

DRAFT NATIONAL AIR SPORTS POLICY PUSHES FOR SAFETY STANDARDS

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Human resources, Youth, Sports and related issues

Sky dance:The policy suggests that popular spots such as Bir Billing in Himachal Pradesh can be declared as air sports control zones.

The government on Sunday released a draft national policy for air sports in the country that will require entities providing these services and their equipment to be registered, as well as be liable for penalties.

The policy proposes a two-tier governance structure for air sports in the country, which will include an apex governing body called the Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) and associations for each air sport. It will cover activities like aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding, hang gliding, paragliding, microlighting, paramotoring, skydiving, and vintage aircraft.

The ASFI will be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and will represent India at the Lausanne-headquartered Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) and other global platforms related to air sports. It will provide governance over various aspects of air sports, including regulation, certification, competitions, awards and penalties.

Each air sports association will lay down its safety standards for equipment, infrastructure, personnel and training, and specify the disciplinary actions to be taken in case of non-compliance. Inability to do so may lead to penal action by the ASFI.

Registration required

All persons and entities providing air sports services will be required to register as members of the respective air sports associations. Key equipment used will also have to be registered.

It is proposed that popular air sports attractions in the country such as Bir Billing in Himachal Pradesh, Gangtok in Sikkim, Hadapsar in Maharashtra and Vagamon in Kerala can be declared as a “control zone” for air sports in order to ensure the safety of other manned aircraft.

Schools and colleges will be encouraged to include air sports in their curriculum and their students will have the opportunity to participate in the FAI’s international competitions.

The draft policy also aims to promote domestic design, development and manufacturing of air sports equipment under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan; waive import duty on equipment for a few years; as well as request the GST Council to consider rationalising the GST rate on air sports equipment to 5% or less.

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