

India's gold drought at Asiad: Of 28 in China, 20 already lost

10 Gold Medals Won In Japan, Hope For 2 More

sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

With the Asian Games entering the final stretch, India's declining gold medal numbers tell an uncomfortable story and offer a sharp reality check. Of the 28 golds India won in Hangzhou three years ago, 20 have already slipped away in Aichi-Nagoya — across shooting, athletics, archery, badminton, equestrian, squash and tennis. The sharpest contrast comes in individual events. In Hangzhou, India won nine individual gold medals across shooting, athletics and archery. None of those have been defended and, in some events, India was not even able to make the final rounds in the ongoing edition.

In 2023, India produced a historic 106-medal haul — 28 gold, 38 silver and 40 bronze. Shooting alone delivered se-

Photo: IANS

INDO-PAK RIVALRY COMES ALIVE



Defending champs India survived a scare, blowing a 3-0 lead before snatching a 4-3 win against Pakistan as Abhishek struck just 45 secs before the hooter in men's hockey semifinal. India take on Malaysia in the final Saturday

➤ In the 2nd battle between the arch-rivals, in volleyball, Pakistan won 3-0 to enter the semifinals
➤ The next episode of the rivalry will unfold on Nisshin's cricket pitch Saturday after India beat Sri Lanka by 124 runs in semifinal
➤ India's medal tally rose to 64 — 10 gold, 22 silver and 32 bronze

➤ Manu Francis and Prince Kurisinkal Noble won India an unexpected silver as they bagged 2nd place in men's skiff opening race 9. Harshita Tomar and Shital Verma claimed women's bronze
➤ Nitesh Siwach secured India's first silver in Greco-Roman wrestling at Games since 1962, while Mansi Ahlawat lost bronze medal play-off in women's 62kg
➤ Defending squash champions India won bronze after both men and women lost in the semifinals
➤ Compound archer Ganesh Mani Rathnam Thirumuru won bronze in men's individual event
➤ Indian tennis finished without a medal for the first time since 1986 after Sumit Nagal lost in men's singles QF

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ven golds and athletics six, while archery completed a clean sweep of all five compound golds. Three years later, India has lost all seven shooting golds it won in Hangzhou and all six in athletics. In archery, the three team titles have survived, but neither of the individual ones. In squash, the country has lost both its titles from 2023 in the

men's team event and mixed doubles. The Hangzhou golds in badminton men's doubles, team dressage and tennis mixed doubles have also not been retained.

As of Thursday, India has 10 gold medals at Aichi-Nagoya, with men's hockey and cricket still carrying title defence possibilities. India's overall medal tally has cros-

sed 60 (it's 8th overall), but the country is staring at a far lower haul than Hangzhou. For perspective, China has so far won 154 gold and 288 medals.

Particularly worrying is the disappearance of gold medals that India had already established as its continental benchmark.

➤ Can't build on gains, P 27

Rafale deal for 114 jets likely by March: Official

New Delhi: In good news for IAF, defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said Thursday govt was planning to conclude the contract for 114 Rafale jets by the end of this financial year and looking for a higher level of integration of Indian weapons in it.

Confirming that bids submitted under the request for proposal stage are undergoing formal assessment, he said, "We should be able to reach some conclusion in that procurement cycle before the end of this year."

"They had agreed to integrate Indian weapons in the Rafale Marines that we had bought. In this case, we are going one step ahead, in the sense it's a buy-and-make programme, with the bulk of the aircraft to be assembled in India, with significant levels of indigenisation and integration of Indian systems and weapons," Singh, who is also DRDO chairperson, told ANI.

India contracted 26 Rafale Marine jets from France for Rs 63,000 crore in 2025 for the Navy. TNN & AGENCIES

Govt backs SCO connectivity, but PM's Pak visit uncertain

Pak's Terror Support Key Factor For India

Sachin.Parashar
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India's participation in the SCO meeting of national coordinators in Islamabad to firm up the calendar for high-level meetings has sparked speculation about whether PM Modi would travel to Pakistan for the heads of state summit next year. Modi has missed only one of the seven in-person summits since India became a full member of the Eurasian bloc in 2017, but officials said his past attendance is no guarantee of a visit even for a multilateral event to Pakistan, a country India has come to describe as a serial practitioner of terrorism.

