

{ DELHI CABINET MEETING }

Sports achievers to get bigger prizes

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NEW DELHI: In a major push to retain and reward sporting talent in the national capital, the Delhi government on Tuesday announced significant hikes in prize money for medal winners at international and national events, along with assured government jobs. The move is aimed at curbing the trend of athletes migrating to neighbouring states that offer better incentives.

Speaking after a cabinet meeting at the Delhi Secretariat, sports and education minister Ashish Sood said the new measures would be implemented under a revamped "Mukhyamantri Khel Protsahan Yojana".

"Delhi is now offering the highest prize money for international medal winners in the country," he said. "In addition, we are committing government jobs to ensure that athletes continue to live and train in Delhi, with long-term security."

The scheme, aligned with the Centre's Khelo India and Fit India campaigns, will also cover financial support for training, equipment, nutrition and mental health from the school level, said chief minister Rekha Gupta in a statement. "We want to nurture champions from Delhi itself," she said.

Under the revised cash awards, Olympic and Paralympic gold medallists will receive ₹7 crore, up from the previous ₹3 crore. Silver and bronze medal winners will now be awarded ₹5 crore and ₹3 crore respectively, as against ₹2 crore and ₹1 crore earlier.

Additionally, Olympic and Paralympic gold and silver medallists will be eligible for Group A jobs in the Delhi government, while bronze winners will be offered Group B posts.

"This will provide not just financial support but lifelong dignity and stability," the chief minister said.

For winners at the Asian Games and Para Asian Games, the new cash awards stand at ₹3 crore for gold, ₹2 crore for silver, and ₹1 crore for bronze. Commonwealth Games and Para Commonwealth Games medal-

lists will now receive ₹2 crore, ₹1.5 crore, and ₹1 crore for gold, silver and bronze, respectively.

At the national level, prize money has also been substantially increased. Athletes who win gold will now be awarded ₹11 lakh, while silver and bronze winners will receive ₹5 lakh and ₹3 lakh, respectively.

The announcement marks a sharp shift in Delhi's sports policy, particularly in the wake of past controversies where the state was criticised for failing to support its own athletes.

One of the most widely discussed cases was that of wrestler Divya Kakran, who moved from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh and stirred a row in 2022.

After winning a bronze at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Kakran had thanked the Delhi CM for his congratulatory message but pointed out that she had lived and trained in Delhi for over 20 years without ever receiving financial support. The Delhi government had responded by stating that she was officially representing UP.

"Neighbouring states like Haryana and UP offer ₹5-6 crore and permanent government jobs to medal winners. That's why many players trained in Delhi end up shifting their base," Sood said. "With this overhaul, Delhi has now become the most rewarding state for athletes."

Job appointments will now be extended beyond Olympic and Asian Games medallists. Commonwealth and Paralympic winners will also benefit from government employment. Gold and silver medallists at the Commonwealth Games, and gold winners at the Para Asian Games, will be eligible for Grade B posts. Bronze medallists and others with notable performances will be considered for Grade C positions.

The government has also announced new measures to support grassroots talent. School students excelling at the state and national levels will receive training assistance of up to ₹5 lakh, including medical insurance of ₹5 lakh.

For elite athletes, support has been extended to ₹20 lakh for training, with ₹10 lakh in health coverage.



Cabinet decisions

MUKHYAMANTRI KHEL PROTSAHAN YOJANA

₹7 cr maximum cash reward for Olympics, Paralympics, Asian Games Asian Para Games, Commonwealth and Para Commonwealth Games winners

₹11 lakh is the upper limit of cash reward to be given to national-level winners

₹5 lakh maximum amount for training assistance to student athletes with outstanding performance at state, national levels

₹20 lakh hiked training aid for international-level players

GOVT JOBS TO WINNERS IN INTERNATIONAL GAMES

Scheme to also cover financial support for training, equipment, nutrition and mental health of school students

Move aimed at curbing athletes' migration to neighbouring states for better incentives

"The scheme will not only promote sports, but also instill pride and attachment of the players towards Delhi, so that they develop their talent in Delhi itself and bring laurels to Delhi by winning national and international medals."

