

2010 Commonwealth Games Delhi

How much does national prestige cost?

Introduction

Delhi all set for the Games

Delhi will be playing host to the 19th Commonwealth Games (CWG) from Oct 3 to Oct 14 in the winter of 2010. Held every four years since 1930, the CWG would be taking place for only the second time in Asia, following Kuala Lumpur in 1998. After Malaysia and Jamaica (1966), India would be the third developing country to host the event. India had previously lost the CWG bids in 1990 and 1994 and dropped out of the race in 1998 to give support to Kuala Lumpur. Delhi has previous experience of playing host to only the Asian Games (Asiad), in 1951 and 1982. This will be the biggest multi-sport event conducted in the city. Hence, the decision to award the CWG to India for the first time is being acclaimed with great fervour by policy-makers, media, and eminent citizens.

With more than 1 billion people, India is the Commonwealth's largest nation and accounts for some 55 percent of the Commonwealth's population. The decision in India's favour was taken during the CWG Federation General Assembly meeting, which took place in Jamaica in November 2003. Delhi was bidding to host the Games against Hamilton and Ontario, both from Canada. The secret ballot gave Delhi a winning 46 votes out of a possible 72 against Hamilton's 22. In the closing ceremony of the Games on March 26, the CWG Federation flag was lowered and handed over to Shiela Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi and later to Suresh Kalmadi, Chairman of the Organising Committee. A Bollywood troupe of film stars and dancers was also given about 11 minutes to perform a song 'Chalo Dilli' at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) as a celebration. It was almost as if winning the bid for the CWG was akin to winning in the Games itself.

What are the Commonwealth Games?

The Commonwealth Games or the 'Pan-Britannic-Pan-Anglican Games' were first organized in Hamilton, Canada in 1930, an event that saw participation from 400 athletes from 11 countries. Compared to the Olympics it was a small-scale affair. The mission statement for the first Games was 'to be merrier and less stern than the Olympics', leading to the Games often now being referred to as the 'Friendly Games'.

Nations organising the Games

Nation	Number
Canada	4
Australia	3
New Zealand	3
England	2
Scotland	2
Wales	1
Malaysia	1
Jamaica	1

The Games have since then been organized every four years by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), a union of around 70 countries. However the Games have had an uneven history, having gone through various name changes and often having suffered from an occasional loss of interest and support. Only 12 countries attended the 1950 Auckland Games, while the 1986 Edinburgh Games was boycotted by nearly all the African and West Indian nations. The Games is seen as a second-tier sports festival, overshadowed by not only the Olympics but the World Cups in soccer, rugby union, and cricket and other championships. It attracts only 70 countries, includes a relatively narrow band of sports, and the performance level for most sports is well below both Olympic and World Championship levels.

However there is support for the Games among most Commonwealth countries. Audiences both at the venues and of television for most events are good without being huge. It provides a forum for at least some of the world's best athletes to compete in an Olympics off-season, and has a place for minor sports.

When and Where the Games Have Been Held

Year	City	Nation	Date
1930	Hamilton	Canada	16 - 23 August
1934	London	England	4 - 11 August
1938	Sydney	Australia	5 - 12 February
1950	Auckland	New Zealand	4 - 11 February
1954	Vancouver	Canada	30 July - 7 August
1958	Cardiff	Wales	18 - 26 July
1962	Perth	Australia	21 November - 1 December
1966	Kingston	Jamaica	4 - 13 August
1970	Edinburgh	Scotland	16 - 25 July
1974	Christchurch	New Zealand	24 January - 2 February
1978	Edmonton	Canada	3 - 12 August
1982	Brisbane	Australia	30 September
1986	Edinburgh	Scotland	24 July - 2 August
1990	Auckland	New Zealand	24 January - 3 February
1994	Victoria	Canada	18 - 28 August
1998	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	10 - 20 September
2002	Manchester	England	25 July - 4 August
2006	Melbourne	Australia	5 - 26 March

Why host the Commonwealth Games?

Like the Olympics, the CWG are regarded as an attractive event to host, because there are a number of benefits that are usually projected for the hosting State. Even though risks and costs come alongside, but every year a number of nations compete vigorously for what they see as 'national honour' for being in world spotlight for two weeks.

- Economically speaking, the Games are believed to **generate and redistribute billions of dollars worldwide**. It is hoped that years before the event, millions would be pumped into the economy for new infrastructure such as large sports facilities. And if the city gives a good presentation of the area, then businesses and tourists will be attracted in the future. During the Games, thousands of visitors including athletes, officials, journalists, television staff, and sport fans are expected, who might extend their stay well beyond the duration of the Games, and spend well above the average level of per-capita consumption.
- In addition massive **advertising revenues** are expected to be churned out from companies desiring to get their products or services out to a large consumer audience world-wide.
- The Games give the city a wide **international exposure** it could usually only dream about. Even while the CWG only involve 70 of the world's 200 nations, these 70 nations comprise 30% of the world's population.
- The Games are usually associated with **urban renewal programs** that precede the event and help upgrade the image of the host city through exclusive development of certain select parts.

Our Concerns

The Indian establishment has also made claims that the 2010 CWG would bring huge profits for the city. New infrastructure is being built including a CWG village on a 40-acre site in the heart of the capital with a possible capacity for 8,500 athletes and officials. The city is being spruced up to the vision of a 'world-class' city, in the hope that the event would boost tourism and revenues. Kalmadi has stated, "It's a big business opportunity, many jobs for many young people".¹

In the midst of all the hoopla, what remains to be seen is what if any are the basis of such claims, and what would be the long-term impact of this ten-day glory on the city. This booklet attempts to undertake this process and raises some fundamental questions such as:

- Why are we hosting the Games?
- Does Delhi have the physical and financial capacity to host the Games?
- What will be the financial cost of the Games and who would be paying for it?
- What will be the social and environmental cost of the Games on the city?

We explore these questions by examining cases of other cities that have played host such Big Games in the past.

Needless to say a lot of research needs to continually feed into such concerns. This document hopes to contribute to such endeavors.

¹ 'India to host 2010 Commonwealth Games', *The Hindu*, Nov 15 2003, New Delhi edition

Delhi's 2010 Plan

In preparation for the Games, and to cater to the needs of the thousands of sportspersons and visitors expected during the event, Delhi is undergoing a massive revamping exercise. Just as during the Asiad 1982, a range of infrastructure is being developed and upgraded, though at a much larger scale. This includes sports stadia and complexes, transport facilities such as flyovers, roads, buses and airports, commercial complexes, hotels and tourist sites etc. The Asiad 1982 changed parts of south and central Delhi, and the CWG hopes to regenerate the Yamuna belt, parts of east and southeast Delhi. Kalmadi asserts, "We have a big responsibility but I think people will be surprised by the turn of events in Delhi. We will really show what India has to offer,"²

Some of the **infrastructure developments**, as reported variously by the newspapers include the following:

Sports Venues

- A brand new **Commonwealth Games village** would be built on the banks of Yamuna on NH-24 next to the Akshardham Temple. Spread over an area of 40 acres, the village would house 8,500 participants and officials. It will be a state-of-the-art village with two zones, a residential area and an area for training facilities, and would comprise air-conditioned auditoriums, dining halls, banking facilities, fitness, cultural and communication centres
- 15 sports will be included in the 2010 CWG: *Aquatics, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Hockey, Lawn Bowls, Rugby 7s, Shooting, Squash, Table Tennis, Weightlifting, Wrestling and Netball*. In this regard, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has planned **new sporting venues** including the Yamuna Sports Complex in Surajmal Vihar, five new outdoor stadia and two indoor stadiums. Land measuring 40000 sq m has been earmarked.
- The **sports complexes** that were built for the 1982 Asiad Games are being **upgraded**, including the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Sports Complex that would be used for opening and closing ceremonies, and also athletics, lawn bowls, and weightlifting; Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium for hockey; Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Aquatic Complex for swimming, Indira Gandhi Sports Complex for gymnastics, cycling and wrestling; Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range; Thyagaraja Sports Complex for netball, and the Talkatora Indoor Stadium for boxing. These will have new illumination systems, changing rooms, galleries, leak-proof roofs, air-conditioning plants etc.

Hotels and Leisure

Almost 19 five-star and budget hotels have been planned before 2010, including in east (two in Mayapuri Vihar, one in Shahdara) and south Delhi (two in Jasola and one in Okhla). Additional facilities like restaurants, shopping places, recreational centres and tourist complexes are also underway in the city, esp. on the Yamuna river-bed, which is to be developed for commercial purposes. During the event, evening entertainment/cultural programmes, arts/craft exhibition of

² 'Delhi looks to 2010', http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/commonwealth_Games/default.stm

commonwealth countries, food festivals and heritage packages are also to be organized. The government also intends to develop a 'mini-India tourism and culture park' in Delhi on 150 acres.

Transport

To ensure smooth ride for the sportspersons and tourists in the city between the airport, sports centres, hotels and tourist places, new transport facilities are also underway.

Airports

- The Delhi Government plans to modernize (read privatise) the international airport. Contracts for the same were awarded in early February 2006 to international consortia, despite opposition. 'According to GMR-Fraport, the successful bidders for revamping Delhi airport, the new airport will be able to handle 80 million passengers a year by 2021, as compared to 12.8 million passengers in 2004-05.'³

Roads

- The ring road in the city is to also become an expressway. Besides the existing two Ring Roads, a third ring road would be constructed to provide access to the Commonwealth Games Village site and would be built at a cost of Rs 3,600 crores'⁴
- A 200 m long carriageway with tunnel is proposed, which would connect the Games Village to the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. It would run from the Nizamuddin Bridge to Subj Burj (Lodi road).
- Two new bridges across the Yamuna - at Geeta Colony and Wazirabad would also be built so as to improve East Delhi's connectivity. The Wazirabad bridge would be a signature bridge on lines of the one in London.
- An under-bridge would be constructed on railway level crossings at Vivek Vihar. Two by-passes would be built at Masoodpur and Mahipalpur.
- Improvements would be made on roads near the sports venues. Beautification of 129.20 kms and widening of 37.8 kms of roads would also be undertaken.
- A special lane will be dedicated to athletes' vehicles.

Buses

- A multi-modal transportation system would be developed. The High Capacity Bus System would be started in seven corridors.
- The Delhi Transport Corporation would have about 1,100 dedicated low floor shuttle buses (200 a/c, 800 non a/c, and 100a/c mini buses) to link the airport, hotels, stadia and tourist spots.
- All buses will have an Automatic Vehicle Tracking System, which will track not only their speed and location but also the trips missed.

³ 'Sprucing up for the Games', http://www.ibef.org/download/delhi2010_april6.pdf

⁴ 'Multi-pronged strategy for Commonwealth Games', *The Hindu*, Feb 11, 2005, New Delhi edition

- There are also plans for improvement of bus shelters, and building multi-level parking lots, all of which would be done through private agencies.
- Improved street lighting in the Games areas would also be one of the improvement projects implemented with help from Belgium.

Flyovers

- There are plans for the construction of 40 new flyovers before 2009 to improve traffic circulation, many of which are presently underway.

Metro

- Besides the routes give in the phase wise plans, the Delhi Metro would expand its services to Noida before the CWG, as per the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Uttar Pradesh Government and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation. Feeder services for the Metro would also be put in place.

Proposed Budgets

Transport Department

Purchase of	Rs in Crores
200 new modern a/c buses for athletes	80
800 deluxe buses for park and ride	160
100 a/c mini buses	20
1000 quality radio taxis	Private operators
Renovation of ISBTs and signages etc	10
Total	270

Public Works Department

Construction	Rs in Crores
Tunnel: Nizamuddin bridge to Lodi Road	135
2 bye-passes at Masoodpur & Mahipalpur	30
Widening of 37.8 kms	81
Beautification of 129.20 kms	68
24 new flyovers (estimate)	1900
Total	2214

Municipal Corporation of Delhi

Construction	Rs in Crores
Underbridge at Vivek Vihar	40.00
Improvements on JLN marg	4.55
Improvement of Mehrauli Gurgaon road	6.00
Total	50.55

Health and Sanitation

The Health Department has proposed to construct a state-of-the-art sports specialty hospital near the Games Village with network connectivity to super specialty hospitals, and has also underlined the need for 50 new high-tech ambulances for placing near different venues of the Games for sports persons.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has also laid out the plans for

- Improvement of surroundings of railway stations, parking and bus stands at Old Delhi, New Delhi, Nizamuddin and Sarai Rohilla,.
- Procurement of mechanical sweepers and garbage recycling stations, as also accessories and uniform for sanitation staff etc.
- Upgrading storm-water drains.

Health and family welfare

Works	Rs in Crores
Setting up 12 health posts	0.70
Setting up a polyclinic at Games Village	15.00
Ambulance services	5.00
Additional equipment in existing hospitals	20.00
Training /disaster preparedness	5.00
Total	45.70

Water

- A dedicated 1 MGD plant would be set up for at the Games Village for supply of filtered water. A sewage treatment plant would also be installed.
- Water supply and sewerage treatment facilities at all stadiums would be augmented.

Delhi Jal Board

Works	Rs in Crores
Upgrading water supply at Games Village	16.50
Sewerage and STP at the Games Village	23.50
Total	40.00

Power

To meet its power requirements for the event, Delhi has commissioned a 350 MW gas-based combined cycle Pragati-II power project at an estimated cost of Rs.13 billion and has decided to purchase 4,387.17 square meters land from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for Rs 15.5 million towards building a 66 KV grid sub-station at Uttam Nagar⁵ The Delhi government has also allowed private companies to set up a 1,000 MW power plant in Bawana.⁶

⁵ 'Common 'wealth' agenda', *The Pioneer*, April 28, 2006, New Delhi edition; 'Eight projects to beautify Delhi before Commonwealth Games', http://in.rd.yahoo.com/news/*http://in.news.yahoo.com

⁶ Commonwealth Games 2010 Requirements Motivate Delhi To Go For Private Electricity Generation Plants, <http://www.gurgaonscoop.com/story/2004/9/9/111756/0292>

Cost of the Games

Initial bid

The Indian Bid Document to the Commonwealth Games Evaluation Commission in 2002 laid out a total budget of \$422 million (Rs1772 crores).⁷ A provision of approximately \$235 million (Rs 986 crores) had been kept for infrastructure, with the bulk (\$163 million) going in for constructing the Games Village.

