

India to Host Commonwealth Games 2030 in Ahmedabad

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The Commonwealth Games is a major international multi-sport event held every four years among the Commonwealth of Nations, mostly former British territories. It brings together athletes to compete in various sports while promoting equality, friendship, and shared values. Unlike the Olympics, the Games include smaller nations and territories, creating unique opportunities for athletes worldwide. It has grown into a global spectacle featuring men, women, and para-athletes, celebrating inclusivity and sportsmanship.

Commonwealth Games

Originally known as British Empire Games (first edition: 1930 in Hamilton, Canada), the event has gone through name changes and format evolutions. Over time, it expanded in the number of sports, inclusion of women, and para-sport. The governing body was originally the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), now rebranded as Commonwealth Sport from March 2025, reflecting its ambition to be more movement than just event organizer.

Today, 72 Commonwealth Games Associations participate in events ranging from athletics to netball and lawn bowls. Its traditions include the King's Baton Relay and ceremonial hoisting of the Commonwealth flag, symbolizing

unity among member nations.

Commonwealth Games Ahmedabad 2030

On October 15, 2025, the Commonwealth Sport Executive Board has finalized Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India) as the host city for the 2030 Commonwealth Games (XXIV Games), which will mark the 100-year anniversary (since 1930 Hamilton Games). Indian Cabinet, on August 27, 2025, approved the bid and nominated Ahmedabad as “ideal host city,” highlighting its infrastructure, democratic support, and sporting culture. Formal proposal presented to the Commonwealth Sport Evaluation Committee (September 2025) emphasizes affordability, inclusivity, sustainability, gender equity, para-sport integration, and long-term legacy. 2030 bid is India’s second time hosting (first was Delhi 2010). The centenary edition holds symbolic value.

Infrastructure & Urban Planning for Ahmedabad:

- The bid includes the **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** Sports Enclave, estimated at Rs 6,000 crore, with features: aquatic centre, indoor arena, athlete village, upgraded stadiums.
- Transport and hospitality upgrades are underway: airport terminal expansion costing ~Rs 3,130 crore, metro & BRTS networks being enhanced, new hotels & accommodations being built.
- Rezoning of agricultural land (~200 hectares) approved for sports and related infrastructure development around Ahmedabad, e.g. for sports zone, residential zones near sports complexes.

Commonwealth Games 2030 Ahmedabad Hosting Significance

- Sports Infrastructure Expansion: Hosting 2030 will require/ accelerate improvements in stadiums, athlete villages, training centres, transport, and hospitality. This infrastructure can benefit local communities and future events.
- Economic Benefits: Job creation through construction, services, tourism; potential boost to local business; tourism inflow; increased investment and urban development, especially in Gujarat/Ahmedabad.
- Soft Power & Global Image: Successfully hosting centenary edition would enhance India’s standing in international sports; ability to host Olympics (2036) may be bolstered.
- Social & Youth Engagement: Increased participation in sports, training of officials/ volunteers, youth development, community health and recreation centres.
- Promotion of Sports Diversity: With reinstatement of sports dropped, broader talent base can benefit; improved competitiveness in lesser-funded sports.

Commonwealth Games Glasgow 2026

The 2026 Commonwealth Games, officially the XXIII Games, will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 23 July to 2 August 2026. Originally awarded to Victoria, Australia, the state withdrew due to rising costs. Glasgow was confirmed as the replacement host, becoming the third city in Scotland to host the Games. The 2026 edition will be smaller, featuring 10 sports, four venues, and no athletes’ village. It is also the first Games after King Charles III became Head of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Games Ceremonies

The opening and closing ceremonies celebrate the culture of the host nation, include flag hoisting, and introduce athletes.

- **Opening Ceremony:** The ceremony begins with the hoisting of the host nation's flag and national anthem. Flags of the previous and next host nations, along with the Commonwealth Games Federation flag, are also raised. Artistic performances showcase music, dance, and theater reflective of the host's culture. Athletes enter grouped by nation, with the previous host first and the host nation last. Speeches formally open the Games, and the King's Baton, carried by a distinguished athlete, symbolizes unity and goodwill.
- **Closing Ceremony:** The closing ceremony occurs after all competitions conclude. Athletes enter together, without national distinction, symbolizing unity. Officials give speeches, and the Commonwealth Games flag is handed to the mayor of the next host city. Artistic displays highlight the next host nation's culture. The David Dixon Award, honoring an athlete for exceptional performance and contribution, is presented. The ceremony reinforces the spirit of sportsmanship, cultural exchange, and camaraderie among participating nations.
- **Medal Presentation:** After each event, medals are awarded to the top three competitors or teams on a three-tiered podium. National anthems are played for gold medallists, and flags of medallists are raised. Volunteers assist in ceremonies, acting as flag bearers or presenting medals, ensuring smooth proceedings and reinforcing community involvement.

