

## **In time for Games, India's new sports injury center (With Images)**

By Shweta Srinivasan

New Delhi, April 10 (IANS) It's set to give a healing touch to players! A spanking new sports injury centre with integrated medical facilities has cropped up adjacent to the Safdarjung Hospital, one of four designated referral hospitals for the Delhi Commonwealth Games.

After the October Games, the one of its kind government facility will not only cater to sportspersons but also provide otherwise expensive treatment to common people at subsidised rates.

"Our hospital is preparing to dedicate the first fully integrated Sports Injury Centre to the nation. Once complete, it will be the largest such medical outfit in Southeast Asia catering to the specific needs of sportspersons," Deepak Chaudhary, the centre's director and the hospital's leading arthroscopic surgeon, told IANS.

The seven-storey building will be a one-point solution for any sports injury with its advanced diagnostic centre, radiology wing, physiotherapy unit, advanced surgical equipment, rehabilitation and post-operative care as well as a capacity of 50 beds.

The total cost of the project is estimated at Rs.70.72 crore (Rs.707 million) and the hospital is recruiting a staff of 187 people, including specialised orthopaedic doctors, a senior official in the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee's medical department told IANS.

"The facility is likely to be ready by June-end and will be a legacy for the country. In August, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) medical commission will visit the centre. They are satisfied with our arrangements so far," Jiji Thomson, special director general of the Organising Committee, told IANS.

The CGF delegation has already visited the other three designated hospitals - the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the G.B. Pant Hospital - which will cater to a cluster of stadia or Games venues in a fixed geographic radius.

According to P.S.M. Chandran, a sports medicine expert involved in the project, the centre is a "boon" for a large number of Indian sportspersons who cannot afford to travel abroad for treatment.

He told IANS: "It is a positive contribution for this sector. Firstly, it is a government hospital and hence the treatment is cheaper than in private hospitals. Also, the doctors working for this wing will also be leading doctors practising elsewhere. So the large number of players who hail from rural or less fortunate socio-economic backgrounds can benefit. "

Chandran, who is with the Sports Authority of India, clarified that the Safdarjung Sports Injury Centre was not a standalone centre and was part of the Safdarjung Hospital's orthopaedics facilities.

"During the Games, it will treat players only but after that it will treat sports injuries but not that alone. There may not be enough workload to treat only sports injuries. Once reputation builds up, cases may get referred from all over the country but again that won't be just of sportspersons," Chandran added.

Usually injury cases, specially in contact sports, are referred for treatment abroad.

"Unfortunately in our country integrated and related facilities for management of sports injuries under one roof are virtually non-existent. Now with the coming of our centre, injured players need not limp around to foreign countries for treatment," Chaudhary said.

Indian sportsmen also agree that the centre would be a "boon" for them.

Wrestler Sushil Kumar, who has won the Olympic bronze medal, told IANS: "In India, we don't have care units for sports injuries. It is good that we will have a centre in Delhi.

"For sports injuries, we usually go to South Africa or Australia and that's a costly affair - something that all sportspersons can't afford. This will be a boon for all Indian sportspersons."

Another Olympic bronze winner boxer Vijender Singh says in his sport the chances of injuries are high and hence a treatment facility on home turf has added advantages.

"The chances of injuries in body contact sports like boxing and wrestling are more. So it is good if we are able to avail ourselves of specialised treatment right here," he told IANS.

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