

# Sports Cities of India 2024

Future destinations for global sporting events



**#GT Bharat**  
SHAPING VIBRANT INDIA

# Preface – Grant Thornton Bharat



## Abhishek Binaykia

Partner, Sports Industry Leader  
Grant Thornton Bharat

The current decade is set to be a transformative one for Indian sports, driven by an ambitious vision to host global mega-events such as the Olympic Games in 2036 and to cultivate world-class athletes. The Sports Cities of India 2024 report by Grant Thornton Bharat, in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), evaluates how cities across India are evolving into sporting hubs, laying the foundation for a new era of sporting excellence.

Over the last decade, the concept of sports as an industry has matured significantly. From a vague idea, it has evolved into a robust and growing sector. The period between 2021 and 2024 has seen an unprecedented surge in investments in areas such as entertainment, sponsorships, manufacturing, media spending, endorsements, and e-sports. Cricket continues to dominate the landscape, accounting for 85% of total sports spending, primarily due to the ongoing expansion of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Meanwhile, investments in other sports like football, kabaddi, and marathons are on the rise, capturing the remaining 15% of the market. The industry hit a record 49% growth in 2022, reaching INR 14,209 crore, and continued to expand by 11% in 2023, with total revenues touching INR 15,766 crore. While the disproportionate focus on cricket remains a concern, it is encouraging to witness the growth of niche sports like pickleball, kho-kho, and table tennis, supported by significant corporate investments. This diversified growth signals a shift towards a more inclusive sporting ecosystem in India.

At Grant Thornton Bharat, we are fully committed to helping India emerge as a global sporting superpower. Our efforts align with the country's broader ambition of achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 — a vision that sees sports as a catalyst for national development. To achieve this, adopting global best practices while leveraging India's unique strengths is key. Grant Thornton Bharat has been a crucial player in providing advisory solutions for India's sports sector, focusing on strategy, athlete and coach development, infrastructure, events, and technology. Through our work, we aim to create a positive, lasting impact on Indian sports by fostering collaborations between key stakeholders—both in the public and private sectors. This 2024 edition of the report delves deep into the progress made by leading sports cities across India. It evaluates these cities based on criteria such as infrastructure development, event-hosting capability, travel and hospitality standards, advancements in sports technology, grassroots initiatives, and athlete and coach development. The analysis is detailed in the scorecard for each city.

Between 2021 and 2024, India's cities have not only hosted prestigious international tournaments like the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup and the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup but have also significantly invested in grassroots programmes like Khelo India. These initiatives have enhanced funding, talent development, and athlete training, becoming the backbone of India's sports ecosystem. Government bodies like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) are introducing sports at an early stage in education, focusing on the development of athletes and coaches to nurture excellence from a young age. Furthermore, the private sector's role in supporting leagues, sports science centers, management institutes, and youth academies continues to strengthen the country's sporting infrastructure.

Sports Cities of India 2024 is more than a report — it's a blueprint for India's sporting future, designed to drive discussions on creating cities capable of consistently hosting prestigious global events. The report celebrates impactful success stories such as the Paralympics and the rising participation of women in sports and outlines actionable strategies to provide a roadmap for India's journey toward becoming a global sporting powerhouse. Additionally, it encourages cities to refine their focus on infrastructure, talent development, and technological innovation as key drivers of success, bringing the nation closer to realising its bold sporting ambitions, including the dream of hosting the Olympics in 2036.

# Foreword



## Chanakya Chaudhary

Chairman, CII National  
Committee on Sports

It is my privilege to introduce the *“Sports Cities in India 2.0”* report, prepared by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Grant Thornton Bharat. This report delves into the critical role of sports cities as enablers of sports development, urban transformation, and economic growth. The 2024 edition arrives at a particularly significant time as India prepares to bid for the 2036 Olympics, aligning seamlessly with the nation’s larger vision of *“Viksit Bharat 2047”*, where sports will play a crucial role in elevating the country’s global stature.

The latest edition brings with it several important enhancements that build on the foundation of its 2021 predecessor. A significant focus of the report is on grassroots development, offering a deeper look into each city’s sporting infrastructure from the ground up, thus painting a clearer picture of local ecosystems. Inclusivity remains at the heart of this edition, with attention given to initiatives like Khelo India, the Paralympics, and the growing role of women’s sports, ensuring that sports development in India is truly equitable. Furthermore, the report expands its scope by highlighting indigenous sports, locally celebrated athletic activities, and emerging trends such as esports and pickleball, showcasing a broader spectrum of the sporting landscape in India.

Overall, this 2024 edition presents a more detailed, inclusive, and transparent assessment of sports cities in India. It not only supports the country’s Olympic ambitions but also underscores the pivotal role sports will play in creating a healthier and more vibrant society. At the CII National Committee on Sports, we believe that sports cities will be instrumental in India’s transformation into a global sporting powerhouse.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Grant Thornton Bharat team and the CII Sports secretariat who have worked together in developing this project. I hope this report paves the way for policymakers, businesses, and sports administrators to collaborate in building a sustainable, forward-thinking sports ecosystem for the future.



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# 01

## Setting the stage



The global sports industry has undergone a significant transformation from 2021 to 2024, marked by technological advancements and shifts in business models. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies, leading to innovations like virtual fan experiences and enhanced data analytics. Major events, such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (held in 2021) and the FIFA World Cup 2022, showcased the resilience and adaptability of the industry. Additionally, the rise of athlete influencers and their engagement on social issues has reshaped fan interactions and media consumption.

The traditional methods of sponsorships, ticket sales, merchandising etc are actively undergoing digital transformation, through improved analysis and utilisation of fan data.

Top global sports industry trends include



The traditional methods of sponsorships, ticket sales, merchandising, etc., are actively undergoing digital transformation, through improved analysis and utilisation of fan data.



Generative AI is revolutionising the sports industry by enhancing content creation, personalising fan experiences, improving athlete performance, and streamlining operations.



Expect innovation around applications involving content generation and management, live sports coverage, player evaluation, fantasy sports, fan engagement and back-office operations.



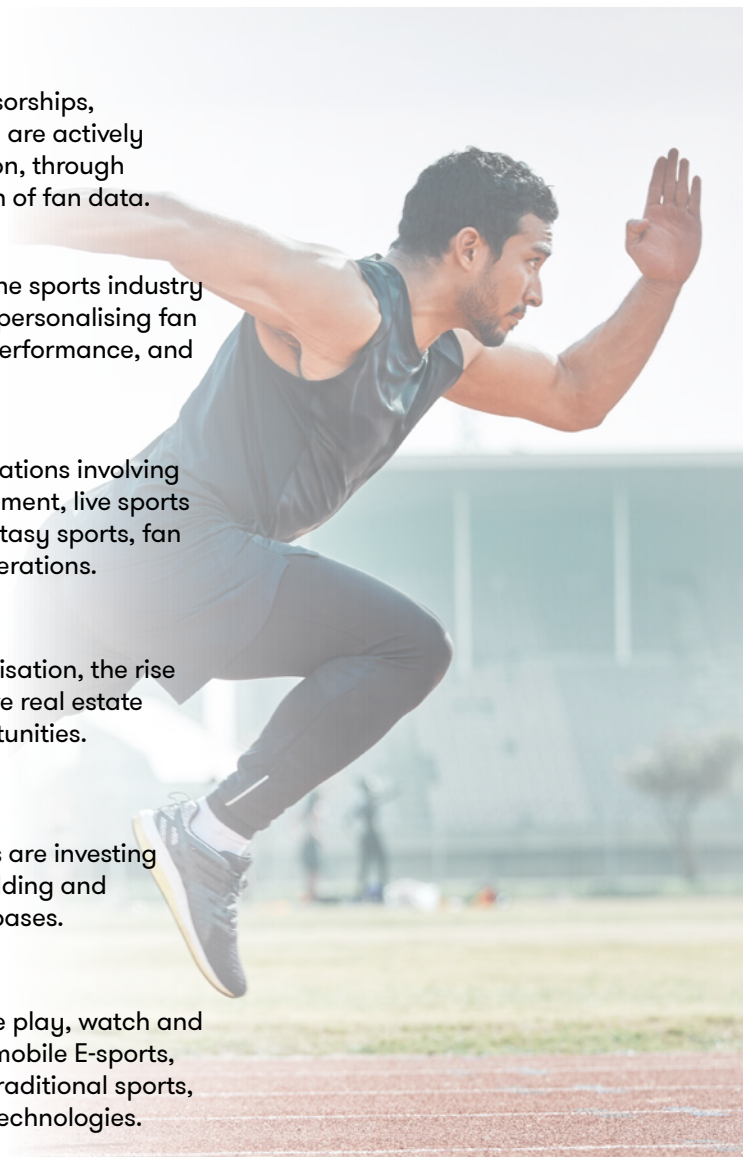
A wide range of investors, globalisation, the rise of women's sports, and innovative real estate projects are creating new opportunities.



Sports organisation and leagues are investing significant time and effort in building and managing proprietary fan databases.



Trends revolutionising the way we play, watch and experience E-Sports. The rise of mobile E-sports, the integration of E-sports with traditional sports, and the adoption of AR and VR technologies.



# India's journey in sports:

## Celebrating milestone achievements



### **Tokyo 2020 Olympics (held in 2021):**

India celebrated its best-ever performance, securing seven medals, including Neeraj Chopra's historic gold in javelin. The Indian women's hockey team reached the semi-finals, showcasing their growing progress and determination on the international stage.



**2021 test series in Australia:** The Indian cricket team made headlines with a memorable test series win, demonstrating remarkable resilience and depth.



**Asian Games 2022 (Hangzhou, China):** India achieved a historic milestone by winning 107 medals, including 28 golds, marking its best performance ever at the Asian Games. This included standout performances in archery, athletics, and shooting.



**Commonwealth Games 2022 (Birmingham, England):** India won 61 medals, including 22 golds, 16 silvers, and 23 bronzes.



**Thomas Cup (2023):** India made history by winning its first Thomas Cup, defeating 14-time champions Indonesia 3-0 in the final. This victory is hailed as one of the biggest achievements in Indian badminton, showcasing the country's growing strength in the sport.



**2023 ICC Cricket World Cup:** India reached the final but finished as runners-up. Hosting the tournament provided a platform for Indian cricket to shine, with strong performances throughout the series.



**Paris 2024 Paralympics:** The Indian contingent created history by winning a record 29 medals, including 7 golds, 9 silvers, and 13 bronzes, finishing in the top 20. This achievement underscores the growing recognition and support for para-athletes in India.



**Paris 2024 Olympics:** India won 6 medals, including a silver in javelin by Neeraj Chopra. Additionally, **Manu Bhaker** became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal, achieving a remarkable feat by securing two medals in a single edition of the Olympics.



**ICC T20 World Cup 2024:** India clinched the ICC T20 World Cup held in the USA, adding another prestigious title to their cricketing history. This victory highlighted India's dominance in the shorter format of the game.



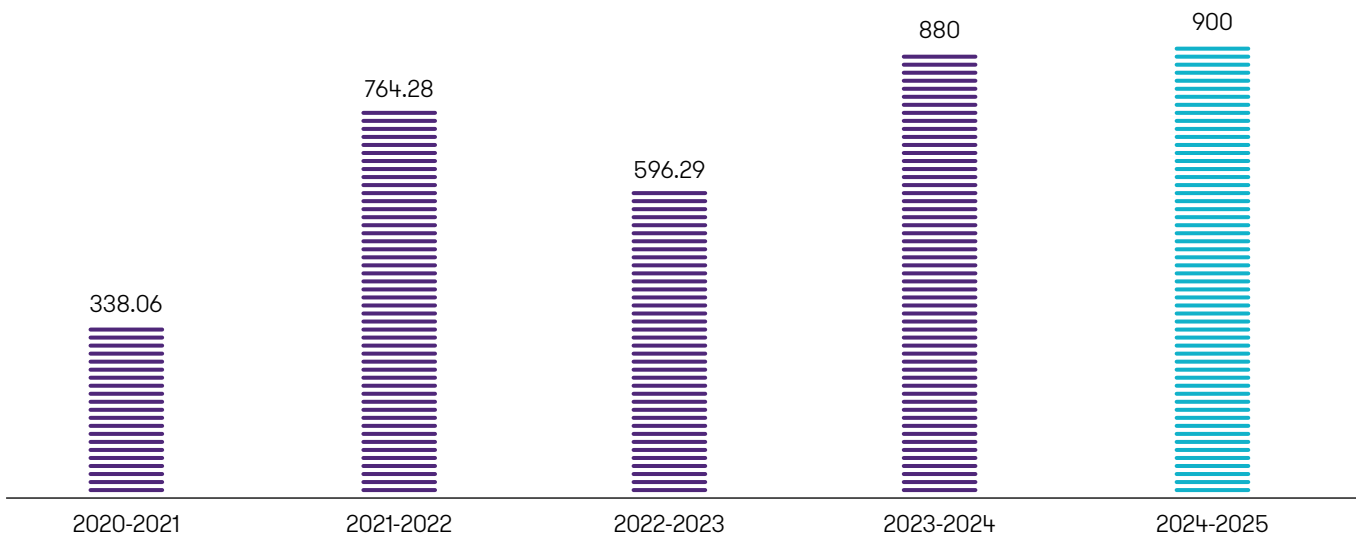
**Hockey:** The Indian men's hockey team secured consecutive bronze medals at the Olympics, marking a significant return to form after a 52-year gap for the men's team. This resurgence reflects the strengthening of hockey as a key sport in India.

