



## Paralympics 2024

### A Legacy of Resilience and Triumph

**August 28, 2024**

The Paralympics have long been a beacon of hope and inspiration, showcasing the extraordinary abilities of athletes who overcome immense challenges to achieve greatness. As the world gears up for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games starting from **28 August to go on till 8 September**, the event reminds of the indomitable human spirit! With India sending its largest-ever contingent of **84 athletes in 12 games**, the nation is set to leave an indelible mark on this prestigious event.

## Paralympics 2024

India's largest ever contingent of 84 athletes  
set to compete in Paris



## **A Historical Overview: The Birth of the Paralympic Movement**

The origins of the Paralympic movement can be traced back to **1948, when Sir Ludwig Guttman**, a German neurologist, organized a sports competition for World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England. What began as a small event with just 16 athletes competing in archery and netball has since evolved into a global phenomenon.

### **1952: The First International Stoke Mandeville Games**

The foundation of the Paralympic movement was laid in **1952** when the **first International Stoke Mandeville Games** were held. A team of veterans from the Netherlands joined British teams in a competition that marked the beginning of an annual tradition. This event was crucial in promoting the idea that sport could be an effective form of rehabilitation for those with physical disabilities.

### **1954: Growth and International Participation**

By 1954, the **International Stoke Mandeville Games** had grown significantly, with 14 countries participating. The majority of athletes were paraplegic patients from hospitals or rehabilitation centers that had adopted sports as part of their therapy programs. This expansion reflected the increasing recognition of sports as a vital component of physical and psychological recovery for injured veterans.

### **1955: Expanding Horizons**

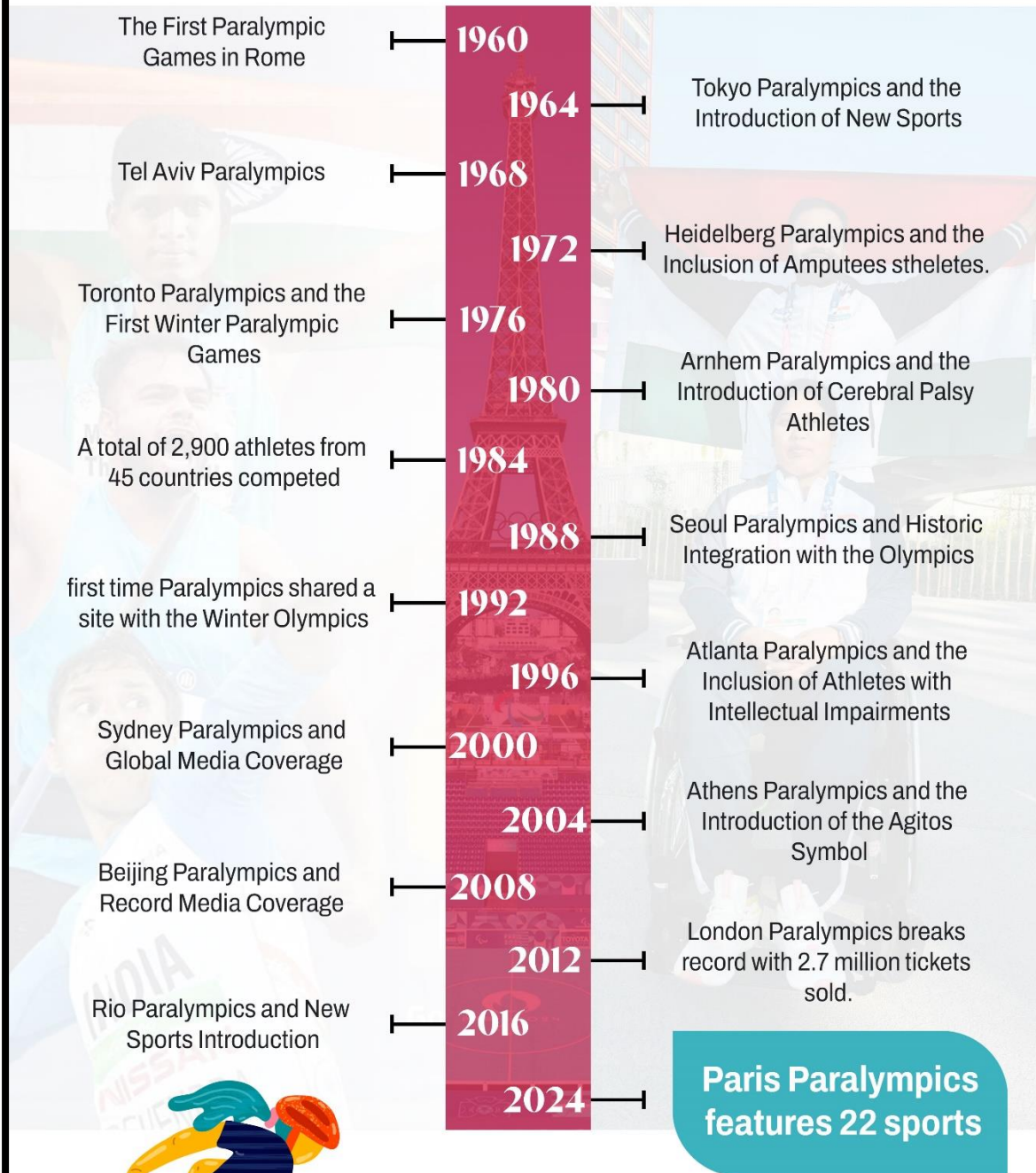
The fourth edition of the International Stoke Mandeville Games in 1955 saw further growth, with 18 countries and 200 athletes competing. The Games continued to foster international camaraderie among athletes with disabilities, establishing a solid foundation for future global competitions.

