



## CASE STUDY

### COMMONWEALTH GAMES

## At the top of our game - host broadcast television production and coverage facilities and services

Will they be ready in time?" is a perennial question posed to the countries hosting the Commonwealth Games; none more seriously than the recent Games in New Delhi.

SIS LIVE won the prestigious contract to cover the 2010 Games in October 2009 following months of exhaustive negotiations with Prasar Bharati, the Broadcasting Corporation of India.

Even for a company with SIS LIVE's experience and outside broadcast heritage, it was an enormous challenge, but the opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities to a global audience of hundreds of millions of viewers and the world's media was too good to miss.

What SIS LIVE couldn't have known at the time was just how challenging it would be to deliver and how perilously close New Delhi

would come to not being ready. Timescales for the 2010 Games were tight from the outset. A project of this size would normally be planned for up to two years in advance. For the Games, it was fifteen months. As the months ticked by the delays began to eat into the schedule.

With one month to go, the authorities had finished just one of 21 blocks. Just as the



### PROJECT TIMELINE

#### January 2009

SIS LIVE's first expression of interest

#### September 2009

confirmed as the successful bidder

#### March 2010

contract signed

#### April

production plans finalised

#### September

take receipt of four out of 21 broadcast compounds

#### 3 October 2010

Commonwealth Games opening ceremony begins

first compounds were handed over, the worst monsoon for 200 years began, leaving some areas under 12 inches of water. Some broadcast compounds were still being handed over in mid-September.

In the final weeks before the opening ceremony, the Games hit the headlines; delays, unsanitary accommodation, a collapsed walkway and athletes pulling out due to security fears. Expectations were growing that the Games would be a disaster.

Against this backdrop, all that the SIS LIVE team could do is focus on using what little time it had left to deliver what we had promised. And it was a long list: deliver all of the coverage from the Games in full HD, involving 21 sports in 12 different venues across the city.

By the time that the event began, SIS LIVE's ranks had swelled from 500 to more than 1,650, around 600 of whom were from India with 50 from their national broadcaster, Doordarshan.

More than 1,000 experienced staff swarmed in to Delhi from virtually every continent, from Poland to the Philippines. Most were shocked by the amount still to do and the conditions in which they would have to work.

## SIS LIVE KIT LIST

- 1,650 games time staff
- 1,400 hours of live coverage
- 600 microphones
- 365 HD camera channels
- 125 EVS machines
- 50 HD radio channels
- 29 fly-away OB units
- 24 camera cranes
- 12 camera tracking systems
- 6 steadicams
- 5 ultra hi-motion cameras
- 5 'beauty shot' cameras
- 4 helicopters
- 4 motorbikes
- 1 OB truck

Alan Bright, SIS LIVE's Commonwealth Games project director says 'Eventually, thanks to everyone's perseverance and working around the clock, things began to fall in to place. Humour helped, too: "There were so many problems, many of which you couldn't make up, that sometimes you just had to sit back and laugh. When you're planning a project like this, you don't imagine having to worry about monkeys interfering with shots, rats gnawing through cables or cobras having to be removed from compounds – but we had them all."

Against all odds, the Games started on time at 2:30pm BST on 3 October. The spectacular and innovative opening ceremony was critically acclaimed, particularly the use of a helium balloon as a giant projector screen. To the millions of people watching on TV, including those enjoying the first Games to be broadcast in HD, the event was running smoothly.

Over the next 11 days, SIS LIVE produced more than 1,400 hours of live TV. David Meynell, managing director, SIS LIVE: "It was a massive achievement in both the quantity and quality of production. Under the circumstances, delivering the Games in standard definition would have been an achievement. To have delivered unbroken HD coverage at such high quality with universal acclaim from global broadcast rights holders was exceptional."

SIS LIVE entered the Games as one of the few companies in the world capable of delivering them. It leaves with its reputation enhanced as one of even fewer who could have done so against such enormous odds.