## Did you know?

1. According to Reuters, the Indian Premier League (IPL) has skyrocketed to become the world's second most valuable sports league - with broadcasting and streaming rights for the two-month long event being sold for USD 6.2 billion for the 2023-2027 period. On a per-match basis, it worked out to be a jaw-dropping USD 16.8 million - the second highest among major sports leagues. No wonder cricket fans are over the moon.
2. Let's not forget the Women's Premier League (WPL), which has made a splash with a media rights bid of INR 951 crore for its first five years. This incredible investment highlights the booming market and growing enthusiasm for women's sports. The WPL media rights deal ranks as the second highest globally for a women's sports league within the last 2-3 years.



## Khelo India budget - YoY growth trajectory



The programme aims to promote sports at the grassroots level and has been pivotal in identifying and nurturing young talent. Since 2018, Khelo India has expanded to include Khelo India University Games (KIUG), and Khelo India Winter Games in 2020, and the Khelo India Para Games in 2023. The establishment of the Khelo India State Centers of Excellence across the country provides training facilities for promising athletes.

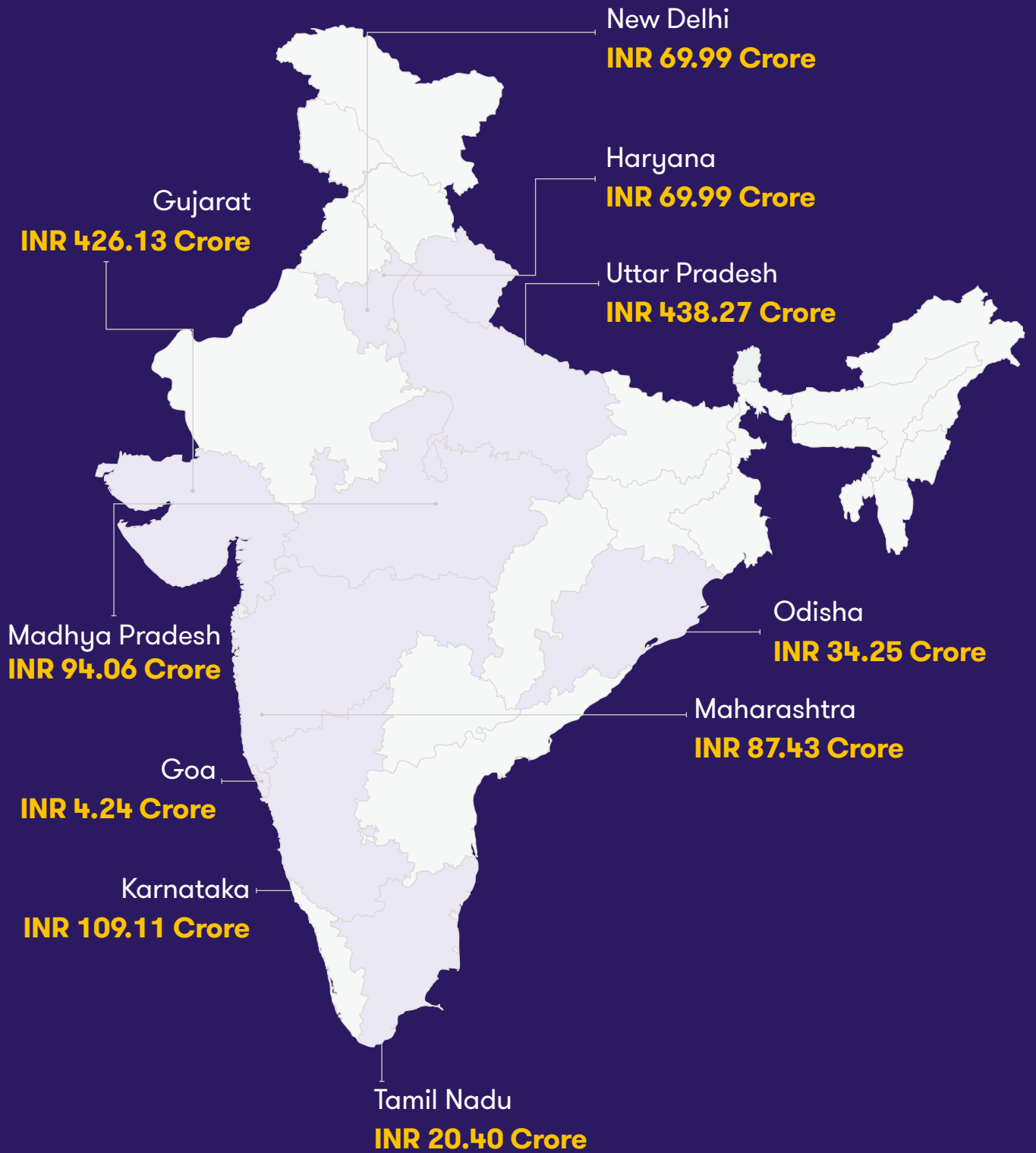
There has been a marginal increase in budget for **National Sports Federations**, marking an increase of INR 15 crore, from INR 325 crore in 2023-24 to INR 340 crore for the upcoming fiscal year. **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** has received a slightly enhanced allocation of INR 822.60 crore, up from INR 795.77 crore in the previous year. The SAI manages sports infrastructure and oversees the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), a key initiative for supporting elite athletes.

The **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** and the **National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)** both received slight increases in their budgets. The NADA's budget rose from INR 21.73 crore to INR 22.30 crore, while the NDTL's budget increased from INR 19.50 crore to INR 22 crore.

While budget allocations may appear minimal in certain areas, state investments in infrastructure have significantly levelled the playing field. States like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are leading the way with record-breaking investments. Figure 1.0 illustrates the state-wise allocations of funds for sports infrastructure.



Figure 1.0- State-wise allocation of funds for sports infrastructure under Khelo India Scheme



\*The map depicted is just for illustrative purpose



**02**

# Unveiling India's sporting journey

India knocked it out of the park with its stellar hosting of the 2023 ICC Cricket ODI World Cup. Matches were held across 10 cities, and the opening and final matches were held at the **Narendra Modi Stadium** in Ahmedabad, the largest stadium in the world, with a capacity of 132,000. The economic impact of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup is expected to be approximately USD 1.39 billion, making it the biggest Cricket World Cup in history.

In addition to cricket, India hosted the **FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022** at **Kalinga Stadium** in Bhubaneswar marking the second major football event in the country within five years. The **44th FIDE Chess Olympiad** was inaugurated by the Prime Minister at the Indoor Stadium in Chennai, attracting over 2,000 participants from 188 countries, the highest ever in the event's history. This Olympiad featured a 'Torch relay,' which travelled to 75 iconic locations across India over 40 days before reaching Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, the competition's venue.

The **2022 WADA Athlete Biological Passport (ABP)** symposium also took place in New Delhi, gathering over 200 participants from 56 countries. The event focused on discussing recent trends and challenges in anti-doping, highlighting the ABP as a crucial tool for detecting and deterring doping in sports.

India's sports leagues have made significant strides in enhancing infrastructure development. Leagues such as **Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT)**, **Indian Super League (ISL)**, and **Prime Volleyball League** increasingly prioritise infrastructure preparedness. This focus not only supports their growth and development but also contributes positively to the overall sports infrastructure ecosystem in the country.

The **Indian Oil Grand Prix of India**, held at the Buddh International Circuit, marked a historic debut for MotoGP in the country, showcasing India's growing prominence in the motorsport arena. The championship's commercial rights holder, Dorna, has signed a new contract with the Uttar Pradesh government, ensuring that the Indian GP will continue at least until 2027.

Additionally, India recently hosted the **Davis Cup** tie against Sweden at the Royal Tennis Hall in Stockholm. This event underscores India's commitment to international tennis despite facing challenges in securing victories. Together, these events reflect India's evolving landscape in sports, highlighting achievements and the potential for future growth.

## Envision excellence: India's quest to host the Olympics in 2036

India is emerging as a strong contender to host the 2036 Olympics. In the 2024 Independence Day speech, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** railed the nation with an inspiring vision to host the Olympics and highlighted ongoing preparations. He emphasised India's capability to organise major international events and its renowned hospitality, stating:

“

Our goal is clear: to host the 2036 Olympics on Indian soil, and we are making significant progress towards this.”

While the ambition is strong, the Indian Olympic Association is yet to formalise a potential host city.

The competition for the Olympics is becoming increasingly fierce, with nations such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, and Turkey emerging as strong contenders. These countries are ahead of the curve, driven by their rapidly growing economies and significant investments in sports infrastructure. Moreover, the number of interested parties bidding for the Olympics has reached double digits, highlighting the intense competition.

In this context, India must take proactive steps. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) must establish a formal bid that specifies the hosting city and initiate negotiations with the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This initiative is equally crucial for the 2030 Youth Olympics.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has established important elements to consider when drafting a proposal for hosting the Olympics 2036. Important parameters include geopolitical, socio-economic, human development and environmental factors, vision and venue masterplan, alignment with existing long-term development plans, envisaged sustainability and legacy impacts, political and public support, funding strategy, sports event experience, accommodation capacity, transport infrastructure, and safety and security.

“

India's ambition of becoming 'Vibrant Bharat' encompasses economic growth, social equity, and global leadership. Sports play a crucial role in transforming this vision into reality by serving as a powerful tool for soft power and international influence.

Our vision of hosting the Olympics in 2036 could be a significant milestone in propelling India towards becoming a sporting powerhouse. International events could provide a platform to showcase our culture on a global stage, build international relationships, and create role models.

Hosting sizable international events like The Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games etc., depends on excelling in several domains like event hosting, technology and infrastructure, athlete and coach development, grassroots initiatives, fan engagement, marketing, hospitality and more. Take a closer look at our report to track sports developments across various cities and discover how your favourite city ranks.

Creating a vibrant sporting ecosystem is a dream for India, and Grant Thornton Bharat is committed to supporting this grand vision.

### **Kunal Sood**

Partner and National Transformation Consulting Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat

With a vision to support the growth of the Indian sports industry and its capacity to host large-scale international events, including the Olympics 2036, the **Sports City Report** provides a comprehensive analysis of India's preparedness for hosting mid-to large-scale sporting competitions. Central to this report is an extensive survey that utilises relevant parameters, a targeted questionnaire, effective polling techniques, and a scoring mechanism to evaluate the leading sports cities in India.

This survey gathers insights from various prominent sports professionals, including representatives from national sports federations, associations, government bodies, leagues, clubs, academies, infrastructure developers, sports media, and event management agencies.

By synthesising these perspectives, the report aims to paint a clear picture of India's potential as a host for significant global sporting events, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Don't miss Chapter 4: Indigenous sports of India – A fusion of tradition and innovation. Discover five unique sports that set India apart from the rest of the world.

## **Survey and methodology**

Objective definition: The survey aims to comprehensively evaluate the best sports cities in India based on detailed parameters to determine their suitability to host impactful international events. The goal is to assess each city's readiness to host mid to large-scale international events.

## **Parameters for evaluation**

The survey, containing both qualitative and quantitative questions, will assess the readiness and preparedness of various states to host mid to large-scale international events using the following evaluation criteria.