In a separate plan given by the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) to the planning commission, a total budget of Rs 770 crores was earmarked for the development of infrastructure. The work to be taken up by the different Departments, with transport and public works getting the lion's share of the money:

Departments	Rs (in crores)
Transport	270
Public Works Department	165
Urban Development/PWD	100
Municipal Corporation of Delhi	75
Health and Family Welfare	46
Delhi Jal Board	40
New Delhi Municipal Committee	34
Department of Education (Sport)	40
Total	770

However, even if one were to add up all the expenses that have been made public so far by the different departments on the various projects recounted earlier, the total amount comes in the neighbourhood of almost Rs 23,000 crores. This figure does not account for several items for which details have not yet been made available.

In fact in August 2006, the Delhi Finance and Public Works Department Minister A.K. Walia disclosed that the cost of infrastructure development related to the Games could reach Rs 26,808 crores.⁸

⁷ The Report of the Commonwealth Games Evaluation Commission for the 2010 Commonwealth Games, Sprucing up for the Games, http://www.ibef.org/download/delhi2010_april6.pdf.

⁸ 'Rs.26,808 crore to be spent in the run-up to C'wealth Games', *The Hindu*, Aug 03, 2006, New Delhi edition

Sector	Item	Rs.cr.	Sector	Item	Rs.cr.	
Transport	200 A/c buses	80	Road & rail infrastructure	Railway stn modernization	3600	
	800 Deluxe buses	160		Airport modernization		
	100 A/c minibuses	20		Connectivity		
	1000 Quality radio taxis			Ring Rd to Expressway		
	ISBTs & Signages	10		270 km 3 rd Ring Road		
Metro Phase II	8000	Special lane for athletes				
	8270	2 Bridges across Yamuna		464		
Public works	Nizamuddin-Lodi Rd tunnel	135		Metro to NOIDA airport		
	Masodpur-Mahipalpur bypass	30		7 HCBS corridors		
	37.8 km Road widening	81		Bus shelters		
	129.2 km Road beautification	68	Multi-level parking			
	24 New flyovers	1900	Improved street lighting			
	2214	Electric Trolley Bus				
Municipality	Vivek Vihar underbridge	40	Light Transit Rail			
	Jawaharlal Nehru Marg	5				
	Mahatma Gandhi Road	6				
	51	New stadia	Wrestling			
Health & Family Welfare	12 health posts	1	Martial Arts			
	Games Village polyclinic	15	Rugby			
	Ambulance service	5				
	Equipment for hospitals	20	Upgraded stadia	National Stadium	324	
	Disaster preparedness	5		Yamuna Complex (A)		
	46	Siri Fort auditorium (A)				
Delhi Jal Board	Games Village water supply	17		JLN Complex (A)		
	Games Village STP	24		Dhyanchand Stadium		
	41	SPM Aquatic Complex				
Power	350 MW Pragati II	1300	IG Sports Complex (A)			
	Land for Uttam Nagar grid stn	2	Karni Singh Range			
	1000 MW Bawana (pvt)	3560	Thyagaraja Complex			
	1000 MW from Tehri & NTPC		Talkatora Indoor (A)			
	1000 MW from Chhattisgarh		St Stephen's grounds			
	4862	Hindu College grounds				
Games Village (pvt)	A/c auditoria		Ramjas grounds			
	Dining halls		SRCC grounds			
	Health centres		Daulat Ram grounds	1700		
	Media centres					
	Banking		Beautification	MCD (Delhi)		
Residential		NDPC (New Delhi)				
Training		PWD (Public Works)				
	659	DTTDC (Tourism)				
CWGOC	Operation, ceremonies, etc	980	Hotels	19 new 5* & budget hotels		
		980		10,000 more 5* rooms		
Housing	40,000 low income units			5,000 more budget rooms		

Total = Rs 22,887 crores

Present Estimates

The truth of the matter is that the CWG will cost much more than even that estimate. According to media reports, the budget for the CWG has now escalated to more than \$1 billion.

The Central Sports Minister Mani Shankar Aiyer also criticized the Indian Olympic Association and the Delhi Government for its lavish plan to spend \$1.150 billion (Rs 4,830 crores) on the extravaganza, saying the money could be better spent on developing sporting infrastructure across the country. "The proposed budget has risen from \$335 million to \$1,150 million and nobody blinks an eye on spending such a staggering amount," he said.⁹

Actual Cost

⁹ www.channelnewsasia.com, Billion-dollar Commonwealth Games has India's sports minister fuming, 11 May 2006; Sports Minister Criticizes India's Commonwealth Games Budget, Thu, May 11, 2006, www.Gamesbids.com

To know how much the Games would cost to the public, Hazards Centre filed a number of applications under the Right to Information Act (RTI). These RTIs were sent to the following departments. Information was sought on the Detailed Project reports , plan and cost outlay and budgets

Dates

As a breach of our rights as a citizens none of the departments responded to the RTIs even after the stipulated 45 days period was over. Even appeals to the Central Information Commission office yielded no results.

The real costs therefore have been hidden from public view.

Raising the cost

The Union finance ministry asked the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to generate its own funds for building the infrastructure for the Games Village. One of the reasons being that the centre is wary of footing the huge bill, because the Asian Games investments in 1982 had later become useless and a financial burden to the Centre.¹⁰ The Planning Commission has therefore suggested that DDA should hand over the construction of the Village to private builders – even though, collaterally, the Commission has allocated Rs 5,200 crore to Delhi for 2006-07, of which Rs 200 crores is for the Commonwealth Games Village. In this way, and after the Games ends, the Village could be transformed into a tourist attraction or sold to recover the cost.¹¹

To raise funds for the Village now, the DDA plans to auction plots for eight hotel plots in the 40-hectare area to raise the necessary funds for housing the athletes. DDA also plans to auction plots for hotels in other parts of Delhi – although the auctions have so far not been uniformly successful.¹² The Delhi government has planned to finance the Games with its own resources. It has allocated 27 per cent of its total plan outlay to infrastructure development in the state.

All these measures, however, are not likely to yield enough revenues immediately to bear the total costs of the Games, which has almost **tripled**. The concealed costs are perhaps even **five** times the revised budgetary figures. In other words to cover the total costs of the Games there is going to be significant borrowing from public funds, the market, and financial institutions. And as with the costs, it is unlikely that these borrowings would be made public, due to the massive government and media propaganda of acclaiming the event as a “national” victory of sorts. This, as we shall see later is fairly typical of the organisation of such mega events, whose consequence is years of locked up investments, low returns, and long-term debts – all of which have to be eventually paid for by the citizens through increased taxes, prices, and cesses.

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¹⁰ 'COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2010: Centre asks Delhi to supply funds', www.projectsmonitor.com, April 25, 2005

¹¹ 'Delhi budgets for C'wealth Games', www.projectsmonitor.com, March 17, 2006

¹² 'Sprucing up for the Games,' http://www.ibef.org/download/delhi2010_april6.pdf.

Do Big Games generate profit?

A lot of public money is being spent on the CWG 2010 on claims that the returns would be much more than this, that the Games would be a huge moneymaking event that would reap benefits for all sections of society. In fact in all host cities, such Games are taken up on the promise that profits would be generated.

Suresh Kalmadi says, "We will get lot of sponsors to bring down the costs. Staging of the Games is no longer a loss-making venture. That is why so many countries want to host the Games."¹³ So much so that Kalmadi, who is also the Indian Olympic Association President, is all set to bid for the 2016 Olympics for New Delhi, since he feels the city would have the necessary infrastructure following the 2010 Games. He asserts, "We will make double the money that we will spend. It is a win-win situation for the host country".¹⁴

The question that needs to be asked is what is the basis of such contentions by the Indian organizers. What are the precedents for Delhi? Did other cities that played host to the CWG and the Olympics recover the costs? Did they make any profits?

To get a clearer picture on the same, it is worthwhile to look at the expenditures and returns of other host cities of big Games such as the CWG and the Olympics.

Games	Year	Estimate \$mn	Actual \$mn	Deficit \$mn	Debt for	Comments
Olympics	Mexico 1968				30 years	
	Munich 1972			1,000		
	Montreal 1976	310	2,000	1,000	32 years	\$2.4bn for stadium
	Los Angeles 1984			+225		
	Seoul 1988		15,500			\$45bn national debt
	Calgary ^w 1988	461	1,000	910		Most of the Olympic facilities, which lie unused later, including a \$98 million Olympic Saddledome Stadium, a \$72 million Olympic Park, ski jumping, and skiing facilities a \$5.9 million, Media Village that contained apartment blocks of 266 residential suites.
	Barcelona 1992	7,500	10,000	1,400		Being paid by Spanish tax payers 1000 on infrastructure.
	Atlanta 1996		1720			The Olympic venues, including a shooting site and beach volleyball, and downtown Centennial Olympic park lost their luster once the Games left town and became huge white elephants
	Nagano 1998		1,140			
	Salt Lake ^w 2000		3,000	155		
	Sydney 2000	2,530	5,565	2,600	10 years	\$200mn for stadium, \$200mn for superdome, \$4bn on infrastructure
	Athens 2004	1,300	20,000	16,600	20 years	\$2bn for security; Stadiums lie empty

¹³ 'The Rediff Interview/IOA President Suresh Kalmadi', January 27, 2004, www.rediff.com/sports/people.htm

¹⁴ *ibid.*

	Turin 2006	3,190			
	Beijing 2008	1,600	40,000		\$2.2bn for airport, \$14bn for energy, \$620mn for stadia, \$660mn for television, \$330mn for theatre, \$48bn for infrastructure
	Vancouver ^w 2010	1,750	6,000		\$580mn for venue construction, \$34mn for bid, hidden costs \$138mn
	London 2012	1,500	12,000		\$19bn on infrastructure
Common wealth	Hamilton 1930	0.045			
	Brisbane 1982				\$450mn worth of sports venues, aboriginal land rights movement, claims to have made operating profits
	Edinburgh 1986	14		4.3	Used infrastructure from previous 1970 Games
	Auckland 1990	54			Games held in 1950
	Victoria 1994	160			
	Kuala Lumpur 1998	33			First time in Asia
	Manchester 2002	963	1,200		
	Melbourne 2006	195	1100		\$70mn on security
	Delhi 2010	1,600			\$346mn for beautification, \$7.4mn on ceremony
Asiad	Delhi 1982	Rs550	Rs10,000		

As seen in the table above, from whatever data is available in the public domain, except for Los Angeles Olympics of 1984, not one Games claims to have made a profit in the last forty years. Contrary to popular perception and to what is so systematically propagated by the state and the media, all host cities have made massive losses and most have been paying the accumulated debts over decades, because the actual costs far outstripped the estimated costs and revenues did not come up to expectations.

A bulk of the investments in all big Games goes into building new infrastructure. A greater portion of the same, and the subsequent losses is attributed to the massive sports venues that are built at an enormous scale. Most of these later become 'white elephants', i.e. these end up being a long-term drain on the economy because these are seldom used afterwards and require huge maintenance costs. Almost all the countries that have played host to big Games have a legacy of such white elephants. Only those cities which were able to cut costs substantially and have used previously built sports complexes, roads, and hotels – the best case being that of Los Angeles, seem to emerge somewhat as exceptions.

On the whole, with the scale of spending increasing with every successive Games, the losses and debts for the host countries have also escalated sharply. There are numerous examples to substantiate this argument.

Olympics

Munich 1972

The city lost more than \$1bn hosting the Games.¹⁵

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Montreal 1976

The Montreal Games are a classic example of a colossal loss. "The Olympics can no more lose money, than a man can have a baby," declared legendary Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau after

¹⁵ 'Scary economics of the mega event', www.businessday.co.za, 04 May 2006

winning the right to host the 1976 Olympics. But in a cruel irony, the Games were a massive financial disaster for Quebec. They were the most expensive Games ever organised as Quebec built and built for the Games.¹⁶

The price tag for hosting the Games was originally estimated at \$310 million, but the costs spiralled to almost four times, upto \$2 billion, because of bad management, poor planning, and just plain corruption.¹⁷

Montréal's Cleveland (Municipal) Olympic stadium was also enormously expensive: it was to initially cost only \$200 million, but the final bill skyrocketed to \$2.4bn and it is now called the 'Big owe'.¹⁸ The Canadian government lost millions of dollars by building many other facilities that were rarely used again and were expensive to maintain or tear down.

This resulted in a whopping \$1-billion deficit. At the current rate of repayments, the debts would be paid only by 2008, i.e. more than 30 years later. To this day the city's smokers are obliged to contribute a sixth of every cent they spend to help pay off the lingering debt.¹⁹

The financial woes of the Montreal Games left many nations wary of hosting the Olympics - so much so that Los Angeles's bid for the 1984 Summer Olympics went uncontested. In fact throughout the 1980s, Montreal's experience discouraged other cities from bidding for the Olympics.²⁰

The profit makers

The media and the IOC often state that the Olympic host cities like Barcelona, Atlanta and Los Angeles reaped economic benefits. The facts however speak otherwise, even when costs given in public declarations omit local and state funds and giveaways of property.²¹

1. Los Angeles 1984

Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, it is said, were the first to make a profit since 1932. However this is when costs were covered by federal taxes to the tune of \$75 million, and more than 30 companies contributed \$126 million.²² The Games, which were subject to boycott by East Bloc countries, were mostly privately funded. The city did not build much new infrastructure and corporate sponsors covered necessary construction.²³ In that way the Olympic watchers note that Los Angeles was unusual because few new projects were undertaken. The bar was set low.²⁴ the Games however did usher in the era of unprecedented corporate involvement.

