

India's Sporting Transformation

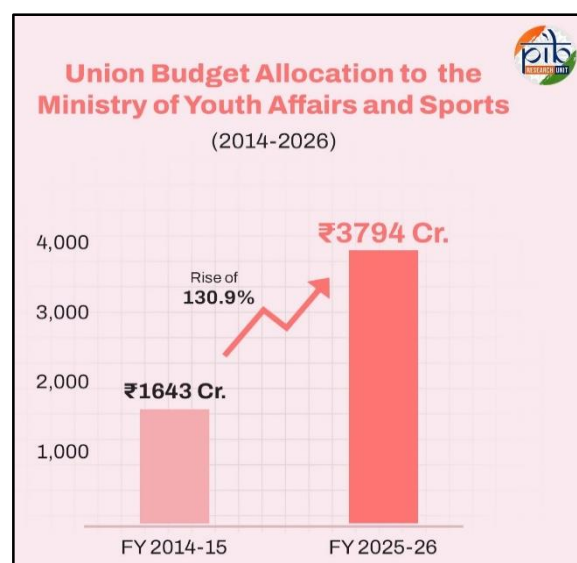
Building Champions, Inspiring a Nation

June 10, 2025

Introduction

India has the **largest youth population in the world**, with about **65%** of its people under the age of 35. Recognizing the potential of this demographic dividend, the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** plays a crucial role in youth development and sports promotion. It focuses on personality-building, skill enhancement, and fostering national integration through various initiatives.

In a move to fuel India's sporting future, the government has made a record allocation of **₹3794 crores** to the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** for **FY 2025-26**. A major portion, that is **₹2,191.01 crore**, has been allocated to **Central Sector Schemes**, with the flagship **Khelo India Programme** receiving **₹1,000 crore**. The budget allocations to the ministry in the **FY 2014-15** were **₹1643 crore**, marking a **rise of 130.9%** in 2025-26.



Khelo India Scheme

Launched in **2016-17**, the **Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports** aims to promote mass participation and sporting excellence in both rural and urban areas. The scheme received an extension for **five years** in **2021** with an outlay of **₹3,790.50 crore**. Key achievements include:

- Approval of **326 new sports infrastructure projects** worth **₹3,124.12 crore**.
- Establishment of **1,045 Khelo India Centres (KICs)** for grassroots training and support.
- Notification of **34 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCs)** and accreditation of **306 academies**.
- Support for **2,845 Khelo India Athletes (KIAs)** with coaching, equipment, medical care, and a monthly out-of-pocket allowance.



Khelo India Games

Under the Khelo India movement, the **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)**, the **Khelo India University Games (KIUG)**, **Khelo India Para Games** and the **Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG)** were set up as **annual national sports competitions** where youngsters, representing their states and universities,

respectively, showcased their skills and competed for medals. The initiative began with the **Khelo India School Games** in **2018** held in **New Delhi**. The big push came after the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** became associated with the initiative later that year and consequently the Khelo India School Games were renamed to the **Khelo India Youth Games from 2019**.



The KIYG began in **2018** with **18 sports**. In **2025**, when the 7th edition of KIYG was held in **Bihar**, it featured **27 sports**. So far, **17 editions** of the **Khelo India Games** have been conducted, with participation from over **50,000 athletes**.

More than 1,300 athletes each took part in **Khelo India Para Games 2023** and **2025**.

KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification)

KIRTI is a nationwide initiative to **identify and nurture sporting talent among children aged 9 to 18**. The program uses **Talent Assessment Centres (TACs)** across the country, standardized protocols, and advanced IT tools (including AI and data analytics) for transparent, merit-based selection. There are **174 TACs** in the country as of present.

KIRTI aims to create a **sustainable pipeline of athletes** to help India become a **top-10 sporting nation by 2036** and **top-5 by 2047**.

Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)

Government provides assistance to India's **top athletes** for their **preparations for Olympic and Paralympic Games**. **Selected athletes** are supported with **funding from National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)** for **customized training and** other support not available under normal schemes of the Ministry. Out of pocket allowance (OPA) is paid at **Rs. 50,000/- per month** to Core group athletes. Further, a **Development Group** was added to **support junior athletes** with a stipend of **Rs. 25,000/- per month**. TOPS contributed to India's medal-winning success in the **Tokyo 2020** and **Paris 2024 Olympics**.

As of August 2024, **174 individual athletes & 2 hockey teams (Men & Women)** as core group have been selected under the scheme.

