

Pele approached to promote Kerala's sports lottery

Brazilian football legend Pele has been approached to promote the Kerala government's plan to launch a 'sports lottery', proceeds of which would help build sports infrastructure in towns and villages across the state.

The sale of lottery tickets, priced at Rs.100 each, would be inaugurated Nov 14 and the draw for the first prize of Rs.20 million (\$446,000) would be held Jan 26 next year.

'Pele has been contacted but since Nov 14 is fast approaching and since he is tied up (with other assignments), he will be coming later. He will take part in events to promote the lottery,' Kerala Sports Minister M. Vijayakumar told IANS.

Among the other sports legends who would be here to promote the lottery are former Indian cricket captains Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev, tennis star Sania Mirza and athlete Milka Singh. Dates of their visits, however, are yet to be decided.

All proceeds of the lottery, after deducting the prize amount and expenses, would go into a sports fund, which would disburse money to the state's 1,000-odd local administration bodies to build and improve sports facilities and infrastructure.

The local bodies as well as arts and sports clubs will also sell the tickets and receive a 27 percent commission on sales.

'We are also planning to hold an exhibition cricket match involving former and current cricketers. We would sell lottery tickets as entry passes for the match.

'To begin with, it has been decided to print two million lottery tickets in batches and depending on the response we could print more,' the minister said.

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