

# AIR SPORTS IN THE COUNTRY TO HAVE AN OVERSIGHT BODY

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

Floating fun: The air sports industry in the country is worth Rs. 80-100 crore. NIVEDITA GANGULY

For the first time in India, air sports such as paragliding or hot-air ballooning will come under a four-tier governance structure with the Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) as the apex body which will oversee aspects such as regulation, certification, accidents and penalties.

Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister for Civil Aviation, on Tuesday unveiled the national air sports policy. "Air sports is one area which has the ability to transform into a huge industry," he said.

He said that the air sports industry in the country was today worth Rs. 80-100 crore, with nearly 5,000 providers, which could grow 10 times in terms of revenue and yield 1 lakh direct jobs apart from a multiplier impact on the economy.

## Four-tier structure

The policy lays down a four-tier governance structure with the ASFI at the top, followed by national associations for individual sports and their regional and district-level units.

The ASFI will be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) which will represent India at global platforms related to air sports such as the World Air Sports Federation and will also conduct competitions across the country through different national air sports associations.

The ASFI will provide governance over different aspects such as regulation, certification, competitions, awards and penalties, and will publish its draft guidelines within a period of six months. It will be chaired by the Secretary, MoCA, who will nominate up to three eminent experts related to air sports as members of the ASFI governing council. Sports that will come within its ambit are aeromodelling, model rocketry, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding, powered gliding, parachuting, paramotoring, powered aircraft and rotorcraft.

"Initially, these bodies will receive financial support from MoCA. It is a virtuous cycle, because once we have our teams participating in international events, more funds will flow in," said Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary (MoCA).

The government will also look at various incentives to encourage the sport such as reducing GST on air sports equipment from 18%-28% to 5% or less, Mr. Scindia said.

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