## Parameters



## Nominations

To ensure a comprehensive and authentic outcome, the sports departments of various states and union territories in India will confirm their participation through a self-nomination process. Each department will complete a detailed survey, gathering accurate and representative data from all 28 states and 8 union territories. The states will nominate one to two cities, which will be assessed on the above parameters, and the scores will be adjusted depending on weighted averages of various parameters. The top 10 cities with the highest total scores are selected, ensuring a transparent and fair selection process.

## Selection criteria

### Phase 1

States are evaluated based on sports infrastructure, participation, and performance, athlete development programmes, government support and fan engagement, and more. Each criterion is weighted and scored to rank the top 10 states. In the event of no or limited response, secondary research will be used to evaluate the basis of the parameters listed.

Scoring criteria	
0-20 points	Indicate a need for significant improvement in sports infrastructure, participation and performance, development programmes, government support, and fan engagement.
20-40 points	Reflect a moderate level of sports development, with efforts to enhance sports infrastructure, participation, and development programmes, but the room for improvement remains.
40-65 points	Represent a good level of sports development, characterised by considerable progress in sports infrastructure, participation, and development programmes, along with notable government support and fan engagement.
65+ points	Signifies an excellent level of sports management, showcasing top-notch sports infrastructure, high levels of participation and performance, robust development programmes, extensive government support, and active fan engagement.

### Phase 2

In case of a tie post calculating weighted scores, a tiebreaker mechanism has been established to determine the final ranking. Here's a possible tiebreaker:

1. A secondary weighted score has been used for tied criteria, calculated using an alternative set of weights or by reassigning weights to other criteria that were not initially given as much priority.
2. If the tie still persists, an already assigned expert panel will evaluate the tied criteria based on additional factors such as potential for growth, historical performance, and other qualitative assessments.

### Phase 3: Public polling criteria

**Objective:** To gather diverse stakeholder opinions through public polling, ensuring minimal biases and accurate rankings of the top 4-5 chosen cities based on the survey results.

**Sample size:** The public polling will include a sample size of over 1000+ respondents.

- 1. Combatting biases:** To mitigate biases, rigorous measures are implemented, including:
  - Ensured diverse representation in the sample to minimise demographic biases.
  - Used random sampling techniques to select respondents.
  - Employed robust data collection and analysis methodologies to identify and address any inherent biases.
- 2. Distribution:** The survey is distributed through multiple channels, including email, social media platforms, sports organisations, government departments, and sports federations. Collaborative efforts with local sports clubs, associations, and community groups are made to reach a diverse audience.
- 3. Data collection:** Responses are collected anonymously over a specified period, ensuring confidentiality to encourage honest feedback.
- 4. Data analysis:** Quantitative and qualitative methods are being used to analyse the data, identifying trends, patterns, and areas for improvement. Statistical tools and thematic analysis will be employed to derive meaningful insights.

### Target audience weighted scores:

Fans

Federations and other interest groups

Athletes

Coaches and other support staff officials

Government representatives

Weighted scores definition for tiebreaks: In the event of a tie, weighted scores will be recalculated based on the significance of the stakeholder groups, as outlined above, to determine the final rankings.

### Data representation of responses

Reporting: A comprehensive report will be prepared, summarising findings, and presenting key insights, strengths, weaknesses, and actionable recommendations. Visualisations such as charts and graphs will be used for effective communication.



“

India is growing as an economy, we are witnessing development across sections and sports is no exception.

In the recent past, our country has seen some top performances in multiple sports at the international level, be it shooting, wrestling, hockey, athletics, archery or badminton, to name a few..

I believe that hosting an event of the scale of Olympics in India will surely drive the development of sports overall and undoubtedly fast track our evolution as a sporting nation and the essential cultural change.

### Mukul Choudhari

Head of Sports Excellence Centres, Tata Steel and CEO, Jamshedpur FC



# 03

## Best sports cities in India

## India's top marvels

The Indian marvels are truly in the big leagues, hitting it out of the park with their exceptional capabilities. Learn more about these cities that are in the zone for setting the gold standard for sports excellence.



### Bhubaneswar

#### A leader in sports promotion

A special shoutout to Odisha for emerging as a leading state in India for sports promotion, with Bhubaneswar at the forefront of hosting major national and international sporting events. This transformation is fuelled by state-of-the-art infrastructure, strategic planning, and robust support from both government and private sectors.

At the heart of Bhubaneswar is the Kalinga Sports Complex, the largest sports facility in the city, spanning 80 acres. It features an athletics and football stadium with a capacity of 12,000 people, a hockey stadium accommodating 15,000 spectators, and facilities for 350 athletes. The complex also includes 10 high-performance centers established by the state government, making it a central hub for athletic development.

The Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology University has been instrumental in promoting sports by establishing high-performance centers for various disciplines. Notable athletes like Tapan Mohanty and Rakesh Patra have trained here. Recent developments include the AIFF-FIFA Talent Academy, inaugurated in November 2023 by Arsène Wenger, and a badminton high-performance centre currently under construction, which will feature eight courts, a seating capacity for 500, a cafeteria, guest rooms, and a gymnasium. Additionally, a gymnastics center is being developed that will include seating for 250 persons, a 10m shooting range, a hockey stadium with two pitches, a weightlifting hall, a swimming pool complex, and a sports climbing wall.

Bhubaneswar moves ahead of the curve by building its first Indoor Athletics Centre, which includes a 200m athletics track with a seating gallery for 2,000 spectators and facilities for pole vault, shot put, long jump, high jump, and weight training. This center will also provide 56 rooms for athlete accommodation.

By taking the ball and running with it, Bhubaneswar has successfully hosted the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, showcasing top-tier hockey talent and enhancing global visibility for the sport. The city also played a pivotal role in organising the Indian Super League, significantly contributing to the growth of football in India.

The Odisha government is dedicated to addressing athletes' needs, alongside infrastructure development. The Kalinga Stadium Sports Complex will soon include a Sports Science Centre for rehabilitation and recovery, equipped with world-class machinery. Collaborations with corporate partners such as Reliance, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India, Dalmia Bharat Group, JSW Steel Ltd, TATA, and Rungta Mines, along with renowned sports personalities like Abhinav Bindra and Pullela Gopichand, have facilitated the establishment of high-performance centers and grassroots development programmes.

#### Prospects

Bhubaneswar is poised to become India's premier destination for major sports events. The successful hosting of events like the Hockey World Cup (2023 & 2018), the Asian Athletics Championship (2017), and the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup (2022) underscores the state's commitment to sports development.

#### Achievements

Looking ahead to the Paris 2024 Olympics, two athletes from Odisha have qualified, along with three for the Paralympics. In the 37th National Games, Odisha ranked 16th and secured a total of 58 medals, including 10 gold, 18 silver, and 30 bronze medals.

## Scorecard

# 8.68 /10



### Event hosting

**Excellent** in event hosting. Hosted impactful events demonstrating scale and event hosting capabilities.

### Quality of infrastructure

**Top notch.** Kalinga Sports Complex and HPC are instrumental in promoting sports and showcasing quality infrastructure

### Fan engagement

**In the zone.** Fan engagement on social media and other outlets is phenomenal, with content and visibility, and involving fans.

### Federation collaboration

Good, but there is significant scope for improvement

### Marketing and visibility

**Shining bright.**

## Areas of improvement

- **Coaching and athlete development:** Needs boost. Enhanced coaching programmes are needed to build a stronger foundation of talent. Athlete development can be strengthened with more focused programmes.
- **Grassroot support:** Need more investments in grassroots support can be increased to a higher level.



## Chennai, Tamil Nadu

### Top pick by athletes, coaches, and federations

In an exciting poll by Grant Thornton Bharat targeting athletes, coaches, and federations, Chennai sprinted ahead as the top sports destination in India, winning by a whopping 58.3%. The city's vibrant sports culture and world-class facilities have clearly captured the hearts of the sporting community.

Chennai's iconic sports culture is a vibrant tapestry of rich history, athletic passion, and community engagement. The city embraces diverse sports, fostering a strong sense of local pride. Iconic teams like the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Chennaiyin FC serve as unifying forces, bringing people

together to celebrate their shared love for competition.

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Chennai has successfully hosted several significant international events, showcasing its organisational prowess. Notably, the 44th Chess Olympiad in 2022 attracted around 2,000 players from 188 countries, solidifying Chennai's status as India's chess capital. The Chennai Open, formerly an ATP World Tour tennis tournament, has played a crucial role in developing tennis in the region. At the same time, the

Chennai Challenger continues to provide exposure for aspiring players. The Chief Minister's Trophy, organised by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, and the Khelo India Youth Games further highlight Chennai's capabilities in hosting diverse sporting events. The CM Trophy Tamil Nadu brought together 25,000 participants for the state finals, reinforcing Chennai's reputation as a premier venue for large-scale sporting events.

Chennai is home to expansive venues catering to various sports. The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, with a capacity of over 40,000, serves as a focal point for football and athletics, while the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium is a historic cricket ground that has hosted numerous international matches. In 2024, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium underwent significant renovations, including a new athletics track and upgraded seating, enhancing the sporting experience for athletes and spectators alike. The Tamil Nadu government has committed substantial resources to sports development, allocating INR 1,000 crore for various initiatives, including facility upgrades.

Plans for a Global Sports City on the outskirts of Chennai aim to enhance the city's sporting infrastructure, featuring a 500-acre complex with facilities for hockey, indoor cycling, athletics, and multi-purpose arenas for volleyball, basketball, and boxing.

The 2024 sports budget of Tamil Nadu shows the state's commitment to enhancing its sports infrastructure and promoting athletic development. Four Olympic academies are set to be established in Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchy, and the Nilgiris, to provide elite athletes with advanced training

facilities. The government is also focusing on improving support for para-athletes and upgrading existing sports facilities to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all aspiring athletes. The Tamil Nadu Champions Foundation, a public-private partnership initiated in May 2023, has already supported around 390 individuals, including approximately 250 para-athletes. Various grassroots initiatives, such as the Khelo India Youth Games, engage young athletes and offer them competitive exposure, which helps nurture talent early on. Additionally, the Kalaignar Sports Kit initiative aims to foster grassroots talent by providing sports kits to 12,618 village panchayats across the state. This initiative covers 33 sports items, including cricket, football, volleyball, and throwball, making equipment more accessible for young people in rural areas.

## Achievements

Tamil Nadu showcased impressive achievements in sports, particularly at the Paris 2024 Olympics, where it had a strong representation with 13 athletes, including seven para-athletes.

The state ranked 10th in the 37th National Games and was the runner-up in the Khelo India Youth Games 2023.

Overall, Tamil Nadu excelled in these competitions, securing a total of 77 medals in the National Games, comprising 19 gold, 26 silver, and 32 bronze, along with 98 medals in the Khelo India Youth Games, which included 38 gold, 21 silver, and 39 bronze medals. This highlights Tamil Nadu's commitment to fostering athletic talent and excellence.

## Scorecard

# 8.62 /10

(All scores include weighted averages and are adjusted for marginal errors to standardize and prevent biases)



Large scale events	Quality of infrastructure	Fan engagement	Federation collaboration	Marketing and visibility
Tamil Nadu shows exceptional organisational prowess in hosting mega size events	Sports facilities are getting smarter, but there's room for more tech upgrades.	Tamil Nadu's fans bring the heat, driving massive participation and community spirit.	Chennai's got the playbook. Stellar teamwork with local and national federations ensures top-notch events.	Marketing is on point, but there's room for more innovative campaigns to keep the buzz alive.

## Areas of improvement

- **Athlete and coaching development:** It is time to up the game! Enhanced coaching and focused athlete programmes can build a powerhouse of talent.
- **Grassroot support:** Future stars in the making! More grassroots programmes are key to long-term success and a thriving sports culture.



## Bengaluru, Karnataka

Bengaluru, known as the 'Silicon Valley of India,' has a sports ecosystem as dynamic as its tech sector, making it a favoured destination for both national and international events. From its rich cricket history to its growing influence in football, tennis, and athletics, Bengaluru has solidified its place as a key sports hub in India.

