

**President YAI Address at Water Sports Centre, Bhopal on 18 August**  
**2017**

1. Hon'ble Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Yashodhara Raje Scindia, Mr Ashok Thakkar, Council Member of YAI, Dr Malav Shroff, President of the Asian Sailing Federation, distinguished guests and audience, ladies and gentlemen, and most importantly all the enthusiastic participants, coaches and supporting staff.
  
2. At the outset, I would like to thank the Hon'ble Minister for inviting me to the Opening Ceremony of the Raja Bhoj Multiclasses Ranking Regatta 2017.
  
3. This event is being conducted by the National Sailing School, Bhopal under the aegis of the Yachting Association of India. Hosting an event of this magnitude is indeed befitting the rising stature of Bhopal, the 'city of lakes'. We at the YAI are indeed proud to be associated with the city of Bhopal which is now an eminent centre for yachting in the country.
  
4. It is indeed heartening that Bhopal boasts of world-class sailing facilities. The credit for this distinction goes to the patronage of the Sports Minister and the support of the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
  
5. I must admit that it has been the drive and vision of the Hon'ble Minister and her team of enthusiastic government officials which has brought the very challenging sport of sailing and therefore the Indian Navy, here to be associated with this beautiful city.

6. It was due to the efforts of the Hon'ble Minister that the country's first sailing school, the National Sailing School was established at Bhopal and inaugurated by the then President of YAI, Admiral Arun Prakash on 08 Aug 2006. It is a matter of pride that within a very short span of time, the children from this School have won medals in various National and International championships.

7. Ladies and Gentlemen, as you are aware, India has a glorious maritime tradition (SAMUDRI VIRAAASAT) stretching back thousands of years. The seas around us continue to be important even today in our country's march on the path of economic development. It is therefore, important that we inculcate a maritime tradition in our youth to further our maritime legacy. The best way of doing so is to acquaint our young people with water through sports like yachting.

8. The YAI is constantly looking to broad-base this sport and make it popular all across India. It is our endeavour in the YAI to open such facilities at as many locations in the country as feasible. The NSS, Bhopal will, however, retain the distinction of being the pioneer school, and the YAI is committed to lending full support in the future too.

9. To the young yacht persons and their parents, I wish to highlight that yachting is not just a sport. Being on the water and battling the elements of wind and water fosters a spirit of adventure. It is also a great way of building team spirit as well as leadership skills and inculcating sound character. Last, but not the least; sailing is not a sport for the weak hearted . It demands a very high degree of physical fitness, strength, stamina and concentration, particularly at the top levels of competitive yachting.

10. Participation in sports not only promotes a healthy lifestyle, but also teaches us to accept defeat and celebrate victory. These important life lessons become building blocks for our success in life.

11. Before I conclude, I would like to give a piece of advice to all the young yachtspersons present here. Compete fiercely, but make the most of this wonderful opportunity to showcase the true spirit of sportsmanship. I wish all the participants fair winds, happy sailing and plenty of exhilarating moments. I am sure your exploits would make the inaugural Raja Bhoj Multi classes Ranking Regatta 2017 a memorable success.

12. I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude once again to the Hon'ble Minister for her patronage to the sport of yachting. I would also like to thank the government of Madhya Pradesh for their unstinted and wholehearted support. My compliments are also due to the Director Sports and his entire team at NSS, Bhopal who have worked tirelessly to coordinate this event which will certainly play an important role in raising Bhopal's sporting profile.

13. Thank you and Jai Hind.