### **1960: The First Paralympic Games in Rome**

The ninth International Stoke Mandeville Games, held in Rome from 18 to 25 September 1960, were considered the first Paralympic Games. These Games took place just days after the Olympic Games concluded, with **400 athletes from 23 nations** competing in eight sports. This historic event marked the official start of the Paralympic Games, showcasing the athletic abilities of competitors in wheelchairs and setting the stage for future Paralympic events.



# Paralympics over the Years



<sup>1</sup> [https://x.com/Media\\_SAI/status/1828502188684935637/photo/1](https://x.com/Media_SAI/status/1828502188684935637/photo/1)

<sup>2</sup> [https://x.com/Media\\_SAI/status/1827335746107117810/photo/1](https://x.com/Media_SAI/status/1827335746107117810/photo/1)

### **1964: Tokyo Paralympics and the Introduction of New Sports**

The 1964 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, held from 3 to 12 November, brought together **375 athletes from 21 countries**. This edition introduced **para powerlifting and a 60m wheelchair race**, despite athletes still using everyday wheelchairs. The Games highlighted the need for specialized equipment, a development that would come in the following decades as para-sports continued to evolve.

### **1968: Tel Aviv Paralympics**

Due to technical reasons, the 1968 Paralympic Games were relocated from Mexico City to Tel Aviv. Held from 4 to 13 November, these Games saw **750 athletes from 29 nations** compete, with **women's wheelchair basketball** and the **100m wheelchair race** making their debut. This edition underscored the growing diversity and inclusion in Paralympic sports.

### **1972: Heidelberg Paralympics and the Inclusion of Amputees**

The 1972 Paralympic Games in Heidelberg, Germany, were notable for the participation of **984 athletes from 43 countries**. This year marked the first inclusion of amputee athletes in the Games. Additionally, discussions among coaches and delegation heads led to the creation of subcommittees for each sport, paving the way for more structured rules and classification systems in Paralympic sports.

### **1976: Toronto Paralympics and the First Winter Paralympic Games**

Toronto hosted the fifth Paralympic Games from 3 to 11 August 1976, with **1,657 athletes from 40 countries**, including amputees and visually impaired athletes, participating for the first time. The Games introduced new sports like goalball and shooting. That same year, the first Winter Paralympic Games were held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, marking the expansion of the Paralympic movement to winter sports.

### **1980: Arnhem Paralympics and the Introduction of Cerebral Palsy Athletes**

In 1980, the Paralympic Games were held in Arnhem, Netherlands, **where 1,973 athletes from 43 countries competed**. This edition marked the first time athletes with cerebral palsy participated in the Games, further broadening the inclusivity of the Paralympics. Sitting volleyball, specifically for amputees, also made its debut.

### **1984: Dual Locations and Classification Advancements**

The 1984 Paralympic Games were unique in being held in two locations: New York and Stoke Mandeville. A total of **2,900 athletes from 45 countries** competed, with the Games marking significant advancements in classification systems for athletes with various disabilities. This year solidified the organizational structure necessary for managing the growing complexity of the Paralympic movement.

### **1988: Seoul Paralympics and Historic Integration with the Olympics**

**The 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games were groundbreaking as they were held at the same site as the Olympic Games, a historic first!** Over 3,000 athletes from 60 countries participated, with several Olympic officials trained for Paralympic competitions. This integration highlighted the growing acceptance and recognition of the Paralympic Games on the global stage.