2. Barcelona 1992

The Barcelona Games in 1992 are also claimed as successful, partly because they were well organized. However the Games didn't come cheap and left a huge debt. The Games were initially estimated to cost \$7.5 billion, but cost approximately \$10 billion, generating revenues of just under \$3 billion. Of the \$10 billion, \$6 billion came from commercial funding efforts, such as

¹⁶ 'Hosting the Olympics', <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Cost Benefit Analysis>

¹⁷ 'The Olympics Bid and Why We Should Oppose It', <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Awakening Opposition>

¹⁸ 'Will Greece be an Olympic winner', www.moneyweek.com, April 26, 2006

¹⁹ 'How the Olympics are becoming a sustainable business', www.sustainability.org, Jan 17 2006

²⁰ 'The London Olympics Bill', <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2005/rp05-055.pdf>.

²¹ www.gao.gov/new.items/gq00183.pdf.

²² 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts>

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ 'Athens gambles future', <http://deseretnews.com/dn/spt>

lotteries and sponsorships, and private investors backing the construction of hotels.²⁵ The Games left behind a Montreal-size deficit of \$1.4 billion (U.S.), which is being paid by the Spanish taxpayers.²⁶

3. Atlanta 1996

Atlanta in 1996 also claims to have made a profit. Officially Atlanta made \$10 million, but that excludes the \$1 billion in hidden costs that Atlanta taxpayers have spent on infrastructure and are still paying a surcharge to pay off the debts.²⁷ The 1996 Atlanta Games cost \$1.72 billion. The taxpayers spent US\$1 billion on infrastructure, and federal taxes were levied of \$609 million.²⁸ The Olympic venues, including a shooting site and beach volleyball, and downtown Centennial Olympic park lost their luster once the Games left town and became huge white elephants.²⁹

Sydney 2000

It has been reported that the Sydney Games boosted the Australian economy by \$3.3bn³⁰. But what the Games budget does not include are the over-all expenditures associated with the Games. The government has adopted a restrictive definition that does not allow for a true measurement of costs relating to the staging of the Games.³¹

As in other cities, the Sydney Olympics in 2000 also left a huge fiscal hangover. In 1993, when Sydney bid for the Games, it was stated that they would cost only \$AUS 3 billion (£1 billion).³² The real cost ended up being \$AUS 6.6 billion, again more than double the estimated cost. It had a \$2.6-billion deficit that the taxpayers will be paying for a decade to the tune of about \$32 million a year.³³

The spiraling costs and debts occurred because Australia didn't get the tourism bounce it expected from the Games. Also because the costly athletic facilities have shapd up as white elephants, including the \$200 million Olympic Stadium.³⁴ The \$200 million privately-run Super-Dome for gymnastics and basketball has not been able to attract other events.³⁵ The rowing centre is now more popular with dog walkers.³⁶

Seoul 1988

²⁵ The Olympics Bid and Why We Should Oppose IT, www.creativeresistance.ca

²⁶ Do the Olympics generate money for the economy, [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Cost Benefit Analysis](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Cost%20Benefit%20Analysis)

²⁷ 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic%20Size%20Debts)

²⁸ [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Spending - True Cost](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Spending%20-%20True%20Cost); *STOP THE D. C. 2012 OLYMPIC BID!*, www.dwatch.com

²⁹ Athens gambles future, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/spt>

³⁰ (www.moneyweek.com, greece).

³¹ 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic%20Size%20Debts)

³² ibid

³³ ibid.

³⁴ *After the party, Sydney's Olympic blues*, <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/>, July 11, 2001

³⁵ 'Concerns raised over Olympics' cost', www.abc.net, September 22, 2000

³⁶ Athens gambles future, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/spt>

The actual cost of the Seoul Olympics stands at more than 11 billion Euros. The extra amount covers infrastructure projects and other indirect public sector expenditures not included in the original Olympic budget.

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Calgary 1988

The Calgary Winter Olympics were initially estimated at \$461 million. The total cost however came to \$1 billion. Debt came to \$910 million.

The International Olympic Committee claims the 1988 Calgary Games made a \$90-million profit. The Calgary Olympic Association claims they made a \$150-million profit. But in 1999, Toronto Star columnist Thomas Walkom went to Calgary to test those claims and concluded that the Calgary Olympics were a money loser. It could only claim to be profitable if the huge subsidies received from federal, provincial and municipal governments for Olympic venues were excluded. He added that the organizing committee's figures do not include the cost of building most of the Olympic facilities, which lie unused later, including a \$98 million Olympic Saddledome Stadium, a \$72 million Olympic Park, ski jumping, and skiing facilities a \$5.9 million, Media Village that contained apartment blocks of 266 residential suites.³⁷

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Salt Lake City 2000 (Winter)

American taxpayers subsidized the Salt Lake Winter Olympics with billions of dollars, but it left them with a \$155 million deficit.³⁸ The total cost came to \$3 billion.³⁹ After the Games the tax revenues of Utah state fell so far short of predictions that the state faced a US\$155 million shortfall, slashed spending, dipped into emergency funding.⁴⁰

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Athens 2004

The 2004 Olympics in Athens have taken the credit for being the most expensive Games in the history of Olympics until now. At the time of their bid in 1997, the budget was just \$1.3 billion. In 2000, this figure leapt to \$5.3 billion (£3.4 billion). In April 2001 the Finance Ministry increased their estimate to \$6.2 (£4.0 billion).⁴¹ But in actuality came in somewhere between \$15 and \$20 billion, more than double the original target, all without counting many of the infrastructure costs.⁴²

The Greek Government went on a massive spending spree to complete transport and sports venues, thus pushing out the total cost. The Olympics were also an enormous security operation, making Athens into a war zone patrolled by armed troops and security cameras all over the city, the bill for which came to \$ 2 billion.⁴³

³⁷ 'Do the Olympics generate money for the economy', <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Cost Benefit Analysis>

³⁸ <http://www.csmonitor.com/world/europe.html>

³⁹ 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts>

⁴⁰ <http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,400008943,00.html>

⁴¹ Hidden Cost of the Olympics, www.liebrich.com, January 28 2003

⁴² Golden Scam: *Fantasy and Reality in the Olympics*, www.plannersnetwork.org

⁴³ <http://www.csmonitor.com/world/europe.html>, September 01, 2004

The spiraling costs have caused massive public debt to the tune of \$16.6-billion⁴⁴ that could haunt taxpayers for at least a decade. To this must be added the lost revenues from tourism, which declined sharply in the run-up to the Olympics.⁴⁵ With the high debt, and the slowdown in development, the economy is now facing a serious recession.⁴⁶

A lot of snazzy new sports facilities were built which are now money-losers because of lack of demand. Almost all of the 36 purpose-built Olympic venues now lie empty.⁴⁷ With maintenance costs of 100 million euros a year for the empty stadiums, Athens residents are asking how much longer it will take for them to reap the benefits of the Olympic legacy in the land where the Games were born. A recent government study predicted it would cost 103.8 million dollars a year for the maintenance and operation of Olympic sites, including the main stadium complex.⁴⁸

Even the houses at the foot of Mount Parnitha in Athens, where the 10,500 athletes lived, resemble a ghost town today, and most of the jobs it generated have vanished. Soldiers guard the site while the government tries to find another use for it.⁴⁹

Beijing 2008

The city that would perhaps outbeat Athens in terms of costs (and expected losses) is Beijing, which has gone all out to spend a whopping \$40billion⁵⁰ for its upcoming 2008 Olympics. Its original operating budget was \$1.609 billion⁵¹ but in the course of building expressways, modern stadia and related infrastructure the cost has shot up sharply. 'By 2008, Beijing plans to have spent at least \$2 billion on venues, \$2 billion in operating costs, \$24.2 billion on infrastructure and \$7 billion on environmental clean-up, besides other costs.'⁵²

London 2012

For the London Olympics of 2012, the original estimated cost was set at £1.5 bn⁵³. However, even at this stage, media observers say the total budget could reach £12 billion.⁵⁴

The bid leaders have moved from claiming that the Games would make a profit to admitting that they would require a government subsidy of up to £2.5 billion. The London taxpayers have been warned that there is no limit on the amount they may be expected to pay if costs go up for staging the Games. Under current funding agreements between the Mayor and the Government, any cost over-runs for the Games will be 'shared' between the National Lottery and London taxpayers.⁵⁵

⁴⁴ Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city?, http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm, June 18, 2006

⁴⁵ Greece after the Olympics, <http://www.hellenicnews.com/index.html>

⁴⁶ Cost of Athens Olympics Far Exceeds Estimates, 19/11/2004, http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/homepage/; 'Will Greece be an Olympic winner', www.moneyweek.com

⁴⁷ 'Athens trying to use Olympic venues to recoup costs', <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/>, July 12, 2005

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ 'Olympics as Economic Stimulus -- The Athens Counterexample', <http://kipesquire.powerblogs.com/>; 'The Olympics and the City', <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/home.html>, April 2005

⁵⁰ 'Dragon in the Limelight', *International Health*, Vol. 27 (1) - Spring 2005, <http://hir.harvard.edu/symposia/64/>; 'When cost is no object?', <http://divisionoflabour.com/archives/001494.php>

⁵¹ 'Beijing Olympics to cost less than Athens Games', <http://www.dailytimes.com>, September 13, 2005

⁵² 'Beijing wants Chinese 'hello' in 2008', <http://www.chinadaily.net/english/home/news.html>, August 08, 2004

⁵³ 'How Much Might the 2010 Vancouver Olympics Cost?' <http://www.canstats.org/index.asp>, January 24, 2003

⁵⁴ '2010 Games costs up \$110 million', www.cbcsports.com

⁵⁵ 'London taxpayers warned about Olympics costs', <http://www.girlstalksports.com/>, October 26, 2005

Commonwealth Games

As compared to the high-profile Olympics, very little information is available in the public domain on the costs and economic performance of the relatively cheaper Commonwealth Games. The first one in 1930 at Hamilton is reported to have cost as little as \$45,000. The one at Edinburgh in 1986 was estimated to cost \$14 million, and apparently incurred a deficit of \$4.3 million. Expenses for future Games have skyrocketed from \$54 million for Auckland in 1990 to \$1200 million in Manchester in 2002. The only exception to this trend appears to have been the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Games, held for the first time in Asia, for which the initial bid was \$33 million, but it is not known what the actual costs were.

Manchester 2002

The Original Estimate for the Manchester Games in 1994 was 78 Million pounds. By 2001, a year before the Games, the project was 100 million pounds (\$200 million Cdn) over budget.⁵⁶ Twelve months before the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, the government needed to provide emergency cash injection of £105m.⁵⁷ The actual cost however came to \$1.2 billion.⁵⁸ The plan for raising the revenues through advertising and tickets wasn't met. In the years since 2002, Manchester dug into reserve savings, sold land to raise money and diverted profits from its investments in the Manchester Airport.⁵⁹

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Melbourne 2006

The initial bid for the Games was placed in 1998 at \$195 million⁶⁰ but by the end of 1999 it had blown to almost \$400 million. Worse was to come in April 2003 when the State Government admitted that the Games budget had exploded to over \$1.1 billion.⁶¹ The cost of staging the event had more than doubled! This included an opening and closing ceremony, which cost \$30 million and \$ 20 million respectively. On top of the enormous operational outlay was \$338 million to rebuild the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) as the Games' main stadium. Additionally more than \$200 million of tax-payers money was spent on upgrading a variety of sport facilities.⁶² Organizers also went over budget on security, spending more than a hundred million Australian dollars on a safety net involving state and federal police, military personnel and aircraft and thousands of private security staff.⁶³

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Asian Games

Delhi 1982 Asian Games

During the Asian Games in 1982, sports infrastructure such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the Talkatora Stadium, the Indira Gandhi Indoor stadium and the Yamuna Velodrome were built, as was the Karni Singh shooting range. It was also the Asiad which saw the development of the Ring Railway and starting of the suburban transit system. The Asiad Village, three hotels (Kanishka, Mughal Sheraton and Taj Palace), and four flyovers were also built for the Games. At the same

⁵⁶ 'High wire act', <http://www.cbc.ca/ns/features/commonwealthGames2014/manchester-experience.html>

⁵⁷ 'Scrap London's Olympic Bid', <http://www.enrager.net/features/olympics/index.php>

⁵⁸ 'Games costs reach \$1.1bn', <http://www.theage.com.au/1010744667380.html>

⁵⁹ 'High wire act', <http://www.cbc.ca/ns/features/commonwealthGames2014/manchester-experience.html>

⁶⁰ Commonwealth Games Cost, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/brkfast/default.htm>

⁶¹ <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/4A256811001D78BF?Open>

⁶² Melbourne's Commonwealth Games: glitter covering glaring inequality, 3 April 2006, <http://www.wsws.org/index.shtml>

⁶³ 'Next stop: New Delhi 2010', <http://www.mg.co.za/>, March 27 2006

time, the Player's Building, meant as a VIP complex, was never completed, nor was the roof of the Talkatora swimming pool, and the retracting roof of the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium never worked effectively.⁶⁴

None of the facilities made were ever fully utilised later as was planned. This is obvious from the estimated total expenditure of Rs 7-10,000 million on the Games, with revenues of Rs 60 million through ticket sales, a sum inadequate to cover even the operational costs of Rs 150 million. Even after the Games, these remain heavily underutilized. The roof of the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium remains jammed and leaks; the stadium is actually tilting to one side.⁶⁵

The shooting ranges are in a complete state of neglect and suffer from a lack of maintenance. The Ring Railway has never run to full planned capacity and neither have the many stadia and hotels ever reported satisfactory utilisation and occupancy.

For athletes visiting the capital, large-scale temporary housing was required. Designed for this purpose was the Asiad Games Village, a cluster of interlocking housing units. In 1982, the government had planned to raise foreign exchange by selling Asiad Village apartments to NRIs. However, the response was very poor. Finally, public sector companies bought most of the apartments.