Additional secretary Alok Dimri travelled to Pakistan this week for the national coordinators' mee-



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ting, as first reported by TOI on Monday. The first such visit from India to Pakistan since the 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack highlighted how SCO, which is dominated by China and Russia, has remained insulated from India-Pakistan tensions, unlike the more modest Saarc regional framework.

For a PM visit, though, as official sources said, India will factor in Pakistan's continued support for cross-border terrorism before making a final decision. The same is likely to apply for the meetings of defence and foreign ministers heading in to the main summit, as India seeks tangible and irreversible action by Pakistan against cross-border terrorism to make the overall environ-

ment conducive for any substantive engagement.

After the meeting this week, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif will soon write to leaders of all member states inviting them for the SCO heads of state summit. He had last invited Modi for the heads of govt meeting in Islamabad in 2024, but India had then sent external affairs minister S Jaishankar, who usually represents India in that meeting.

Modi attends the meetings of the Council of Heads of State (CHS), the supreme decision-making body of SCO, which meets annually on a rotational basis in the country chairing SCO. Pakistan assumed chairmanship from Kyrgyzstan at the Bishkek summit last month.

Although Modi did skip

the Kazakhstan summit in 2024, India will likely weigh multiple geopolitical factors before deciding on his potential visit to Pakistan, apart from Pakistan-backed terrorism. India's engagement with SCO facilitates the ongoing normalisation of relations with China while preserving its strategic and longstanding ties with Russia. Ironically, counterterrorism and security cooperation is one key reason for Delhi's engagements with the grouping that also helps India with Central Asian connectivity and regional security in Afghanistan, while reinforcing strategic autonomy.

Dimri was greeted warmly in Pakistan, with an official photo showing him standing next to Pakistan deputy PM and foreign minister Ishaq Dar. Dimri said the national coordinators had finalised an agenda for common wellbeing and prosperity with focus on connectivity, trade and transit. "This programme will continue for a year and will culminate with the Islamabad Summit."

'BrahMos missile system to see over USD 600 mn exports'

NEW DELHI, Oct 1 (ANI)

BRAHMOS is a benchmark for India's emerging export story with exports to cross USD 600 million, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh has said and noted that there are contracts or agreements to sell the high-end strategic system to three Southeast Asian countries including Indonesia and Vietnam.

In an interview with ANI, Singh said the missile also has an air-launched version and it is a great success on Sukhois.

BrahMos missile system to the tune of about USD 330 million has been delivered to Philippines. The Defence Secretary said that exports should be about USD 100 million to start with for Vietnam, and for Indonesia, it should be around USD 200 million.

"BrahMos is a kind of benchmark for our emerging export story. This is one of the high-end strategic systems that we've been able to export. We've got con-



tracts or agreements to sell it to three Southeast Asian countries, starting with the Philippines, and now Indonesia and Vietnam as well," he said.

"The system has been proven in battle during Operation Sindoor... This missile also has an air-launched version, which exists and is a great success on Sukhois. There is tremendous potential for this particular system, and I hope that this will continue to be one of the anchors of our export momentum," he

added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had earlier described BrahMos as not just a missile, but a symbol of the growing indigenous capabilities of the nation.

The missile features a traditional warhead and an advanced guided system and possesses the capability to strike long distances at supersonic speeds. This combination of speed, accuracy, and power makes BrahMos one of the best systems in the world.

'Akash is one of our success stories'

Defence Secy Rajesh Kumar Singh on indigenous missile system's global reach

NEW DELHI, Oct 1 (ANI)

HIGHLIGHTING the maturing capabilities of India's domestic defence manufacturing sector, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh on Thursday praised the indigenous Akash Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) system as a key milestone in India's journey toward self-reliance in military technology.

Speaking to ANI on India's defence export trajectory, Singh noted that the Akash system has transitioned into a stabilised production phase, backed by strong domestic orders alongside an expanding footprint across international defence



markets.

"Akash, I would say that it is one of our success stories. It shows the maturing of our indigenous missile design and production system. It is effective in dealing with high-velocity aerial targets," said the Defence Secretary.

Production for the Akash missile system has stabilised, with active procurement con-

tinuing for the Indian Armed Forces while orders from foreign nations continue to grow.

Following Armenia as its launch customer, India has expanded deliveries and exports of the Akash system to Central Asian nations, including Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.