The city boasts several world-class sports venues catering to various disciplines. The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium stands out as one of India's most iconic cricket grounds, regularly hosting international matches and Indian Premier League (IPL) games for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). The stadium's advanced drainage system and eco-friendly initiatives make it a leader in sustainable sports infrastructure. For athletics, the Sree Kanteerava Stadium serves as the city's primary venue, offering facilities for football, track and field events, and other sports. The KSLTA Stadium is a top destination for tennis enthusiasts and has hosted international tournaments like the Bengaluru Open. Other prominent facilities include the Bangalore Football Stadium, home to the Bengaluru FC football team, which has brought significant attention to the city's football culture, and the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence, which provides top-tier training in badminton, cricket, football, and athletics. These venues, combined with the city's emphasis on upgrading existing infrastructure, have established Bengaluru as a key player in India's sports landscape.

Bengaluru's sports infrastructure continues to expand, with several upcoming projects aimed at further elevating the city's status. The Karnataka government has announced the development of a sports city in Devanahalli, near Bengaluru's international airport. This project will include a multi-sport complex with cricket, football, hockey and athletics facilities, along with residential training academies. Additionally, the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) has proposed building new stadiums on the city's outskirts to accommodate the growing demand for cricket and other sports.

Bengaluru's track record of hosting high-profile sports events is impressive. The city regularly hosts international cricket matches at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, a key IPL game venue. The stadium is also known for hosting the ICC T20 World Cup and other international fixtures. Bengaluru's Bengaluru Open, an ATP Challenger tennis tournament, attracts top talent

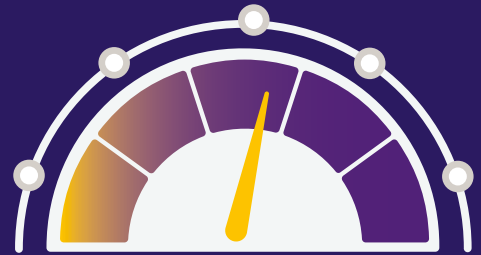
from around the world, contributing to the city's reputation as a tennis hub. Additionally, the Tata Bengaluru Marathon has become one of India's most anticipated marathon events, drawing thousands of participants annually, including elite runners. In football, Bengaluru FC has hosted numerous Indian Super League (ISL) matches at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, where passionate local fans create an electrifying atmosphere.

Bengaluru has long been a nurturing ground for young sports talent, with numerous academies and grassroots programmes aimed at fostering the next generation of athletes. The city is home to several top-tier sports academies, including the Padukone Academy for badminton and the Dravid Cricket Academy, both of which have produced national and international stars. The Khelo India Youth Games have also played a vital role in Bengaluru's sports development, giving young athletes the platform to compete at the national level. The Karnataka State Sports Development Authority (KSSDA) supports various grassroots initiatives, providing financial aid, coaching, and facilities for budding athletes. The Bengaluru FC Youth Academy has been instrumental in promoting football at the grassroots level, while initiatives like the KSCA Academy focus on cricket talent, offering professional coaching and mentorship to aspiring players.

The Karnataka government has been proactive in promoting sports development through various initiatives. In the 2023-24 state budget, a significant allocation was made to enhance sports infrastructure and promote athletic programmes across Karnataka, focusing on Bengaluru. The Amrutha Bharathi Sports Scheme was launched to identify and train athletes from rural and underprivileged areas, providing access to elite coaching and modern sports facilities. Another key initiative is the Bengaluru Sports City project, aimed at creating a centralised hub for multiple sports disciplines. The government has also been focused on building academies and training centers for specific sports, including badminton, cricket, and athletics, ensuring that young talent has access to top-tier facilities. The Karnataka Olympic Association continues to work closely with state authorities to push for Bengaluru's inclusion in the bid to host international multi-sport events like the Youth Olympics and Asian Games. With these projects and plans underway, Bengaluru's position as a top-tier sports city is set to strengthen in the coming years.

## Scorecard

# 7.21/10



### Event hosting

Bengaluru is batting a thousand when it comes to hosting events, consistently knocking it out of the park with its strong capabilities.

### Quality of infrastructure

The city's infrastructure showcases top-notch quality and technological advancements that would make any sports fan cheer.

### Fan engagement

Fan engagement is currently at midfield. There's room to score more points by actively involving fans and boosting their participation.

### Athlete development

Bengaluru is hitting a home run in athlete development, providing excellent support and facilities to nurture future champions.

## Areas of improvement

- **Coaching development:** Bengaluru needs to step up its coaching game to build a stronger foundation of talent. Think of it as needing a better playbook to train the next MVPs.
- **Marketing and visibility:** The city needs to improve its marketing and visibility. It's time to get off the bench and make noise to enhance its presence and reach.
- **Grassroot support:** Grassroots programmes need more investment and focus.





## Delhi

### Social media sensation

Delhi has emerged as one of India's top sports cities, beloved by fans on social media. According to Grant Thornton Bharat's social media outreach, 44% of the fans prefer Delhi to be the best sports city, excelling in global sporting events.

Renowned for its world-class infrastructure and history of hosting major international events, Delhi's transformation began with the 1982 Asian Games. However, the most significant leap came during the 2010 Commonwealth Games (CWG), when Delhi revamped its sports facilities, propelling itself onto the global sports stage. Today, Delhi boasts over 20 state-of-the-art sports complexes, making it a prime location for hosting both national and international sporting events.

The city's sports infrastructure is anchored by iconic venues like the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium for football and athletics, and the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, India's largest indoor arena, accommodating 140,000 spectators. The Arun Jaitley Stadium (formerly Feroz Shah Kotla), one of India's oldest cricket grounds, continues Delhi's cricketing legacy by hosting international matches. Other key venues include the Siri Fort Sports Complex, Thyagaraj Sports Complex, and the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium. These venues, upgraded for the CWG 2010, serve as training and competition sites for professional and grassroots athletes alike. Delhi's geographical advantage over other cities, especially in the National Capital Region (NCR) areas, such as Gurugram, Noida, and Faridabad, allows for future infrastructure expansion.

With ambitious projects like the Delhi Sports University in Ghevra, North West Delhi, Delhi's sports infrastructure is set for further growth. Spanning 79 acres with an 'INR 1,000 crore budget', the university will provide cutting-edge sports facilities and focus on elite athlete training. As part of the Delhi Master Plan 2041, the creation of a Delhi Sports City in Dwarka and Rohini is also underway. This complex will support Delhi's ambition to host events like the Youth Olympics and Asian Games. Another major project is the Dwarka Stadium, a 40,000-seat multi-purpose venue set to open by 2025, enhancing the city's capacity to host international tournaments.

Delhi has proven itself as a premier venue for hosting large-scale sporting events. The 2010 Commonwealth Games set new standards in event management, and the city regularly hosts international cricket matches, FIFA-recognised football tournaments, marathons, and athletic meets. IPL matches at Arun Jaitley Stadium draw huge crowds, and events like the Pro Kabaddi League and Hockey India League have also garnered significant interest. Annual events such as the Delhi Half Marathon attract elite runners from around the world. In 2024, Delhi hosted the Junior Men's Hockey World Cup, reinforcing its reputation as a prime sports event hub.

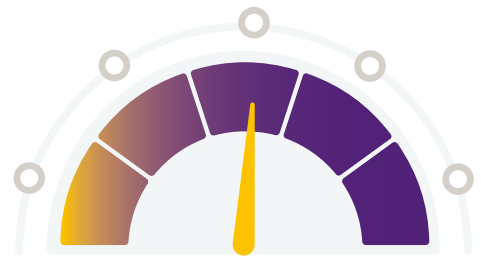
Delhi is committed to nurturing young talent, with initiatives like the Khelo India Youth Games regularly hosted in the city, providing a platform for emerging athletes. The Delhi Sports University, inaugurated in 2022, focuses on sports education and training, while private academies, such as those established by the Virat Kohli Foundation, provide opportunities for grassroots talent development. Programmes like the Mission Olympic Cell and the Play and Progress Scheme offer financial support and coaching to promising athletes. Additionally, the Delhi Talent Search Programme, expanded in 2023, aims to identify and nurture talent from underprivileged communities, ensuring access to quality coaching for all aspiring athletes.

The Delhi government has invested heavily in sports infrastructure and athlete development, with INR 118 crore allocated in the 2023 budget for upgrading sports facilities. The Sports Authority of India (SAI), headquartered in Delhi, is establishing centres of excellence for various sports disciplines. These venues not only host events but also serve as critical training grounds for India's top athletes. Looking ahead, projects like the Delhi Sports University and Delhi Sports City, under the Delhi Master Plan 2041, will position the capital to host major international events, further solidifying its status as a premier sports destination in India.

## Scorecard

# 7.19/10

(All scores include weighted averages and are adjusted for marginal errors to standardize and prevent biases)



### Event hosting

Delhi is like a seasoned captain, hosting events with finesse, but could use more matches to stay in top form.

### Quality of infrastructure

Delhi has got a stellar Infrastructure, with venues like the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium leading the way.

### Travel and hospitality

Delhi's travel and hospitality services are a hole-in-one, ensuring a smooth experience for all.

## Areas of improvement

- **Federation collaboration:** Needs to tighten its defense, improving collaboration with sports federations.
- **Marketing and visibility:** Time to step up to the plate and boost marketing efforts to hit a home run in visibility.
- **Fan engagement:** Fan engagement is at midfield; more interactive events could score higher points.
- **Athlete and coach development:** Needs a stronger playbook for developing athletes and coaches, akin to building a championship team.





## Pune, Maharashtra

Pune has emerged as a thriving sports city. The city is not just about cricket; it embraces a diverse range of sports, from badminton to athletics, reflecting the vibrant spirit of its residents. The city's commitment to nurturing talent and hosting diverse sporting events reflects its growing reputation as a key player in India's sports landscape. Whether as players or passionate fans, the people of Pune embody a spirit of sportsmanship that makes the city truly special.

The Balewadi Stadium continues to serve as a premier venue, hosting major events such as the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) and the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL). Recent upgrades have ensured that the stadium meets international standards, improving its capacity and facilities. Notable events hosted at Balewadi Stadium from 2022 to 2024 include:

Fourth season of UTT (July 13-30, 2023)

PKL season 10 (December 3-24, 2023)

South Asia's only ATP 250 tennis event

AFC Champions league matches

CEAT Indian Supercross Racing League

National Children's Science Exhibition

Designed to international standards, the Balewadi Stadium features a range of facilities, including shooting ranges, an aquatic center, and a tennis complex. Its comprehensive design and modern amenities make it a premier sports venue in India, capable of hosting large-scale events and providing top-notch facilities for athletes and spectators alike.

The government has sanctioned 341 sports infrastructure projects under the Khelo India Scheme and the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF), aimed at strengthening grassroots sports across the country. This includes the establishment of over 1,000 Khelo India centers in 679 districts, including Pune, which provide comprehensive training and support for young athletes. Additionally, 296 sports academies have been accredited, enhancing the training ecosystem for aspiring athletes.

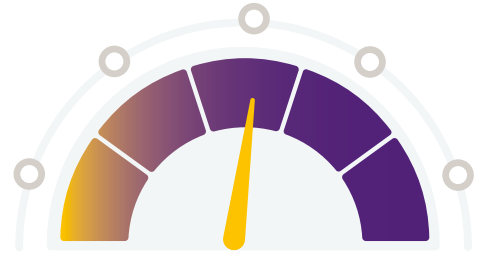
Pune supports around 1,200 athletes daily, with facilities catering to diverse sports. This number significantly increases during major events, showcasing the city's commitment to athlete training and development. Grassroots initiatives, notably the Khelo India programme, have encouraged youth participation, with local academies actively nurturing talent. The STAIRS Foundation's initiative, 'One Maharashtra One Goal,' launched in September 2024, aims to foster grassroots sports development through district-level matches.



Various universities and sports organisations in Pune are conducting talent identification programmes to scout emerging athletes, while mentorship and training programmes are in place to prepare them for competitive sports. Local sports academies and clubs engage with the community, ensuring that young athletes receive the necessary support to excel.

## Scorecard

# 7.11/10



### Event hosting

Pune is hitting it out of the park with exceptional event-hosting capabilities.

### Quality of infrastructure

The infrastructure is solid but could be upgraded to stay ahead of the game.