### **1992: Barcelona and the Winter Paralympics in Tignes-Albertville**

In 1992, the Winter Paralympics were held in Tignes and Albertville, France, **the first time they shared a site with the Winter Olympics**. Later that year, the Summer Paralympics in Barcelona saw 2,999 athletes from 83 countries compete, with wheelchair tennis making its debut. The Games were widely broadcast, reaching millions of viewers and setting numerous world records.

### **1996: Atlanta Paralympics and the Inclusion of Athletes with Intellectual Impairments**

The 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta featured **3,259 athletes from 104 countries**, including, for the first time, athletes with intellectual impairments. This inclusion marked an important milestone in the Paralympic movement, further broadening the diversity of the athletes competing.

### **2000: Sydney Paralympics and Global Media Coverage**

Sydney hosted the 11th Summer Paralympic Games in 2000, with **3,879 athletes from 123 countries**. The Games featured 18 sports, with women participating in para powerlifting for the first time and wheelchair rugby making its debut. The event received unprecedented global media coverage, with millions of viewers tuning in, solidifying the Paralympics' place in the international sports landscape.

### **2004: Athens Paralympics and the Introduction of the Agitos Symbol**

The 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens involved **3,808 athletes from 135 countries** and marked the first year the Olympic and Paralympic Games shared an organizing committee. The Agitos, the symbol of the Paralympic movement, was revealed in its current form during the Closing Ceremony, and women's competitions in para judo and sitting volleyball were introduced.

### **2008: Beijing Paralympics and Record Media Coverage**

The Beijing Paralympic Games in 2008 saw the participation of **3,951 athletes from 146 countries**. With the addition of para rowing, the number of sports increased to 20. The Games set a new record for media coverage, with 5,800 accredited journalists and 3.8 billion television viewers worldwide, highlighting the growing popularity of the Paralympic Games.

### **2012: London Paralympics – Breaking previous records!**

The London 2012 Paralympic Games were celebrated as the “greatest Paralympic Games ever,” with 4,237 athletes from 164 countries competing. The Games, held from 29 August to 9 September, **sold 2.7 million tickets**, breaking previous records. London's hosting of the Games, where the Paralympic movement began, symbolized the culmination of decades of growth and progress.

### **2016: Rio Paralympics and New Sports Introduction**

The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games marked the first time the event was held in South America. From 7 to 18 September, **4,328 athletes from 160 countries competed**, with para canoeing and para triathlon making their debut. These Games were the most heavily broadcast in history, reaching audiences in 154 countries.

### **2021: Tokyo Paralympics and New Sport Additions**

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, delayed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **introduced para badminton and para taekwondo to the official program**. The Games were held from 24 August to 5 September, continuing the tradition of innovation and inclusivity that has defined the Paralympic movement since its inception.

### **Paris 2024: A Historic Milestone**

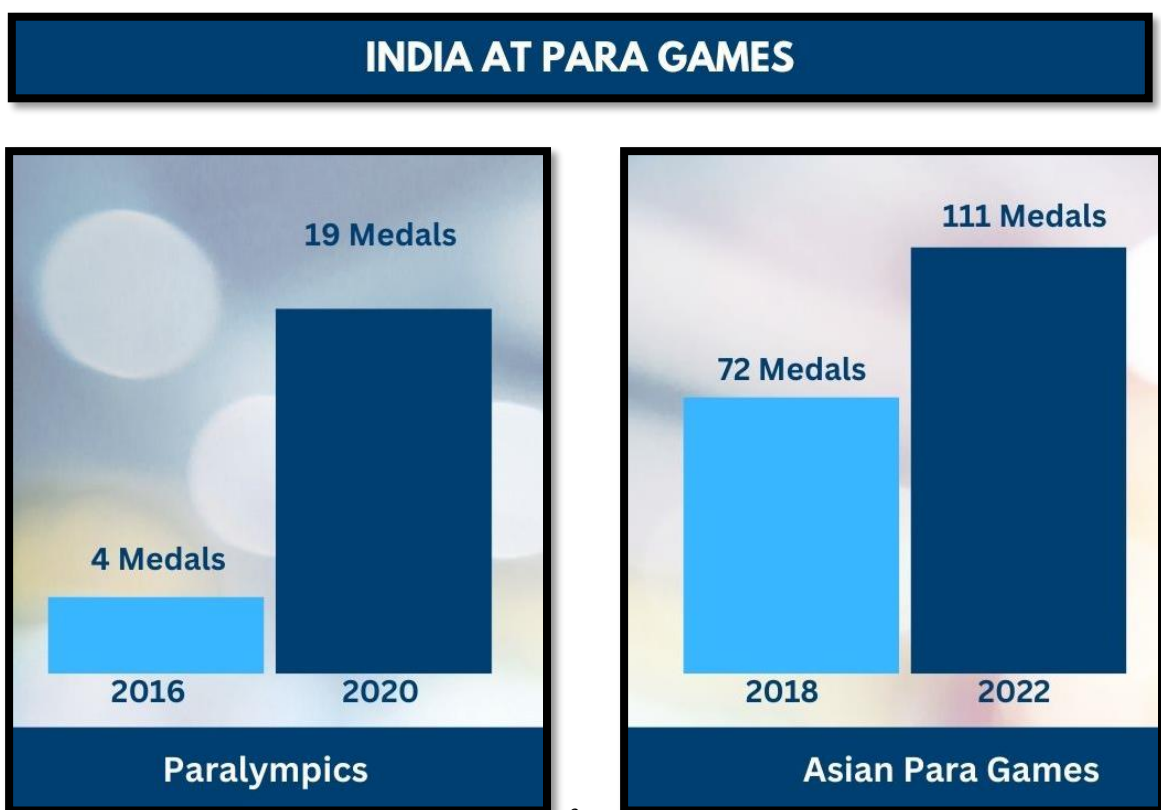
The Paris 2024 Paralympics mark a historic moment as France hosts the Summer Paralympic Games for the first time. This is only the second time the country has hosted the Paralympics, the first being