The Overall Picture

As seen, no modern Games have made money when all costs, including public money and land transfers, infrastructure costs, and security are factored in. Far from making profits, the host countries come under severe debts. And these debts run up by the state and big business are to be paid by none other than ordinary citizens, by means of higher taxes for years to come.

Taxpayers are in fact legally responsible for any debt left over from the Olympics. The host governments sign this contract with the Indian Olympic Committee (IOC) (Rule 42). They are required to assume full financial responsibility for any cost overruns. The IOC however takes at least 10% of any profits, often more like a third. The principle thus applied by the promoters of the Games is simple— privatize the profits and socialize the losses. Public funds pay for the lion's share of the costs of the Games.

But these facts are seldom shared with the public. The truth of each mega event lies buried beneath a mass of concealed subsidies, unaccounted expenditures, creative book-keeping, and massive branding exercises.

⁶⁴ CCS Report.

⁶⁵ ibid

Social and Environmental Costs of Big Games

Other than being a financial burden, big Games also impose heavy social and environmental costs on a majority of citizens.

- Paying off the event's debt may postpone other public projects for years. The billions spent come at the expense of public education, health, welfare and even usable sporting facilities.
- After the Games the cost of living in the city increases with massive hikes in land and housing prices.
- The need to build infrastructure in the city in a short span of time legitimises the blatant flouting of norms of urban planning and environmental management.
- The Games also cause large-scale human right violations. In order to project an image of a 'clean city' to the international media and tourists, governments evict out of people living on roads and temporary settlements. This results in massive loss of jobs. Any protests by affected parties to highlight these violations or the negative impact of Games are ruthlessly crushed.
- Overall, the Games contribute to further exacerbating the divide between the privileged elite and the rest in the city.

'Cleaning' the City

'Prior to the *1936 Olympics in Berlin*, Germany, the Nazi regime mounted a campaign to eliminate any evidence of poverty from the streets of the capital. Homeless persons and those living in inadequate housing and poorer neighborhoods were evicted from their dwellings and the city in order to present a positive image to the international community that was to descend on Berlin for the Games.⁶⁶

These practices however not exclusive to a particular evil regime but are existent till today. In all host cities, in the name of building, cleaning and beautifying the city for the big event, the working poor who toil to build the new and glorious Games sites, are ruthlessly evicted from their home and work. Research carried out by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) highlights extensive cases of forced eviction directly linked to the preparation of such events.⁶⁷

Prior to the event, the police often make 'street sweeps' to clear the homeless people, the street vendors, the informal workers, slums and other visible signs of poverty out of the public view. In recent history, all host cities such as Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing, and of

⁶⁶ 'International Events and Forced Evictions', Housing Rights Bulletin, Volume 1 No. 3 August 2004, Olympics Special, <http://www.cohre.org/library/COHRE-HRB-Aug04.pdf>

⁶⁷ International Events and Forced Evictions: A Focus on the Olympics

course Delhi.⁶⁸, have carried out massive 'cleaning up' operations, as described in the following section. This has often been done in the name of urban renewal programs.

Olympics

Seoul 1988

The Seoul Games were truly unprecedented in the scale of the official crackdown on poor homeowners, squatters and tenants. Between 1985-1988, over 720,000 people were forcefully evicted from different areas to 'beautify' the city and to secure land for sports stadiums and the Olympic village.⁶⁹ Without any notice, families attacked by thousands of police and thugs wielding knives and iron-bars.⁷⁰ No alternative accommodation was provided. The street vendors also faced a crackdown by the authorities, aided by gangsters.⁷¹

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Barcelona 1992

The city also saw thousands of people being evicted. A special ordinance made it illegal for the homeless to sleep in vacant buildings. Tenants and small businesses were also forced out.⁷² The city even built walls to hide slums from television cameras along the marathon route.⁷³

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Atlanta 1996

The process was carried further in Atlanta. The Games led to the destruction of about 5,000 public housing units⁷⁴ and displacement of nearly 30,000 of the city's poorest citizens to make way for Olympic venues⁷⁵

Additionally 9,000 homeless people were wrongfully arrested (many of them African-American)⁷⁶ during the eight months leading up to the event for begging and loitering.⁷⁷ And for the two weeks of the Games, homeless people were shunted up to 300 kilometres out of Atlanta.⁷⁸

⁶⁸ 'Can't Get No Satisfaction - The Olympic Spectacle', <http://www.scoop.co.nz/link-out/p5666/a439/www.seek.co.nz/?tracking=scoop>

⁶⁹ Commentary — Sport as an Avenue of Tourism Development: An Analysis of the Positive and Negative Impacts of Sport Tourism, <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/cit/002/0082/cit0020082.pdf>

⁷⁰ Offending the eyes of the mighty, *The New internationalist*, Issue 229 - March 1992

⁷¹ Street Vendors in Asia: A Review, SHARIT K BHOWMIK, http://www.wiego.org/papers/2005/unifem/4_Bhowmik_Asian_Hawkers_EPW.pdf.

⁷² Commentary on 'Urban Mega-Events, Evictions and Housing Rights, The Canadian Case' by Kris Olds, <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/cit/001/0195/cit0010195.pdf>; Not all fun & Games, November 22, 2004, www.nydailynews.com

⁷³ Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city? http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm, June 18th, 2006

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic%20Size%20Debts)

⁷⁶ Commentary on 'Urban Mega-Events, Evictions and Housing Rights, The Canadian Case' by Kris Olds, <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/cit/001/0195/cit0010195.pdf>; Not all fun & Games, November 22, 2004, www.nydailynews.com

⁷⁷ 'Anger over Sydney Olympics connects everyone from Aborigines to train drivers', *Freedom Socialist*, Vol. 21, No. 2, July-September 2000

⁷⁸ Did we share the spirit? – one year after the Sydney 2000 Olympics, <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/ioc/download/One%20Year%20On%20-%20After%20the%20Sydney%202000%20Olympic%20Games.PDF>.

The extensive street-sweeping activities were done under the *Project Homeward Bound*, which gave Atlanta's homeless a one-way ticket to somewhere they had family, or a job waiting for them. They signed a paper promising not to return.⁷⁹

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Sydney 2000

The Sydney Olympics can also be remembered as the *homeless Games*. Bearing resemblance to what was done in Atlanta four years ago, extensive measures were taken to rid Sydney's streets of homeless people in a programme called *Gateway*⁸⁰. This was done to showcase Sydney and Australia as a major tourist destination for the next several decades. Residents of the poor Aboriginal suburb of Redfern were also removed to make the Olympic environs more attractive to tourists.⁸¹

In the two years before the Games a series of legislation were passed which have severe impacts on the homeless and the use of public space. A number of local government ordinances introduced in 1999/2000 controlled the movement of homeless persons in the inner city. Police were given a directive to move 'vagrants' off the streets. Sydney City Council Rangers and private security guards employed by various local and Olympics authorities were handed new powers to remove 'by reasonable force' anyone deemed a nuisance. 'Offences' ranging from drinking alcohol to demonstrating, begging, or camping in many places were subject to the new measures.⁸²

At the time, Sydney Lord Mayor, Councillor Frank Sartor commented: "We want to know what it will take to get these people off the streets." Showing his utter contempt for the homeless, Sartor added: "You could shine lights on them to make life uncomfortable, but they will only move to another hole somewhere else. There has to be a solution. We cannot afford to be a world city, with fantastic fireworks and the Olympics without also showing that we are dealing with our problem of homeless on the streets".⁸³

The amendments introduced then remain in force today and their combined impact has made many public areas frequented by the homeless out of bounds.

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Athens 2004

The Athens Games were used as a pretext to carry out forced evictions of Roma communities (formerly known as the Gypsy community) in the Greater Athens area, even though the land they inhabited was not required for the construction of Games-related infrastructure.⁸⁴

Initially, the authorities came to an agreement with the community, which stipulated that adequate compensation and resettlement would be provided to the community in exchange for vacating the

⁷⁹ 'STOP THE D. C. 2012 OLYMPIC BID!', www.dccwatch.com

⁸⁰ 13 Good Reasons to Hate The Olympics (Australia 2000 Summer Games), www.creativeresistance.ca

⁸¹ 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic%20Size%20Debts)

⁸² Did we share the spirit? – one year after the Sydney 2000 Olympics. <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/ioc/download/One%20Year%20On%20-%20After%20the%20Sydney%202000%20Olympic%20Games.PDF>.

⁸³ 'Sydney's homeless to be removed for Olympics', www.wsws.org, February 3, 2000

⁸⁴ Greece: Athens Olympics security raises human rights concerns, [http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/EUR250082004ENGLISH/\\$File/EUR2500804.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/EUR250082004ENGLISH/$File/EUR2500804.pdf)

land they had been living on for decades. This agreement was signed in August 2002 between the Mayor and a representative of the Roma association.⁸⁵

But local organizations in Greece such as the Greek Helsinki Monitor report that a majority of the Roma families who were forcibly evicted were not provided with adequate compensation, reparation or resettlement. Several local and international NGOs including [Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions](#) repeatedly asked the International Olympic Committee to intervene in the matter to ensure that such injustices do not eventuate. However nothing in this regard was done.⁸⁶

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Beijing 2008

Beijing perhaps beats the record when it comes to displacement of the poor for the Games coming up in 2008. Over 500,000 city residents – almost one and a half times the total population of Washington D.C have been forcibly evicted to prepare the city leaving people to fend for themselves with minimal or no compensation.⁸⁷

Human rights organizations such as CHORE, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International⁸⁸ report that in a large-scale restructuring exercise in Beijing, entire neighborhoods have been demolished to build hotels, shopping centres and skyscrapers. This especially includes houses in the old areas, i.e. hundreds of the winding alleys - *hutongs* (traditional Chinese lanes and alleyways) where people have lived for centuries.⁸⁹ According to a new report by COHRE, 1.25 million people have already been moved from their homes due to 'Olympics-related redevelopment' with another quarter million evictions expected before the Games start.⁹⁰

Demolition has come with only a few days notice, and sometimes none at all. If people are lucky, they find the character *chai* painted on their front door, meaning demolish. If not, the house is already gone. Real estate speculators and price inflation have fuelled a scramble among developers and local governments to develop the city centre.⁹¹

As a result of China's basic - or lack of - individual property rights protection, individuals have limited say over housing issues. This has subsequently allowed for the continued abuse by contractors to demolish and clear hutongs virtually unopposed. Residents who lose homes or businesses face the combined might of city authorities and wealthy developers eager to profit. They feel they have not been compensated adequately or have little redress. Human Rights Watch has reported: "When people present their cases to courts, judges are usually corrupted by party officials and developers. Sometimes homes will have already been destroyed by the time a judge makes a decision to even hear the case. There have been complaints of violent evictions by thugs or construction crews injuring or even killing occupants during a demolition."⁹²

⁸⁵ 'U.N. Report: Gypsies Repressed, Attacked in Europe Reuters, 15 August 2000', bcnews.go.com/wire/US/reuters20000815_1657.html

⁸⁶ 'Forced evictions of Roma communities in Athens', http://www.minorityrights.org/International/int_stat_detail.asp?ID=103#anchor

⁸⁷ Beijing's urban makeover: the 'hutong' destruction, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/content/articles/PDF/3632.pdf>

⁸⁸ 'Olympic flame will arrive in Beijing for the first time', 25 March, 2004, china, <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=538#;>; Evictions Monitor, Housing Rights for Everyone, Everywhere, Newsletter of the COHRE Global Forced Evictions Programme, <http://www.habitants.org/filemanager/download/37/>; Geneva Group Shames China for Continuing Mass Evictions, 01 December 2005, <http://www.voanews.com/english/portal.cfm>

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ **HEADLINE: OLYMPICS BLAMED FOR FORCIBLE REMOVAL OF 2M OVER 20 YEARS June 5, 2007**

⁹¹ Thousands of homes destroyed to make way for Olympic tourists, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-1628199,00.html#>

⁹² Beijing's Traditional Neighborhoods Fall Victim to Olympic Building Frenzy, <http://mensnewsdaily.com/p1/>, June 04, 2006

However, continued frustration among the local residents has resulted in the protests getting louder.⁹³ Amnesty International's annual report for 2004 highlights that public and large peaceful protests against such practices have increased, leading to numerous detentions and other abuses. There have been cases of evicted people setting themselves on fire in Tiananmen Square. Petitions and anonymous Internet protests have also been multiplying. Despite the imprisonment of Ye Guozhu - a housing rights activist who was imprisoned after applying for permission to hold a mass protest against the forced evictions, there are some flickers of progress.⁹⁴

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Vancouver 2010

For the Winter Olympics in 2010 in Vancouver, there are already signs of development pressures in the Downtown Eastside neighborhood that houses the greatest concentration of low-income residents. Just like in the Expo 86 World's Fair held in Vancouver, the poor are getting kicked out of their homes in the lead-up to the Games.⁹⁵

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Commonwealth Games

Kuala Lumpur 1998 Commonwealth Games

In Kuala Lumpur also, the state government feverishly carried out evictions of existing squatter settlements to build projects to beautify and upgrade the capital including hotels, condominiums and other structures such as the Petronas Twin Tower, which pride themselves as the world's tallest buildings.⁹⁶

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Delhi 2010

In an uncanny parallel, it is now reported that the Indian police are to launch a controversial plan to eradicate beggars and cripples from the streets of Delhi ahead of the Commonwealth Games in 2010. A government report prepared by academics at Delhi University⁹⁷ has recommended that Delhi's beggars be rounded up by a special police squad and placed in detention centres, for presenting a cleaner image of the city for the Games. The public, too, should be educated about the "evils of almsgiving, which... promotes parasites in the society and de-motivates them from doing hard work". Begging is already illegal in Delhi. Anyone caught begging can be arrested and taken before the beggars' court before being incarcerated in one of 12 beggars' homes, which are more like jails than homeless hostels. At present, the law is under-used. Delhi's beggars' homes have room for 3,600 inmates, but just 1,400 are held in them. Many more will have to be built if the estimated 60,000 beggars in the city are to be out of sight before 2010.

