

No sports in toxic air: Delhi govt reschedules sports calendar to non-pollution months

The change in the schedule was done in response to several directives issued by the Delhi High Court in this regard, the circular said.

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According to the new schedule, 40 games in different schools will be conducted in the months of September and October.

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- Delhi govt alters school sports calendar.
- Change due to high winter air pollution.
- Games now scheduled for Sept and Oct 2026.

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In the wake of high air pollution during winter months, the Delhi government has altered the annual calendar of the major sporting events held for school students, and directed schools to conclude the events by October-end, an official circular issued by the state government showed. The state government has tweaked the schedule of Delhi State School Games (DSSG) 2026-27.

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The Delhi High Court as a result closed a plea on August 3 seeking directions against holding outdoor sporting events in the national capital during peak pollution months.

As per the circular, the school administrations are

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As per the circular, the school administrations are mandated to ensure all zonal school games in all disciplines shall be planned and completed "sufficiently in advance" of the scheduled state-level competitions.

All schools should ensure timely competition of all preparatory activities, including conduct of zonal competitions, verification of eligibility, preparation of fixtures, and coordination with participating schools, so that the state-level competitions are conducted smoothly without delay, the circular said.



According to the new schedule, 40 games across different schools will be conducted in the months of September and October. The last game in the schedule will be completed on October 19, 2026.

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The timeline of the case

In November 2025, as many as 11 school children, who are residents of Delhi, [had filed a writ petition](#) in the Delhi High Court, seeking a stay on "state-scheduled" sporting events during November to January, as these months witness "severe" and "hazardous" air quality.

The petitioners said that the annual sports calendar (including all zonal, inter-zonal, state and national tournaments, trials, and coaching camps) for all outdoor sports in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, should be scheduled during safer and less susceptible months with "verified better" ambient air quality; and sought directions from the Delhi HC on the same.



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As a result, on December 19, the Delhi High Court had requested the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to take into consideration this aspect of the matter and issue necessary directions to the concerned States so that the sports events/competitions/activities could be shifted to safer months.

In the petition, Dr. Arvind Kumar, Founder Trustee of the Lung Care Foundation, said that “long-term cohort studies have repeatedly shown that exposure to high PM2.5 in childhood leads to permanent reduction in lung growth and capacity, which persists into adulthood and predisposes to chronic respiratory disease. Given these established vulnerabilities, children must be treated as a priority risk group in any decision involving outdoor exposure.”

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