

Asian Games hit hard by unseasonal rains

A car stuck in a huge waterlogged area is the last thing one would expect to see in desert-dry Middle East. But that is precisely what has happened over the last couple of days here and has dampened the mood at the 15th Asian Games here.

The opening day of the Games Friday witnessed a record downpour and the weather department has forecast more showers and windy conditions over the next few days.

The rains Friday affected the opening ceremony and art director David Atkins admitted that many sections of the programme had to be left out keeping in mind the safety of the performers in wet conditions.

Spectators, who had been waiting for the spectacular Opening Ceremony braved the weather enduring the chilly conditions, a phenomenon not common in these parts.

Since the city is not geared to handle flood situations, the record rainfall paralysed normal life and tankers were called upon to drain out the waterlogged streets and residential complexes.

With the focus on main roads, many by-lanes were still paralysed till late Saturday. The most popular Corniche road that has been decked up for the Games, Al Waab, low lying areas of Al Rayyan and many other areas were hit badly causing major traffic jams.

Salwa Road, one of the major roads in Doha was hit badly and it took till Saturday evening to make it easy to access.

Locals say that the city - and the country - on an average receives about four to five decent showers, but never in quick succession.

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