

Making Gujarat a sports powerhouse

With an aim to promote sports in the state, government brings out new sports policy; focus on grassroots level

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In sync with former chief minister Narendra Modi's dream of making Gujarat a sporting powerhouse, the state government issued its sports policy on Wednesday.

The policy has provisions to promote sports from schools and college levels by including sports as an important subject in the schools. Without a plan, the policy had even made provision for 'Right to Play and Playground,' which demands a playground of 2000 square yards in a vicinity of 2 kms.

The government had made provision for cash rewards starting from Rs1 lakh to Rs 5 crore. A gold medalist will receive Rs5 crore as cash reward, Rs 3 crore for Silver and Rs2 crore for a bronze

medal in Olympics. The cash reward varies as per the competition.

According to the Gujarat's sports minister Nanubhai Vanani, "the policy will have an all-round impact on the emerging sports paradigm. This policy, therefore, will be path breaking and become a landmark in the development of the Gujarat."

He said that the national rating of Gujarat State is 9th and the state government wants to improve its rating to the top position, through this policy.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The policy mentions that special arrangement for the attendance should be made for a student who is good at any sports. For instance, such students shall be given an option of evening classes.

Sports will be included as a subject

in the curriculum at par with other optional subjects in a phased manner.

Talking to *Mirror*, Manish Bhardwaj, Sports, Youth and Cultural Activities department said that the policy is prepared in coordination with the education department.

He added that the guidelines for the phased curriculum will be issued shortly. The policy mentions that the students who compete in state, national or any international sporting events will be given flexibility in attendance, along with that the marks for sports subject will be counted in the grand total.

The policy had made a provision of 2 percent of total seats in any colleges, including professional courses to be reserved for meritorious sportspersons. "All the provision related to schools, and colleges are included as per their advices," he said.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE POLICY

Scholarships, incentives to attract youth

- 1) Class I jobs to be offered to Olympic medal winners, Asian Games Gold medalists
- 2) Class II jobs to be offered to the silver and bronze medalists of Asian Games
- 3) Two percent recruitment in Government to be reserved for meritorious sportspersons.
- 4) Two percent of the total seats in the college including professional courses such as engineering, medical and other courses will be reserved for meritorious sportspersons

BENEFITS FOR PLAYERS:

- 1) Scholarships and training to top athletes under the 'Shaktidoot Scheme' of state government.
- 2) Annual benefit of Rs 65,000 per player to 1400 total players under Swami Vivekanand Centre of Excellence towards sports nutrition, stipend and traveling expenses for sports training.
- 3) Cash awards will be given to winners of National - International Championships for games such as Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Asian Games (Seniors & Juniors) and National Games and National Championships.

WATER SPORTS

The state government is also keen to promote water sports in the state ta-

king advantage of Gujarat's longest coastline along with the rivers.