

Press Release

Vedanta's Sesa Football Academy Senior Men's Team Felicitated for I-League 3 Breakthrough

2nd June 2024, Panjim, Goa: Vedanta's Sesa Football Academy Senior Men's Team was felicitated at the SFA Sirsaim Campus for their first-ever Runners'-Up finish in the just concluded Goa Pro League Top Tier for the 2023-24 Season. The League showing has guaranteed SFA its maiden I-League 3 participation which is a major breakthrough. The felicitation ceremony was organised by Vedanta Sesa Goa.

The felicitation ceremony was graced by Dr. Caitano Fernandes, President Goa Football Association, Padma Shree Brahmanand Shankhwalkar-former Indian Football Captain, Mr. PK Mukherjee, Independent Director- SCDF, Mr. Navin Jaju, CEO- Vedanta Sesa Goa in the presence of Ms. Leena Verenkar, Head ESG, Vedanta Sesa Goa and Ms. Sandhya Malik, Chief Corporate Communications Officer- Vedanta Sesa Goa along with other Company Officials and the entire coaching & support staff at SFA. Mr. Denzil Franco, SFA Alumnus & ex-Indian National Football player was also present on the occasion.

During the ceremony, 31 players and the entire coaching & support team and 9 staff members were felicitated with specially designed medals, trophies and certificates of appreciation. A special award was instituted for Joshua D'Silva, for being the highest goal scorer with 24 goals in the GPL Top Tier, which incidentally happens to be the highest ever single season tally in the League since 2010. SFA, with 55 goals, had also emerged as the top goal scorers in the League. A friendly football match was organized between the Vedanta Sesa Goa units to honour this achievement during the felicitation ceremony.

Mr. Navin Jaju, CEO, Sesa Goa, Vedanta Limited on the occasion said, *"Heartiest congratulations to the SFA senior men's team for their breakout 2023-24 season and scintillating performance in the Goa Pro League Top Tier. I am proud of each & every player in the team, their coaches & the support staff. SFA, over the years has contributed immensely to Goan and Indian football & the promotion of the Senior Team to I-League 3 will further fuel the effort. In line with the Vedanta philosophy of ushering in progress through the medium of sports, we support SFA in all endeavours & through it, we will continue to work towards our quest of regaining the erstwhile glory of Goan & Indian Football."*

Dr. Caitano Fernandes, President-GFA said, *"Heartiest congratulations to Vedanta's SFA Senior Men's Team for their remarkable runners-up finish at the Goa Pro League 2024! I am confident that within a year, they will further be promoted along the I-League ladder. In the last 4-5 years, SFA has made very commendable progress in the Goa Pro League. Vedanta Sesa Goa has supported Goan football in many ways. Their support to women's football has been a game changer, and it is only because of the Vedanta Women's League that Goa State won the U-15 Girls Nationals after a gap of 22 years because the VWL allowed us to create the talent pool and revive girls and women's football."*

Mr. Brahmanand Sankhwalkar added: *"Having been associated with Vedanta's Sesa Football Academy for a long time now, I have been witness to the extraordinary accomplishments of*

players spanning multiple generations. It fills me with immense pride to see the SFA Senior Team attain this well-deserved recognition, today. Their recent success not only underscores their dedication and hard work but also sets a promising foundation for even greater triumphs in the future, paving the way for the academy's continued legacy of glory."

Ms. Leena Verenkar, Head- ESG, Vedanta Sesa Goa said: *"The growth and success of the SFA's senior men's team is indelibly linked with the fortunes of Goan Football. It is a matter of immense pride for us that we are all here because of the special achievement made possible by the outstanding performance of SFA team. I congratulate them and wish them Goodluck for I- League 3."*

Sharing her views on the occasion Ms. Sandhya Malik, Head-Corporate Communications, said: *"Today's felicitation ceremony was a celebration of Vedanta's philosophy of 'transforming for good,' honouring this outstanding achievement of our SFA senior Men's team and all those who have supported and, lived this phenomenal journey with them. I extend heartfelt congratulations to the players of the SFA team."*

SFA is a flagship CSR project of Vedanta Sesa Goa foundation & is managed under the aegis of the Sesa Community Development Fund (SCDF). SFA aims to develop quality footballers from the state of Goa and across the country by creating environment for discovering, nurturing, and building talent for Indian Football. The academy identifies and trains talented youngsters, who are passionate about Football at the grassroots level by inducting them into its residential programme and over a period of four years, nurtures and develops them into professional footballers and well-disciplined citizens while taking care of their academic education throughout the residential training programme.

SFA has groomed over 180 boys since its inception in 1999 and has made tremendous impact on the football fraternity across the country. Most of the academy alumni have represented the National team, I-League clubs, and prestigious football clubs across the nation. 9 players have earned the National team cap and many alumni have played the elite Indian Super League (ISL). Apart from Residential football training programmes through Sesa Football Academy, Vedanta has also launched Vedanta women's league (VWL) in collaboration with GFA, which is one of its kind platforms for aspiring women footballers across Goa state. 430+ Women footballers from across Goa have represented various clubs in the 7 editions of VWL so far. Apart from this, the SFA has contributed to reviving age-group football for both boys and girls through the conduct of the U-15 Youth Cup for boys and the inaugural Sesa Vedanta U-15 Youth Cup for girls and has collaborated with AWES for organising four editions of veterans' tournament as well.