

31 Oct 2017 - 20:18

AIGF held All India Gaming Summit 2017



The All India Gaming Federation (AIGF) held the All India Gaming Summit 2017 on Saturday at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.

The summit successfully brought together relevant stakeholders on a common platform and addressed topics such as ills of the present system, issues & challenges and self regulation in skill-gaming. The summit also showcased global best practices from regulated economies to work towards finding pragmatic and implementable solutions.

The All India Gaming Summit 2017 was inaugurated by Hon'ble Justice Balbir Sing Chauhan, Chairman Law Commission of India and Hon'ble Justice Siddharth Mridul – Judge, High Court of Delhi. The event witnessed eminent speakers such as Mr. K T S Tulsi, Member of Rajya Sabha and Senior Advocate – Supreme Court of India, Dr. Rajiv Mani, Joint Secretary – Ministry of Law & Justice, Mr. Amit Goenka, Promoter – Essel Group, Mr. Siddharth Luthra, Senior Advocate and Former Additional Solicitor General of India , **Ms.Gowree Gokhale, Partner – Nishith Desai & Associates** and International Regulatory Bodies which includes Mr. Phil Harisson, Regulator – GLI, Australia and Ms. Sarika Bijen Patel, Commissioner - UK Gaming Commission to name a few.

Speaking on legalizing gaming in India, Hon'ble Justice Balbir Singh Chauhan, Chairman Law Commission of India, said, "Issue of Gambling and Betting has to be addressed by the renowned experts of the industry gathered here at the summit today. We welcome the opinions of the industry experts and would look forward to incorporating the views in our report". As per the industry reports regularizing and legalizing the sector will bring in revenue and employment. But responsibility of ensuring welfare and safeguarding the interests of the vulnerable sections of the society should be kept in mind while regularizing the betting and gaming. I wish all the success to the summit and look forward to the fruitful discussion".

One of the key speakers at the summit Mr. K T S Tulsi, Member of Rajya Sabha and Senior Advocate – Supreme Court of India said, "I believe that if betting is to be legalized and regulated it will provide direct employment to 5,70,000 people and indirect employment to 1.7 billion people. Besides, Govt can earn huge revenue by legalizing the sector. E.g on a turnover of 150,000 crores, the Govt. can earn a TDS of Rs. 4500 crores. It is a matter of discussion why isn't betting should be considered to be regularized when it is only a game of skill. It is pertinent to question If betting on a horse can fall under the preview of game of skill why isn't predicting the result of the game in cricket or football is".

Sharing an overview of international best practices at the summit, Ms. Sarika Bijen Patel, Commissioner - UK Gaming Commission said, "UK's gambling laws are very comprehensive and include both betting and gaming. In UK we consider gambling a legitimate leisure pursuit. In my opinion anyone who wants to bet will bet, irrespective of whether the system is legitimate or illegitimate. If betting is illegal, it will push the system to dark basements. If betting is regulated, at least the players get protected. Just legalising gambling means companies in this business will do anything they want. In the UK, the four big betting companies are listed, have investors and follow corporate governance codes. We fine the operators for any lapses. That sends a strong message to their shareholders and investors. It also sends a strong message to competition that they need to look after their customers".

Mr. Phil Harisson, Regulator – GLI, Australia, one of the key speakers at the summit said, "It is impossible to restrict gambling hence regulation is the best solution. Internationally, established regulators have put in place rigorous laws to protect the consumers and ensure the integrity of the industry. India can do well by consulting with the existing regulators and refer to international best practices. Furthermore, India has enormous opportunities to benefit from the technology that can be utilized in gaming industry".

Speaking at All India Gaming Summit 2017, Roland Landers CEO, AIGF said, "This is an endeavor to bring on a common platform, Indian & International stakeholders to discuss pertinent issues We believe that our members and other attendees will hugely benefit from the key sessions that will highlight the importance of legality and why regulation is the need of the hour for the Indian Gaming industry. AIGF has been liaising with many Indian States & Central Government bodies, and has submitted various reports that define ways of implementing a legalized and regulated framework for Gaming in India.

Legalizing betting is expected to reduce the prevalence of black money making its way into the economy, and promoting nefarious activities. It is also expected to bring significant revenue for the government while at the same time helping monitor and regulate sports related activities and discrepancies.

Owing to the increase in young population, purchasing power, economic growth, technological advancement and the desire for varied means of entertainment, the industry has a huge potential for growth. The industry is instrumental in generating tax revenues for state governments and creating employment opportunities. The Digital India drive has led to improving the infrastructure as a whole. Better internet speed even in the remote areas has led to more consumption of content. Post demonetization, the digital online payment systems received a boom with a larger part of the population being incentivized and compelled to use the same. All these factors add to the huge potential of the market in India.
