In the past Railways has successfully launched exhibition trains like Azaadi Express, Red Ribbon Express and National Science Express for highlighting Indian Independence, AIDS awareness and Science and Technology respectively. With Commonwealth games being hosted in India, Ministry of Railways and Department of Information Technology jointly launched Commonwealth Express to spread awareness about sports and Information Technology among the masses across the country.

VINAY THAKUR
Senior Technical
Director, NIC HQ
vinay@nic.in

VIVEK VERMA
Regional Editor, NIC HQ
Chandigarh
vivek.verma@nic.in

GANESH KHADANGA
Technical Director, NIC
HQ
ganesh@nic.in

D.S. VENKATESH
Principal Systems
Analyst, NIC HQ
venkat@nic.in

Commonwealth Express Train –
An exposition on wheels

Edited by **Vivek Verma**

THE Commonwealth Express train was flagged off by Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways Km. Mamata Banerjee and Hon'ble CM of Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit along with Hon'ble Minister of State for C&IT Sh. Sachin Pilot on 24th June 2010 from Safdarjung railway station. Also present on the occasion were Ministers of States for C&IT, Railways, Chairman Railway Board, Secretary, DIT and DG, NIC. The flagging off of the Commonwealth Express in New Delhi coincided with the arrival date of the baton through the Wagah Border from Pakistan. After 101 days journey schedule covering 21 States and 3 UTs and stopping over at 49 cities having broad gauge connectivity, this exhibition train concluded its journey in Delhi on 1st October 2010.

Out of a total of 11 coaches, five coaches were allocated to Railway Sports Promotion Board to showcase the history of Commonwealth Games, details of the venues of the events, to spread general awareness about different sports and to give wide publicity to the sports icons of India who have brought laurels to the country with their stupendous feats. In the remaining six coaches,

Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways Km. Mamta Banerjee, Hon'ble CM of Delhi Smt. Sheela Dixit and Hon'ble Minister of State C&IT Sh. Sachin Pilot flags off the 'Commonwealth Express Train'

Department of Information Technology showcased the capacity and the work done in the country in the area of Information and Communication Technology to make people understand the significance of ICT as a major force of change, impacting every sphere of life. The initiatives carried out by the Department of Information Technology and its affiliated entities in the fields of e-Governance, infrastructure, technology relevant to rural India, language interfacing technology etc., were exhibited by way of backlit translites, front-lit digitally printed posters, short informational films etc. To reach out to the common man in as effective manner as possible, the content of the backlit translites was made available in ten

regional languages and this language changeover happened as and when the train entered such a State. With no entrance fee or platform ticket requirement, the exhibition remained open from 10 a.m to 8 p.m at each halt.

The first coach gave brief history of Commonwealth Games and details about the mascot "Shera" and the Queen Baton Relay (QBR). The second coach threw light on details of the venues and various games to be played. The third coach displayed various sporting events, which have been included in the Games and details about the participating countries were displayed in the fourth coach. The contribution of Railways in the development of sports and the list of medals won by railway sportspersons in international events found their place in the fifth coach.

Remaining 6 coaches very nicely covered different facets of ICT. The first of which systematically presented an impact that ICT has made in the life of a common man by showing the evolution in communication from smoke signals in primitive times to SMS and e-mails in the present times. Initiatives taken by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) and NIC impacting the life of common man was displayed in the second coach. The third coach dealt with the influence of ICT in various sectors - social, health, education, agriculture and ecology. The fourth coach presented ICT from industry's perspective highlighting its contribution towards the growth of economy. The theme of the fifth coach revolved around common service centres (CSCs), an initiative for common man's convenience which serves as an enabler for bringing government closer to citizens. The sixth coach, designed as mobile auditorium, provided Internet services, Citizen Centric Services, Video conferencing and mobile communications for the convenience of public.

The theme "IT Story of India", was very nicely demonstrated through host of e-Governance applications namely AGMARKNET, NREGASoft, VAHAN/SARATHI, e-Counselling, Public Grievances, Land Records, Property Registration, Tele-education, India Portal, Video Conferencing system, etc. In addition, an e-Quiz facility was an instant hit, where participants replied to system generated questions on Computers, Environment and Earth Sciences to win a certificate. Counters were very well equipped with laptops, printers, display equipment etc. and printed brochures of around 60 applications, with local language interface, were made available. The average reported audience at each location was 12000-15000 and more than 5 lakh persons visited this unique exhibition of sports and IT.

