

FIFA Fan Fest to connect the world

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JOHANNESBURG: With just 198 days until kick-off to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, FIFA has launched a Fan Fest which will connect football fans globally across South Africa and five continents.



The FIFA Fan Fest, or the official public viewing events, will allow football enthusiasts to watch all 64 matches free in some of the most iconic locations in South Africa and around the world.

FIFA announced on Monday, 23 November 2009, that all nine South African Host Cities as well as Berlin, London, Mexico City, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome and Sydney will be used as official public viewing events of football's flagship tournament.

Millions of football fans are anticipated to watch the matches and other World Cup related programmes and experience the event like never before.

Local Organising Committee boss, Dr Danny Jordaan, believes the FIFA Fan Fest will shape the experience of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and bring the world together to enjoy Africa's first World Cup.

"If there are no matches in particular, city fans will still have an opportunity to watch all 64 matches on the giant screen for free in a vibrant, secured and exciting environment.

"These public viewing areas will be opened for the duration of the event and there will be live entertainment and many interesting programmes," he said.

These fan parks will be organized by the Host Cities, together with FIFA, as well as the LOC and the international FIFA Fan Fest cities.

FIFA Fan Fest was launched in Germany during the 2006 World Cup and more than 18 million fans gathered at the 12

official events and transformed Germany as one of the greatest fan parties of all time.

The public viewing areas are set to create thousands of jobs for small businesses operating particularly in arts and craft, beverages and the entertainment industry.

The LOC boss assured that the fans parks could create a large number of job opportunities, depending on the number of visitors that arrive in South Africa during that period.

FIFA President Sepp Blatter said the FIFA Fan Fests will bring an unprecedented experience to millions of football fans in South Africa and around the world.

"The first International FIFA Fan Fest is another milestone in bringing the excitement of the FIFA World Cup to an even greater audience," he said.

Meanwhile, FIFA marketing director Thierry Weil told reporters that the Fan Fest is an extension of what would be taking place in stadiums, adding that this will give fans, who are unable to attend the matches, an opportunity to experience the World Cup fever.

"Since there is a restricted number of fans allowed inside the stadium, we have initiated these fan parks to ensure that everyone feels they are a part of the event.

"We are working together with the LOC and Host Cities to ensure that these outdoor events bring an exceptional experience of the 2010 FIFA World Cup," Weil said.

Host Cities will also organise facilities for disabled football fans.

Meanwhile, on 4 December, the day of the eagerly awaited Final Draw, visitors and South Africans will have the first opportunity to get a taste of what is to come in 2010 when Cape Town hosts the Long Street Festival for the Final Draw which will feature an official FIFA Fan Fest showcase event.

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