the Winter Paralympics in 1992 in Tignes and Albertville. The 2024 edition is poised to be a grand celebration of athleticism, resilience, and the spirit of inclusion.

The Paris Games will take place from 28 August to 8 September 2024 and will feature **22 sports, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo.** New additions to the Games include **para judo, para rowing, and para cycling, reflecting the evolving landscape of para-sports.**

### India's Journey in the Paralympics

India's journey in the Paralympics has been one of gradual growth and increasing recognition. The country's participation in the Games has expanded significantly over the years, **with 84 athletes in to compete in 12 games at Paris Paralympics 2024—a record for India.** This growth is a reflection of the rising support for para-sports in the country and the success of government initiatives such as the Khelo India program and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).



3

**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** engaged with the Indian contingent ahead of their participation in the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris, France. During the interaction, he extended his best wishes to the athletes, commending their resilience and determination. The Prime

<sup>3</sup> Pathway to Paris pdf

Minister emphasized the nation's pride in their accomplishments and expressed confidence in their potential to bring glory to India on the global stage.



4

Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, expressed his pride in the Indian contingent during a send-off ceremony in New Delhi. He emphasized the government's commitment to providing para-athletes with the necessary resources and support to excel on the global stage, reflecting India's determination to make its mark at the Paralympics.

### **Indian Athletes to Watch at Paris 2024**

The Indian contingent at Paris 2024 is packed with talent and potential, with several athletes poised to make headlines. Among them is **Krishna Nagar**, who will be defending his men's singles title in para badminton. In para shooting, **Avani Lekhara and Manish Narwal**, both Tokyo 2020 medallists, will be looking to add to their impressive medal hauls.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://x.com/mansukhmandviya/status/1825563835249676591/photo/1>





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**Sumit Antil**, a gold medallist and world record-holder in the F64 category of javelin throw, is another athlete to watch. His performance in Tokyo 2020 captivated the nation, and he will undoubtedly be a strong contender in Paris. **Bhavina Patel**, India's first Paralympic medallist in table tennis, will compete in both the women's singles and doubles events, adding to the anticipation surrounding India's performance.

In para powerlifting, India will make its first podium attempts since Athens 2004, with athletes **Parmjeet Kumar, Ashok, Sakina Khatun, and Kasthuri Rajamani** representing the nation. The excitement continues with Indian judokas **Kapil Parmar and Kokila** making their Paralympic debuts, adding new dimensions to India's participation in the Games.

### **Conclusion: A Celebration of Human Spirit**

The Paralympic Games are more than just a sporting event; The Games challenge societal perceptions of disability and promote inclusion, reminding the world that sport has the power to break down barriers and bring people together. As the Paris 2024 Paralympics unfold, the world will once again witness the incredible feats of athletes who defy the odds and redefine the boundaries of human potential. As India's largest-ever contingent prepares to compete at Paris 2024, the nation stands united in support of these extraordinary individuals. Their stories of resilience and triumph

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<sup>5</sup> [https://x.com/Media\\_SAI/status/1824399189117374666/photo/2](https://x.com/Media_SAI/status/1824399189117374666/photo/2)

are a source of inspiration for all, reminding us that the true essence of sport lies not in victory alone but in the courage to pursue one's dreams against all odds.

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