

Tax sops likely to make India aerosports hub

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NEW DELHI: Aerosport enthusiasts in India may soon not have to go abroad for skydiving and other related activities. The Jyotiraditya Scindia-led Union aviation ministry on Saturday issued the draft National Air Sports Policy (NASP) 2022 that aims to make India one of the top — and safest — destinations for this super-exciting field by 2030. The sports covered in this draft include: aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, governance model, gliding, hang gliding and paragliding, microlighting and paramotoring, skydiving and vintage aircraft.

“To make air sports affordable to the common public, the government will request the GST Council to consider rationalising the GST rate on air

sports equipment to 5% or less. The vision is to make India one of the top air sports nations by 2030 (through) a safe, affordable, accessible, enjoyable and sustainable air sports ecosystem,” a senior aviation ministry official said.

ENSURING SAFE LANDING

► Union aviation ministry has issued the draft National Air Sports Policy 2022

► The government is expected to request the GST Council to consider

rationalising the rates on air sports equipment to 5% or even less

► An Air Sports Federation of India will be established as the apex governing body



The draft policy seeks to leverage India’s potential for air sports, given its large geographical expanse, diverse topography and fair weather conditions. “Fixed locations for air sports — for instance, Bir-Billing in Himachal, Gangtok in Sikkim, Hadapsar in Maharashtra or Vagamon in Kerala — can be declared as a ‘control zone’ with necessary permissions from (authorities including) local air traffic control. This will enable hassle-free flying by air sports enthusiasts in such control zones without creating any risk to national security or safety of other manned aircraft,” the official added. An Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) will be established as the apex governing body.

India aims to attract aerosport enthusiasts from Europe and North America during peak winter as these activities shift to mild climate zones. “ASFI and air sports associations will work towards developing a hassle-free process to enable their movement to India. This will enable Indian air sports enthusiasts to learn from the experience of the visiting professionals, get exposed to global best practices and create opportunities to host global competitions in India,” he added.

Competitions in India will be conducted as per the guidelines of Lausanne-based Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the world governing body for air sports. “Air sports by their very nature involve a higher level of risk than flying a regular aircraft. NASP 2022 places strong focus on ensuring international best practices in safety. Inability to enforce safety standards by an air sports association may lead to penal action by the ASFI against such association including financial penalties, suspension or dismissal,” he added.

The government will consider allowing imports of air sports equipment without any duty for a particular number of years. Imports of previously used air sports equipment may also be allowed without duty, subject to laid down norms of airworthiness.

An airspace map of India has been published on DGCA’s DigitalSky Platform (<https://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in>) that segregates the entire airspace of India into red, yellow and green zones. “Air sports practitioners may rely on this easily accessible map for guidance. Operation in red and yellow zones requires permission from central government and the concerned ATC authority respectively. Operation in green zones for aircraft with all-up weight up to 500 kg does not require any permission,” he said.