

Germany's cities and hotels in World Cup fever

Hamburg, May 18 (DPA) Language courses, street parties, security plans - the quarters hosting the 32 World Cup participants in Germany are getting ready for the football stars and the flood of fans from around the world.

'For our city, this is an opportunity of unprecedented proportions to present ourselves,' says Siegfried Fricke, mayor of Koenigstein, a town located in the Taunus hills outside Frankfurt.

The town is now preparing for the arrival of the reigning world champions Brazil June 4. Amid all the joy about the publicity which the host cities and their selected hotels will be certain to gain, they also often face a number of logistical and security challenges.

For example, there is Baden-Baden, where the Schlosshotel Buehlerhoehe will be hosting the English national team.

But for some 5,000 English fans, a five-hectare field has been rented near the village of Achern, some 20 km away, where the 'England Camp' of tents will be set up.

Koenigstein is spending some one-half million euros (\$625,000) for its role of hosting the world champions from Brazil.

The town expects up to 7,000 visitors, who will daily be given a bit of the Copacabana feeling with caiprinha cocktails and beach soccer parties.

But despite the folk festival atmosphere for the fans, the soccer stars in Koenigstein will be kept well shielded from the public.

Similarly elegant and equally shielded will be the German national team when they take up quarters at the Schlosshotel in Berlin's district of Grunewald.

The entire area around the impressive palatial hotel, built in the style of a French castle, will be hermetically sealed off and guarded round-the-clock.

Protective measures will be especially keen for the guests in Friedrichshafen and in Hamburg.

Friedrichshafen, located on Lake Constance, will be hosting Iran's national team, prompting Interior Minister Wolfgang Schaueble to express some concern about security issues.

'We will be using both open and covert measures around the clock in order to guarantee the safety of the Iranian delegation,' says Bernhard Weber, head of security operations for the local police department in Friedrichshafen.

Hamburg, as well, faces a challenge with the USA national team set to reside in the Park Hyatt hotel directly in the centre of the city.

Preparations are meanwhile going into high gear in the individual hotels around the country. Everywhere, hotel personnel are practising foreign language phrases so that the prominent guests

from abroad can feel a bit at home.

'Even the hotel maids are going to be able to say 'hello, in Ukrainian,' says Hartmut Pirl from Seminaris Seehotel hotel in Potsdam.

(© IANS / India eNews)