While roads, hotels, and stadiums are being built with a nationalistic fervour reminiscent of 1980, and the polluted Yamuna is being "cleaned", many of Delhi's most familiar features are being obliterated. Stalls selling freshly made food have been banned; the monkeys that roam the streets are being shut up in cages; and there are even plans to herd thousands of the city's stray holy cows into a dairy complex.

⁹³ 'Summer Postcard Action 2006', <http://www.amnestyusa.org/action/summer/china.html>

⁹⁴ 'China has razed thousands of homes, restaurants, and small shops in Beijing to "beautify" the city before it hosts the 2008 Olympics,' http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1568

⁹⁵ **HEADLINE: Poor kicked out of their homes for 2010 Games, UN must monitor: MLA BYLINE: BY CP April 3, 2007**

⁹⁶ 'Forced Eviction of Squatters in Malaysia', <http://www.hrsolidarity.net/index.php>

⁹⁷ Report name by DSSW

Thousands of small industrial units have already been closed down, as have shops and neighbourhood stores; the cycle rickshaw has been prohibited from most city streets; street vending is being zoned out of existence; and hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers are being uprooted and pushed to the periphery of the city. Over 40,000 families were ruthlessly removed from the banks of the river in 2004, just as the Commonwealth Games Village is coming up on the river-bed itself.⁹⁸

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Pan American Games

Rio de Janeiro 2007

Close to 300 slums that surround *Rio de Janeiro* were the victims of the urban warfare in the Brazilian city preparing to host the Pan American Games. For the families of poor workers who live in those areas, the presence of criminals and the police operations against them are a daily nightmare. Rio de Janeiro's Public Safety Minister Jose Mariano Beltrame defended a series of actions on the *favelas*, as the slums are known. He warned that the road to peace is 'often bloody', deploying military, civilian and national security police against the poor people.⁹⁹

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Asian Games

Delhi 1982

The construction spree that took place during the Asian Games in Delhi in 1982, in direct violation of the Master Plan of 1962, required lakhs of workers, who were often paid lower than minimum wages and not provided with any decent and legal avenues for housing, in violation of laws housing of immigrants were not followed by the employers.¹⁰⁰ They were forced to live in slums, which that led to the spread of slum clusters across the city. The population of the city thus increased from the planned 55 lakh to 65 lakh by 1982. Since then these slums have faced eviction through the city on the pretext of being illegal unplanned settlements.

Before the Asiad Games, homeless people reported an increase in harassment as the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act was used to remove many thousands of people from the streets.¹⁰¹

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Hike in Cost of Living

In addition to evictions of the urban poor, big Games also impact the middle classes as prices for land and housing, as also rents shoot up sharply during and after the Games. Areas that benefit from improved facilities and better transport links see the maximum hike in real estate prices. What is usually seen is that public and private lower-cost housing developments are pushed out of preferred areas. Landlords of low-rent hotels and houses also remove tenants to make room for tourists paying exorbitant prices, using methods such as eviction, raising rents suddenly, or converting permanent rental accommodation into temporary hotel accommodation.

⁹⁸ pushing people out of the city, dunu roy

⁹⁹ DPA x Brazil Crime Sports FEATURE: Brazil slum raids provoke outrage, set stage for PanAm Games Diana Renee, dpa Pan American Games are July 13-29 Rio de Janeiro, July 2, 2007]

¹⁰⁰ Asian Games report

¹⁰¹ CCS report

One of the contentions of the Games organizing committees is that the residential complexes made for the players would be made available as public housing once the Games get over. However these complexes are usually constructed on prime real estate within the city and the very notion of 'affordable' housing in such areas is questionable.

Overall, the average cost of living in the city increases due to hike in price of transportation, food, and other basic amenities, due to increased privatization. All cheaper options are pushed out by the authorities so as these don't fair better in competition with elite ones.

A few instances of the above include:

Olympics

Calgary 1988

For the Winter Olympics, in 1987 and 1988, a large number of tenants were forced out as landlords wished to make room for outsiders willing to pay higher rent.

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Barcelona 1992

Since the 1988 Games, city housing price levels increased more than in the rest of the region and more than 1% over the inflation rate in Spain. Construction capacity became limited as Olympic work took priority over the public housing programme. 'Housing prices soared 131 per cent in the five years leading to the Games -- nearly 50 per cent more than in Spain as a whole'¹⁰².

The market price of old and new housing rose between 1986 and 1992 by 240 percent and 287 percent respectively. A further 59,000 residents left Barcelona to live else where between the years of 1984 and 1992.¹⁰³ And although everyone cites the Barcelona Olympics as the great success story, the city saw escalated higher costs for food, transportation, and services.¹⁰⁴

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Atlanta 1996

In 1996, the Atlanta Olympics demonstrated the particular vulnerability of tenants to unfair and discriminatory housing and policing practices. This included large rent increases in the private rental market and the conversion of emergency accommodation into tourist accommodation. Most of the original residents of these units could not afford the increase in rent and were therefore evicted. Further, displacement of residents occurred when private landlords upgraded flats in areas close to the city centre, in anticipation of an influx of people with higher spending power. In this way, well-located housing became too expensive for the middle class. House prices rose by 19% in the five years leading up to the 1996 Games. This compares with 17% price growth in Atlanta's home state, Georgia and 13% growth in the US over that period.¹⁰⁵

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Salt Lake City 2000 (Winter)

¹⁰² 'Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city?', http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm

¹⁰³ **The Housing and Real Estate Dimensions of Mega-Events**

¹⁰⁴ 2010 World Cup in Capetown: Scary economics of the mega event
, <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/topstories.aspx?ID=BD4A194528>

¹⁰⁵ 'House prices go for gold in Olympic host cities,' <http://www.hbosplc.com/economy/includes/06-07-05OlympicsandHousePrices.doc>

In Salt Lake City also there was a scramble to find new housing during the Games. Many landlords throughout the town hiked up rental rates or evicted tenants to make room for Olympic guests. This was done intensively because Utah has a law that states that 15 days before rent is due, a landlord can give notice for eviction, without giving any reason. The evicted tenants also have little legal recourse.¹⁰⁶

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Sydney 2000

Preparation for the Olympics brought in a significant increase in Sydney's housing prices since the mid 1990s.¹⁰⁷ For instance house prices in Homebush Bay, a former industrial site 20 minutes from the centre of Sydney, rose 70% in the five run-up to the Olympics, compared to a 50% increase in house prices in other parts of Sydney.¹⁰⁸

House Prices in Sydney in the lead up to the 2000 Olympics

	1995	2000	% Increase over 5 years
Homebush	\$248,000	\$422,000	70%
	£98,704	£167,956	
Sydney	\$197,000	\$295,000	50%
	£78,406	£117,410	
Homebush house price as a multiple of Sydney	1.26	1.43	

Source: NSW Department of Housing

The same period also brought a host of difficulties for tenants due to substantial rent increases, no cause evictions and closure of cheap rooms and guesthouses. In the 12 months to March 2000 in many suburbs rent increases ranged from 10% to 30%. With no laws that guarantee their security of tenure in any State in Australia, tenants were being forced to pay thousands on the cost of moving. The Tenants' Union noticed a fourfold increase in the number of enquiries coming from tenants who received eviction notices for no reason other than that the landlord wants more rent. Almost 120 eviction-related cases went before the tribunal each day, which is actually a small proportion of the true number of affected people.¹⁰⁹

Boarders and lodgers had even less protection. With no specific legislative rights they received the shunt by thousands, so that landowners could establish backpacker accommodation, and place their property for other developments, cashing in the Olympic land price boom. All inner metropolitan tenants services reported hundreds of boarder and lodger eviction cases.¹¹⁰ After the Games Sydney is a city scarred by expensive high-rise apartment blocks, or over-abundance of unaffordable housing units, and an inflated rental market.¹¹¹

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Commonwealth Games

Kuala Lumpur 1998

¹⁰⁶ 'Can't Get No Satisfaction - The Olympic Spectacle,' <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0602/S00207.htm>

¹⁰⁷ Truly sharing Sydney's Olympic Spirit, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/>, 15 August 2000

¹⁰⁸ 'House prices go for gold in Olympic host cities,' <http://www.hbosplc.com/economy/includes/06-07-05OlympicsandHousePrices.doc>

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ 'Strange Tenants', http://workers.labor.net.au/49/c_historicalfeature_rent.html;

The Olympics Where have all the boarding houses gone, *Alternative Law Journal*, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/AltLJ/2000/10.html>

¹¹¹ '13 Good Reasons to Hate The Olympics', <http://www.cat.org.au/aoa/index.html>.

Here the house prices were up 48% over the five years to 1998 versus a 40% rise in Malaysian house prices. However, house prices in Kuala Lumpur and the rest of Malaysia dropped more than 9% in 1998 as the country suffered the effects of the Asian crisis.¹¹²

Manchester 2002

The redevelopment of central Manchester provided a spur to house prices in the area. In the five years leading up to the 2002 Commonwealth Games house prices in central Manchester rose by 102% versus a 52% rise in prices in the North West and an 83% increase in prices across the UK.¹¹³

House Prices in Manchester in the lead up to the Commonwealth Games

	2002	1997	% Increase over 5 years
Central Manchester	£98,461	£48,796	102%
North West	£96,048	£63,298	52%
UK	£136,074	£74,388	83%

'Creating' Jobs

As part of the 'economic miracle' myth, Games bidders also make extravagant claims about vast increase in jobs during and after the Games. But this turns out to be a fallacy, because

Firstly the proportion of new jobs created are usually much fewer compared to what is promised, and in fact ridiculously low when seen against the massive capital investments that go into the mega event. A great amount of tasks during the event that would otherwise generated jobs is managed by employing young volunteers in the name of national honor and prestige. In Delhi the government plans to train over 17,000 volunteers for work during the event. The following are some of the examples.

Barcelona Olympics 1992

The Olympic investments reached near 6 million euros and 53% of that budget was from public funds. But the economic activity that this money generated didn't have a positive impact on the job growth. Between 1987 and 1991 the number of jobs created in the construction sector were only 33,000, a figure much lower than the expected, considering that three fourths of the total investment went towards the construction sector. Also for instance in the hotel and catering trade sector only 20,000 new jobs, again much less than expected and lasted only for the duration of the event. In the other sectors too, such a trend was seen.¹¹⁴

Salt Lake City Olympics 2002

Even in the state of Utah, average job growth for the Olympic impact period (1996-2001) was 37% less than the pre-Olympic period (1990-1995)¹¹⁵

¹¹² 'House prices go for gold in Olympic host cities,' <http://www.hbosplc.com/economy/includes/06-07-05OlympicsandHousePrices.doc>

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Do the Olympics generate money for the economy, <http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Cost Benefit Analysis>

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

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Secondly the new jobs are also only a fraction of what are lost due to eviction of thousands of people who are sent to far-flung areas with no either prospects of employment or with little facility to commute to the previous jobs. The existing job scenario is further aggravated due to banning of certain occupations and closure of small time shops and businesses.

Delhi CWG 2010

In preparation of the 2010 CWG, lakhs of street vendors, rickshaw pullers and small petty shopkeepers have faced eviction from work by way of ceiling orders, new planning norms and zoning laws.

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Lastly most of these jobs are in fact short term or part time jobs, and in the unorganized sector. A majority gets employed in the construction industry. And often because of the pressure to make things happen quickly, companies blatantly sacrifice labor protections, including longer hours of work, less pay and no safety regulations.

Delhi Asiad Games 1982

The workers who were brought in to work on different Games' related sites faced massive violation of rights, as has been extensively documented in a report by *Public Union of Democratic Rights*.

Sydney Olympics 2000

Workers called for a strike action after ten potentially fatal accidents at Homebush Bay. Members of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union also raised a voice against Government pressure to work special rosters over the 15-day Games period without a compensatory bonus.¹¹⁶

Athens Olympics 2004

Human rights activists noted that dozens of workers were killed in accidents due to absence of safety norms at construction sites of Olympic stadiums that were to be built at an urgent pace.¹¹⁷ Industries ranging from construction to hospitality employed undocumented workers for just 50 percent of union wages.¹¹⁸ Also agreements over 7-hour days for construction workers were long-forgotten in the run-up to the Games, as contractors threatened and forced workers to put in 12 hours and even 19 hours, seven full days a week, in terrible conditions with no locker rooms, toilets, ambulances, scaffolds, qualified staff, and so on.¹¹⁹

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'Greening' the City

The Games also take a heavy toll on the environment of the city, as the need to construct massive infrastructure in a short time leads to 'fast track planning', where proposals are pushed

¹¹⁶ Anger over Sydney Olympics connects everyone from Aborigines to train drivers', *Freedom Socialist*, Vol. 21, No. 2, July-September 2000

¹¹⁷ 'Greece - Olympics: hidden truths', <http://ainfos.ca/index24.html>

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

through the planning process without the normal economic, social and environmental assessment procedures being applied. Very often river-bed areas are developed on grounds of regeneration, which end up harming the ecological security of the river system. The following are some of the cities where environment damage related to Games has been evident.

Olympics

Sydney 2000

The Sydney Olympics were also known as 'green Games' because of projects such as solar-powered village being implemented. However the reality was quite different. For instance almost a third of Bondi Beach was torn up to build a volleyball stadium, which will be used for only six months. Highly toxic water was seen in Homebush Bay, the site of many Olympic venues.¹²⁰ Further the state government passed a legislation in 1995 to assist in the development and regeneration of projects associated with the Games. The *Act* allowed all projects linked with the Games to be suspended from the usual Environmental Impact Statements requirements. This was achieved at the cost of the people of Sydney losing their rights to initiate a court appeal under environment and planning legislation against the proposed Olympic projects.

