BENGALURU: A Bengaluru Open a la French Open, a museum for sports history and heritage and an annual international sports film festival are some of the recommendations former India cricket captain Rahul Dravid and badminton's former world number one Prakash Padukone have made towards making Bengaluru a global sporting hub.

Dravid and Padukone cochaired a task group formed by the Karnataka Knowledge Commission (KKC), the state’s policy think tank, to prepare the Karnataka State Sports Policy. The draft was submitted to the government. Athlete Ashwini Nachappa, hockey player AB Subbaiah and swimmer Hakimuddin S Habibullah among others were members of the task group.

"Bengaluru is ideally positioned for development as a sport city as it possesses sports-friendly weather round the year, a sports-loving population, basic multi-sport as well as dedicated single-sport stadia in central locations and world-class hospitality options and connectivity options. Bengaluru also has experience in hosting national and international level competitions," the report states.

The task group, considering Bengaluru’s shrinking playgrounds, makes it clear that careful planning of infrastructure usage is a prerequisite to attain international standards of sport. "Public access to stadia and high performance venues must be part of the plan," said Nandan Kamath, managing trustee at GoSports Foundation, member secretary of the task group.

The report suggests a comprehensive legislation - Karnataka Sports Act - to regulate sports administration and to "provide opportunities for every resident of Karnataka to
access sport facilities that are safe, age-appropriate and need-appropriate”. It details the role and service standards government, educational institutions, local bodies and sports service providers need to adopt. The law will ensure “equitable allocation of resources” for girls, LGBTQs, seniors and community-based sports, the report says.

Citing the example of the Indian Premier League, the group said the government could turn to the private sector to fund sporting needs. The experts called for a Sports Commission, a statutory body managed completely by professionals. “It is vital to keep the sports policy as a living document. The body should be tasked with coordinating public and private players,” Kamath said.