

Arjunas from region shine bright

Gaurav Gill first to get recommended in motorsports, Toor, Anjum, Thakur get the nod

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Gaurav Gill lets out a big laugh when asked to compare his historic feat of getting recommended for Arjuna Award and his many podium victories.

Gill today became the first-ever motorsports driver to get the nod for the prestigious awards from the committee after his name was announced as part of the 19 from the committee led by Justice (retd) Mukundakam Sharma.

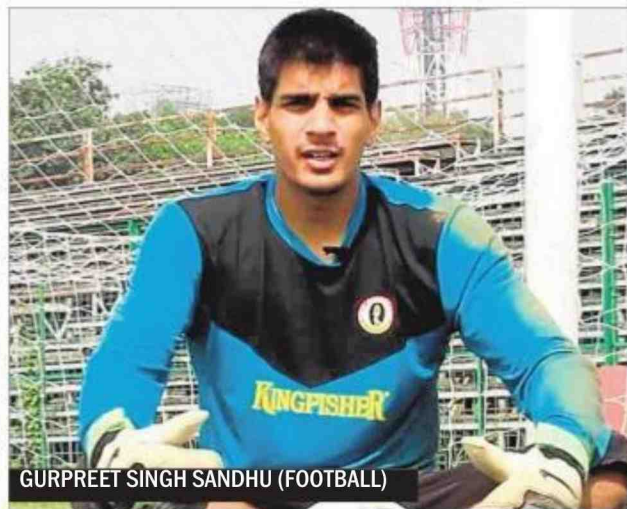
The Federation of Motorsports Clubs of India (FMSCI) has been religiously sending nominations for the award — starting from 2004 with India's first-ever Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan's name, to no avail.

The rejections varied from being a non-Olympic sport to a body that had no national presence as only clubs, unlike state associations, are affiliated to FMSCI. Later on, nominations were rejected after officials pegged the sport on par with entertainment. The sport also failed to find favour because it was thought to be a niche sport.

And for these very reasons Gill knows why this award is special to him and his community after all, Karthikeyan and many others before him have had it rough from both the Sports Ministry and the committee. "Well this is an entirely different victory. It is a victory that cannot be compared with my other victo-



Ajay Thakur (kabaddi)



GURPREET SINGH SANDHU (FOOTBALL)



Gaurav Gill (motorsports)



Sonia Lather (boxing)



ANJUM MOUDGIL (SHOOTING)



Pooja Dhanda (wrestling)



TEJINDERPAL SINGH TOOR (SHOT PUT)

“If you ever want your name in the Awards list, make sure you have people who will get your name to the list. Performance is least considered in our country. Sad state of our country but can't help it. Let go and just play until you can

— HS Prannoy, SHUTTLE

ries,” Gill told The Tribune.

“This is special in its own way it is for the people of the country, people who have been in my sport and for my sport,” he added.