

Nasrec gets R120 million upgrade for 2010

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More than R120 million has been set aside to upgrade the Nasrec precinct south of Johannesburg's city centre to support the hosting of the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Officially announced on Monday, 21 April 2008, the upgrading of the precinct is scheduled to start in May, which will see the area be transformed into a world class centre over the next two years.

"The IBC will be the pulse and the nerve centre for all TV operations during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Though a sophisticated network it will be linking the venues in South Africa to the rest of our football family all over the globe.

"This way it will also create a legacy, far beyond the event in terms of telecommunication infrastructure for the country," said FIFA President Joseph Sepp Blatter in a video message to guests attending the function.

Johannesburg was among the country's three cities that bid for the right to be the nerve centre for all TV and radio operations during the tournament. Cape Town and Durban were the other two bidding cities.

Speaking during the event, Johannesburg Executive Mayor Amos Masondo said the money will be used mainly to rent and upgrade the required halls and facilities from the Expo Centre.

"In addition the city will provide various services relating to electricity installation, security and monitoring, waste removal, health and transport."

The city approved the Nasrec precinct as a development node to bridge the apartheid spatial planning gap between the south and the north of Johannesburg in 2001.

"This has resulted in among others, the private sector partnering with the city in investing R1 billion in the Nasrec precinct for the development of 500 residential units and a four star hotel," Mayor Masondo said.

Nasrec, one of the city's oldest and largest exhibition centres, will see thousands of broadcasters from around the world based there for six weeks during June/July 2010.

During the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, the IBC was set up in Munich where Germany hosted 13,400 accredited TV commentators, camera crew members and technical staff.

The centre broadcast images and reports of the world cup to more than 120 television and radio stations in 190 countries to over 26 billion people across the world.

Similarly, the IBC to be established in Nasrec will host thousands of broadcasters from around the world for the six week duration of the world cup.

The cumulative television audience for the 2010 event in South Africa is estimated to reach 30 billion.

Communications Deputy Minister Roy Padayachee said the IBC would have the most up-to-date digital broadcast telecommunications systems available to provide for an estimated 3000 broadcast journalists during the event.

“Once completed, the satellite teleport and telecommunications infrastructure will be able to support transmission capacity of forty gigabytes per second.

“This FIFA World Cup will also be the first one broadcast in high-definition television. A dedicated network will link the ten venues and the rest of the world to the images from the 2010 FIFA World Cup,” the deputy minister said.

The IBC would become a key legacy project for business and sporting-related businesses in a safe hi-tech node which would eventually include residential, shopping and entertainment developments.

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