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Guj Sports Minister Says New Football Academy For Girls In Pipeline

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Mission Eleven Million (MXIM), the school outreach programme of the FIFA Under-17 World Cup 2017 that will be held in India this October, which aims to take the beautiful game to 11 million schoolchildren, dazzled football lovers of the city with the MXIM Football Festival Ahmedabad, at Transstadia Arena in Kankaria on Saturday evening.

There were some 5,000 children at the event, whose slogan was "Football takes over", where they took part in various football-related activities and games.

All-India Football Federation president and former Union minister Praful Patel, former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia, Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan and Gujarat minister for sports Rajendra Trivedi presented the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 mascot, "Kheleo", to the Ahmedabad public.

"As India will host the U-17 World Cup from October this year, it will help take the beautiful game to new heights in our country. I am pleased to announce that Gujarat will also play host to the Santosh



(Top) Gujarat sports minister Rajendra Trivedi, actor Hrithik Roshan, AIFF chief Praful Patel and former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia presented the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 mascot 'Kheleo' to city public. (Below) Mission Eleven Million dazzled children at the event

Trophy competition this year, which will give a boost to the beautiful game in the state. Gujarat will also soon get another football academy," Patel said. Ahmedabad had been listed as a Plan B alternative venue for the U-17 World Cup last year.

Trivedi told TOI that apart from the football academies being run by the Sports Authority of Gujarat at Ahmedabad and Anand, a new academy for girls is in the pipeline. He said that though the location had not been fixed yet, the most likely option was Himmatnagar.

"I am really excited about football reaching more and more people in our country. Mission Eleven Million be a land-

mark in the football journey of India. I want football to reach not just 11 million children, but many more. I am very proud to be a part of this," Bhutia said. Patel then presented awards to MXIM competition winning schools Anand Niketan; Karnavati Vidyavihar, Viratnagar; and Gopalak Vidya Sankul, Gandhinagar.

Patel and Bhutia then squared off, leading five-a-side teams of select kids in a miniature exhibition match at the venue. Team Bhutia 'won' that match 4-2.

The event also had shows of skill by football freestylers Archis Patil from Mumbai and Mayur Makwana from Ahmedabad.