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Athens 2004

Athens, like previous Olympic cities, also claimed to be the 'greenest' ever, but here also ecological destruction was blatant with venues built on places of ecological importance. The Olympic village was built on the cliffs of Mount Parnitha, eliminating parts of the forest in one of Athens' last green resorts. The Olympic rowing facilities were built at Shiniias, another important site. Green spaces were also destroyed to allow for the construction of the ping-pong venue in Galatsi. Mount Imitos was destroyed in order to build facilities for distribution of high voltage electricity, and the Kifissos River was filled with rubble in order to become motorway as a part of the Olympic ring.¹²¹ Further, the rowing lake was constructed on an endangered coastal ecosystem and the easily available Mediterranean solar energy was never tapped. Additionally about 8,500 trees were cut in the city to allow for the expansion of roads.¹²² In view of this destruction, *Greenpeace* and the *World Wildlife Fund*, organizations working on issues of environment and sustainability, gave the city a score of only 1 out of 10.¹²³

London 2012

For its Games, London has laid out plans to redevelop the Lower Lea Valley, a part of east London where most of the events will take place. Environmentalists say that planned development along the banks of the River Lea will result in the loss of common land and destroy recreational activities. They also say that building on the river will disrupt flood relief systems, threaten wildlife habitats and lead to more than 500 mature trees being felled. Much of the Lower Lea Valley is an extensive network of waterways with important wildlife habitats on a key migratory route.¹²⁴

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¹²⁰ 'A History of the Cost of Hosting the Olympic Games', [http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic Size Debts](http://www.creativeresistance.ca/awareness-toc/awareness-olympic-watch.htm#Olympic%20Size%20Debts)

¹²¹ 'Greece - Olympics: hidden truths', <http://ainfos.ca/index24.html>

¹²² 'Golden Scam: Fantasy and Reality in the Olympics,' www.plannersnetwork.net

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ 'London 2012 cost 'likely to rise', <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, April 3 2006; 'Scrap London's Olympic Bid', <http://www.libcom.org/index.php>.

Asian Games

Delhi 1982

The consequences of Big Games were obvious in Delhi as long back as 1982, when the Asian Games were seen as a pretext to set up short-term deadlines for projects that would otherwise have taken a decade to complete, and to legitimise bringing in of newer and more expensive technologies. Though India had won the bid to host the Games in 1976, by 1980 no work had started, and it was only when the Indira Gandhi government stormed back into power in that the political thrust was provided for completing the Games infrastructure in time.¹²⁵ All big constructions bypassed the 'Master Plan of Delhi' of that time using the prerogative of 'national' prestige. These included the stadiums, and other sports facilities, the Ring Railway, hotels and flyovers.

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Commonwealth Games

Melbourne 2006

Melbourne's premier sporting ground, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), which was redeveloped in preparation for the Games is now being transformed into commercial housing with a distinctly eco-friendly image. However environmentalists say that it was constructed by alienating public parkland. Additionally more than 2,000 trees were cut to develop the Games village. Building norms were also bypassed for the construction of a 15-storey apartment tower, almost double the 24-metre height limit was allowed in the area.¹²⁶

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Delhi 2010

In Delhi for the CWG what is very much in sight is the destruction of the River Yamuna belt as plans are underway to transform its banks for commercial development for tourists, and the construction of a 40 hectares site for the CWG village. With profits in sight, the DDA along with private bodies has laid out elaborate plans for the river front development. The Delhi High Court in an order on June 4, 2005 gave permission to the DDA for the acquisition and commercial development of a 25-km-stretch along the riverbank. The land has already been acquired, clearances granted and the construction has begun.

Environmentalists however warn that the construction on the river-bed is inadvisable as covering the banks with impermeable concrete would threaten Delhi's largest groundwater recharge zone. It would also lead to a flood like situation. (add...)

The Commonwealth Games Village and its Environmental Impact Assessment

The manner in which environmental clearance has been given for the development of the Games Village on the river-bed is itself indicative of the pressures at work. The DDA approached the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) for clearance of the Village in October 2006, three years after the bid had been won, citing urgency and importance of the matter. The Expert Appraisal Committee made a site visit the next month and recommended that DDA find an alternative site. But DDA built up pressure on the MoEF on grounds of time being a major

¹²⁵ CCS report

¹²⁶ 'Common 'wealth' agenda', *The Pioneer*, April 28, 2006, New Delhi edition

constraint. The MoEF then issued clearance in December subject to the conditions that only temporary structures would be built and there would be no rain water discharge.

In January 2007 DDA proposed a study on flooding by CWPRS, Pune and MoEF agreed that DDA can begin planning provided mitigation measures are identified. In February CWPRS submitted the Hydraulic Model Studies, the final report was submitted to MoEF by March, and DDA considered that to be sufficient to proceed with construction. MoEF complied in April, saying that construction can begin subject to mitigation measures. Thus, it took DDA less than six months to obtain environmental clearance, making a mockery of the entire process of regulation.

As part of this fast-track process, private consultants EQMS Pvt Ltd, submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Commonwealth Games Village (CGV) to the project proponent, Delhi Development Authority (DDA). A review of the EIA reveals the following discrepancies:

1. The proposed CGV is to be divided into a Residential Zone and an International Zone. While the Residential Zone consists of air-conditioned apartments, dining halls, health centres, media centres, and banking facilities; the International Zone is to comprise of the main entry, logistics centre, accreditation centre, ceremonial plaza, retail facilities, media centre, cultural centres, transport centre, information centre, leisure and entertainment facilities. In addition, there is also a Village Operation & Support Area, a Transport Mall, and Practice Areas. Since there is considerable overlap between these different zones, it is not clear what is meant by designating the International Zone as a “temporary” one and whether it will contain the hotels. The EIA does not examine the impact of the construction of this “temporary” zone, nor its eventual removal, which will require considerable demolition and disposal of rubble.
2. At different places, the EIA mentions that the total population of the CGV will be 8,000 or 10,000 during the Games, and 11,500 or 15,000 after the Games. It does not clarify which population the impact is being assessed for.
3. The EIA does not answer the question that, if the air-conditioned apartments (of at least 150 m² floor area according to the figures) are to be made available for “public occupancy” after the Games – in other words, those with considerable means only will be able to purchase the flats – why should the water consumption fall from 225 litres per capita per day (lpcd) during the Games to 150 lpcd after the Games, while it remains at 320 lpcd for the hotels that are proposed to be built?
4. The EIA does not compute that, if one were to consider the above figures, the peak water consumption for CGV alone would be (at 320 lpcd for 4000 hotel beds and 225 lpcd for a population of 11,000) 37,55,000 litres – which exceeds the proposed 3 MLD capacity of the water treatment plant. Nor does the EIA ask where this water will come from and what the impact will be of ground water withdrawal on an extensive scale (a “barrage” of 50 tube wells is to be sunk in the Yamuna flood plain for this purpose, according to newspaper reports).
5. If 3.755 MLD of water is required as per the above calculation, then the sewage generated will also be 3.004 MLD, or 0.67 MGD. A Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) capacity, therefore, of 1 MGD for both the Akshardham Temple and the CGV is not likely to be adequate but the EIA does not take this into consideration. If the effluent of this STP is to be partially (338.5 KLD) disposed off into the Shahdara link drain, that lies on the other side of the embankment, then the EIA should both examine whether the drain is at a lower elevation to permit gravity flow, or whether the effluent will have to be pumped over the embankment – but does neither.
6. 183,700 m² of floor space over a total area of 11 hectares (or 110,000 m²) gives a FAR much higher than 167, but the EIA does not specify whether this is in conformity with the

permitted stipulations, nor does it examine whether the flood plain will be able to bear the load of 11 storied residential buildings (or the higher loads of the hotels whose height is unspecified). This is also critical given the known high seismicity of the region (Zone IV) and the fact that the fault line passes under the river-bed.

7. The High Flood Level (HFL) for which the proposed mitigation measures have been adopted is given as 204 m, but it was 205.32 m at Nizamuddin Bridge in 1978, 204.55 m in 1988, and 205.355 m in 1995. Even the modelling done by CWPRS gives a figure higher than 204 m for a peak discharge of 7022 cumecs in 1988, but the EIA has no analysis of this important feature. It should be borne in mind that the newly-constructed Right Marginal Embankment upstream of Wazirabad was breached in 1978 and inundated large areas of Alipur Block and areas like Model Town, Adarsh Nagar, and Mukherjee Nagar in deep waters, thus reducing the flood discharge at Wazirabad and Nizamuddin.
8. The proposed mitigation measure is to raise part of the land (37.5 ha) of the CGV to 204 m by deposition of 262,500 m³ of fly-ash (which will be adequate for 0.7 m of cover, the remaining 0.3 m to be filled with earth from digging of basements – which will, therefore, be significantly lower than the flood plain). Even then, this raised land will be lower than the HFL predicted by the CWPRS model, and the EIA does not factor in the impact, on both the Akshardham bund as well as the lower land, of the hydraulic gradient across the bund.
9. What is even more critical is the impact of leachates from the fly-ash, which has not been considered at all in the EIA. Fly-ash is known to have significant amounts of heavy metals that come from the parent coal, and these will leach into the ground water, particularly given that the built-up land will not only be exposed to the seasonal rains but will also regularly receive large amounts of effluents from the STP (proposed by the EIA as a “management” measure). STP sludge will also be deposited on the land, as will pesticides and fertilisers. All these shall percolate down to pollute the ground water, which is then going to be pumped out to supply water to the CGV.
10. Of the three test wells, all are already unfit for drinking with high concentrations of Ammonia and coliforms, as well as Iron and Lead – which indicates the significant permeability of the soil. The EIA completely ignores what will happen to this ground water when the toxic leachates from the fly-ash and other residues percolate down through the sandy bed, and what will be its impact on the food chain.
11. Parking for 8,400 cars will require more land than has been allotted for commercial purposes, and only slightly less than that for residential use. This has been incorrectly given by the EIA as only 5.7% of daily traffic because the comparison is with the total traffic on both NH24 as well as the Bund Road (152,556 vehicles). On the other hand, if only the Bund Road were to be considered, that currently carries a mere 6,512 cars. Hence, anticipated traffic (and vehicular pollution) will more than double after the Games and its impact has been wrongly dismissed in the EIA as of no consequence.
12. The total power requirement of the CGV has been stated to be 30 MVA (or 2 KVA per capita – which gives an idea of the affluent population that is proposed to be housed in the CGV after the Games), to be supplied by BSES. But only 10 diesel sets are considered for replacing this supply in case of failure – which is totally inadequate, considering that there will be at least 4 hotels and 6 apartment blocks as well as a number of commercial complexes. Hence, more sets will inevitably be installed by private parties and this will further contribute to the air pollution, which has not been assessed in the EIA.

13. The EIA states that air pollution monitoring has been carried out “even” during the rainy season, when the fact of the matter is that it was carried out only during the rainy season – although the precise dates are not mentioned. This is a complete distortion of the requirements of the EIA that pollutants must be measured at least once during the worst season and not only during the period when dilution is the greatest. Even then the concentration of Particulate Matter and Respirables is higher than permitted.
 14. The EIA states that there is no vegetation on the site except for 596 trees (of which at least 95% are to be cut down during course of construction), but this is obviously because the EIA team visited the site after preliminary construction work had begun. As is obvious from satellite imagery, there was significant farmland in the area prior to (and even during) the construction of the Akshardham temple and its bund, but this has not been assessed for the purposes of the EIA.
 15. Modelling of the flood plain has been done by the Central Water and Power Research Station, which is clearly deficient in the following respects:
 - a. The consequences of further jacketing of the river upstream have been mentioned but not considered for the purposes of the modelling. This is a serious omission because the O Zone Development Plan of DDA has earmarked the entire flood plain between Wazirabad and Okhla for jacketing in three stages.
 - b. The proposed construction of four more bridges has been mentioned but they have not been considered for prediction of flood levels, although one of them is just upstream of the Nizamuddin Railway bridge and will contribute to further restricting flood flows.
 - c. The impact of sudden releases at barrages upstream (such as at Tajewala in 1978 or from the Sahibi river in 1964 and 1977) or of breaches in the upstream embankments (such as the ones in 1978 and 1988 which inundated parts of Mukherjee Nagar and Model Town in the north) have not been factored into the model.
 - d. While 7022 cumecs has been chosen as the discharge data (of 1988) for the purposes of modelling, it is known that the discharge in 1978 was even higher at 7,900 cumecs, and actually 100 year data should have been taken for the scientific evaluation (Delhi has experienced six major floods since 1900). In fact, analysis has shown that of all the bunds in Delhi, only RME Palla meets the requirement for a 25 year frequency flood, and even that would fail in a 100 year flood.
 - e. It has been mentioned that there is flood attack on the nose of the embankment and measures have been suggested to strengthen the nose, but this also indicates that there will be a hydraulic gradient across the embankment during floods that will weaken its base, while the raised land of the CGV could create a reverse gradient during the lean season, particularly since the CGV land will be extensively irrigated with effluent water.
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‘Securing’ the city

As has been documented, Big Games bring a huge negative social impact on the majority of the citizens including evictions, homeless sweeps, police harassment, hike in cost of living and environmental hazards. As a result many affected communities voice their protest on these practices. However the logic of the profit-earning Games entails that these protests are brutally crushed. A city can't host the Games if it can't guarantee to the organizing committees that there

will be no protests in or around any venues. To present a pleasant image and to prevent 'disruption', the governments enact draconian legislation to curtail civil liberties, in particular the right to peaceful protest. The demands of the local citizens are sacrificed at the altar of big international business groups and tourists who would flock the city. Harsh actions are taken also against groups in the country that want to use the opportunity the Games to showcase to the international community the injustices they face.

All this is done in the name of 'security'. The state becomes a police state and deploys heavy machinery and troops to undertake surveillance, which makes even ordinary movement difficult. Even while the security for athletes, officials, journalists and spectators is important, it often happens at the expense of human rights, especially those of vulnerable groups.

