

Critical Reasoning Practice

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A game plan for India's success as 2036 Olympic host

In his Independence Day address from Red Fort to the country, this August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that it was India's dream to host the 2036 Olympic Games, adding that preparations were being made for this. This is an audacious announcement to say the least. India has never hosted the Olympics before. India has almost always underperformed in the global athletic arena. India has limited world class track and field infrastructure.

Yet, the Olympic ambition does not seem far-fetched. The country's sporting prowess is growing. Its sportspersons enjoy enormous respect among their peers. The Indian sports engagement is at an all-time high. However, whether India succeeds in its Olympic bid or not will depend on how the country builds consensus both within and beyond its borders.

Electing the future host

Hosting an Olympic Games is a marathon effort, as this writer witnessed first hand when visiting the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. There is a lot of ground to cover in preparing the infrastructure. In Paris, for instance, there were '329 medal events in 32 sports (including the four additional sports)' that bring the best athletes in the world on one stage, not to mention the lakhs of tourists. Since 2019, the process for host bidding has undergone a complete overhaul. These changes are part of the reforms brought in by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) after allegations of corruption were made in connection with the award of the 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo Games. The revamped selection process was first tried in 2021 when the bidding process was conducted to choose Brisbane as the host city for the 2032 Games.

The contender cities are now engaged in confidential exchanges by the Future Host Commission (FHC), a dedicated body set up by the IOC. The remit of the FHC goes beyond ensuring integrity. It also runs feasibility



Manuraj Shunmugasundaram

an advocate at the High Court of Madras and a spokesperson of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

Within India, there must be a collaborative approach between governments and the relevant agencies; the infrastructure in some States needs to be highlighted

assessments, studies environmental concerns and human rights standards as part of the process. The IOC is expected to hold an election at the conclusion of the dialogue process led by the FHC, likely in 2026, where its members will vote to choose the host of the 2036 Games.

India's march towards its Olympic ambition began in 2010, after New Delhi hosted a successful Commonwealth Games. The Union Government reformed sports associations through the National Sports Development Code ('Sports Code'). With an eye on improving the sports ecosystem from the grassroots level, the Khelo India Scheme was launched in 2017. Under this scheme, the focus is on upgradation of sports infrastructure, development of talent, promotion of sports and sports academies.

Under the Khelo India Rising Talent Identification programme, there is a push to develop and identify talented individuals between the ages of nine to 18 years. The Committee formed for identification of talented individuals makes recommendations on Khelo India athletes who are then nurtured with support from the government. At the Paris Olympics this year, 28 Indian athletes who participated were Khelo India athletes.

States and events

Sports is a state subject, being included under Entry 33 of the State List under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Among the States and Union Territories, Tamil Nadu leads in terms of infrastructure. Recently, the Government of Tamil Nadu announced a Global Sports City on the outskirts of Chennai. It is expected that it will have international facilities including a multipurpose stadium, football grounds, athletic tracks, an Olympic-size swimming pool, a velodrome, sports science facilities, a sports medicine centre and other sporting infrastructure.

Tamil Nadu has taken a leap when it comes to beach sports. Kovalam, a coastal town off

Chennai, has been hosting international surfing events. Chennai hosted an international beach volleyball tournament in 2010 and an international sailing regatta in 2014.

Planning ahead

The biggest expenditure for countries organising the Olympics is from building sporting infrastructure. However, Paris capitalised on existing venues and facilities, thus reducing the capital expenditure.

According to the Union Government, Tamil Nadu has nearly 390 Olympic-standard infrastructure facilities; Delhi is second with nearly 161 and Odisha third with 153. Tamil Nadu, having hosted the South Asian Federation Games in 1995 and the Khelo India Youth Games in 2024, has invested in considerable sporting infrastructure. Similarly, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, hosted the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 and showcased its world-class sporting facilities. By leveraging States such as Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Odisha, which already have sports infrastructure, India would be in a better position to advance a cost-efficient and eco-friendly bid to host the 2036 Games.

There is much at stake when India makes its bid to host the 2036 Olympics. Parties, governments and stakeholders across political or territorial lines must come together in the national interest. But, the leadership for this must come from the highest echelons in the Union government. India's Olympic bid must necessarily be constructed through a collaborative and cooperative approach amongst stakeholders. States must be taken into confidence and a multi-stakeholder, representative committee ought to be formed to plan for India's bid. By leveraging the expertise of States such as Tamil Nadu and Odisha, the committee should put forward its best proposal in line with the criteria devised by the FHC. Only such an effort would be in the national interest and a bid that is truly representative of the country's potential.

Question -1) Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument that India's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games is feasible?

- A) India has consistently underperformed in recent international athletic competitions.
- B) The Future Host Commission has rejected multiple bids from countries lacking prior Olympic experience.
- C) Several states in India lack the necessary infrastructure to host Olympic-level events.
- D) The Indian government has successfully implemented the Khelo India Scheme to nurture young athletes.

Question -2) If the Government of Tamil Nadu fails to complete the Global Sports City project, which of the following is the most likely consequence for India's Olympic bid?

- A) India's bid will be rejected due to insufficient infrastructure.
- B) The Union Government will allocate more funds to other states to compensate.
- C) Tamil Nadu will lose its position as a leading state in sports infrastructure.
- D) India's Olympic bid will still proceed but will be less competitive.

Question -3) The author mentions the 2010 Commonwealth Games as a starting point for India's Olympic ambition. What assumption underlies this reference?

- A) Hosting the Commonwealth Games automatically qualifies a country to host the Olympics.
- B) Successfully hosting a major international sporting event demonstrates a country's capability for the Olympics.
- C) The infrastructure built for the Commonwealth Games is sufficient for the Olympics.
- D) The Commonwealth Games and the Olympics have similar organizational requirements.


Question -4) Which of the following best describes the author's tone towards India's Olympic bid?

- A) Skeptical but hopeful
- B) Cautiously optimistic
- C) Indifferent
- D) Highly critical

Question -5) The passage suggests that the Khelo India Scheme has a significant role in India's Olympic bid. Which of the following, if true, would most support this claim?

- A) The majority of India's Olympic athletes were trained under the Khelo India Scheme.
- B) The Khelo India Scheme has led to increased participation in sports at the grassroots level.
- C) The Khelo India Scheme is primarily focused on sports infrastructure development.
- D) Other countries bidding for the Olympics have similar schemes in place.

Question -6) What is the main assumption behind the author's suggestion that leveraging states like Tamil Nadu and Odisha could make India's Olympic bid more cost-efficient?



A) These states have all the infrastructure necessary to host the Olympics on their own.

B) The existing infrastructure in these states reduces the need for new construction, thereby lowering costs.

C) Other states will not need to contribute to the infrastructure development.

D) The sports infrastructure in Tamil Nadu and Odisha is underutilized.

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