



MEDIA RELEASE

Reliance Foundation and Mizoram Football Association join hands to build a competitive pathway for grassroots football in Mizoram

Aizawl, 31st October 2022: Reliance Foundation, the CSR arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and **Mizoram Football Association** have joined hands to expand, transform and create a complete hyper-local pathway and decentralised approach to grassroots football in the state through **Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RFYC) Naupang (Children) League**. **The Naupang League** aims to develop local ecosystems and enable aspiring and talented footballers as young as 5 year-olds both boys and girls to gain competitive and practice exposure. The focus is on a broad base of multi-tier, age-group engagements that operate all through the year and meaningfully engage players.

Mrs. Nita M. Ambani, Founder Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, said, *"Football is a way of life in Mizoram, woven into its social and cultural fabric. This partnership between RF Young Champs and Mizoram Football Association will provide high quality training to talented young boys and girls. It will enable budding footballers as young as 5 years of age gain competitive exposure and enhanced play time. I'm excited about the immense possibilities it will open up for children in Mizoram, a state that is heavily invested in football. At RFYC, we remain committed to unlocking the potential of grassroots football across India and helping aspiring footballers achieve their full potential."*

Lalngthinglova Hmar / Tetea Hmar, Honorary Secretary, Mizoram Football Association & Executive Committee Member, AIFF, said, *"We are extremely happy with the partnership forged between Mizoram Football Association and Reliance Foundation, and this project can be a game-changer for Mizoram and Indian Football. The community participation in the proposed Naupang League will add a different dimension to the competition as it will be a collective participation of kids, parents and the local community which will drive and motivate the team like never before and fuel the competitiveness of the league. The pilot project in Mizoram which we are confident will be successful, can be used as a blueprint for grassroots development, and the first of its kind, in Indian football. We are looking forward to the kick-off and in the same year the FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup is in India and FIFA Men's World Cup 2022, will give extra enthusiasm to the kids. MFA is glad that Reliance Foundation has been providing a platform to young kids so that they can bring alive their sports dreams."*

The **RFYC Naupang (Children) League** will be hosted in 4 locations in Mizoram with 2 models of the league structure. The Mizoram FA and District FAs will host the leagues in Lunglei and Kolasib, enabled by RFYC, while 2 Leagues in Aizawl and Champhai will be owned and operated by **Reliance Foundation Young Champs**. The age categories begin at Under 06 and continue until Under 13 years with multiple game formats. A minimum of 30 games will be played by the kids. RF Young Champs will further integrate with RF Youth Sports in the region to ensure additional games and competitive exposure to deserving players.



The Mizoram football ecosystem is set to benefit immensely from **Reliance Foundation's Young Champs** as its programs include Coach Education and Development; Referee Development; Weekly Coaching Program for Kids; Quarterly Camps (local) for Emerging elite; Enablement of Inter District Championship; and **Reliance Foundation Young Champs** camps in Mumbai for Best of the Best and understating match day operations better. RFYC has also donated an ambulance to the Mizoram Football Association.

Notes to the Editor: Reliance Foundation's Mizoram story:

- Reliance Foundation Youth Sports has been working extensively in the North East Region. RFYS started in 2016 with its first North-East centre at Guwahati, following which football centres in talent hotbeds of Imphal, Shillong and Aizawl were added in 2017. In a continuous attempt to provide access to high-quality competitions across the country, RFYS in 2017 expanded in Mizoram, apart from Aizawl to Lunglei, Kolasib, and Champai.
- Presently 2022-23, RF Youth Sports in collaboration with ISL clubs, state federations, and partners is conducting school and college-level competitions in over 20 cities with expected participation from over 33,000+ athletes and 2,400+ teams across the country. The Mizoram has begun in October 2022 in Aizawl, Kolasib, and Champai.
- Additionally, Reliance Foundation runs Young Champs. The academy was launched in May 2015 with the vision of identifying talented young footballers and providing them with an environment of excellence to unlock their potential both on and off the pitch. Reliance Foundation Young Champs since inception has had quite a few players from Mizoram who have come through the local, regional, and national scouting sessions to be a part of RFYC's fully funded scholarship football academy. From the first batch in 2020, nine players were signed by ISL and I-League clubs, such as Muhammed Nemil at FC Goa, Thoi Singh at Bengaluru FC, and Ayush Chhikara at Mumbai City FC with 6 from the second batch in 2022 who have contracts to continue to follow their passion for football.

About Reliance Foundation Sports:

Reliance Foundation celebrates the spirit of sports – joy, health, grit, determination, winning and losing. And works to ensure that more and more children and youth from all sections of society are able to play sports and, in the process, build a fitter, stronger and more active India. Our initiatives have touched the lives of over 21.5 million young people since 2013 across the country from 13,000+ schools and colleges, enabling an opportunity for a talented kid anywhere to be able to achieve their dream of a career/glory in sports. We are especially committed to ensuring more presence and success of girl and women athletes in India and design our programmes in a manner that offers them maximum opportunities. At **Reliance Foundation**, we hope to be the wind beneath the wings of Indian sportspersons and help them reach their true potential.

The **Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RFYC)** academy launched in May 2015 with the vision of identifying talented young footballers and providing them an environment of excellence to unlock their potential both on and off the pitch. Supported entirely by the Reliance Foundation, each year RFYC offers fully funded scholarships to young talents from across the country following a comprehensive yearlong scouting process. For more information on RFYC initiatives please go to <https://www.rfyoungchamps.org/>

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