> **While a section of the population is aware of the significance of ICT, the larger section still does not have much clarity about it. The more important part is that the people do not know how ICT as a tool can change their lives. The CWG Express is about bridging that knowledge gap**
>
> **Sh. R. Chandrashekhar ,**
> Secretary, MoCIT

The Central representatives from NIC Land Records Division, Headquarters, States and Districts managed the show very well. Right from the start at Delhi on 24th June, 2010, top priority was accorded to this event by DG NIC, who along with Dr. Y K Sharma, DDG, NIC visited the train a number of times and guided the team with their valuable suggestions. All through the journey, criss-crossing the length and breadth of the country, NIC's central team at headquarters with active participation of respective state units, who mobilised their resources, ensured the success of the event. SIOs personally reviewed arrangements of stalls, deployment of officers and the applications to be demonstrated in the stalls. NICSI extended full logistic support in a short span of time.

GLIMPSES FROM THE STATES/UTS

Punjab - A team of 7 officers manned the counters at Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Chandigarh and answered to queries of the visitors. Many e-governance applications including PRISM, "Suvidha" were demonstrated.

Jammu and Kashmir - A team of 4 officers under SIO handled the J&K leg of the exhibition at Udhampur. CM public grievance, Electoral roll, social welfare, cause-lists of courts were some of the applications that evinced keen interest.

Haryana - Covering Ambala and Chandigarh, a team of 7 officers under SIO gave demonstration of HALRIS, HarSamadhan and Public Grievances, Online counseling and Off campus counseling, "E-Disha" - citizen centric service centres and may other applications, which was widely appreciated.

Chandigarh - A team of 4 officers under SIO managed the show. Visitors were briefed about the various initiatives including eSampark, eJan Sampark and Gram Sampark.

Himachal Pradesh - At Una 7 officers tirelessly showcased the initiatives like eSamadhan, ePehchan, Job Portal, eParman, eGazette, Online Hotels Reservation.

Uttarakhand - At Hardwar, SIO with a team of 10 officers displayed various applications like Devbhoomi(Land record), Transport(Vahan and Sarathi), Commercial Tax, e-Janadhar Seva, Employment Exchange automation, Uttarakhand-SWAN.

Uttar Pradesh - The team was in full strength at all the 5 halts - Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Jhansi and Agra city where Bhulekh-Land Record System, e-Scholarship-Scholarship Management System, e-District Scheme, PRERNA-Property, Food and Civil Supplies Computerisation-Ration Card Digitization, Land Record based Rice/Wheat Procurement System, SMS for PDS distribution were shown.

Bihar - Covering Patna and Gaya halts, a team of 14 officers gave demonstration of Vahan and Sarathi (Transport), RACE (Energy Billing), SCORE (Property Registration), MUDRA (Municipal Corporation), E-certificates, PHC and CHANAKYA.

Assam - There were 2 stoppages at Maligaon and Mariana where the NIC Assam team showcased DHARITREE (Land records), e-PANJEEYAN (Registration), VAHAN & SARATHI (transport), e-COURT (Court) & use of Geographic Information System (GIS) in Land Records computerization.

West Bengal - With 5 scheduled stoppages namely New Jalpaiguri, Asansol, Kharagpur, Kolkata and Durgapur, the applications shown were Bhumi, Bhuchitra, Missing Child Portal, School Education Portal, WBAGRIS-NET.

Jharkhand - NIC team was in full strength at Dhanbad and Ranchi to showcase the initiatives taken by them. Some of the projects displayed were e-Nagrik Sewa (Certificate issuing system through Pragya Kendra), Samvad (Public Grievance Monitoring system), e-court, Land Records, Revenue Court, Old Aged Pension Scheme, Commercial Taxes and Transport department. Jharkhand Space Application Centre and Jhrakhand Agency for Promotion of IT (JAP-IT) also coordinated with NIC and displayed noteworthy happenings in the state like e-Registration, CSC project, Jharkhand Portal, Jharkhand

GEO profile, Village Profile, Agriculture Information system etc.

Orissa - The team of 10 NIC officers took over the responsibility of demonstrating various applications at Macheshwar station. This included e-FCS (Paddy Procurement), Bhulekh (Land Records), Chief Ministers Grievance Redressal System, GePNIC (eProcurement), SUBIDHA (eMunicipality), Jalakara (Water Billing).

Chhatisgarh - The halts were at Raipur and Durg where Paddy Procurement Computerisation, Online Agriculture Subsidy to Farmers (e-Agri), RES works Accounting System (e-Works), Computerisation of House allotment by Housing Board (AWAS), Land Records Computerisation (BHUIYAN), Property Registration Process (E-Panjeeyan), PDS online, e-Agri, e-Works and BHU-NAKSHA : Land Parcel map management were presented by a team of 8 NIC officers.

Andhra Pradesh - The train reached Secunderabad to a rousing welcome. Visitors appreciated the concept which highlights the significance of ICT as a major force of change impacting virtually every sphere of life from industry, health and education to ecology and disaster forecast.

Tamil Nadu - With halts at Chennai and Madurai, the focus was to showcase the impact of ICT in various sectors - social, health, education, agriculture and ecology. Anytime Anywhere e-Services for Land Records, Collabland, BC and MBC Scholarship system, Systems for Civil supplies, Online MSME, PICME where showcased.

