

# BOLLYWOOD BLAST FOR COMMONWEALTH GAMES

**Supporters of King Khan say he is younger and more secular than Big B**

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SUPERSTAR Shah Rukh Khan had once said he would stop doing things that Amitabh Bachchan had done before. Like the remake of Don, or the hit quiz show Kaun Banega Crorepati. But this is an entirely different ballgame. Shah Rukh may now be doing something that Amitabh couldn't do at all.

After the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) decided not to consider his name as the brand ambassador for 2010 Commonwealth Games, Bachchan might have to contend with another ignominy. That of being replaced by Shah Rukh Khan.

Speculations have been doing the rounds of political circles in Delhi that the Congress is aiming at killing two birds with one stone, if such a move materialises.

Though Commonwealth Games Federation chairman Suresh Kalmadi was not available for comments, federation's media in-charge Lalit Bhanot did not rule out the possibility of SRK becoming the brand ambassador for the mega sporting event.

Though officially, he was

## BOL BACHCHAN

Amitabh Bachchan was the brand ambassador of 1982 Delhi Asiad in which he lent his voice and anchored the opening ceremony. He was close to Rajiv Gandhi at that point of time.



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more cautious. "Right now we are considering names of sportspersons as ambassadors. Whenever we will take a decision, we will let you know."

"Shah Rukh has everything a brand ambassador for an international event should have. He is a Muslim and is someone who stood up against the hooliganism of the Shiv Sena. He has a secular face, he is young, and has a larger appeal," a senior bureaucrat associated with the Commonwealth Games told MiD DAY, requesting

anonymity.

IOA chief Suresh Kalmadi, at a function on Tuesday, hinted that Big B was too old for espousing the cause of an international sporting event. "We are looking for a fresh, young face," he told media persons. The statement pumped oxygen into the lungs of those who have been baying for the blood of Bachchan after he took over as the brand ambassador of Gujarat.

The Congress, the ruling party both at the Centre and Delhi, has already reiterated that somebody who could stand for Narendra Modi's Gujarat should not be made the face of an event as big as the Commonwealth Games.

"Mr Bachchan do you

endorse what happened during the riots? What are your views on the Gujarat government's complicity during the post-Godhra massacre? You must explain your position clearly," Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari had demanded.

In fact, it was after the Congress party snubbed Bachchan for his role as Gujarat's brand ambassador that the BJP came up with the proposal of making the Big B the face of the Commonwealth Games.

However, the Congress tried to steer clear of its role in the decision of choosing a brand ambassador for the October games. "It is the prerogative of the Commonwealth Games Federation to appoint a brand

ambassador. The Congress has nothing to do with it," Tiwari told MiD DAY.

But with the surfacing of Shah Rukh's name even the BJP is in a tight spot. Though it outrightly rejected the idea of dropping Amitabh Bachchan's name due to age factor they did not completely disagree with SRK replacing him.

Indian Olympic Association senior vice-president and an executive board member of the Games VK Malhotra said, "The matter will be decided by the executive board. I would not like to comment on his (Amitabh Bachchan) candidature. But saying no to him just because of his age is ridiculous."

Sources in Delhi Congress said choosing SRK will help the party send out a message to Amitabh Bachchan, adding that "Shah Rukh is younger and more acceptable."

They also pointed out the close relations that the King Khan enjoys with both Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit to corroborate their claims.

Shah Rukh Khan during the Delhi Half Marathon in November 2009 had indeed expressed his desire to be a part of the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony.

MiD DAY tried to contact Amitabh Bachchan, but he did not return the phone calls.

Another federation official said that there could be many brand ambassadors for the promotion of the event and Shah Rukh could be one of them.

"However, at this juncture it is very tough to say who will be named as main brand ambassador for the games. The executive board is yet to take a final decision," the official said.



Amitabh Bachchan has become the brand ambassador of Gujarat and not of Pakistan. He is an artiste and not Dawood (Ibrahim). Congress leaders were harassing Bachchan as he is the brand ambassador of a BJP-ruled state and has fallen out with the first family of the ruling party.  
— Prakash Javadekar, BJP spokesperson



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— Manish Tewari, Congress spokesperson

# BE A SPORT. CARPOOL.

**A website is raising awareness about the concept to ease off traffic during Games**

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TRAFFIC arteries are getting choked by the day. But is the government ready to face the heat during the Games? Well, that's something a Gurgaon-based car-pooling website is trying to figure out by spreading awareness about the concept.

The website, Easy2com-

mute.com (E2C), is currently registered with over 3,500 corporate employees and adds about 75 members each week. More than 3,000 areas/sectors/colonies/offices in Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Noida and Greater Noida are covered by this website. The members are hoping to bring the number to around 10,000 by the start of the Games.

"We had approached

Commonwealth Games organisers, hoping to get them enthused about the idea of car-pooling, but they didn't revert. The lukewarm response forced us to knock the corporate door, and it proved useful," said Amrishi Bajaj, one of the founder members of the website.

"Eight months have passed since September 2009, and till now the organisers have done nothing. As an aware citizen, we have taken the onus. This initiative can help ease traffic congestion during the Games. We are now looking forward to triple the number by Commonwealth Games

through our effort," added Bajaj.

In 2009, the Delhi government had also planned to launch the Pan City Mega Carpool Scheme ahead of the Commonwealth Games 2010. The ride sharing scheme designed in collaboration with IIT-D, aims to provide a simple way to encourage car owners to share their vehicles with other car owners, thereby resulting in fewer cars on city roads.

To read more about traffic arrangements during games log on to [www.mid-day.com/delhi](http://www.mid-day.com/delhi)



Commuting during the morning hours is the worst thing in Delhi. To ease the pressure, I started using this service. There are three others who are on the same route and share the car with me. This has saved a lot of our money and time. This is a good way to beat the traffic during the Games if more and more people come forward.

— Hemant Kumar Roy, Noida resident.

## SMART PLAN

An intelligent traffic system (ITS) will be installed for effective monitoring of traffic on roads during Games. The first phase of the project will include 87 roads covering about 210 km and 220 intersections. Traffic police will install CCTV cameras in 58 markets and 27 border checkpoints across the city. The traffic department will also use modern

enforcement equipment such as lux meters and driving simulators. The traffic department will establish an integrated communication network (cyber highway) and a central command operations control room called C4i. C4i, with the help of wireless sets, mobile phones and landlines, will be linked to staff on the ground and subsidiary bases.