

# Shri Dharmendra Pradhan presides over kick-off programme for distribution of footballs as part of F4S at PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Fort William, Kolkata

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar and Shri Shantanu Thakur were present at the event

Programme organised simultaneously in 21 KVs across West Bengal

Over 88000 footballs to be distributed across the state will benefit more than 15-16 lakh students - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

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Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, presided over the kick-off programme today for the distribution of FIFA footballs as part of the Football for Schools (F4S) at PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Fort William, Kolkata, West Bengal. The event was organised by the Ministry of Education and the All India Football Federation (AIFF). At the event 2487 FIFA footballs were distributed to 349 schools in Kolkata district. The programme was organised in 21 Kendriya Vidyalayas, simultaneously, covering all districts of West Bengal. In total, 88113 footballs will be distributed across the state.

Minister of State for Education and Development of the North Eastern Region, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar; Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Shantanu Thakur; Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (DoSEL), Shri Sanjay Kumar; Joint Secretary, DoSEL, Smt. Archana Sharma Awasthi; officials of the Ministry along with other distinguished dignitaries and eminent sportspersons were also present at the event. Sports captains (Boys and Girls) of the school shared their thoughts during the event.



While speaking at the event, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan shared that, as part of the initiative, footballs would be simultaneously distributed to students in 21 Kendriya Vidyalayas across the state today. He noted that over 88,000 footballs will be distributed in West Bengal alone, benefiting nearly 15 to 16 lakh children. Expressing his personal love for the sport, he emphasized that even a single football in a small school can inspire children to engage with the game and develop a genuine passion for playing. He further highlighted that approximately 10 lakh footballs will be distributed to schools across the country, aiming to boost participation in football and nurture a strong sporting culture among students. The Minister also kicked off an exhibition football match between two teams at the school.

In his address, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar emphasized that NEP 2020 envisions sports and other co-curricular activities as integral components of a holistic education. He highlighted the policy's focus on flexibility and a multilingual approach, and expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for conceptualising NEP 2020, and to Shri Dharmendra Pradhan for providing a clear roadmap for its effective implementation. Dr. Majumdar further noted that NEP 2020 accords equal importance to academics and sports, promoting well-rounded development among students. A healthy body nurtures a healthy mind, and engaging in sports like football plays a vital role in helping children adopt and sustain a healthy lifestyle, he said.



In his address, Shri Shantanu Thakur emphasized the importance of strengthening the sporting skill of children and prepare for international competition. He underscored the significance of initiatives like this in achieving that goal. Efforts such as these, he said, will rekindle children's love and interest in playing football and foster a deeper connection with the sport. Shri Thakur also noted that such initiatives play a crucial role in identifying and nurturing emerging sporting talent across the country.

In his address, Shri Sanjay Kumar expressed gratitude to Shri Dharmendra Pradhan for conceptualising this initiative. He highlighted that lakhs of footballs will be distributed to students across schools nationwide through this partnership with FIFA. He emphasized that the initiative will spark greater interest in sports among children and nurture a sporting culture at the grassroots level. He further noted that, in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, sports is recognised as an integral part of education, underscoring the value of collective participation and the pursuit of excellence.

The Football for Schools (F4S) programme, spearheaded by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), aims to promote football at the grassroots level by making the sport more accessible to students within the school system. In India, the programme is implemented by the DoSEL, with support from the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI). Under the F4S program, FIFA is contributing more than 9.6 lakh footballs for school students of India besides 129 other countries (as of January 2025). Building on the success of earlier rollouts in states like Odisha in 2024, the F4S program in West Bengal is part of a nationwide movement underscoring India's commitment to nurturing a sporting culture from the school level.

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