



More than 5,000 YOG athletes and officials will stay at 10 NTU halls of residence (above). Located on the northern side of the campus, these buildings will get fresh coats of paint and have their rooms refurbished.

The Village Square (left) in NIE will function as the heart of the Youth Olympic Village. Highlights include the World Culture Village exhibition, featuring the histories and cultures of all 205 National Olympic Committees. There will also be a bank and retail shops as well as concerts in the area. PHOTOS: JOSEPH NAIR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES



Existing facilities at NIE that will be refurbished include the tennis, basketball and handball courts (left). A completed upgrade is the bright new hockey pitch, fitted with improved lighting. PHOTO: NTU

Get ready for the Village, people

NTU is being spruced up for next year's Youth Olympics. Here is a peek at some upgrades

tan yi hui

The inaugural Youth Olympic Games (YOG) do not take place until next year, but already the students of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) are cheering. The reason: improved campus facilities.

As the NTU campus has been designated the Youth Olympic Village, which will house more than 5,000 athletes and officials from 205 National Olympic Committees for the Games, it is in the midst of a makeover.

Upgrading works include a new coat of paint for 10 halls of residences and air-conditioners in almost 3,000 rooms which previously only had ceiling fans.

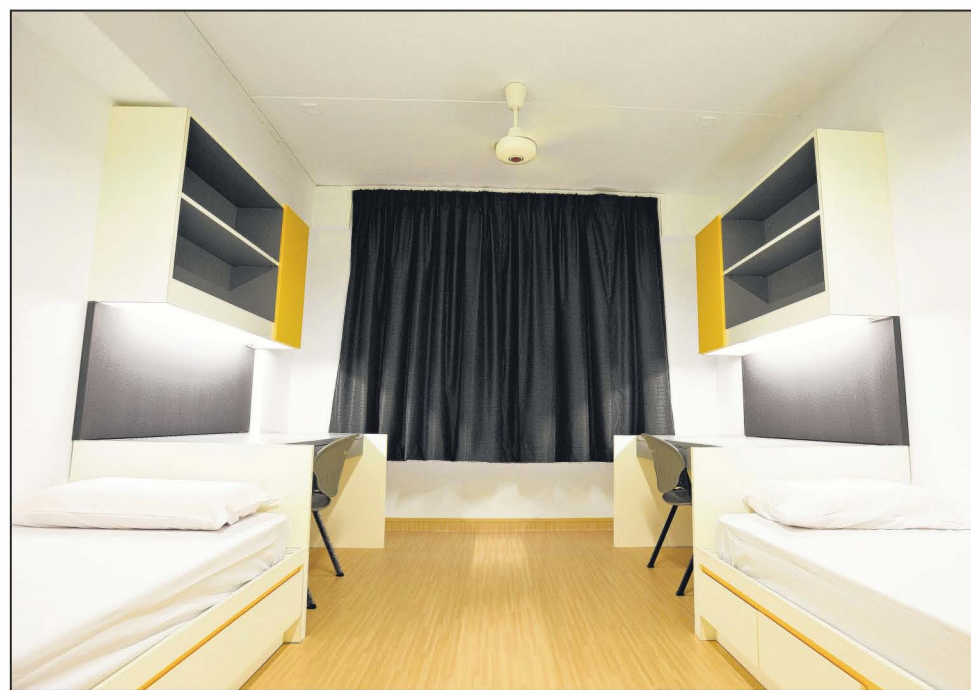
Other room additions comprise vinyl floors and new bed furnishings that come with lower drawer compartments.

Renovated toilets will feature new mirrors, tiles and basins, while the floor in all hall pantries will be retiled.

Improved facilities on the National Institute of Education (NIE) side of the campus include fully renovated toilets, refurbished sports courts and a spanking new hockey pitch.

There will also be a new glass canopy and sound-dampening boards for the canteen, which will expand to accommodate about 2,000 people. Athletes can also tap into the existing wireless IT connectivity through NIE.

NTU students are already giving their



thumbs-up. Trainee physical education teacher Danny Leong, 33, who has "sneaked a peek" into the NIE toilets still under renovation, says: "They are completely different from how they used to look. I definitely like the new designs."

The bonus of a spiffier-looking campus has come for NTU students because the original plans for the Youth Olympic Village had to be scrapped.

The \$500-million, 19ha University Town in Clementi, which is under construction, was the first choice to host the athletes and the accompanying officials.

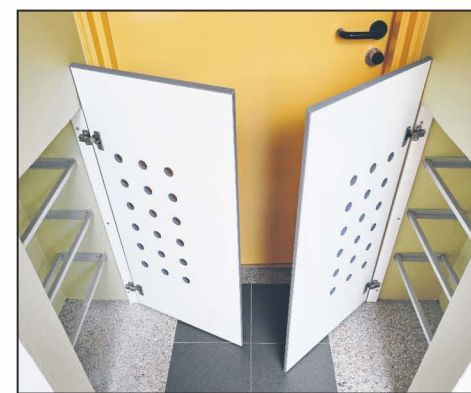
The National University of Singapore project, which began construction last year, was accelerated and scheduled to be ready by August next year for the games, but due to rising prices of building materi-

als, this would incur a "significant" increase in cost. So the Youth Olympics organisers announced last August that the village would be relocated to NTU.

The 200ha NTU campus had already been identified as an alternative venue when Singapore submitted its bid to host the event in 2007. In February last year, the Republic was named the host city of the inaugural Games over the other finalist, Moscow.

According to organisers, only "a small fraction" of the US\$75.4 million (S\$108.3 million) budgeted for the Games will go to the refurbishment works at NTU.

The bulk of NTU's costs come from separate budgets that were already in place for regular upgrades. These have been brought forward for the occasion.



Existing shoe racks (above) outside the rooms have been fitted with doors to give the corridor a neater appearance. Meanwhile, the double rooms (left) have been upgraded with new flooring, air-conditioners, beds and curtains.



NIE's newly renovated toilets (above) now boast motion-sensor lighting, new mirrors and basin finishings.

Attend the YOG carnival at The Padang next Friday at 5pm, where the YOG countdown clock will be unveiled. Admission is free. For details, log on to www.singapore2010.sg

Ms Sheryl Lim, director of the Youth Olympic Village, says: "Our philosophy from the start is to use existing facilities. What construction there is involves projects that were already planned before we decided to bid for the Games."

An NTU spokesman adds: "The guiding principle behind the refurbishments is that they remain integral to the needs of the university's students, who will be the final beneficiaries of the works."

NTU's sprucing-up, started last December, will take place in phases to avoid disrupting the academic semesters, say university officials. It is scheduled to be ready by May next year, three months before the two-week Games kick off on Aug 14.

The events will be held during the semester break when the students mostly vacate the campus and move out of the halls. NTU also says the start of the new academic year will be postponed to Aug 30, 2010 - three weeks later than usual.

The Games Village will occupy about 55ha - nearly the size of 80 football fields - and is divided into two zones: the Residential Zone and the Village Square.

Ten undergraduate halls of residence (Halls 3, 8 to 16) will be the temporary homes for the athletes and officials. The Village Square, essentially the heart of the village where all participants will congregate, will be located in the NIE part of the campus.

Final-year engineering student Xu Chen Xiang has just moved into his hall in preparation for the upcoming semester. He is pleased with the new curtains and bed furnishings in his room.

The 21-year-old student from China has only one regret: He will not get to use the air-conditioner, which has already been installed. He says: "We can use them only after the Games. Too bad I won't be around then."

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