Commonwealth Games Sports

The Games feature a diverse sports program blending Olympic sports with events unique to the Commonwealth.

- **Core and Optional Sports:**
 - The 2026 program will include 10 sports: athletics, para-athletics, 3×3 basketball, 3×3 wheelchair basketball, boxing, gymnastics (artistic), judo, lawn bowls, netball, swimming (including para-swimming), track cycling, para track cycling, weightlifting, and para powerlifting. Several previous sports like rugby sevens, badminton, squash, diving, and wrestling have been removed due to infrastructure and time constraints.
- **Parasports Inclusion:**
 - The 2026 Games will feature 47 para-sport events, the largest in Commonwealth Games history. Athletics will include jumping, throwing, and track events. Swimming has added men's 800m and women's 1500m freestyle events. Wheelchair basketball and 3×3 basketball have expanded team quotas, highlighting inclusivity and equal opportunity for athletes with disabilities.

Commonwealth Games 2026 Changes Announced

Significant changes have been made to make the 2026 Games more sustainable and cost-effective.

- **Event Scaling**

- Originally, Victoria, Australia, was to host, but rising costs led to cancellation. Glasgow agreed to host a scaled-down version featuring 10-13 sports, using existing venues without constructing a new athletes' village. This approach demonstrates fiscal responsibility while maintaining the Games' competitive integrity.

• **Funding Arrangements**

- The rescue plan relied on CGF funding and commercial income; the Commonwealth Games Federation provided £100 million, supplemented by £30-50 million from commercial sources. Australia contributed AU\$200 million as compensation (reports cite figures from ~AU\$200m to AU\$380m). The low-cost approach reduces public financial burden while ensuring smooth execution.

• **Sports Program Removal**

- Several sports were removed due to logistical challenges, including rugby sevens, badminton, triathlon, and squash. Athletics and swimming added new events, parasport events increased, and lawn bowls moved indoors. This ensures the Games remain competitive, inclusive, and manageable for athletes and organizers alike.

• **Sports Format Changes**

- Cycling will maintain 26 events despite dropping mountain biking. Lawn bowls will now be held indoors with a reduced number of events. Athletics has added the mixed 4x400m relay and reintroduced the Mile race for men and women, paying tribute to the historic "Miracle Mile" of 1954 between Roger Bannister and John Landy. These changes reflect flexibility, modernization, and audience engagement.

Commonwealth Games Mascot 2026

The official mascot for Glasgow 2026 is Finnie, a Glaswegian unicorn. Finnie's design was created by schoolchildren, promoting youth engagement. Her horn is a traffic cone, a playful nod to Glasgow's Duke of Wellington statue tradition. The unicorn symbolizes Scotland's national animal and is linked to the royal coat of arms. Finnie represents creativity, cultural pride, and a friendly ambassador for the Games, helping build excitement and identity among fans and participants.

Commonwealth Games Historical Background

The idea for a multi-nation sporting event arose in 1891, proposed by John Astley Cooper to promote unity across the British Empire. Key Historical Milestones

- 1911 Inter-Empire Championships: Held in London; Australasia, Canada, South Africa, and UK participated.
- 1930 British Empire Games: First official Games in Hamilton, Canada; organized by Melville Marks Robinson.
- Name Changes: British Empire Games → British Empire & Commonwealth Games → British Commonwealth Games → Commonwealth Games.
- Inclusion of Para-athletes: Full participation from 2002.
- Equal Medal Events: Achieved by 2018; women's events outnumbered men by 2022

Commonwealth Games Federation

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the governing body overseeing the Games. Headquartered at Commonwealth House, London, it ensures the smooth running of each event, sets sports programs, and awards hosting rights. English is the official language, while the host nation may include other local languages in announcements and ceremonies. CGF ensures inclusive communication for athletes, officials, and spectators.

Structure and Roles:

- International Federations (IFs): Supervise sports at global levels, e.g., FIBA for basketball.
- Commonwealth Games Associations (CGAs): Represent countries or territories, similar to National Olympic Committees. Currently, 72 CGAs are recognized.
- Organising Committees (OCCWGs): Temporary bodies managing individual Games, dissolved post-event.

Commonwealth Games Medals

Australia leads all-time medal counts with 2,596 medals, followed by England (2,322), Canada (1,647), India (564), and New Zealand (706).

