

Special provision for welfare of youth in Himalayan and NE States

†2397. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether special provisions have been made for the welfare of youth of the Himalayan and North East States of the country at the time of formulating National Sports Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the manner in which the development of youth from economically and sport-wise weak States will take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL): (a) to (c) The National Sports Policy, 2001, provides that high priority will be accorded to the development of Sports in the rural areas to harness the available talent and potential. In this context, the Village Panchayats/Gaon Sabhas as well as rural Youth and Sports clubs will be mobilized to facilitate development of the requisite infrastructure and for the identification of talent through an appropriate competition structure in the rural areas as also in the disadvantaged and remote parts of the country which appear to merit special consideration under various schemes including for the North East. Efforts will also be made for tapping such potential as swimming in coastal areas and Archery in tribal areas. The available talent will be nourished and actively supported. Geographically disadvantaged Regions will be extended additional support for the promotion of Sports. There has been a strong tradition of Indigenous and traditional games in practically all parts of the country through ages. Indigenous games will be promoted through schemes related to rural sports.

The Policy recognizes the inter-dependence and inter-relationship between the Sports and Tourism sectors, the integrated development of which is capable of generating very substantial revenues and ensuring a high volume of tourist traffic from within the country and from overseas, while simultaneously promoting a sports & fitness culture in the country. Adventure Sports, in particular, have great potential for the promotion of tourism. Towards this end, the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Union and State Governments, that is those handling Sports, Tourism and related subjects, will strive to draw up joint/unified Plans and Proposals for various parts of the country, with due reference to the possibilities in the North Eastern Region, and to execute these programmes in a systematic and coordinated manner.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

In addition, the Ministry of Youth Affairs is implementing the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA) which provides for construction of a sports complex (comprising outdoor playfield and indoor sports hall) at each block of the country, both for outdoor and indoor sports disciplines, on land measuring about six - seven acres at a cost of ₹ 80 lakh each (Total ₹ 1.60 crore) and conducting annual sports competitions, including a special competition called the North-East Games exclusively for the North-East States.

Unique sports traditions have developed in the Himalayan region in the countries and the States that are a part of it. To promote these, the Government proposes to hold an annual event to promote these games in which countries such as Nepal and Bhutan will also be invited to participate in addition to the Indian States such as J&K, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and the North Eastern States.

Participation of youth in sports competitions

2398. SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken/being taken for participation of Indian youth in various international sports tournaments/competitions and overall improvement of their performance;

(b) whether there is any plan to review the existing sports facilities/training facilities in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL): (a) Schemes of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports *viz.* Scheme of Assistance to NSFs, National Sports Development Fund, Scheme of Human Resource Development in Sports, and Schemes of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) *viz.* National Sports Talent Search (NSTS) Scheme, Army Boys Sports Company (ABSC) Scheme, SAI Training Centres (STC) Scheme, Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme, Centres of Excellence (COE) Schemes are being implemented with the objective of preparing Indian sportspersons and teams for improved performance in international sports events.

(b) and (c) As 'sports' is a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to create adequate sports infrastructure including state-of-the-art sports facilities, playgrounds and recreation centres.