FIT India Movement

Fit India Movement was launched with a view to make **fitness an integral part of our daily lives**. The mission of the movement is to bring about behavioural changes and move towards a more physically active lifestyle. Key achievements under this scheme are:

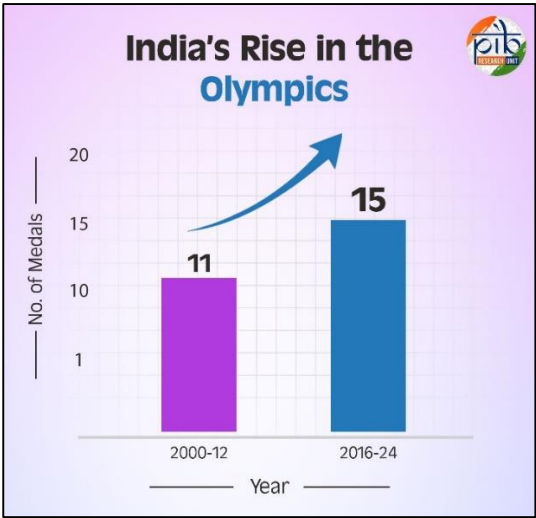
- The first-ever **Fit India Carnival**, a three-day fitness and wellness festival, took place in **March 2025** in **New Delhi**.
- A special online series titled, '**Fit India- Healthy Hindustan**' Programme, a talk show by eminent fitness experts and Fit India icons, was launched in **2023**.
- **Fit India Family Sessions** were conducted, under this movement, on fitness with experts with objective of inculcating fitness routine amongst families with simple and easy capsules.
- In October 2019, more than **1500 Fit India Plog Runs** were organised across the country under Fit India Movement.



Indian Performances at Major International Competitions

Olympics

India's Olympic journey witnessed a **remarkable transformation** between 2016 and 2024, underscoring a new era of athletic excellence. From a modest haul of 2 medals in Rio 2016 by a 117-member contingent, India surged ahead to claim 7 medals at Tokyo 2020 and maintained a strong showing with 6 medals at Paris 2024, both with contingents of 117–119 athletes. Notable performers in this period include **Neeraj Chopra**, India's **first Olympic gold medalist (Tokyo 2020)** in **athletics (javelin)**, and **Mirabai Chanu**, a **consistent medalist in weightlifting**.



Year	Host City	Indian Athletes	Medals Won
2016	Rio de Janeiro	117	2
2020	Tokyo	119	7
2024	Paris	117	6

At Tokyo 2020, Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian track and field athlete to win a gold medal at the Olympics for men's javelin throw.

After a 41-year wait, the Indian men's hockey team won an Olympic medal at Tokyo 2020 Olympics since the gold at the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

At Paris 2024 Olympics, Manu Bhaker became the first Indian woman ever to win a medal in Olympic shooting.

Paralympics

India's Paralympic achievements have **grown exponentially** in the last three editions, reflecting a robust support system for differently-abled athletes. From 4 medals in Rio 2016 with 19 athletes, the tally jumped to 19 medals in Tokyo 2020 and peaked at 29 medals in Paris 2024, where 84 Indian athletes competed. This success includes 7 golds, 9 silvers, and 13 bronzes in 2024 alone, a testament to India's growing prowess in para-sports. Prominent stars include **Avani Lekhara** in **shooting**, **Sumit Antil** in **javelin**, and **Pramod Bhagat** in **badminton**. The focused inclusion of para-athletes in programs like TOPS and Khelo India Para Games has helped elevate India as a rising force in global para-sports.

Rising to Glory

India's Paralympic Journey (2012-2024)

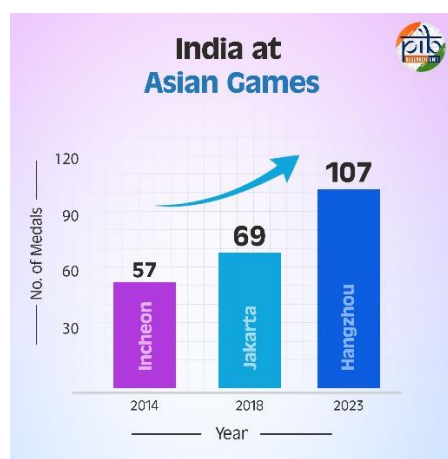


2012 London		2016 Rio		2020 Tokyo		2024 Paris	
Gold	0	Gold	2	Gold	5	Gold	7
Silver	1	Silver	1	Silver	8	Silver	9
Bronze	0	Bronze	1	Bronze	6	Bronze	13
Total	1	Total	4	Total	19	Total	29

