India’s focus on Football

What is the issue?

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- India recently hosted the U-17 World Cup, the first FIFA.
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- This experience shows that India must build on it with focus on grassroots.
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What is the significance of U-17 World cup?

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- This U-17 World Cup has proved to be a real eye-opener,the standard and quality have been very high up until now.
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- It’s an educating, enriching experience for everyone related to Indian football.
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- Awesome individual skills have combined with superb tactical sense and fantastic game management.
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- India’s U-17 players got the sort of exposure and opportunity that they would not otherwise have.
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- The footballers captured the imagination of the public, with players like goalkeeper becoming household names.
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- India embraced the tournament wholeheartedly, with the turnout over the three weeks shattering previous attendance records for a FIFA youth tournament.
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- Over 1.3 million people thronged the stadiums, with the crowds in football-crazy Kolkata in particular a sight to behold during the finals.
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What are the areas India need to plan on football?

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- India already started a national U-15 league two years ago and a U-13 league is scheduled to begin soon.
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- The 5-12 age group must now be the focus, with the involvement of local clubs.
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- The All India Football Federation has already expressed a desire to host the FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2019.
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- Having competently staged a global event, it is more important now to focus on the grassroots.
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- Youth development in Indian football has hitherto been non-existent, except in a few, devoted academies.
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- More organised, competitive football, starting from the youngest of age groups, is vital.
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- Improvement in infrastructure, with new training grounds built and existing stadiums upgraded, should ensure a longer legacy for football in the country.
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Source: The Hindu, Financial express

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