### Coaching development

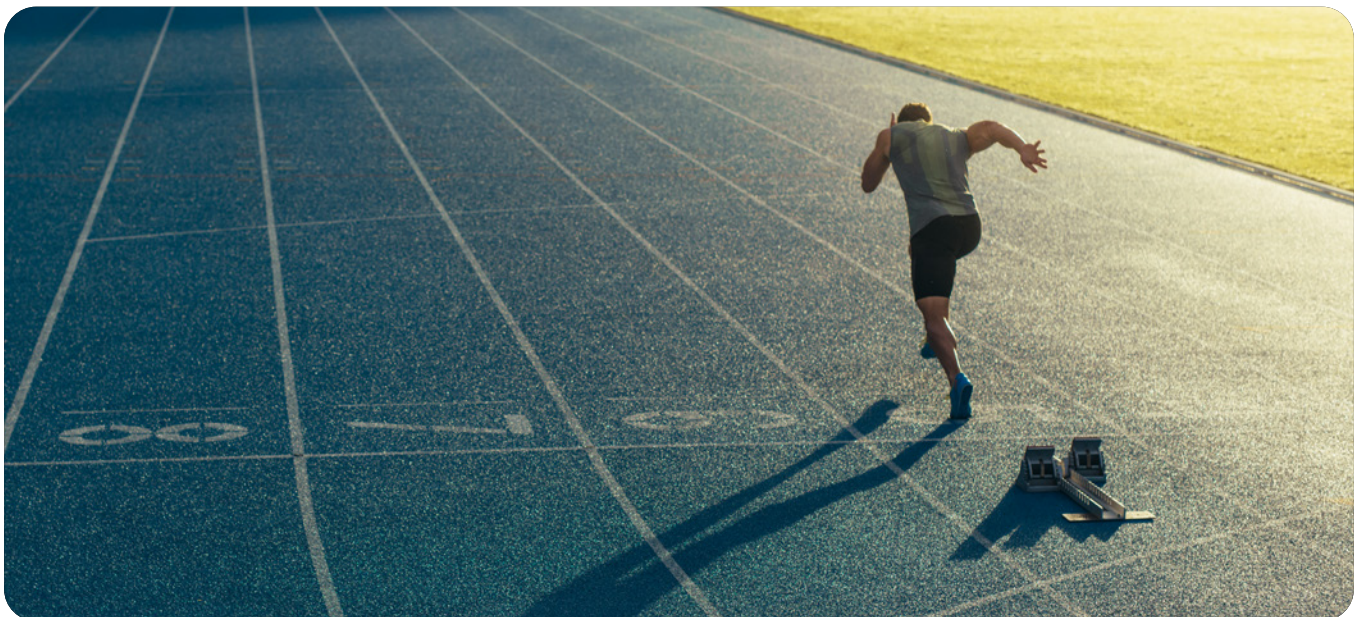
Pune's coaching development is top-notch, training future champions with excellence.

### Marketing and visibility

Marketing and visibility are exceptional, making Pune a well-known sports hub.

## Areas of improvement

- Federation collaboration: Good collaboration with federations, but there is room to tighten the defense.
- Grassroot support
- Fan engagement: Fan engagement has scope for improvement; more interactive events could boost enthusiasm.
- Athlete development: Need significant improvement



# Rising Stars

Our rising stars are on the verge of greatness, steadily building their sports infrastructure and reputation. They may not be top marvels yet, but they are making significant strides and are poised to shine brightly soon.



## Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujarat, has rapidly developed into a significant sports hub in India. Known for its historical association with cricket, Ahmedabad has, in recent years, expanded its focus to become a multi-sport destination, with state-of-the-art infrastructure and a growing culture of hosting international events. From the inauguration of one of the world's largest stadiums to the city's ambition to host global sporting events, Ahmedabad is emerging as a key player in India's sports ecosystem.

Ahmedabad's most iconic sports infrastructure achievement is the Narendra Modi Stadium (formerly Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium), which stands as the largest cricket stadium in the world, with a seating capacity of 132,000. Opened in 2020, the stadium has since hosted several high-profile cricket matches, including IPL fixtures, India vs. England Test series, and other international games. It is a global benchmark for cricket infrastructure, equipped with modern amenities, LED lighting, and high-tech practice facilities. The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Complex, which houses the Narendra Modi Stadium, is being further developed to include facilities for multiple sports. This complex is designed to host both cricket and sports, such as football, basketball, and athletics, signalling Ahmedabad's shift towards becoming a multi-sport city. Other prominent venues in Ahmedabad include the EKA Arena by TransStadia, a multi-purpose stadium with facilities for football, kabaddi, and other indoor sports. TransStadia has gained international attention for its retractable seating technology and cutting-edge sports science services, becoming a preferred venue for national and international events.

Ahmedabad is seeing significant new sports infrastructure projects between 2022 and 2024. One of the major upcoming developments is the expansion of the Narendra Modi Sports Complex to include facilities for indoor sports like basketball, tennis, and badminton. Plans are also underway to build an Olympic Village within the complex, including athlete residences, training centers, and rehabilitation facilities, setting

the stage for hosting global multi-sport events. The Ahmedabad Sports City project is another major initiative by the Gujarat government. Located near the GIFT City, this sports city aims to develop world-class infrastructure for football, athletics, and indoor sports, aiming to make Ahmedabad a candidate for hosting events like the Youth Olympics or Asian Games in the future.

Ahmedabad's status as a major sports destination was cemented when it successfully hosted the final of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 at the Narendra Modi Stadium, drawing global attention to the city's capability to handle large-scale international events. Additionally, the stadium hosted the opening ceremony and other important matches during the tournament, further establishing Ahmedabad as a global cricket hub. The EKA Arena by TransStadia has also been preferred for major indoor events. Ahmedabad hosted the Pro Kabaddi League and ISL matches at the arena, demonstrating the city's growing interest in sports beyond cricket. The Ahmedabad Marathon, held annually, has also gained prominence, attracting both amateur and professional runners from across the country and abroad. The city has proven it can handle multi-sport events with excellent infrastructure and organisational capabilities.

Ahmedabad is committed to developing sports at the grassroots level. The Khelo India Youth Games, hosted by Gujarat in 2022, was a pivotal moment for Ahmedabad's grassroots sports infrastructure, as it gave young athletes from across the country an opportunity to compete at a high level. The event showcased the city's ability to nurture emerging talent and organise large-scale youth competitions. Through the Khel Mahakumbh initiative, the Gujarat government has encouraged youth participation in sports by offering competitive platforms and access to sports equipment. In 2023, the initiative saw record participation, with thousands of young athletes competing in sports like athletics, kabaddi, and volleyball. Ahmedabad has also seen the rise of sports

academies focusing on disciplines such as cricket, football, and badminton. The Narendra Modi Stadium includes a cricket academy that offers advanced training facilities for aspiring cricketers. Additionally, the TransStadia Institute of Sports Sciences offers training and sports education programmes that are helping nurture a new generation of athletes in Gujarat.

The Gujarat government has substantially invested in upgrading sports infrastructure and supporting athlete development. In the 2023-24 state budget, over INR 3,000 crore was allocated for sports infrastructure projects and other facilities under the Missions Schools of Excellence, encompassing Education, Sports, Arts and Culture.

The Gujarat Sports Policy, launched in 2023, focuses on promoting sports culture at the grassroots level, identifying and supporting young talent, and providing financial aid for training and international exposure. Through this policy, the government aims to make Ahmedabad a key national sports training and development center.

Looking forward, the Gujarat government is actively pushing for Ahmedabad to be considered for hosting international multi-sport events. With ongoing developments in the Sports City and the expansion of facilities at the Narendra Modi Sports Complex, Ahmedabad is positioning itself as a strong contender for future global sports events.



## Panaji, Goa

Panaji, the capital of Goa, is steadily becoming a prominent sports hub in India, mainly known for its strong football culture. While historically recognised for football, the city has expanded its focus to accommodate a range of sports, fueled by new infrastructure developments, government initiatives, and a growing passion for sports tourism. With its unique geographical location, Panaji is positioning itself as a key player in India's sports landscape, both for national and international events.

Panaji's sports infrastructure has significantly enhanced, especially in the football domain. The Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda, located just outside Panaji, is one of Goa's most iconic sports venues, and has been the heart of football in the state. It has hosted international football matches, including the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017, and is home to Indian Super League (ISL) franchise FC Goa. The stadium, with a seating capacity of 19,000, continues to be a central venue for high-profile matches and has seen upgrades in terms of seating, lighting, and turf quality. In addition to football, Panaji is developing facilities for other sports. The Shyama Prasad

Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Taleigao has become a key venue for indoor sports like badminton, table tennis, and basketball. The stadium, known for its world-class facilities, hosted the 2022 National Games, which saw athletes competing in various disciplines. Beyond these larger venues, Panaji has smaller sports complexes and training centers like the Campal Indoor Stadium and several local football fields catering to grassroots and professional athletes. Plans are in motion to upgrade these facilities to support local sports development further.

Between 2022 and 2024, Panaji has seen new infrastructure projects to further enhance its role as a sports city. The Goa Sports City project, located on the outskirts of Panaji, is a significant step towards creating a comprehensive sports ecosystem in the state. This project includes multi-sport arenas, training academies, and residential facilities for athletes. The Goa Sports City aims to elevate Panaji's profile as a host city for international events, designed to accommodate a wide range of sports, including football, athletics, and water sports. The government of Goa is also focusing on expanding water sports infrastructure, leveraging the state's coastal advantage. Panaji will see the development of specialised facilities for sports, such as sailing, windsurfing, and kayaking, adding a unique dimension to the city's sports offerings. These initiatives are designed to attract international water sports events, contributing to Goa's sports tourism.

Panaji's ability to host major sporting events has grown significantly over recent years. The city has become a central location for football tournaments, notably the Indian Super League (ISL), where FC Goa plays its home matches at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The venue also hosts national and international tournaments, attracting large crowds of football enthusiasts. In 2022, Goa hosted the 36th National Games, with Panaji as a key city in the event. The games were a huge success and underscored the city's growing reputation for hosting multi-sport events. Panaji played a central role in organising competitions across various disciplines, from football and athletics to badminton and swimming, solidifying its capacity to handle large-scale sporting events. Panaji is also a key destination for the growing popularity of water sports in India. The India International Regatta and other water sports competitions held along Goa's coast have drawn participants from around the world, helping position Panaji as a hub for water-based events.

Panaji has a strong culture of grassroots sports development, particularly in football, which has been part of Goan life for generations. The Goa Football Development Council (GFDC) has played a key role in nurturing young football talent across the state. The FC Goa Youth Development Programme provides aspiring footballers with structured training, coaching, and competitive opportunities. The city's robust grassroots football

programmes ensure a steady pipeline of talent for both domestic leagues and the national team. Beyond football, the Khelo India Youth Games have become a crucial platform for young athletes in Panaji. Goa has consistently contributed to these games, with Panaji hosting several regional qualifiers and competitions in disciplines like athletics, swimming, and table tennis. The Sports Authority of Goa (SAG) continues to invest in athlete development through programmes that provide modern facilities and coaching to athletes across various sports. The city is also home to several private sports academies, including those focused on cricket, badminton, and athletics, which are helping build a wider sports culture in Panaji.

The government of Goa has been instrumental in supporting sports development across the state, with Panaji at the center of its efforts. In 2023, the state government announced a comprehensive sports policy focusing on improving infrastructure, developing athlete support programmes, and increasing Goa's visibility as a sports tourism destination. Key initiatives include upgrading existing sports complexes and building new training facilities. The Goa Sports City project, part of the state's broader sports development strategy, is one of the most ambitious, aiming to provide world-class infrastructure for athletes while promoting sports tourism in Goa. The project will also focus on eco-friendly and sustainable construction, aligning with the state's commitment to environmental conservation. The state is also working to boost water sports, aiming to make Panaji the center of India's water sports circuit. Plans to introduce professional water sports leagues and international competitions are in progress, with the aim of developing a unique niche in India's sports ecosystem.



## Panchkula, Haryana

Panchkula, in Haryana, has become a significant sports destination in northern India. It is known for its robust infrastructure and hosting major national events. With its world-class facilities, the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex is the city's centerpiece, regularly hosting national-level events in wrestling, athletics, and more. The Haryana Cricket Association's Stadium also hosts national cricket tournaments.

The Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex boasts its multi-sport facility and includes a world-class athletics track, football fields, and venues for wrestling, kabaddi, and cricket. The complex regularly hosts national-level events, particularly in wrestling and athletics. The city is also home to the Haryana Cricket Association's Stadium, which has hosted national-level cricket tournaments. Panchkula's sports infrastructure caters to various sports disciplines and offers training facilities for athletes at both grassroots and professional levels. The city has also

hosted key Pro Kabaddi League matches, and its facilities are increasingly used for national cricket tournaments. Panchkula's ability to host multi-sport events efficiently has placed it on the map for future national sports competitions.

Between 2022 and 2024, Panchkula has continued developing its sports infrastructure. The Haryana government has announced plans to build additional sports facilities, including a state-of-the-art indoor stadium for badminton, basketball, and volleyball. Panchkula also benefits from Haryana's broader push to improve sports infrastructure in preparation for hosting future national and international events. In 2022, the city hosted the Khelo India Youth Games, further solidifying Panchkula's reputation as a major sports destination. The successful execution of this event showcased the city's modern sports facilities.

The Haryana government has invested significantly in sports infrastructure and athlete support, focusing on promoting women's sports. Panchkula is part of Haryana's strategy to become a national sports hub, with plans to bid for larger events and enhance facilities further.



# Regional champions

Regional champions are emerging powerhouses, showcasing immense potential and dedication, and are just a step away from becoming the next big stars in the sports world.



## Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Bhopal has also made significant strides as a major sports destination, reflecting Madhya Pradesh's commitment to developing world-class sports infrastructure. The state was recognised with the Best State for Promoting Sports Award, highlighting its efforts to provide international-standard facilities for athletes. The Madhya Pradesh State Sports Academy in Bhopal plays a central role in nurturing young talent through specialised coaching across various sports disciplines.

A significant step in Bhopal's sports development is the construction of the MPRDC Sports Complex in Nathu Barkheda. Significant investments will be made to include an athletic and hockey stadium, with subsequent phases bringing in a multi-purpose indoor stadium and more sports facilities.

Bhopal is also home to the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy, one of the world's best shooting facilities, which includes ranges of 10, 25, and 50 meters. The academy hosted the ISSF World Cup Championships, with ISSF President Luciano Rossi praising its world-class infrastructure.

Bhopal is preparing to host the National Games of India, enhance its infrastructure, and make logistical arrangements for this multi-sport event. These developments showcase Bhopal's growing capabilities as a key venue for national and international sporting events.



## Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow is rapidly becoming a key sports city in India, driven by its growing infrastructure and focus on athlete development. With state support, the city is now a major national and international sporting events hub. Lucknow's Ekana Sports City, featuring the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium (50,000-seat capacity), hosts IPL and international matches. The K.D. Singh Babu Stadium remains a key venue for hockey, while the Guru Gobind Singh Sports College continues to groom athletes across multiple sports. Upcoming projects include a sports university, as well as expansions in football, athletics, and indoor sports facilities.

Lucknow regularly hosts major events, including IPL matches, Ranji Trophy games, and national hockey tournaments. The Ekana Stadium has become a premier venue for international cricket matches, further boosting the city's profile. The city plays a central role in identifying and nurturing talent through the Guru Gobind Singh Sports College and government-backed programmes. Lucknow is also active in the Khelo India Youth Games, offering young athletes opportunities to compete at higher levels.

The Uttar Pradesh government continues investing in sports infrastructure, focusing on traditional sports like kabaddi and emerging sports like e-sports. Significant funds have been allocated for facility upgrades and athlete support.

## Indigenous sports of India

### A thriving fusion of tradition and innovation

India's sports landscape is as diverse as its cultural fabric, blending centuries-old indigenous traditions with modern enthusiasm. While traditional sports like Kho Kho, Gilli Danda, Kabaddi, Gatka, and Mallakhamb have long been part of the country's heritage, they are now witnessing a revival with formal recognition and support.

### Indigenous sports: A legacy reborn

India's indigenous sports are deeply rooted in its history, promoting physical fitness, discipline, and community spirit. With the government's support through programmes like Khelo India, these sports are being revived, celebrated, and modernised, giving them a new lease of life.

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Reviving India's indigenous sports like Kabaddi, Gatka, Kho-Kho, Gilli Danda, and Mallakhamb isn't just about preserving cultural roots—it's about empowering the next generation to reconnect with their heritage while embracing fitness, discipline, and community values. These sports are deeply embedded in India's cultural fabric and offer more than just physical activity. They teach important life skills such as teamwork, strategy, and resilience.

**Sudhanshu Mittal**

President, Kho Kho Federation of India

## Kabaddi

One of India's most popular indigenous sports, Kabaddi, has transformed into a national obsession, thanks to the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL). A game that once thrived in rural areas now enjoys a massive television audience and players that have become household names. The sport, which tests strength, agility, and teamwork, exemplifies how traditional games can capture modern imaginations with the right platform and promotion.

## Gatka

Gatka, a martial art form practiced primarily by the Sikh community, has gained formal recognition as a sport. Known for its stick-fighting techniques, Gatka promotes self-defense, agility, and balance. Its recognition as part of the Khelo India Youth Games has led to increased participation and awareness, particularly among youth eager to connect with their cultural heritage through sports.

## Mallakhamb

Mallakhamb, often called India's answer to gymnastics, combines acrobatics and yoga performed on a wooden pole or rope. This visually stunning sport has received increased attention, with competitions being held across states. Its

inclusion in the National School Games has ensured that the younger generation experiences this ancient form of physical fitness.

## Kho kho

Kho Kho, a traditional tag game, is another sport that has seen a resurgence. Known for its fast-paced action and strategic gameplay, Kho Kho is now played in schools and colleges nationwide. Establishing the Ultimate Kho Kho league has brought the sport into the limelight, attracting new fans and participants.

## Gilli danda

Gilli danda, often compared to cricket, is a game that has been played in Indian villages for centuries. It involves hitting a small stick (gilli) with a larger stick (danda). This simple yet engaging game is being revived through local tournaments and school programmes, ensuring that the younger generation appreciates this piece of cultural heritage.

Once confined to rural areas, these sports are now celebrated nationwide, showcasing the rich tapestry of India's sporting heritage. With continued support and promotion, they are poised to inspire future generations and keep the spirit of traditional Indian sports alive.

## Yogasana

India's yogasana has not only gained global recognition as a cornerstone of wellness practices but has also evolved into a competitive sport. Yogasanas, celebrated for their holistic benefits, are now integral to fitness regimes, mental health programmes, and lifestyle choices, reflecting India's profound influence on global health and well-being. Yogasanas are a profound practice that integrates body, mind, and spirit. With 84 classical asanas, each offering unique benefits, they are part of the broader practice of Hatha Yoga, which aims to harmonise the sun (ha) and moon (tha) energies within us.

**Competitive yogasana:** This ancient practice has found its way into the realm of competitive sports, with three main categories:

- **Artistic yogasana:** Similar to artistic gymnastics, athletes perform postures for three minutes, synchronising their movements to music.
- **Traditional yogasana:** Participants hold postures for 15 to 30 seconds, focusing on balance and stability.
- **Rhythmic yogasana:** Conducted in pairs or groups of five, players perform asanas in sync, maintaining each posture for five to seven seconds, with points awarded for smooth transitions.

**Global influence:** The inclusion of yogasana in events like the Khelo India Youth Games has boosted its popularity, encouraging more people to participate and appreciate this unique blend of physical fitness and cultural heritage.

## Water sports: Sailing, canoeing, and kayaking

India's coastline and river systems have given rise to a variety of indigenous and modern water sports. Sailing, canoeing, and kayaking have grown significantly, particularly in regions like Kerala, Goa, and Maharashtra. These sports not only celebrate India's natural aquatic resources but also nurture young athletes to compete nationally and internationally. The Indian Naval Sailing Association and local adventure sports clubs have played a pivotal role in popularising these sports.

## Modern games taking center stage

Pickleball, a unique blend of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong, has gained significant popularity in India over the last few years. Originating in the United States in the 1960s, pickleball has quickly grown into one of India's fastest-growing recreational and competitive sports. Its simplicity, adaptability, and appeal to people of all ages have made pickleball a favourite in cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Ahmedabad. The sport's small court size and relatively easy learning curve make it ideal for India's urban population, where space is often a constraint.

Additionally, the All-India Pickleball Association (AIPA) has been instrumental in organising tournaments like the Indian Open Pickleball Championship, helping formalise and promote the sport across the country. Pickleball's growing popularity is further driven by its inclusiveness and community-oriented nature, which blends well with India's traditional love for sports. As more local clubs and competitive events emerge, pickleball quickly becomes a key part of India's modern sports culture.

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Given the huge social media and 'instant gratification' world we are living in, Pickleball becomes an ideal sport which is accessible for all age groups and for people at all levels. Its ease of play, minimal space requirements, and low investment for court construction make it an ideal sport for Indians to take to and excel at it as well.

### Gaurav Natekar

Arjuna Awardee, Double Asian Games Gold Medallist, Founder of Natekar Sports and the World Pickleball

# The rise of e-sports: India's digital playground

While traditional sports remain an essential part of India's culture, the explosive rise of e-sports is rewriting the definition of competition for a new generation. E-sports, competitive video gaming at a professional level, is no longer just a hobby for tech-savvy youth. It is now a multi-billion-dollar global industry, and India is emerging as a significant player on the international e-sports scene. In a landmark move, the government of India formally recognised e-sports as part of multi-sport events in 2022, placing it under the purview of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. This recognition has opened opportunities for the growth of e-sports as an organised, structured industry with proper regulation and development.

## Popular e-sports titles in India

Games like BGMI, Call of Duty, Free Fire, and FIFA have become hugely popular among India's youth, with professional leagues, tournaments, and sponsorships rapidly increasing.

## Tournaments and leagues

The rise of e-sports leagues, such as the ESL India Premiership and Skyesports Championship, has given professional gamers a platform to showcase their talent and compete for substantial prize pools. Cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru have hosted major e-sports events, attracting not just players but massive online viewership, rivalling traditional sports.

## E-sports and careers

E-sports in India has also opened new career paths. Aside from professional players, careers in streaming, game development, event management, and digital marketing have flourished. Platforms like YouTube Gaming and Twitch have allowed gamers to build large followings, making gaming a viable full-time career option. Influencers and streamers like Mortal and Dynamo Gaming have become celebrities in their own right.

## Government and corporate support

With the official recognition of e-sports, the Indian government has begun to look at ways to support the industry, from providing infrastructure for training centers to organising tournaments at the national level. Corporates are also taking notice, with brands like Red Bull, Nvidia, and Airtel sponsoring e-sports events and teams, thus fuelling the growth of the industry.

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E-sports in India is witnessing exponential growth, evolving from a niche activity into a thriving industry with immense potential. With over 700 million gamers projected by 2025 and an estimated revenue of INR 1,100 crore by 2025, esports is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of India's digital economy. The rise of competitive gaming, fueled by increased internet penetration, smartphone usage, and the popularity of online multiplayer games, is opening new avenues for youth engagement, brand sponsorships, and international recognition. This growth positions India as a major player in the global esports landscape.”

**Abhishek Binaykia**

Partner, Sports Industry Leader  
Grant Thornton Bharat

## Unique blend of tradition and innovation

The unique interplay between its ancient traditions and cutting-edge digital innovations makes India's sports landscape exciting. On the one hand, sports like Kabaddi, Gatka, and Mallakhamb continue to hold cultural and community significance, ensuring that the nation's rich heritage remains a vital part of its future. On the other hand, e-sports offer a new kind of platform where India's youth can compete on a global stage in a rapidly growing industry.

04

# Stories of impact



# Success stories and important sports developments

## The Khelo India programme

India's Khelo India programme is a flagship initiative aimed at fostering sports culture and developing athletic talent across the country. Since its inception in 2018, Khelo India has grown to become a cornerstone of India's sports development strategy. Between 2021 and 2024, Khelo India has seen remarkable growth in the scope, reach, and impact. Khelo India's vision is to revive India's sports culture by creating a robust sports ecosystem that can produce world-class athletes. It targets various stakeholders, including young students, local athletes and seasoned professionals, focusing on both grassroots initiatives and elite-level training.

