



BACKGROUNDS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Asian Games 2026

India's Journey from New Delhi to Aichi-Nagoya

06 October, 2026

Asian Games 2026 at a Glance

The Asian Games, also known as **Asiad**, are the biggest sports competition in Asia, held once every four years. They are organized by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and currently have 45 participating countries or regions. The 20th Asian Games were held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4, 2026. The official slogan was "Imagine One Asia." This is the third time that Japan has hosted the Asian Games, following the earlier editions held in Tokyo (1958) and Hiroshima (1994).

This major event was spread over 16 days of intense world-class competitions. It featured 43 sports and 71 disciplines in a grand showcase of athletic excellence. A total of 1,407 medals were awarded across 469 exciting events during the Games.



Alongside the Asian Games, Japan also hosting the 5th Asian Para Games from October 18 to October 24, 2026, in Aichi-Nagoya. This marks the first time Japan has hosted the Para Games.

Understanding the Asian Games 2026 Emblem

The colour and design of the official emblem combine local and cultural significance with dynamics of sports. While the curves represent liveliness, the purple, gold, and green centre lines evoke the image of people uniting and advancing towards a bright red sun-the official symbol of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). Purple represents Aichi's prefectural flower,

the iris; **gold** symbolizes Kinshachi, the iconic golden tiger-fish roof ornaments of Nagoya Castle; and **green** reflects the strong environmental consciousness of Aichi-Nagoya, fostered through landmark events such as EXPO 2005 Aichi, COP10, and the UNESCO World Conference on ESD. The emblem contains the first letters of Asia, Aichi and Nagoya initials: "A" is depicted in the purple curve and centre line, "N" in purple and gold.

Asian Games 2026 Official Mascot

"HONOHON," the mascot of the 20th Asian Games, represents the fiery passion of athletes. The name is derived from the Japanese word 'honoho', connected to the origin of the Japanese word for flame. It's design is inspired by the *Shachihoko*, one of the distinctive symbols of the Nagoya Castle and guarding deity of Aichi-Nagoya.



First Asian Games in 1951: India's Founding Role

India's connection with the Asian Games goes back to the very beginning, when the first edition was held in New Delhi in 1951. This was done against the backdrop of post-World War II efforts to strengthen ties among Asian nations, with several regions of Asia having been recently decolonized. The idea of an Asian sporting competition was mooted by India as a means to display unity and rebuild the bonds between Asian nations that the war had broken. The idea of the Asian Games was first conceived by Prof. G.D. Sondhi, a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for India. The suggestion for holding the Asian Games was first made at a conference of Asian Countries held in New Delhi in 1947, and it was decided to call it the Asian Games.

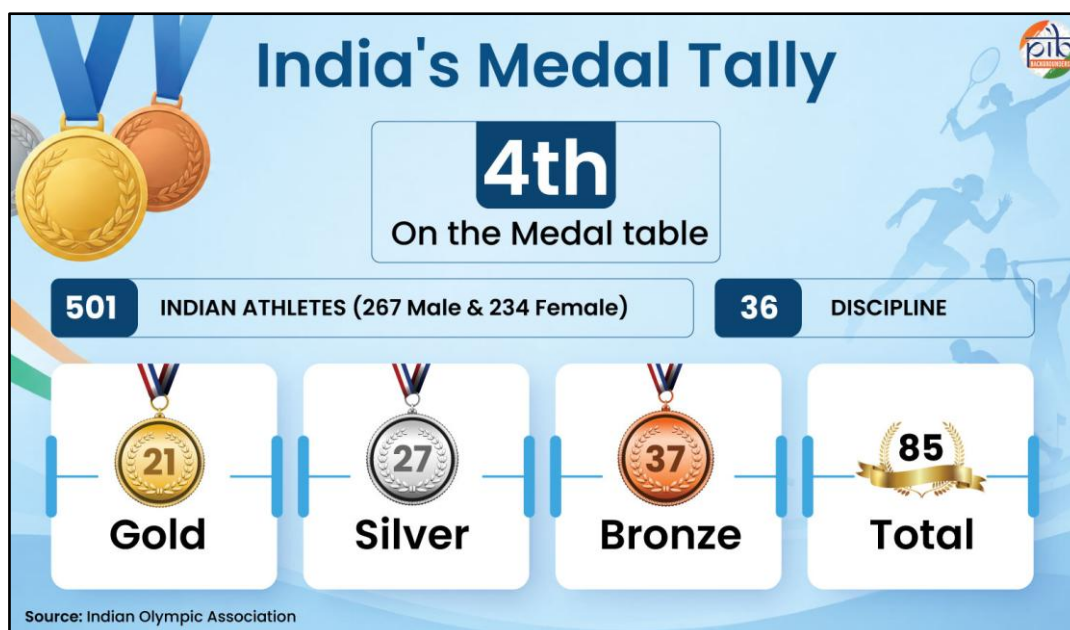


First Asian Games opening ceremony

The inaugural Asian Games were held in New Delhi in March, 1951. President Rajendra Prasad declared them open at the National Stadium. **Eleven nations sent 489 athletes to compete across six sports at that first edition.** India finished second in the medal table that year, behind Japan. Since then, the Games have become a big event that fosters friendship through sports and contributes to world peace by recognizing diversity.

