definitely not a one-time thing. We had a grand prix before renovations here. We have a contract for the next three years to have a grand prix every year. The reach that we are having within the para community all around India is important,” he said.

Parsons, who was recently re-elected as IPC president for a third term, provided his assessment of the matter. “There is growth. There is definitely good support from the government. We are trying to understand the para ecosystem in India. It is a work in progress,” he said.

“India definitely has the momentum. It is growing economically. Being a Brazilian, speaking from the 2016 Rio experience, when the leader of the country takes interest, it’s a good thing. It’s the same in India,” he added.



Fitzgerald stressed the importance of achieving personal bests, not so much not winning medals, as well as the WPAC being the beginning of something big. “India has the largest population. There are many athletes to reach out to but it’s important to remember being competitive is more important than winning medals. For me, it’s the personal best that matters, to inspire. To me these games are the real launch point,” he said.

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