Olympics

Mexico 1968

In 1968, ten days before the opening of the Mexico Olympics, the police killed up to 300 demonstrators who marched for democracy.¹²⁷¹²⁸

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Seoul 1988

The South Korean dictatorship deployed massive troops to crush demonstrations by slum dwellers demanding democracy.¹²⁹

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Sydney 2000

For Sydneysiders, the Olympics meant rent hikes, homelessness, heavy policing, attacks on job conditions, dense traffic, and environmental poisoning. As a result protest grew. And among those making themselves heard are Aborigines, who intend to use the media spotlight on Australia to tell the world about the massive injustices they have endured since 1788.¹³⁰

For the massive police control, Sydney was swarmed with 30,000 private security guards, the NSW Police Force, Federal Police agents, and tens of thousands of Olympic volunteers who were given extraordinary power to arrest and detain. Most military special forces were on a 24-hour alert, and a squadron of Black Hawk helicopters were on stand by at the Holsworthy army base outside Sydney. An elite Australian Defence Force commando unit, as strong and costly as the one sent to East Timor, was ready to "defend the Olympics."¹³¹

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¹²⁷ 'Olympics - Games of the Rich and Powerful Its Hidden History', <https://publish.indymedia.org.uk/uk/servlet/OpenMir?do=getpdf&id=296274&forIE=.pdf>

¹²⁸ 'Design flaws of the Olympics', *Social Alternatives*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 2000, pp. 19-23.

¹²⁹ 'Olympics - Games of the Rich and Powerful Its Hidden History', <https://publish.indymedia.org.uk/uk/servlet/OpenMir?do=getpdf&id=296274&forIE=.pdf>

¹³⁰ 'Anger over Sydney Olympics connects everyone from Aborigines to train drivers', *Freedom Socialist*, Vol. 21, No. 2, July-September 2000

¹³¹ *ibid.*

Athens 2004

Massive security operations were placed to quell any signs of protest. The state placed a ban on demonstrations and strikes.¹³² The city had over 1,000 surveillance cameras installed within Olympic venues and another 300 in public spaces that were used on an every-day level for social control.¹³³ The government spent over two billion US dollars on security. It deployed a force of 80,000 strong police, riot police and army troopers.¹³⁴

Greek officials transformed a disused military camp in Athens into a detention centre for non-Greek visitors who break the law.¹³⁵ But in actuality the prisoners included Roma and refugee populations, political activists, and in fact, anyone seen to be causing trouble or simply being in the way. The police forcibly removed thousands of immigrants, beggars, drug addicts and homeless people from the capital's streets in an environment of terror. Many asylum seekers lacking proper identification documents were arrested and detained in contravention of international standards. Athens also poisoned thousands of stray dogs, many of which were pets, and displaced hundreds of Roma (Gypsy) people, often without compensation.¹³⁶

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Beijing 2008

In Beijing, protests against the massive evictions are being severely crushed. Activists have been imprisoned for sending letters about human rights to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The protestors face threats, prosecution or even death sentence.¹³⁷ Chinese authorities have also reinforced repression against Internet users, Tibetans, members of the Falungong spiritual movement, foreign scholars, the Muslim Uigur minority, democrats, foreign journalists and delinquents, all "in the name of the Chinese Olympics". Many of these groups have been therefore actively carrying out the 'Boycott Beijing Olympics' campaigns across the world.¹³⁸

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Commonwealth Games

Kuala Lumpur 1998

The authorities in Kuala Lumpur actively suppressed public demonstrations and undertook policing of media coverage on protests.¹³⁹

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Melbourne 2006

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ <http://athens.indymedia.org/features.php3?target=en>

¹³⁴ 'Greece - Olympics: hidden truths', <http://ainfos.ca/index24.html>

¹³⁵ Greece: Olympic Games must not lead to a trade off of security for human rights, <http://www.amnesty.ie/user/content/view/full/2665>

¹³⁶ 'Anger over Sydney Olympics connects everyone from Aborigines to train drivers', *Freedom Socialist*, Vol. 21, No. 2, July-September 2000

¹³⁷ 'Faster, higher, free from abuse: Will China's people win basic human rights before the Beijing Olympics?', <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA170212005>

¹³⁸ 'Why we are boycotting Beijing 2008?', http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=2285

¹³⁹ 'Commentary — Sport as an Avenue of Tourism Development: An Analysis of the Positive and Negative Impacts of Sport Tourism', <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/cit/002/0082/cit0020082.pdf>

During the Melbourne Games (as also during Sydney Olympics 2000), thousands of Aboriginal people came from around Australia to highlight the continuing injustices faced by indigenous populations. The authorities however ensured that they remained out of sight.¹⁴⁰

Cricket Tour

Zimbabwe 2007

To make the city safe for a tour by Australia's World Cup-winning cricketers, the armed police beat up protestors who were highlighting the appalling condition of the state, that has an unemployment rate of 80%, widespread starvation, and an average life expectancy of 33 years. Under the rule of President Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe is a crippled nation where survival is the most basic challenge, but violent intimidation is a favoured tool of the president to suppress his opponents and respond to his critics: "They will get arrested and get bashed by police". But sport is one of the ways in which the government is seeking to divert the attention of its native population as well as that of other nations from the grim situation back home.¹⁴¹

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¹⁴¹ ZIMBABWE Brutal regime destroying once great nation; Why play Games with this tyrant BYLINE: LAURA ANDERSON, POLITICAL REPORTER, May 11, 2007

Losers and Gainers

As seen in all Big Games, those at the bottom of the economic ladder end up paying a lot of the financial, social and environmental costs, and also suffer a host of human right violations.

The Games both cause and exacerbate urban displacement, privatisation of public space, alienation of indigenous people, and divide between rich and poor. When the mega-event leaves town, it leaves behind a foul mix of repressive laws, public debt, and private wealth. Public and private investments are usually superficial, only renovating certain zones in a city, leaving the rest of the neighbourhoods in a sorry state of neglect. These projects tend to result in the rise of real estate prices and the eviction of the neighbours with lower purchasing power.

On the whole the city becomes unfriendly for the ordinary citizen, whose needs are subordinated to the pleasure of the visitor, and also becomes de-personalized with the arrival of big trade chains and the closure of small, traditional trade stores and vendors, a process that usually results in a net loss of jobs.

Who Gains?

But despite such impacts, why do states compete vigorously to host the Games. The logic can be traced to the powerful interest groups such as **corporations**, which derive massive benefits from the event act as a nexus to bring the same to the city.

Big Games help speed up processes of using the city's resources for private consumption. They give free reign to global entrepreneurs to exploit public funds for private profit. In recent decades, the Games have become a tool of commercialism and corporate greed. The city is packaged as a product to be sold, with the focus on the supposed economic benefits of sport and tourism. Multinational corporations, most of which have horrifying social and environmental record, turn the ideals of sportsmanship into a two-week advertising blitz. Because the Games attract a high media attention, with television broadcasting to billions of people, companies also line up for sponsorship and advertising. Lots of businesses such as marketing firms, hotels, restaurants, and transportation services make big profits.¹⁴²

The winners of Big Games are also the members of the organizing committees who, as has been exposed many times, indulge in corruption, and make their share of profits by acting as a corporation and getting vast revenues from selling TV rights, sponsorships and product lines. And lastly the winners are also the media who gain more advertising revenues during the event and therefore ardently celebrate the Games. They use marketing opinion polls as a substitute for public participation in the decision-making process and conceal the true picture of its costs.

Real Estate Players

But by far the biggest winners are the big real estate players because they use the Games as vehicles to push in mega constructions, which can accelerate their businesses in a short span of time. Real estate lobbies push for removal of state regulations on land and accelerate constructions that are friendly for capital investment.

¹⁴² (Big business demands a corporate Olympics, www.wsws.org, the history of the cost of hosting the...)

This is often done in the name of urban renewal programs, which essentially a plank for public and private interventions to renovate select zones in a city, resulting in the rise of real estate prices and the eviction of the neighbours with lower purchasing power.

One can see why then almost all the Games in the past have been preceded by urban renewal programs where huge money is pumped in to re-make the city. It might seem that the infrastructure developed would benefit the city, and this is also what is projected, but in reality it is meant to benefit only the privileged sections, and only the businesses involved.

Olympics

Rome, 1960 was one of the earliest cities to use the Olympics as a springboard for an expansion of mega urban infrastructure, such as new transport systems and new airport facilities.

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Tokyo, 1964 also spent the then-unfathomable sum of \$3 billion on projects related to the Games including built 22 highways, two subway lines etc and enlargement of the port.¹⁴³

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Munich, 1972 also used the Games to redevelop an abandoned airstrip, build 145 kilometres of new expressways.¹⁴⁴

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Montreal, 1976 as mentioned built extensively before the Games, causing a huge drain on th public exchequer. So much so that faced with the horrible example of Montreal, organizers of the boycotted 1980 Games in Moscow sharply scaled back spending. Even so, Moscow acquired a new airport, new hotels and an Olympic village.¹⁴⁵

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Seoul, 1988 used the Olympics to expand its airport, build three new subway lines, and new palaces to arts and culture. The city even built walls to hide slums from television cameras along the marathon route. The cost of thir urban initiatives being an estimated \$15.5 billion.¹⁴⁶

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Barcelona, 1992 also provided the pretext for a wholesale makeover of the city that entailed the conversion of a big amount of industrial land in service or housing plots. The site of the Olympic village, a former industrial area was transformed into a seaside playground for visitors. Museums, theatres and art galleries were renovated and public squares spruced up. Much of the city's infrastructure was modernized and the standard new airport was built.

Sydney, 2000 and **Athens 2004** also saw massive urban renewal programs. In Athens the Games sparked the largest number of public projects in the city's modern history. They built highways, a new airport, and a suburban rail system.

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¹⁴³ Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city?, http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm, June 18th, 2006

¹⁴⁴ http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm,

¹⁴⁵ Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city?, http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm, June 18th, 2006

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

Beijing, 2008

As is known the city is spending nearly triple what Athens spent in 2004, and it is using this for a building boom that according to one estimate is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to the city's skyline. No Olympic city has ever undertaken anything like the metamorphosis under way in Beijing. Some are Olympic venues, such the \$470-million National Stadium -- dubbed the "Bird's Nest" for its 100,000-tonne basket of intertwined steel beams -- and the \$150-million aquatic centre, known as the 'Water Cube' because its translucent coating resembles bubbling water. The government intends to invest in thirty-seven new gymnasiums and stadiums as well as fifty-nine training centres. Its largest architectural pieces are the Beijing National Stadium, National Gymnasium, Olympic Aquatic Park, Convention Centre, Olympic Village and Wukesong Cultural and Sports Centre.¹⁴⁷

By 2008 the city will have added an expressway, two ring roads and nearly 150 kilometres of light rail and subway tracks. Another 318 kilometres of downtown streets will be built or expanded, and 640 kilometres of sewage pipes renovated. Not to mention building the world's largest airport, a \$2.2-billion facility larger than all the terminals at London's Heathrow Airport combined. To clean the city's polluted air, the Chinese shifted some coal-burning heavy industries to other cities and built two natural gas pipelines to supply cleaner fuel to coal-burning plants. For two months around the Games, they will close factories and power plants, ban automobiles, and spray and sweep roads several times daily. There are even plans to seed clouds to induce rain and wash pollutants from the air.

Vancouver 2010

The Winter Olympics due in is generating their own upgrades - a new transit line, the widening of the Sea-to-Sky Highway to Whistler, and \$615-million in improvements to the city's convention and exhibition centre, among others.¹⁴⁸

London 2012

For its Olympics due in expects to spend upward of \$19 billion on facilities and related infrastructure. And its Games are being touted as the engine for renewal of East London, a generally down-at-the-mouth part of the British capital.¹⁴⁹ The centrepiece will be a 600-hectare Olympic park in east London. Stretching from Stratford to Hackney, the park will accommodate nine new venues including the main 80,000-seat Olympic stadium. Other venues include a 20,000-capacity aquatic centre, which will cost £70 million and be remodelled after the Games to a capacity of 3,500. The 35-hectare Olympic Village will house up to 17,000 athletes. After the Olympics, it will be converted into 3,600 homes. The London bid has also mentioned projects like the extension of the Docklands Light Railway tube line, and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. This will provide a high-speed "javelin" train link from Kings Cross station in central London to Stratford in seven minutes. There will be a 45 percent increase in capacity on the Jubilee Line, while the Olympic park will also be ringed with arterial roads.

Commonwealth Games

Kuala Lumpur 1988

A number of hotels, condominiums and other structures (including the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) Petronas Twin Tower, which pride themselves as the world's tallest buildings) have been

¹⁴⁷ Faster, stronger glitzier: A frenzied building boom is adding the equivalent of three Manhattans to Beijing's skyline. The Olympics always spur urban renewal, but the question has to be asked: Is this any way to build a city?, http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/index.htm, June 18th, 2006

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

built. Roads have been widened, and new tracks have been constructed for the Light Railway Transit and commuter trains.

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Melbourne 2006

For the Commonwealth Games in, an athlete's village in the inner suburb of Parkville housed approximately 7,000 athletes and support staff during the Games was made.

