Tamil Nadu Govt. Honours Bhaskaran with House

TIRUCHI, Oct. 2.

Every gold medal winner in Olympics if he hails from Tamil Nadu will be given a house tree as appreciation and recognition of talent and encouragement to sports and games by the Tamil Nadu Government. V. Bhaskaran, who captained the Indian team which restored the country’s image in world hockey by winning the gold medal at the recent Olympics at Moscow is the first recipient of this honour.

Announcing this decision of the Government, M. G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister, reiterated his decision to constitute a separate department for the promotion and development of sports and games and also to appoint a Minister exclusively to head this portfolio.

The Chief Minister gave away the cashwards to the victorious hockey team at a public function organised by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Sports and Youth Services and Tamil Nadu State Sports Council here this morning. Other national and international events winners were also honoured.

Apart from the four hockey Olympians, Bhaskaran, Allan Schoeffield, Somiah and M. K. Kaushik, E. Karunakaran, the first Indian to win a gold medal in 52 kg class in weightlifting in the Commonwealth Games at Cardiff in 1979 and 37 other international and national winners of various events received the gold medal, cash awards and a Thanjavur art plate from the Chief Minister.

Felicitating the recipients, Mr. Ramachandran said the Tamil Nadu Government, which believed in providing all encouragement to unearth and nurture talent had a duty to perform towards these Olympic winners. It was only towards discharging this duty, that his Government had decided to honour Bhaskaran by handing over the key to him of a house costing around Rs. 1,40,000 constructed by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board in Madras. He said this was no charity, or prize or dole to Bhaskaran but it was a recognition of the contribution and services of Bhaskaran to hockey of which every Indian and every Tamilian was today proud. Bhaskaran was also given a cash award of Rs. 15,000 as a special gesture.

Stressing that sound body and mind were essential for a sportsman or an athlete to achieve laurels, Mr. Ramachandran advised them not to succumb to any bad vices like liquor. For, he regretted ‘sipping a peg of liquor’ at a social gathering had become a status symbol. This attitude should be given up he said.

Mr. Ramachandran said the Government would go the whole hog to tap sports talent in the countryside and give all encouragement for it to develop.

Mr. C. Aranganayagam, Education Minister, who presided, spoke of the various schemes being implemented during the last two years by the Government to catch the young and develop the individual’s aptitude in the game or sport of his choice.

Mr. S. Srinivasan, District Collector and President of the Tiruchi District Sports Council, presented a welcome address to the Chief Minister and felicitation address to each of the 42 recipients of the awards.

Bhaskaran, replying to the felicitations on behalf of the recipients, thanked the Government for its gesture. He said given the encouragement and support, the budding sportsmen and athletes were bound to do well.

Mr. U. S. Natarajan, Director of Sports and Youth Services, proposed a vote of thanks.

Earlier the students of the local high schools gave a mass physical exercises display, yoga asana and folk dances.