## Approach of Khelo India (2021-2024)

1. **Talent identification and development:** Through Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) and Khelo India University Games (KIUG), the programme conducts talent scouting and provides training and financial support to exceptional athletes. Athletes are further supported under the Khelo India Scholarship scheme.
2. **Sports infrastructure:** The establishment of Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCEs) across the country provides world-class training facilities for various sports and ensures that top athletes have access to the best coaching and equipment.
3. **Inclusivity:** Khelo India has broadened its reach by including Khelo India Winter Games and Khelo India Para Games, ensuring athletes across different regions and abilities have equal opportunities.
4. **Community engagement:** Grassroots participation is encouraged through community sports programmes, school-level competitions, and the provision of sports equipment in rural and urban areas.

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The success of the Khelo India programme lies in its ability to revive India's sports culture by fostering a vibrant, inclusive sports ecosystem. Through grassroots initiatives in schools, universities, and academies across rural and urban India, including talent identification, annual competitions, community coaching, playfield development, and state-level Khelo India Centres, the programme transforms young athletes' potential into excellence. Khelo India promotes sports for women and people with disabilities. Khelo India is ably supported by Fit India Mission, which encourages health and fitness through regular physical activity across all age groups.

### **Sujit Panigrahi**

Founder & CEO, Sequoia Fitness and Sports Technology Pvt. Ltd.

## Key highlights of Khelo India (2021-2024)



### Budget allocation:

The Khelo India programme saw substantial growth in its budget during 2021-2024. In 2024, the government allocated “INR 900 crore to Khelo India, an increase of INR 20 crore from the previous year.”



### Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)

The 2023 edition of KIYG was held in Madhya Pradesh, with over “6,000 participants from 36 states across 27 sports disciplines.” These games have become a crucial platform for young athletes, helping them move towards national and international competitions.



### Khelo India University Games (KIUG):

A total of “3894 competitors from 200-plus universities participated in KIUG across 20 different disciplines, including indigenous sports like Mallakhamba and Yogasana.” These games provide a platform for university-level athletes, contributing significantly to nurturing young talent.



### Khelo India Winter Games:

The 2023 Khelo India Winter Games took place in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on sports like skiing, ice hockey, and snowboarding. This initiative is important for developing talent in regions with a natural affinity for winter sports.



### Khelo India Para Games:

The 2023 Khelo India Para Games highlighted inclusivity by hosting athletes with disabilities in para-athletics, swimming, and badminton events. This event emphasises the programme’s commitment to providing a platform for differently abled athletes.



### Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCES)

The Sports Ministry is set to establish Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE) under the ministry’s flagship, Khelo India Scheme. One KISCE will be identified in each state and union territory, with an effort to create a robust sporting ecosystem in the entire country. KISCE is a fine example of strengthening India’s pursuit for excellence in Olympics.



### Khelo India Mobile app:

In 2022, the launch of the Khelo India Mobile App offered fitness resources and sporting information to the public, promoting wider sports participation across India.



### Impact on elite sports:

Several athletes from Khelo India went on to represent India at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (held in 2021) and the Asian Games 2022. These success stories reflect Khelo India’s strong foundation in developing future champions

## The rise of paralympics in India: A new chapter in inclusive sports

India's paralympic journey has been one of resilience and triumph, turning what was once an overlooked sector into a source of national pride. From 2021 to 2024, India's para-athletes made significant strides, showcasing remarkable performances on the international stage while benefiting from growing infrastructure and increased support. These developments reflect India's deep commitment to fostering inclusivity in sports and providing platforms for differently abled athletes. India's success in the Paralympic Games, backed by government initiatives, corporate involvement, and public recognition, has solidified the country's place in the global para-sports arena.

The country's exceptional performances at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics (held in 2021) and the 2022 Asian Para Games have underscored the immense potential of Indian para-athletes. Programmes like the Khelo India Para Games have been instrumental in identifying and nurturing young talent, setting the stage for future success.

Approach of Paralympics in India (2021-2024)- India's strategy to enhance its paralympic framework involves developing elite athletes while also fostering inclusivity at the grassroots level. This approach includes:

### 1. Grassroots development:

The Khelo India Para Games programme plays a key role in identifying and nurturing young para-athletes through state-level competitions and training centers.

### 2. Financial and institutional support:

The Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) provides para-athletes with funding, training, and international exposure on par with their able-bodied counterparts, supported by institutions like SAI and PCI.

### 3. International exposure and high-performance centers:

Para-athletes now have increased access to international competitions and train at specialised high-performance centers designed for their needs.

### 4. Corporate and NGO involvement:

Corporations and NGOs provide sponsorships and scholarships to support para-athletes' training, healthcare, and development.

## Key highlights of paralympics in India (2021-2024)



Tokyo 2020 Paralympics (Held in 2021)

**19 medals**

Won by India, including **five** golds.



Paris 2024 Paralympics

**50+ athletes, 29 medals**

India's best-ever performance at the Paralympics, with the country's largest contingent sent to the Paris 2024 Paralympics.



Khelo India Para Games (2023)

**2,000 athletes**

competed across **20 sports** categories in the Khelo India Para Games.



Asian Para Games 2022 (Hangzhou, China)

**70+ medals**

Won by India, including **16 golds**, highlighting the nation's growing strength in para-sports.



Infrastructure development for para-athletes

**15 KISCEs**

equipped with accessibility-focused infrastructure to support para-athletes.



Increased funding through TOPS and NSDF

**INR 50 crore**

was allocated to the development of para-athletes from 2021 to 2024.

## Women in sports: Breaking barriers

Women sports in India have seen significant progress from 2021-2024. Increased visibility, higher participation rates, and landmark achievements at international events have showcased the immense potential of Indian women athletes. Backed by key initiatives, such as the Women's Premier League (WPL) and the Khelo India Women's League, India has made concerted efforts to raise women's sports profile and provide them with platforms to excel.

### Approach (2021-2024)

Women's involvement in sports events rose sharply, mainly through the Khelo India initiative. "Approximately, INR 9.5 crore was released under the sports for women component of the Khelo India Scheme to increase women's participation in sports since 2020."

The launch of the Women's Premier League (WPL) in 2023 was a landmark moment for women's cricket in India, attracting major investments and boosting the visibility of women athletes. The league underscored the commercial viability of women's sports, further paving the way for the growth of other women's leagues.

The commercial landscape of women's sports has experienced a thrilling transformation. The Women's Premier League (WPL) launch in 2023 was a game-changer, drawing an astounding media rights bid of "INR 951 crore" for the first five years. This monumental investment underscores the booming market for women's sports. The total bid for the five teams reached an impressive INR 4,669.99 crore, highlighting the league's immense commercial potential."

The growing recognition of female athletes, combined with better infrastructure and financial support, has increased the participation and visibility for women at both grassroots and professional levels.

## Indian women athletes shine at Paris 2024 Olympics

India's women athletes shone brightly at the Paris 2024 Olympics, demonstrating remarkable resilience and exceptional performance.

Manu Bhaker made history with two bronze medals in shooting, becoming the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal and the first Indian since independence to win two medals in a single Olympics.

PV Sindhu proudly carried the flag at the opening ceremony, while Ankita Bhakat and Deepika Kumari broke ground in archery. Manika Batra achieved a table tennis milestone, reaching the pre-quarterfinals.

Although the women's hockey team didn't win any medal, they displayed remarkable skill, and Vinesh Phogat's resilience shone despite disqualification. These women athletes proved their mettle, cementing India's presence at the global sports arena.



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Women are natural leaders; all they need is opportunity and trust. Their unique blend of mental resilience and physical strength equips them to excel in sports. India must enhance women's participation in sports leadership, both on the field and in governance.

### Priti Srivastava

Sr VP, Advocacy  
Reliance Industries Limited and Founder, DayaRanii

## Celebrating the triumphs of Indian women in sports



Tokyo 2020 Olympics (Held in 2021)

### 3 out of India's 7 medals

were secured by Indian women athletes, who delivered outstanding performances, with Mirabai Chanu winning a silver medal in weightlifting and Lovlina Borgohain earning a bronze medal in boxing.



Women's Premier League (WPL) 2023

### INR 3,289 crore

Attracted in media rights at the inaugural WPL. This was a landmark moment for women's cricket, significantly boosting the sport's visibility and female participation.



Khelo India Women's League (2023):

**40%** Female participation at the Khelo India Women's League, focusing on promoting grassroots sports and nurturing young female athletes



Tokyo 2020 Paralympics (Held in 2021):

Avani Lekhara made history as the first Indian woman to win a gold medal in shooting at the Paralympics and also clinched a bronze.



Asian Games 2022 (Hangzhou, China):

### 40%

Contributed by Indian women athletes to India's total medal tally, with the women excelling in disciplines like athletics, boxing, and wrestling



Commercial success and sponsorship

### INR 50 crore

The sponsorship amount signed by P.V. Sindhu in 2022. This is part of Indian women athletes, including Mithali Raj, securing record-breaking deals.



## Organisations promoting sports

Various organisations in India, such as Reliance Foundation, Hero MotoCorp, JSW Group, NTPC Limited, and Tata Group, Adani Sportsline, IndusInd Bank, Aditya Birla Group, ONGC, GMR Sports, REC are significantly contributing to sports development through sponsorships, training facilities, and grassroots programmes. Their efforts are instrumental in nurturing talent and enhancing India's presence in global sports.

**Table 1.0 illustrates major contributions and initiatives of Indian corporate foundations in sports development**

Reliance Foundation Youth Sports	Hero Motocorp	JSW Group	NTPC Limited	TATA Group
<p>Sponsors: Mumbai Indians (IPL)</p> <p>Partners with Athletics Federation of India and Indian Olympic Association</p> <p>Paris 2024: 10 athletes from the Reliance Foundation represented India at the Olympics while 2 athletes participated in the Paralympics.</p>	<p>Promotes golf, football, field hockey, cricket, motorsports.</p> <p>Title sponsor for Hero Hockey India League and Hockey World Cup 2023</p>	<p>Owns Delhi Capitals (IPL), Bengaluru FC, Haryana Steelers</p> <p>JSW has high performance centers for athletics, swimming, wrestling, boxing, and judo</p> <p>- 19 athletes at Paris 2024 Olympics</p>	<p>Organised rural sports gathering in March 2024</p> <p>Won "Sportstar Ace Award - 2024" award for archery sports development</p>	<p>Established Tata Football Academy, Tata Archery Academy, Naval Tata Hockey Academy, TSAF Climbing Academy</p> <p>Produced numerous national and international medalists</p> <p>Tata Steel has produced 1 Padma Bhushan, 11 Padma Shri, 1 Khel Ratna, 5 Dronacharya, and 41 Arjuna awardees</p>
<p>Reliance Foundation signed a cooperation agreement with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to promote Olympic values among young people through sport</p>	<p>Hero MotoCorp's Motorsports Team Rally focuses on the 'Rally raid' category. In under seven years, the team has become a force in international rally sport, winning multiple stages at the toughest race.</p>	<p>Supported 17 out of 107 medal winners at the Asian Games in China. Supported athletes with 1 Olympic medal, 17 Commonwealth Games medals, 3 World Championships, and 5 Asian Games medals</p>	<p>Committed INR 115 crores over 5 years for archery development, including infrastructure, training, and international exposure</p>	<p>Achievements include 2 wrestling medals at the Commonwealth Games, the first-ever squash medal at CWG, and 5 international and 195 national medals by Tata Football Academy athletes</p>
<p>The Education and Sports for All (ESA) initiative, led by Nita M. Ambani, supports the holistic development of children by promoting equal opportunities in education and sports</p>	<p>Paralympic training facilities:</p> <p>Hero MotoCorp partners with the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) to provide training and coaching facilities for para-athletes. This includes professional training for 14 specially-abled athletes, guided by experienced coaches, with access to world-class facilities and equipment</p>	<p>Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS): The IIS was launched in 2017 and has trained Olympians like Sakshi Malik, Neeraj Chopra, and Bajrang Punia. Currently, the IIS is grooming 200 athletes with the intention of elevating India to the top five sporting nations</p> <p>Feeder centers: JSW Sports has established feeder centers in Odisha, Manipur, and Haryana, where it trains 6,000 athletes, including prominent figures like javelin star Neeraj Chopra</p>	<p>Archery development: Significant investments by the NTPC include setting up training centers, field targets, and sports science labs compatible with archery, aiming to enhance infrastructure and training facilities for archers</p>	<p>Specialised academies: Tata Group has built academies for football, archery, athletics, hockey, and sport climbing, including the TSAF Climbing Academy, which won laurels at the 27th National Sport Climbing Championship 2023</p>