— REKHA GUPTA, CHIEF MINISTER

MUKHYAMANTRI DIGITAL SCHEME

- 1,200 free laptops to meritorious Class 10 students
- ICT computer labs in govt schools
- 175 computers labs to be set up in 2025-26

EV POLICY EXTENDED AGAIN TILL MARCH 2026

"This is a decisive step towards making Delhi a premier sporting hub...It's about valuing our athletes, building loyalty, and ensuring they stay and shine from Delhi."

— Ashish Sood, minister

Free laptops for meritorious students

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi cabinet has approved the Mukhyamantri Digital Education Scheme for free laptops and establishment of 175 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) labs in Delhi government schools to promote digital learning, education minister Ashish Sood announced at a press conference on Tuesday.

The minister announced that 1,200 meritorious students of Class 10 will be awarded free high-performance laptops with i7 configuration. The total budget outlay for Mukhyamantri Digital Education Scheme approved by the cabinet is ₹8 crore, Sood said.

"Each ICT lab will house 40 computers, and the setup will follow CBSE-approved param-

eters," he added.

Alleging past lapses by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, Sood said there are no functional ICT labs across 1,074 government schools in Delhi. "All ICT labs that exist today were set up between 2015-2019 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, in partnership with the central government and they stand non-functional," he said during the press conference.

Responding to the allegations, an AAP spokesperson said, "Education minister Ashish Sood has developed a habit of ranting about the previous government. If there is any merit in this rant, he should order one more inquiry, and refer this matter also to ACB to investigate."

Sood said distribution of free laptops is in alignment with the vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and to promote

digital learning. "These decisions mark a new era for Delhi's youth," he mentioned.

On being asked about the ICT labs, some school management officials told HT that the computer labs are functional, barring a few computer sets. "We have our computer lab set up with functional 40 computers," a school principal said, requesting anonymity.

Aparajita Gautam, president, Delhi Parents' Association said distribution of laptops and setting up ICT labs is a welcome move. "Unlike private schools, many of the government school students are at the disadvantaged end when it comes to exposure to digital literacy. Distributing laptops and setting up ICT labs will surely help put students of government schools at par with private schools," she said.

In May, Delhi government had announced that it had identified 100 government schools where free computer labs were announced to be set up in collaboration with a non-profit organisation. The initiative was rolled out under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on March 28 between the Directorate of Education (DoE) and the Ladli Foundation Trust, a non-profit organisation.

The DoE had then stated that following a detailed feasibility survey conducted by the non-profit, 100 schools were short-listed for the project. Further DoE had then said they will provide basic infrastructures such as classrooms, electricity, lighting, fans, furniture and power backup while each school will assign a teacher or coordinator to oversee the labs' operations and sustainability.

GOVT EXTENDS EV POLICY TILL NEXT MARCH, NEW POLICY IN MAKING

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi government has extended the current Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy till March 31, 2026 or until the notification of a new policy whichever is earlier, official said. The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting held under chief minister Rekha Gupta at the Delhi secretariat on Tuesday.

The Delhi EV Policy was introduced in 2020 and expired in August 2023 and, has been extended multiple times since then.

Transport minister Parag Kumar Singh said there was a need for broader dialogue and public participation to develop a future-ready, inclusive stronger EV policy.

"The extension will enable the transport department to conduct comprehensive consultations with all stakeholders — including citizens, industry leaders, academic experts, environmental groups, both public and private institutions. These discussions focus on enhancing EV infrastructure, revising existing incentives and subsidies, establishing e-waste and battery recycling mechanisms and clearly defining public-private roles in Delhi's evolving EV ecosystem," said Singh.

The new EV policy was closely aligned with the government's 'Green Delhi' mission, aiming to transform the city into a model of clean, sustainable urban mobility, he said.

"With several new provisions in the pipeline, the revised policy will be stronger, more futuristic, with robust frameworks to accelerate adoption, strengthen infrastructure, promote innovation, and ensure mental accountability," said.