



Speech by Raja Bhalendra Singh

President of the Indian
Olympic Association



Mr. President of India
Mr. Vice-President of India
Madam Prime Minister of India
Mr. President of International Olympic Committee
Distinguished Members of the IOC
Ladies & Gentlemen,

As President of the Indian Olympic Association, the National Olympic Committee of India, it is my proud privilege to welcome members of the International Olympic Committee and other guests for this inauguration of the 86th Session of the International Olympic Committee. We the citizens of India and the members of the sports fraternity consider it a *signal* honour to host, for the first time, an Interna-

tional Olympic Committee Session, where the representatives of the sports world of all continents have gathered, to *apply their* minds to the problems and promises of the Olympic movement.

The Olympic movement *has come to* stay as the 'Movement of the Youth' and has gained immense popularity in every corner of the world. The Olympic Games, which are held once in every 4 years, are enthusiastically looked forward to as a "Festival of Youth", by one and all and is considered the supreme sporting activity which brings into focus the brotherly co-operation, equality and fraternity among all peoples. By our belief in the ideals of the Olympic spirit, we demonstrate to everyone, directly or indirectly connected with sports, that the Olympic movement is livelier and stronger than ever before. In our country, which has a vast population, the Olympic movement spreads through north & south — east and west, embracing people of diverse religions, faiths, cultures and civilisations. However, through this Olympic movement, the diversity is narrowed down to goodwill, fraternity and friendship.

Ladies and gentlemen, sport is now not only a subject for the attention of a particular country or organisation but has come into focus, even in an organisation like the Non-Aligned Movement. In the recently concluded 7th Non-Aligned Meeting, which was held in this very hall, two weeks ago, the Summit *called upon* its members and other developing countries, to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the field of sports and continue their fight for elimination of racial discrimination at all its sports forums. The call of the non-aligned movement *is to uphold* and promote the ideals and spirit of the Olympic movement and Olympic Games, as a means for *enhancing* and strengthening friendship among all peoples and nations, *irrespective* of their economic and social systems, on the basis of complete equality which *precludes* commercial considerations. This, you will agree, is an encouraging international *trend*. I would like to offer my thanks to our honourable Prime Minister, the present Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, for the recognition given to sports at the international level in the non-aligned meeting. *Establishment* of cordial rela-



The eternal Indian greeting : H. E. Sardar Buta Singh. Minister of Sports, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. In the background, H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch and Raja Bhalexandra Singh.

tionships through an exchange of sporting activity between countries is an important means of communication and helps in developing healthy feelings of brotherhood. This goodwill and co-operation is particularly important when there is conflict of one type or another around us. However, under the inspiring leadership of our honourable Prime Minister we have received, in our country, unstinting encouragement and support to unfurl the banner of sport, both at the national and international level, for which every kind of assistance is offered by our government. As everyone knows, India has recently hosted the IXth Asian Games in which a record number of Asian countries participated. The success of these games is still being talked about inside and outside India.

We have, as you all probably know by now, for the first time a Ministry of Sports, headed by our popular Minister of Sports, Mr. Buta Singh, who was also till very recently the President of the Amateur Athletic Federation of India and even today is an honoured Vice-President of the NOC of India.

The very thoughtful approach of the International Olympic Committee to strengthen and

give importance to the continental sports associations is a step in the right direction. This is bound to result in beneficial achievements which will further strengthen sports organisations of the world. The NOC of India is grateful to His Excellency Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, for very kindly allotting the holding of the 86th Session of the IOC to this historical city of Delhi. To all my colleagues of the IOC, I extend my heartfelt greetings on behalf of the NOC of India and sincerely hope that they have a pleasant time during the present Session. I would like to thank my Government sincerely for having generously assisted and helped us in the holding of this Session. Lastly, I would like to thank all our guests who have responded to our invitation to be here today. Your presence will add lustre to the inauguration which will, I am sure, be the fore-runner to a successful Session.

I now request my friend and colleague, Mr. Buta Singh, Honourable Minister of Sports, to address this distinguished gathering.

Thank you.

R. B.S.