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It is projected that the infrastructure developed would benefit the city on the whole, but in reality it is meant to benefit only the privileged sections and the businesses involved. The focus is usually on transport and recreational development to attract the thousands of tourists during and after the games that they say would help recover costs. But these benefits are overstated. Evidence suggests otherwise tourism booms, if at all, are for only short term. While the Games do attract certain types of tourists, it certainly does repel other tourists who would have come in normal circumstances. Some of the prominent cities which in fact failed to live up to the expectations of increased tourism despite much hype include the following

Olympics

Salt Lake City

The Olympics had a negative impact on local tourism, despite the influx of overseas visitors.¹⁵⁰ "Not only is the economic impact relatively insignificant, it is also heavily focused in the host city itself. In fact, other regions of the host country have actually experienced a net reduction in economic activity... particularly in relation to travel and tourism". (Jones Lang LaSalle report on the Salt Lake City Olympics) Salt Lake City was buzzing with overseas visitors attending the Winter Olympics, but local businesses were suffering because so many residents have taken holidays to avoid the Games.¹⁵¹

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Seoul 1988

The city also had significantly fewer tourists than originally anticipated.¹⁵²

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Barcelona 1992

Even while Barcelona Games were seen as a success with many citing the, 'Barcelona effect', that the city came on the world tourist map. But if one looks at trade figures, it is discovered that during 1992 the sales rate decreased and the number of tourists that visited the city (a million and a half) was lower than expected and spent less money than it was estimated. Also, the Barcelona event resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of people that visited other destinations in the Barcelona region.¹⁵³

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Atlanta 1996

¹⁵⁰ do the Olympics generate jobs

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² The Benefits and Drawbacks of Hosting The Olympics, <http://www.mapleleafweb.com/main.shtml>

¹⁵³ THE ROLE OF MEGA-EVENTS IN URBAN COMPETITIVENESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON PEOPLE

In Atlanta also the tourism was not increased. 'According to columnist Neil deMause in *The Village Voice*, University of South Florida economist Philip Porter scrutinized tourism figures for Atlanta in July and August 1996 when the Olympics were in town-for consumer sales, hotel occupancy rates, and airport usage-and found "no notable differences from a typical Atlanta summer."¹⁵⁴

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Sydney 2000

An extra 2.1 million overseas tourists were expected between 1994 and 2004 - a \$4 billion tourism boost'. However Australia didn't get the tourism bounce it expected from the Games. In fact tourism actually went down for both Sydney and Salt Lake City.

Athens, 2004

Greece is already the world's 15th most popular tourist venue, receiving 14 million visitors a year in a typical non-Olympic year, and the Greek government hoped that the positive images from the Olympics would boost tourism numbers to 20 million by 2010. But it held the dubious distinction of being the first host country to see a decline in tourism numbers in an Olympic year. In 2004 the bookings were down 8% on the previous year, advanced ticket sales were running well below expectations. In 2003, the number of annual visitors to Greece declined almost 7% to 13.9 million and dropped again in 2004 to 13.1 million.¹⁵⁵ Athens hotels, which had expected to sell 100,000 to 150,000 beds a night during the Games, have sold only about 70,000 to 120,000. Hotel prices were being slashed - some to as low as half that being asked in the lead-up to the Games.¹⁵⁶ But security concerns, high prices and poor marketing have already cut foreign arrivals by 12 per cent on last year. Greece is still waiting for an Olympic boost to materialize for its \$8.86 billion-a-year tourism industry¹⁵⁷

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Asian Games

Delhi 1982

It was claimed that preparations are being done for the thousands of tourists who would be pouring in the city. In reality the number who came were a mere 200!¹⁵⁸ Massive marketing is underway 'Incredible India and 'Delirious Delhi'. It is only time that will tell how many actually come post the commonwealth.

Part VI

Why India CWG 2010

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.dcwatch.com/archives/default.htm>

¹⁵⁵ Olympics as Economic Stimulus -- The Athens Counterexample, <http://kipesquire.powerblogs.com/>

¹⁵⁶ [NYtenants-online] Athens Olympics Bring Human Misery

¹⁵⁷ Olympics as Economic Stimulus -- The Athens Counterexample, <http://kipesquire.powerblogs.com/>

¹⁵⁸ ccs report

It is in this light that one should evaluate the Indian case of hosting games in 2010. India has been in the bidding process for the Commonwealth Games for a decade and more. But this is the first time that it has got an opportunity to host the Games in 2010. There is need to understand the factors that created the ground for arguing India's case in the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), in the backdrop of contemporary developments.

World-class agenda

It can be contended that the Games come almost as a reward for the successful installation and deepening of certain processes that were set in motion in the last decade as part of the liberalisation regime. Since the opening up of the economy in 1991 tremendous pressures have emerged from international corporations and financial institutions to transform the city into a world-class space so that it is conducive to their entry and operations. The cities are being transformed in accordance with their needs; the space and services are being delineated for their use. Basic services are being privatised so that maximum profit can be churned out of them. The city is also being designed for attracting the tourist and mopping up the revenues. In fact the definition of a world-class city as given by the Delhi Development Authority clearly states the tri-axis of *international conventions, tourism and international sports*.

The move towards "world-class" has meant that India has pushed its case seriously and that its case was taken seriously. This is because the Games provide an opportunity for the national and international business players to invest and make profits in *big* infrastructure such as stadia, hotels and specialised transport, not because it is beneficial to the larger citizenry but because it yields profits. The returns on such an investment would happen only because Delhi has gone forward on this path of 'world-class development' wherein building activity suitable to such needs has been given a free hand inclusive of malls, metros, flyovers, expressways, hotels etc. The 'developments' of the last decade have boosted the confidence of market forces that investing in such a big event is necessary because it gives the much-needed big push to a market-friendly direction of "growth". Encouraged by the competitive awarding of the Games, the city would keenly follow corporate plans that have been laid out for it.

It is for these reasons that former Prime Minister Vajpayee had given a blank cheque to the organisers before the bid, saying no matter what the cost India should get the Commonwealth Games. Suresh Kalmadi, President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), also hinted at these very possibilities when he said at the announcement ceremony of the Games in India, "This is very important for my country. It's a big business opportunity..." And to make the dream come true, India has promised to spend as much as required to make the Games a success. "Delhi can go bigger and better than Melbourne," former Indian tennis player Vijay Amritraj told BBC Sport.

Support by privileged classes

The support of the predominantly urban middle and elite classes of India for the global world-class agenda has meant their ardent support for the Games, as they hope to replicate here the development models of western cities. The massive celebration in the mainstream media of the closing ceremony at Melbourne is indicative of the privileged support base. Recently the IOA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Confederation of Indian Industry in relation to the staging of the Games. It states in detail the activities and areas of cooperation between leaders of Indian industry and IOA.

Time to give to Asia again

With 1.2 billion people, India makes up more than half of the Commonwealth's entire population. Having lost out in bids in 1990 and 1994, Delhi entered the vote as favourite with many urging the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) to once again take the Games to the developing world. Even though Glasgow and Hamilton were good bids, they were not as preferred since they had

already hosted the Games earlier once. Britain has hosted the Games five times and Canada four, most recently in 1994. Adding to it Australia's four Games and New Zealand's three, the Commonwealth had had a predictable journey from the start, except for Kingston in 1966 and Kuala Lumpur in 1998. Glasgow and Halifax promised more of the same.

India was the front-runner because it never has staged the Games, and voters were sympathetic to complaints that wealthy countries are picked too often. It was also favoured because of Afro-Asian solidarity in the Federation and it was a better bid compared to Abuja and Nigeria, both cities of a continent gripped with serious problems and limited resources. Furthermore, at a time when the West's image could hardly be worse, sending the Games to one such iconic city in the developing world was a way of sending a powerful political message.

Bidding process and offer of freebies

In spite of the Asian factor, what really clinched the bid in India's favour was the Government's commitment to underwrite the entire cost of hosting the 2010 Games. The unprecedented offer of free air travel and board and lodging for 25 days for all competitors, officials, technical officials, delegates, Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and international federation officials proved a big plus for the votes. The free ride and hospitality is unheard of, except in the case of the Afro-Asian Games, again held in Hyderabad in 2005. Most importantly, India made a last-minute offer before the vote to give \$7.2 million to train athletes, bettering a Canadian offer of \$3.8 million. This means that India would be contributing around \$100,000 each to Canada, UK, Australia, among 72 other Commonwealth nations, to train sportsmen.

Conclusion

Do we really need the Games?

Big Games are an economic strategy that are promoted to serve big financial interests through a massive program of urban renewal along with advertising and marketing revenues. Over the years, these events have lost sight of sports, instead becoming an excuse for cities to assume massive debt, create massive displacement and become marketing machines.

The benefits, if any, of the Games are funnelled to the cities' elite classes at the cost of the majority sections of the city. The Games never pay for themselves; it is public money that falls into the hands of private businessmen. Developers, real estate agents, and people at the high end of the tourism and hospitality industries will come out on top, while residents of Vancouver and Whistler will bear its negative social impacts, and its forgotten victims - displaced low-income tenants, for example - are ignored

The pretext usually given for the promotion of the Games is that it would lead to a good amount of infrastructure development such as transport systems, better communications etc. The question that arises however, is why not build those facilities anyway, without spending millions more to host the Games? Why spend an enormous amount of money on hoopla for a few days, when the governments otherwise claim lack of sufficient funds for public welfare?

With the Games necessarily generating losses, a huge burden is placed on taxpayers for many years to come. Alongside, the Games bring repression, displacement, workers' deaths, corruption, and environmental destruction: all for the sake of big business.

The Games represent a loss—the loss of opportunity. The billions spent, the human resources wasted and the rights squandered can never be recovered. When the Games have come and gone, those in the host city wake up to a massive financial hangover and begin to ponder what might have been. Billions spent could have very well been used for much more important social sectors, such as housing, education, health, roads, recreational space, and the like. Public funds are a scarce resource, and to finance these kind of events and infrastructures involves a budgetary cut in other, more necessary, sectors. The money could also have been used for promoting non-elite sports by promoting sports facilities in schools and neighborhoods at a decentralized level that would help in raising performance level of sportspersons. The sports installations left behind are completely useless for the people (besides the state).

The Games accelerate the urban development process that exacerbates income and wealth differentials within cities and between cities. Public spaces are privatized. Games facilities are constructed in open public spaces that should have been kept for socially useful projects or as free, green spaces. In fact, in all the host cities, there is an increased privatisation of resources and a consequent massive increase in the security apparatus required to defend that privatisation. Using the Olympics to drive urban renewal distorts priorities.

But the details of the cost of the Games and the resultant increase in prices and taxes are seldom shared with the public at large. The bidding process is never taken up in a participatory manner. The promises made are concealed. It is in this light that the citizen is never able to critically look at the benefits and costs of the Games to the city. Instead the Games are projected as a matter of pride for the country. The government, utilising the agency of the complicit corporate media, is thus able to galvanise enough support for the Games predominantly from the privileged classes who see it as an opportunity for economic, social advancement for their society and are particularly lured by the projected “world-class” improvements in the infrastructure of the city. A massive consensus-building exercise is taken up utilising print and electronic media, along with usage of public spaces for advertising for the Games including hoardings, posters, stickers, whose cumulative effect is a vocal privileged section. The symbolic economy of the city is transformed, as more space becomes fair game for advertisers.

Those which are most impacted are clearly the one's least able to affect the policy making and planning processes surrounding the Games. The perceived 'need' by some interests for the tourism and associated economic developments of hosting an Olympics, creates 'a political and

economic context within which the hallmark event is used as an excuse to overrule planning legislation and participatory planning processes, and to sacrifice local places along the way.

This is nowhere more evident than the build-up to the Delhi Commonwealth Games of 2010. The bidding for the Games itself was treated as a symbol of national 'victory', with eminent sportspersons and corporate figures joining in the parleys. Once the bid was won, there was a stream of self-congratulatory propaganda and a Bollywood team was specially flown into Melbourne to perform at the closing ceremony at the outrageous cost of Rs2.5 crores per minute. This was accompanied by a deliberately designed campaign in the national media about how the city was being transformed from "walled" to "world" class, and the new icons of the Metro and the Malls were regularly displayed, concealing all information about their horrendously large losses and the consequent social and economic impacts on the city. In tandem with this, there was the consistent attempt to vilify the daily labourer, the industrial worker, the rickshaw puller, the street vendor, the slum dweller, the public bus, and the domestic servant as representative of all that was "bad" and "evil" about the city.

Even the acquisition of the lands in the city as part of its restructuring was carefully orchestrated. Thus, a plan for 'developing' the river-bed by channelising the river was prepared in as early as 1996, but it unfolded with the bid for the Commonwealth Games. The first key turned to unlock the treasures of the land was the Akshardham temple that vaulted on to the river on a wave of patriotic fervour as India became part of the "war on terror". The Metro headquarters followed soon after, with the Commonwealth Games Village hard on its heels. Each one of these was part of a much larger game plan. The Swaminarayan sect mobilised about Rs200 crores, mainly from Non-Resident Indians, to build its palatial (and commercial) temple complex that yields an average estimated income of Rs5 crores annually from 'devotees'. This unlocked the doors for the Metro with a first-phase budget of Rs 5,000 crores. And that has enabled the Rs660 crores Games Village, which will eventually spiral into a public expenditure of over Rs25,000 crores. Set against this is the money that real estate developers expect will emerge from the sale of land and property, the river-bed alone yielding about Rs90,000 crores at current land prices!

The negative social consequences of hosting the Games far outweigh any upside to bringing the world to a city's doorstep. While an already rich minority benefit a great deal, (and) most benefit some, the poor and marginal tend to become poorer and more marginal.

Protest sites

But in spite of the propaganda, **there are places where groups speak out against the Games**, though these rarely come into the public eye. For instance, in London, groups manned floating boats along waterways when the IOC representatives came to visit the city, saying that the planned development along the banks of the River Lea would result in the loss of common land and destroy recreational activities.

Protesters in Delhi have been speaking against 1000 mature trees being felled for construction projects. In India also a number of environment groups have been protesting the usage of the Yamuna river-bed for building of the Commonwealth Games Village as it threatens the ecology of the river.

Also there are a number of groups which have used the medium of web launch campaigns against big Games. Some of these include:

<http://www.breadnotcircuses.org/home.htm>

<http://www.whistlerolympicinfo.com/>

<http://www.whistlerolympicinfo.com/economic.htm#Lenskyj>

<http://www.whistlerolympicinfo.com/economic.htm#Jan%2029>

<http://www.whistlerolympicinfo.com/business.htm>

<http://www.whistlerolympicinfo.com/social.htm>

http://www.ajennings.8m.com/olympic_rings.htm
<http://ajennings.8m.com/>
www.creativeresistance.ca

As informed citizens about the adverse impact of big Games on our society, it is our responsibility to ask:

- What are the full financial costs of staging the Games?
- Where are the procedures to address financial, social and environmental concerns of the Games?

Anti-Olympic Alliance - *www.cat.org.au/aoa/*