India's Contingent at Aichi-Nagoya 2026

India fielded one of its largest-ever multi-sport delegations at the Asian Games 2026, with a **501-athlete contingent across 36 sporting disciplines. More than 300 athletes in the contingent were making their Asian Games debut.**



A grand send-off ceremony was held in New Delhi on 8 September 2026, ahead of the team's departure. Union Minister Dr Mandaviya, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Dr P.T. Usha and Chef de Mission Sahdev Yadav attended the event, and the official contingent jersey was unveiled. The Indian Olympic Association organised the event.



Dr. Mandaviya (Centre), along with IOA President Dr. P.T. Usha (right) & Secretary (Sports) Hari Ranjan Rao (left), unveiled the official contingent jersey ahead of the Asian Games 2026.

Image Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

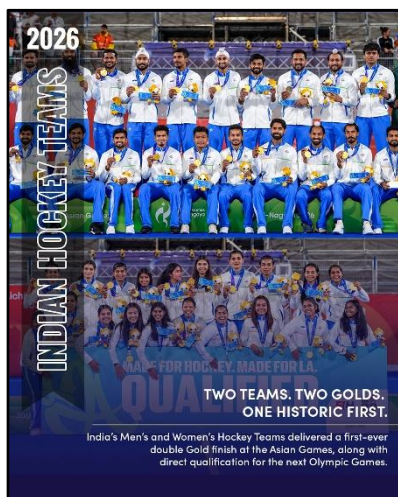
At the opening ceremony on 19 September 2026, double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker and Kabaddi player Pawan Sehrawat led India's parade.

India's Gold Medal Triumph at Aichi-Nagoya 2026

India's campaign at the 2026 Asian Games was highlighted by a 21-gold-medal haul, anchored by strong performances across precision events and team sports. **Archery** led the gold tally with 5 titles, supported by **Shooting** and **Boxing**, which each won 3 gold medals. In team sports, India executed a sweeping "gold rush" across **Cricket**, **Hockey**, and **Kabaddi**, securing 2 gold medals in each sport. Standout performances included the men's cricket team defeating Pakistan by 19 runs in the final, the men's hockey team retaining their continental title with a resounding 5-1 victory over Malaysia, and double gold victories across both the men's and women's kabaddi competitions. Further gold medals in **Wrestling** (2), **Athletics** (1) and **Golf**

(1) brought India's total to 21, reflecting the country's strong and diverse performance across the continental sporting arena.

India's Medal Tally at the Asian Games 2026 Sport-wise Breakdown				
Sport	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Athletics	1	9	14	24
Shooting	3	8	4	15
Archery	5	2	2	9
Boxing	3	0	3	6
Wrestling	2	2	2	6
Squash	0	2	3	5
Sailing	0	1	2	3
Cricket	2	0	0	2
Hockey	2	0	0	2
Kabaddi	2	0	0	2
Golf	1	1	0	2
Weightlifting	0	1	0	1
Wushu	0	1	0	1
Badminton	0	0	1	1
Kurash	0	0	1	1
Mixed Martial Arts	0	0	1	1
Rowing	0	0	1	1
Sepak Takraw	0	0	1	1
Soft tennis	0	0	1	1
Table tennis	0	0	1	1
Total	21	27	37	85



India's Participation in the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games

The Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games will be held in Japan from 18 to 24 October 2026. Around 3,000 athletes from 45 National Paralympic Committees across Asia are expected to compete at these Games. The Games will feature eighteen Para sports.

India will participate through the Paralympic Committee of India, its recognised National Paralympic Committee for the Games. This will mark India's fifth appearance at the Asian Para Games, following its record 111-medal haul including 29 Gold medals at Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games. Out of the 111 medals, female athletes contributed 40 medals (36% of the medal tally). Previously, India had won 14 medals in the 2010 edition, 33 in 2014 and 72 in 2018.

From Grassroots to Global Podiums: India's Policy Push for Sports

Khelo Bharat Niti

The Government launched **Khelo Bharat Niti**, India's national sports policy, on 1 July 2025. It seeks to build a strong, inclusive, and performance-driven sports system. It focuses on bridging the rural-urban gap in training and facilities. It stresses community participation and partnerships to reduce training costs. The policy sets its sights on excellence at the 2036 Olympics. It links sports with school education under the National Education Policy 2020. It also supports women, tribal communities, and persons with disabilities.