Top 5 Leading Countries:

- Australia: Dominates in swimming and athletics, consistently topping medal tables in 13 editions.
- England: Strong in gymnastics, athletics, and team sports, historically second in medal count.
- Canada: Notable performances in athletics and hockey, leading in early Empire Games.
- India: Excelling in shooting, wrestling, weightlifting, and hockey, gradually improving international standing.
- New Zealand: Strong in athletics, rowing, and cycling, maintaining consistent podium finishes.

Commonwealth Games Criticism

Criticism often centers on high costs, social inequities, and political controversies. Environmental impacts, underutilized infrastructure, and commercial pressures also attract scrutiny.

- Controversial Host Cities: Edinburgh 1986 and Durban 2022 faced financial and political challenges, requiring withdrawals or boycotts. Proper planning, sustainable budgeting, and transparent governance are recommended to mitigate criticism.
- Sporting Fairness: Changes in sports inclusion, such as dropping rugby sevens or squash, sometimes generate debate. CGF balances tradition with practicality, athlete safety, and global appeal when making program adjustments.

Commonwealth Games India Participation and Role

India has participated in every Games since 1934, gradually improving performance. India excels in shooting, wrestling, weightlifting, and hockey. Athletes like Abhinav Bindra and P.V. Sindhu have enhanced international recognition.

- In 2022 Birmingham, India won 61 medals (22 Gold, 16 Silver, 23 Bronze) finishing 4th in medal tally. (Reported widely)
- In 2010 Delhi, India's best home performance: 101 medals including 38 Golds; hosted 71/ 72 nations, 6,081 athletes, 21 sports & 272 medal events.
- India's strong sports include shooting, wrestling, weightlifting; but in recent editions some sports where India traditionally does well were dropped, affecting medal yield (e.g. in 2026 program cuts).
- Potential is large: with home advantage in 2030, reinstatement of dropped sports, improved infrastructure, India can improve total medals & athlete readiness.

Commonwealth Games Challenges

Several challenges and they solutions related to the Commonwealth Games has been listed below categorized based on the global and Indian aspects:

General Challenges Globally:

- Hosting large multi-sport events incurs high capital & operational costs; many cities/ regions withdraw due to budget overruns or risk.
- Ensuring infrastructure is used post-games (avoiding underused capacity).
- Balancing sporting event schedules with cost, sports inclusion, athlete welfare.
- Sustainability pressures: carbon emissions, environmental impact, climate resilience.

India-Specific Challenges:

- Political & administrative capacity to deliver promised infrastructure in time (past issues from 2010 Delhi).
- Ensuring transparency, cost control, avoiding corruption, ensuring quality of facilities.
- Transport, accommodation, athlete village readiness, and urban planning in Ahmedabad. Rezoning and land acquisition must balance community concerns & environmental impact.
- Ensuring that sports dropped in 2026 Games, especially those where India traditionally won medals, are part of the program in 2030. The proposal explicitly seeks reinstatement.
- Long-term legacy planning: after Games, ensuring community access, sporting participation, maintenance of facilities, and benefits to local people beyond event.

Way Forward:

- In Ahmedabad's bid and future planning, prioritize sustainability: green buildings, renewable energy, minimized environmental footprint.
- Ensure inclusive governance: para-sport integration, gender equity, community participation, transparent procurement and monitoring.
- Build affordable, multi-use infrastructure to ensure post-Games utilization (sport for schools, public access).
- Strengthen athlete pipeline: coaching, grassroots sports, sports science support so that India competes well across all sports included.
- Ensure financial prudence: realistic budgets, leveraging public-private partnerships, accountability, risk-sharing.

- Embed legacy/social impact evaluation frameworks to monitor benefits in employment, health, tourism, social cohesion.

Commonwealth Games UPSC

- Ahmedabad has been formally recommended by Commonwealth Sport Executive Board to host 2030 Commonwealth Games. Final decision expected at General Assembly scheduled November 2025 in Glasgow.
- India's central government has approved the bid; Gujarat government preparing infrastructure, sports enclave, stadiums, transport upgrades.
- The bid is aligned with "Games Reset" principles of affordability, inclusivity, sustainability. Officials promise to integrate community benefits, improve athlete experience, gender equity, para-sport and human rights commitments
- Meanwhile, global pressures on hosting multi-sport events (cost escalations, bids withdrawing) make India's potential hosting important to maintain continuity of Commonwealth Games movement. Reports say Glasgow 2026 took over from Victoria, Australia because the latter withdrew citing rising costs.

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