

# No sprints and jumps needed: athletes will fly to Games venues

Plans afoot to introduce helicopter shuttle services

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

**GAME PLAN 2010**

**Sidhartha Roy**  
New Delhi, March 4

**PARTICIPANTS IN** the 2010 Commonwealth Games would be spared Delhi's traffic chaos.

Athletes and officials arriving for the Games would be ferried by helicopters from the Games Village near the Akshardham temple to Indra Gandhi International Airport and other sports venues spread across the city. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which is constructing the Games Village, has given land at the site to build two helipads.

The state-owned Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd (PHHL) would build the helipads and also operate helicopters from them. PHHL is also building a 'heliport' spread over 25 acres in Rohini, which would also come up before the Commonwealth Games.

"Once you have the facility ready, helicopters could be used for many purposes, including transporting athletes, for law and order and police surveillance, evacuation and medical emergencies," said a senior official of the Civil Aviation Ministry, who didn't wish to be named.

"If some athletes have to visit the venue for Rugby in

Delhi University, they can be transported by a helicopter. This, however, still requires approvals from other authorities and the modalities are still being worked out," he said.

The official said there are many authorities involved in the process and the city requires a common plan to make helicopter services take off. "Athletes can be quickly taken from the Games Village to hospitals but the hospitals should also have helipads and permissions, too, are required to allow helicopters to land there," he said.

Many hospitals in the Capital have already asked for permission from authorities like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to start helicopter services.

DDA has also given 25-acre

land to PHHL to build a heliport in Rohini. With a base in Rohini, PHHL plans to start shuttle helicopter services to different parts of the city. "With the heliport in Rohini, helicopters would get an independent air corridor and wouldn't obstruct the 'funnel area' of incoming flights to IGI Airport," the ministry official said.

However, to make shuttle helicopter services a reality in Delhi before the Games, faster decision making is required.

PHHL is confident that the heliport and helicopter services would be in place before the Games. "All the agencies have been very cooperative and proactive. The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi has been very helpful," said R.K. Tyagi, Managing Director of PHHL.

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## All play and no work, if govt has its way

**Moushumi Das Gupta**  
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WHAT WOULD be the mood in Delhi during the Commonwealth Games next year? Absolutely chilled out, if the government has its way.

While the athletes sweat it out for medals, you would probably get to holiday at home. Reason: the government intends to reschedule the 2010 holiday list so that there are more off days between October 3 and October 14 — while the Games are on.

The idea is to decongest the Capital and ensure smooth flow of traffic during the Games.

"Delhi Police were asked to prepare a proposal to reschedule the holiday list for October 2010. The Police Commissioner has submitted a proposal today in this regard and we are examining it," said Chief Secretary Rakesh Mehta, on Wednesday.

On February 24, Lieutenant Governor Tejendra Khanna had directed the Delhi government to ensure that courts, colleges, schools and markets would remain closed during the Games' closing

### CHINESE CHECK

During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government had declared a state holiday on the day the opening ceremony took place.

Besides, it banned the use of more than two million cars to contain pollution and traffic.

ceremony on October 14, 2010, a Thursday.

The opening ceremony on October 3 would fall on a Sunday.

"October 14 is a Thursday and October 16 is a Saturday. We will request both private and public sector companies to swap their Saturday off with Thursday, so that offices remain closed during the closing ceremony. We also plan to issue a notification for a bank holiday on October 14," said a Delhi government official.

Furthermore, the Delhi government has decided that no major conference, fair or VIP visits, except those related to Commonwealth Games, would be scheduled during that period.

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