

Pune turning into city beautiful for Commonwealth Youth Games

All major roads, walkways and cycling tracks in Pune are being done up as part of preparations for the Commonwealth Youth Games (CYG) less than 150 days away.

Over 1,300 athletes and 350 officials from 71 countries will participate in the games in nine disciplines from Oct 12-18 and the city is going all out to impress them and accompanying tourists.

Suresh Kalmadi, CYG's organising committee chairman and MP from Pune, has left no stone unturned to bring funds for beautification of the city, infrastructure development and improvement of the Chhatrapati Shivaji complex where the games will be held.

A sum of Rs.3.95 billion has been allocated for the construction of a stadium in the complex. While Kalmadi claims work on the stadium is progressing on schedule and the completed sports complex would be handed over to the organising committee at least two months in advance, officials claim work has been considerably delayed.

CYG's director Brig G.A. Siddique said: 'The delay in the work is due to additional demands made by various federations such the Commonwealth Federation for the Games, the National Sports Federation and the International Sports Federation.'

'For instance, CYG required only 10 badminton courts, but the National Sports Federation wanted 14, so all this leads to delay,' he said.

Siddique is confident that the test run for the games, scheduled between Aug 29 and Sep 4, will be held on time. 'The test run is very crucial because we will be checking the efficacy of the systems installed in the stadium,' he said.

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) commissioner Praveen Singh Pardeshi admitted that the construction of the Balewadi-Baner road, which is a link from the city to the stadium, would be considerably delayed beyond the August deadline.

Pardeshi told IANS: 'We will be able to give only a transportable road before the games. Earlier, we had planned a hundred-foot fully equipped road with all the facilities, but all that we will not be able to achieve.'

The reason, he added, was a delay in starting the road construction project.

He also said that Rs.1.5 million had been allocated for the city's beautification project that involves green patches and flowerpots along the roads and major intersections of the city.

Additionally, Rs.1.5 million has been allocated for street furniture. However, all these works are to start in June.

Maharashtra chief secretary Johny Joseph visited the city a week ago to review the status of the various development projects.

V. Vijayalakshmi (© IANS / India eNews)