Year	Host City	Indian Athletes	Medals Won	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2016	Rio de Janeiro	19	4	2	1	1
2020	Tokyo	54	19	5	8	6
2024	Paris	84	29	7	9	13

Asian Games

India's performances at the Asian Games reflect a **steady rise in both participation and podium finishes**. In Incheon 2014, the Indian contingent of 541 athletes won 57 medals. By Jakarta 2018, this increased to 570 athletes and 69 medals. The breakthrough came at Hangzhou 2023, where India sent its largest-ever contingent of 655 athletes and returned with a historic 107 medals—including 28 golds, 38 silvers, and 41 bronzes. Athletes like **Neeraj Chopra** in **javelin**, **Lovlina Borgohain** in **boxing**, and **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** and **Chirag Shetty** in **badminton** contributed significantly to this record tally.



Year	Host City	Indian Athletes	Medals Won	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2014	Incheon	541	57	11	9	37
2018	Jakarta	570	69	15	24	30
2023	Hangzhou	655	107	28	38	41

Commonwealth Games

India has consistently demonstrated excellence at the Commonwealth Games. In Glasgow 2014, the 215-member contingent won 64 medals. The number rose to 66 medals in Gold Coast 2018 with 218 athletes and remained steady with 61 medals at Birmingham 2022 with 210 athletes. These medals span across diverse sports such as wrestling, weightlifting, table tennis, and athletics. Key performers include **PV Sindhu** in

badminton, Vinesh Phogat in wrestling, and Achinta Sheuli in weightlifting.

Year	Host City	Indian Athletes	Medals Won	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2014	Glasgow	215	64	15	30	19
2018	Gold Coast	218	66	26	20	20
2022	Birmingham	210	61	22	16	23

Other Global Achievements

- India won **double gold** at the **2024 FIDE Chess Olympiad** in Budapest.
- Indian athletes won **22 medals** at the **2023 ITTF Fa20 AI-Watani Para Table Tennis Championships** in Jordan.
- India won the **Gold** medal in the Javelin Throw at the **World Athletics Championships 2023** in Budapest.
- The **Indian Badminton Men's Team** created history by **winning the Thomas Cup** in May 2022.
- Indian contingent won **34 medals** in the **ISSF Rifle/Pistol World Championship 2022 (Senior & Junior)** held in Egypt.
- The Indian team finished on **top** in the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2023** held in Germany.

Global Engagements and Diplomacy

- The **FIFA U-17 Women's Football World Cup 2022** was in 2022 in Bhubaneswar. This was the **second major football event** hosted in the last five years.
- India hosted several key international events related to sports, including:
 - **141st International Olympic Committee (IOC) Session** in Mumbai in October 2023.
 - **FIDE Chess Olympiad** in Chennai in 2022.
 - **BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship** in New Delhi in 2024.
 - **MotoGP Bharat** in Noida in 2023.
- In 2023, the Indian Delegation led by Secretary (Sports) participated in the **Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sports (MINEPS VII)** organized by **UNESO in Baku, Azerbaijan**. India's participation was significant, with a special Yoga session was organized for the delegates.