Record Financial Support

The Union Budget 2026-27 allocated a record **₹4,479.88 crore** to the sports ministry. This is up from **₹1,219 crore** in 2013-14. The Cabinet has also approved a revamped Khelo India scheme for 2026-27 to 2030-31. With support to National Sports Federations, the combined outlay is **₹36,441 crore**. Khelo India alone received **₹924.35 crore** for 2026–27. Earlier, the scheme had a **₹3,790.50 crore** outlay for 2021–22 to 2025–26. The Budget also earmarked **₹500 crore** for sports goods manufacturing.

Finding Talent Early

Khelo India is the flagship programme for grassroots sport. By July 2026, it had set up **1,067** Khelo India Centres. It has approved **349** new sports infrastructure projects worth **₹3,176 crore**. It supports **2,745** Khelo India Athletes with coaching, equipment, medical care, and a monthly allowance. More than **63,000** athletes have competed in the Khelo India Games since 2018.

The **Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI)** initiative identifies and nurtures talent among children aged 9 to 18 years. Its **174** Talent Assessment Centres use data tools for fair, merit-based selection.

Backing Top Athletes

The **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** supports India's athletes. It supports athletes through foreign training, international competitions, coaching camps, and specialised equipment. Athletes receive a **monthly stipend of ₹50,000**. Junior athletes in the Development Group receive **₹25,000** a month. As of April 2026, TOPS supports **55 Core Athletes, 62 Para Core Athletes** and **140 Development Athletes**; in addition, **67 core athletes are in hockey**. TOPS played an important role in India's medals at the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Education, Fitness and Fair Play

The **National Sports University** in Imphal was established in 2018. It offers education in sports science, technology, management and coaching.

The Fit India Movement encourages people to make fitness part of daily life. Parliament passed the **National Sports Governance Bill** in August 2025. It provides for a National Sports Board to recognise sports bodies. A National Sports Tribunal will settle sports disputes.

Beyond Aichi-Nagoya: India's Long Olympic Road

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 sits within India's broader roadmap toward the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics and beyond. More than three hundred of India's five-hundred-plus athletes are making their Asian Games debut this year. This scale of debutant participation reflects the growing depth and expanding bench strength of Indian sport today.

The government has also outlined a ten-year plan investing over ₹36,000 crore to strengthen sports infrastructure nationwide. This investment aims to firmly establish India on the global sporting stage well before 2036. The Sports Ministry has called for a coordinated 360-degree approach involving federations, states and other stakeholders.

India's 85-medal campaign at Aichi-Nagoya, including 21 gold medals, marks another significant chapter in the country's sporting journey. With strong performances across traditional strengths and emerging disciplines, the Games have added further momentum to India's preparations for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics and its longer-term sporting ambitions.

References

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

https://yas.gov.in/sites/default/files/Asian_Games_sanction_for_coaches_and_support_staff.pdf

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2307999®=48&lang=2>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1972615&lang=2®=48&utm>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2149334®=48&lang=2>

Asian Games 2026 Official Website

<https://www.aichi-nagoya2026.org/history-of-the-games/>

<https://www.aichi-nagoya2026.org/official-mascot/>

<https://www.aichi-nagoya2026.org/games-emblem-slogan-core-graphics/>

Olympic Council of Asia Official Website

<https://oca.asia/games/111-aichi-nagoya-2026.html?utm>

<https://oca.asia/news/7738-asia-ready-to-shine-as-aichi-nagoya-to-host-historic-20th-asian-games.html?utm>

Paralympic India Official Website

<https://www.paralympicindia.com/aichi-nagoya-asian-para-games-2026>

International Paralympic Committee

<https://www.paralympic.org/news/aichi-nagoya-2026-celebrates-100-days-go-until-asian-para-games>

<https://www.paralympic.org/news/aichi-nagoya-host-2026-asian-para-games>

Govt. of Japan

https://www.gov-online.go.jp/hlj/en/january_2026/january_2026-08.html

Consortium for Educational Communication

<https://cec.nic.in/webpath/curriculum/Module/BPED/Paper01/9/downloads/script.pdf>

News on AIR

<https://newsonair.gov.in/manu-bhaker-tajinderpal-singh-toor-named-indias-flagbearers-for-asian-games-2026/>

<https://newsonair.gov.in/20th-asian-games-officially-opened-at-mizuho-park-athletic-stadium-in-japan/>

<https://newsonair.gov.in/india-gears-up-for-2028-olympics-with-strategic-preparations-union-minister-mansukh-mandaviya/>

<https://newsonair.gov.in/indian-contingent-for-asian-games-2026-receives-grand-send-off-in-new-delhi/>

<https://newsonair.gov.in/rajya-sabha-takes-up-national-sports-governance-and-anti-doping-amendment-bills-2025/>

PIB Backgrounder

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=154856&ModuleId=3®=48&lang=2>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2293849®=48&lang=2>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=154601&ModuleId=3®=48&lang=2>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2293849®=48&lang=2>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=154856&ModuleId=3®=48&lang=2>