Puducherry - Led by SIO, a team of 9 officers showcased various applications of interest to common man. Visitors showed keen interest in Property Registration (e-Pathiram), Land Records (Nilamagal), Birth and Death Certfiicate, Value Added

Tax (VAT).

Kerala - With stoppages at Trivandrum, Kollam and Ernakulam, a team of 30 NIC officers handled the exhibition where they showcased India Portal (www.india.gov.in), SmartMove with Learners License Test Trial, Dr.SMS, Revenue Services, MVD Kerala Services, Fisheries (RealCraft), SSLC and DHSE, Civil Supplies Dept. Portal, Agmarknet, Passport and MGNREGA.

Karnataka - With 3 stoppages at Mysore, Bangalore Cantt and Hubli spread over 9 days and a team of 10-12 NIC officers, citizens were able to experience many applications. Some of them are Land Records (Bhoomi), India Gov Portal and Courts, Water Billing software, Rural Digital Services (Nemmadi), Panchatantra, NREGA and Vatsoft, Krishimaratavahini.

Goa - The train arrived at Vasco on its 75th day of the journey to a rousing reception. Chief Minister Digambar Kamat inaugurated the exhibition.

Maharashtra - The train had halts at Khadaki and Mumbai Central. Led by SIO there was a team of 14 NIC officers to provide details on Mahabhulekh, Property Card Registration Online, Touch Screen Kiosk, PregCare, e-FACMIS, SIMNIC and District Websites.

Gujarat - The train was welcomed at Gandhinagar with a colourful cultural programme. The exhibition was inaugurated by Mr Ravi Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary (Science and Technology).

Madhya Pradesh - NIC Madhya Pradesh showcased 'Parakh', 'Samadhan Ek Din', 'e-Scholarship', 'e-PDMS', 'Education Portal', State specific contributions under National Portal of INDIA.

Rajasthan- NIC Rajasthan showcased

'Apnakhata', e-Gram and Sugam

Visitors lauded the initiative by way of penning down very positive comments in the visitor's book. Since, local applications were also being showcased; people were thrilled to see their own information online and were seen capturing it on cameras. The coaches dedicated to sports were like a moving museum with plethora of information covering everything from the history of the CWG to India's promising performances and heroes who brought back medals from various tournaments over the years. At every place the train went, traditional welcome was accorded by distinguished gathering and enthusiastic people were too eager to have a glimpse of specially designed train. People braved the inclement weather at some places and came in large numbers just to have a first hand experience of the exhibition. The train in itself was a colourful treat for school students and children who were f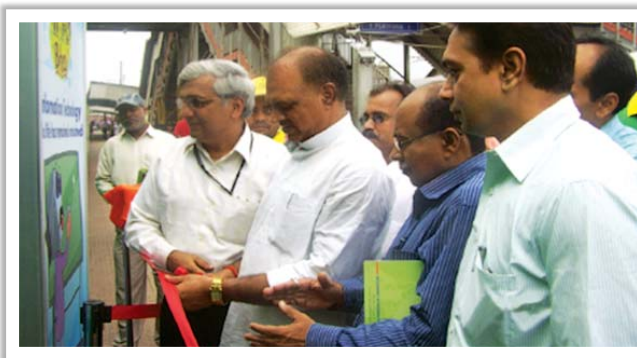ound to be amused by the vibrant theme and ambience. The event was widely covered by local media and TV channels. At some places the exhibition timings had to be extended because of a huge rush. The Sports and Information Technology extravaganza caught the fancy of the masses in the far and wide corners of India through this Commonwealth Express and people went with unforgettable memories of nicely organised exhibition. The successful completion of this odyssey added yet another feather to the cap of this esteem organisation.

"Shera" the mascot of 2010 Commonwealth Games New Delhi

NIC Team at Commonwealth Express Inauguration

State IT Minister, Govt of Bihar inaugurating the exhibition at Patna

Dr. Poongothai A Aruna, Hon'ble IT Minister Govt of TN visiting NIC stall

Student in VC session at Kamakhya/Guwahati

Students lined up at Lucknow to see exhibition

SIO, Karnataka highlighting the Bhoomi application to Syed Kirmani, Cricketer in Bangalore

DC Una was highly appreciative of the e-Governance applications demonstrated by NIC

School Students visiting the train at Bhubaneswar

Students jostling for space at e-Quiz counter at Ajmer

Certificate issued to a participant of e-Quiz at Ranchi

Citizens at Tamil Nilam Stall in Madurai

Sh. N S Nigam, DM, Paschim Medinipur, Sh. Anil Handa, DRM, Kharagpur Division at the inauguration

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Secretary (IT) Chandigarh Administration inaugurating exhibition