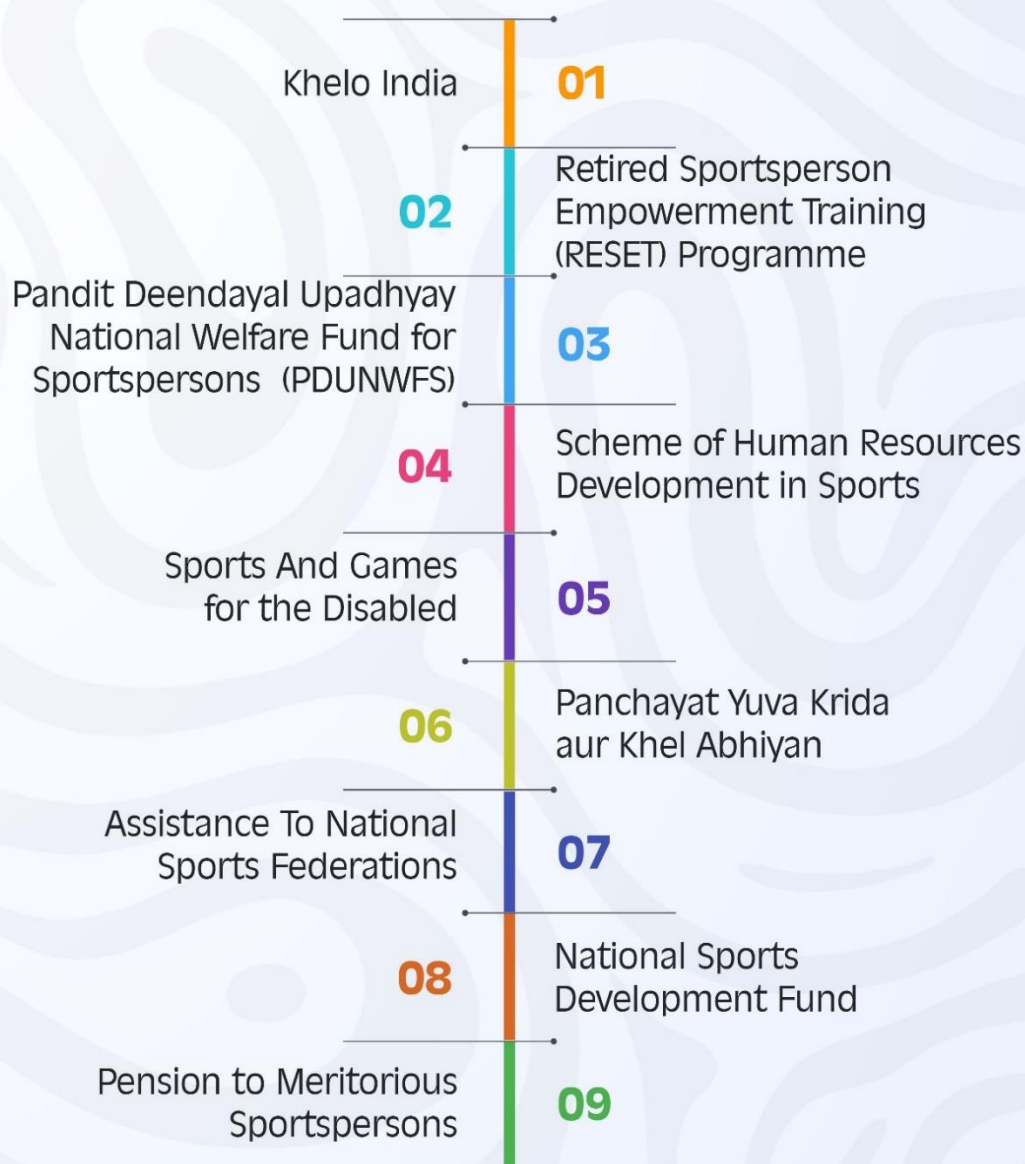
Special Package for Development of Sports Infrastructure of Jammu and Kashmir

A special package of **Rs. 200 crore** for **development of sports infrastructure** in the state of Jammu & Kashmir was approved in **2015**. The renovation/up-gradation of existing stadiums and other works approved for capital districts i.e. Srinagar and Jammu was carried out by the Ministry. Estimated cost for these works was worked out to **Rs. 84 crore**.

Schemes and Programmes to Support Sportsmen in India

India's support for its athletes is now more structured and focused than ever. The approach is holistic—covering every stage of an athlete's journey. From spotting raw talent in villages to backing Olympic medallists, the government has stepped up in a big way. A wide range of schemes now exist to meet the real needs of sportspersons—training, funding, facilities, and life after sport. Each step is designed to help athletes rise and stay at the top.

Schemes and Programmes



Awards and Recognition

The **National Sports Awards** stand as the highest sporting honours in India, celebrating the exceptional achievements of athletes who have put India on the global sporting map. Presented annually, these prestigious awards recognize extraordinary performances at national and international events, while also fostering a spirit of sportsmanship that transcends borders. There is total six categories of awards that are given to sportspersons in India.



Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) is one of the **largest youth organisations** in the world. NYKS has presence in **623 districts** through **Nehru Yuva Kendras (NYKs)**. The areas of focus of the NYKS activities include literacy and education, health and family welfare, sanitation and cleanliness, environment conservation, awareness on social issues, women empowerment, rural development, skill development and self-employment, entrepreneurship development, civic education, disaster relief and rehabilitation, etc.

Conclusion

From increased participation to global podium finishes, India's sports journey between 2014 and 2025 has been marked by vision, inclusivity, and execution. Key flagship programs like **Khelo India**, **TOPS**, and **KIRTI** have provided the critical infrastructure and financial support necessary to identify, train, and nurture talent at every level. The results are visible—not just in international medal tallies but in the growing sports culture within the country. With a clear roadmap toward the Olympic Games of 2036 and beyond, India is steadily moving toward its goal of becoming a top-10 sporting nation.

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