<p>The Jio Institute, in collaboration with the Reliance Foundation, established a high-performance center for athletics. This center offers advanced infrastructure and specialised training for athletes</p>	<p><b>Khelo Hero programme:</b> This programme, a part of Hero MotoCorp's commitment to grassroots sports promotion, focuses on developing sports infrastructure in rural areas. The initiative supports 30 athletes in partnership with the Mary Kom Regional Boxing Foundation, providing academic and nutrition support, equipment, training, lodging, and medical care</p>	<p><b>Youth training programmes:</b> The Inspire Institute of Sports and the feeder centers are crucial in identifying and nurturing young talent across various sports disciplines, promoting physical activity among the youth, and providing them with world-class training facilities</p>	<p><b>Rural sports initiatives:</b> Through events like the rural sports gathering, the NTPC encourages youth participation in sports, promoting physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. <b>Comprehensive support:</b> The NTPC's financial commitment not only focuses on grassroots development but also supports elite athletes with advanced training, competitive exposure, and international opportunities, fostering the growth of archery talent in India.</p>	<p><b>State-of-the-art facilities:</b> Tata Group has developed several high-performance centers and sports complexes, such as the JRD Tata Sports Complex and Tata Steel's High-Performance Centres, which offer world-class sports science support and cutting-edge infrastructure to athletes</p>
<p>The Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) is set to become India's largest U-21 youth tournament, with over 50 teams competing across nine regions.</p>	<p><b>Holistic Athlete Support:</b> The Khelo Hero programme includes not just sports training but also academic and nutritional support, ensuring a well-rounded development for the athletes. Helping athletes perform better and maintain their health</p>	<p><b>Sports Excellence Programme (SEP):</b> The flagship endeavor of JSW Sports, SEP currently supports 49 athletes across four disciplines. It provides financial support and opportunities to train under world-class coaches at Olympic training facilities. Neeraj Chopra, a junior world record holder in javelin throw and silver medalist at the Paris 2024 Olympics, and current CWG and Asian Games champion</p>	<p><b>Recognition and achievements:</b> The Sportstar Ace Award and NTPC's ongoing support have contributed to the success of Indian archers at national and international levels, reflecting the impact of the NTPC's initiatives on athlete achievements. <b>Impact on athletes:</b> The NTPC's initiatives have supported 10,498 athletes in archery across India, highlighting its role as a crucial supporter of the sport.</p>	<p><b>Marathon sponsorships:</b> Tata Sons, in collaboration with TCS, sponsors major marathons such as the Tata Mumbai Marathon and Tata Ultra Marathon, promoting running and physical fitness on a large scale. TCS's involvement in global marathons like the TCS New York City Marathon and TCS London Marathon further promotes physical activity internationally. Additionally, the Tata Group is renowned for its grassroots football and badminton development programmes.</p>

# Spotlights

## Recognising corporate contributions to athletic excellence

**Adani Sportsline**, a subsidiary of the Adani Group, has significantly contributed to the sports ecosystem in India through team ownership, sponsorship, and infrastructure development. They own the Gujarat Giants in the Pro Kabaddi League and support athletes across various sports via the #GarvHai programme, which has helped athletes like Ravi Kumar Dahiya achieve international success. Additionally, Adani Sportsline has partnered with Team India for major events like the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, and developed state-of-the-art facilities such as the Sabarmati Riverfront Sports Park in Ahmedabad.

**IndusInd Bank's** 'IndusInd for Sports' initiative, launched in 2016, focuses on fostering inclusivity and sustainability through sports. They support various programmes, including the IndusInd Inclusive Squash programme and the IndusInd 'TT for Her' programme, which nurture young talent in squash and table tennis, respectively. Their Girl Power programme, in partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport, has helped female judokas win numerous medals. Additionally, the Athlete and Mentor programme supports female athletes in wrestling, athletics, field hockey, and swimming, resulting in significant medal achievements.

The **Aditya Birla Group** has shown a strong commitment to promoting sports and supporting athletes through various initiatives. They were the official sponsor of Team India for the Paris Olympics 2024. Their involvement extends to sponsoring major events like the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 and the Pro Kabaddi League. The group is also developing a sports city in Noida with international-standard facilities.

**ONGC** has made significant contributions to sports by providing scholarships and financial aid to over 250 athletes annually, along with advanced training facilities and professional coaching. Their athletes have excelled in various competitions, winning 13 medals at the Commonwealth Games 2022 and 9 medals, including 5 golds, at the Asian Games 2023. Notable individual achievements include G. Sathiyana's singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut 2024, Koneru Humpy's second-place finish in the Women's Candidate by FIDE, and Sourav Kothari's senior National 15-Red snooker crown at the 90th National Billiards & Snooker Championships. Neeraj Chopra made history by winning India's first gold medal at the World Athletics Championships 2024 in Budapest with a throw of 88.17m and also secured second place at the Doha Diamond League 2024 with a throw of 88.36m.

**GMR Sports** has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting sports and supporting athletes by owning and managing multiple sports franchises, including the Delhi Capitals in the IPL, UP Yoddhas in the Pro Kabaddi League, and Telugu Yoddhas in the Ultimate Kho Kho League. Their investment in world-class sports infrastructure, such as the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium for the UP Yoddhas, ensures athletes can access top-notch training and competition venues. Additionally, GMR Sports actively promotes physical activities among youth through grassroots programmes and local tournaments. They organise local kabaddi tournaments to discover new talent and run various support programmes for young athletes, including talent scouting and development initiatives. Their substantial investments in youth programmes focus on long-term athlete development, providing training camps, coaching, and competitive opportunities to ensure a steady pipeline of talent for the future.

**REC** has shown firm dedication to promoting sports by sponsoring various events and supporting athletes. They have extended CSR financial assistance of INR 100 crore for the broad basing of sports and promotion of excellence in India, focusing on athletics, boxing, and badminton. REC has invested in developing sports infrastructure, including constructing indoor badminton stadiums in Ukhrul, Manipur, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, and a motor racing track in Mamit, Mizoram. They also support national/regional/state/Khelo India sports academies and run various programmes providing financial assistance, training, and mentorship to young athletes. Additionally, REC supports the Target Olympic Podium scheme (TOPS), aiding India's top athletes and their coaches in achieving Olympic success.

## Impact of top voices in sports:

### Contribution of India's female athletes to the country's Olympic success

#### Rukhna Nahi Hai campaign

Parth Jindal, founder of JSW Sports, shared his views on the campaign, stating, "Rukhna Nahi Hai, as a JSW Group campaign, entered its third Olympic Games, and it has grown from being a slogan to now being an emotion, a belief that Team India and all of us took to Paris. The film captures the essence of the athletes' relentless pursuit perfectly."

Abhinav Bindra, Olympic gold medalist, entrepreneur, and a prominent figure in Indian sports, praised the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics 2024. He remarked, "While our tally shows six medals, a deeper look into the performances reveals that we have never had an Olympic event where our athletes have been so competitive across various disciplines."

Viren Rasquinha, former Indian hockey captain and CEO of Olympic Gold Quest, reflected on the performance of Indian athletes at the Paris Olympics 2024. He emphasised the importance of empathy, stating, “There is a time to be tough on our athletes, and there is a time to be empathetic. Understanding what to do when is crucial.”

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Their successes are even more special because of the difficulties women face in pursuing professional sports. Not just economic challenges, even getting permission from their families, finding facilities to train, access to physios and rehab centres, or simply how far they have to travel from their villages to reach a coach. It’s a long and difficult journey for girls to get recognised in sports. And despite that, our female athletes have reached the pinnacle of success.

**Nita Ambani - Chairperson and Founder of the Reliance Foundation**

## Event calendar 2024-2025

S.No.	Event	State	Month	Type
1	FIH Hockey Pro League	Odisha	November 2024 & February 2025	International
2	BWF World Tour's India Open (Badminton)	New Delhi	Likely January 2025	International
3	ATP Tour	Maharashtra	Likely January 2025	International
4	Indian Open Golf	New Delhi	February 2025	International
5	SAFF Senior Athletics Championship	Jharkhand	October 2024	International
6	New Zealand Tour of India (Cricket)	Various	October 2024	International
7	Syed Modi India International (Badminton)	Uttar Pradesh	November 2024 – December 2024	International
8	India Super 100 I (Badminton)	To Be Decided	December 2024	International
9	India Super 100 II (Badminton)	To Be Decided	December 2024	International
10	West Indies Women Tour of India (Cricket)	To Be Decided	December 2024	International
11	Bengaluru Open Golf	Karnataka	Likely March 2025	International
12	Chennai Open Golf	Tamil Nadu	Likely April 2025	International
13	Pune Open Golf	Maharashtra	Likely May 2025	International
14	Kho - Kho World Cup	New Delhi	January 2025	International
15	World Pickleball League	Mumbai	November 2024	International
16	National Games	Uttarakhand	To Be Decided	National
17	Khelo India Youth Games	To Be Decided	To Be Decided	National
18	Khelo India University Games	To Be Decided	To Be Decided	National
19	Khelo India Para Games	To Be Decided	To Be Decided	National
20	Federation Cup (Athletics)	Likely in Punjab	May 2025	National

In conclusion, our report provides an in-depth analysis of the Indian sports landscape from 2021-2024. It covers city rankings, top success stories, the promotion of indigenous and modern sports, initiatives like Khelo India and the Paralympics, and the significant contributions of women in sports. We also examine the role of major corporates in shaping India’s sports ecosystem and highlight the exceptional performance of Indian athletes at international events.

At the heart of the report lies a message to relentlessly nurture talent, aligning with the #GTWay, symbolising that our real strength lies in our people. The future of sports lies in the hands of those who start young and dream big.

With the ambitious goal of hosting mega-events like the 2036 Olympics and bringing them home to India, our report provides an in-depth analysis of the Indian sports landscape and its developments from 2021-2024. We explore top success stories, the promotion of indigenous and modern sports, and the significant contributions of women in sports.

Our scorecards evaluate cities that are leading the way in development, making significant strides in infrastructure, technology, grassroots initiatives, and athlete development, while identifying improvement areas. This report underscores the transformative power of sports in India and highlights the relentless pursuit of excellence. By consciously focusing on nurturing and grooming athletes from a young age, India is ensuring a bright future for its sports ecosystem. Continued investment and support for these initiatives will not only help India host world-class events but also nurture world-class athletes.

The future of sports lies in the hands of those who start young and dream big.

Additionally, our report highlights the exceptional performance of Indian athletes at international events, showcasing their dedication and the country's growing prominence on the global sports stage.



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## Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organisation, with around 9,000 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 294 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For more than 125 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

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For 2024-25, CII has identified "Globally Competitive India: Partnerships for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" as its Theme, prioritizing 5 key pillars. During the year, it would align its initiatives and activities to facilitate strategic actions for driving India's global competitiveness and growth through a robust and resilient Indian industry.

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### Confederation of Indian Industry

The Mantosh Sondhi Centre  
23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003 (India)  
T: 91 11 45771000  
E: info@cii.in \* W: www.cii.in



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# Acknowledgments

## Authors

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### Abhishek Binaykia

Partner, Sports Industry Leader  
Grant Thornton Bharat  
E: abhishek.binaykia@in.gt.com

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### Nandini Arora

Executive Director  
Grant Thornton Bharat  
E: nandini.arora@in.gt.com

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### Tanisha Khurana

Manager  
Grant Thornton Bharat  
tanisha.khurana@in.gt.com

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## Editorial review

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Akshay Kapoor

## Design

---

Shipra Jain

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## For media enquiries, write to

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[media@in.gt.com](mailto:media@in.gt.com)

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## Further Contributors

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Aarushi Madan

Consultant, Sports Advisory, Grant Thornton Bharat

---

Dipti Dash

Associate Director, Sports Advisory, Grant Thornton Bharat

---

Harshit Ahuja

Consultant, Sports Advisory, Grant Thornton Bharat

---

Chanakya Chaudhary

Chairman, CII National Committee on Sports and Vice President,  
Corporate Services, Tata Steel

---

Shivam Sharma

Deputy Director, CII

---

Sunil Kumar Misra

Principal Advisor - CII

---

Poonam Dikshit

Consultant, CII

---

Kaustav Deka

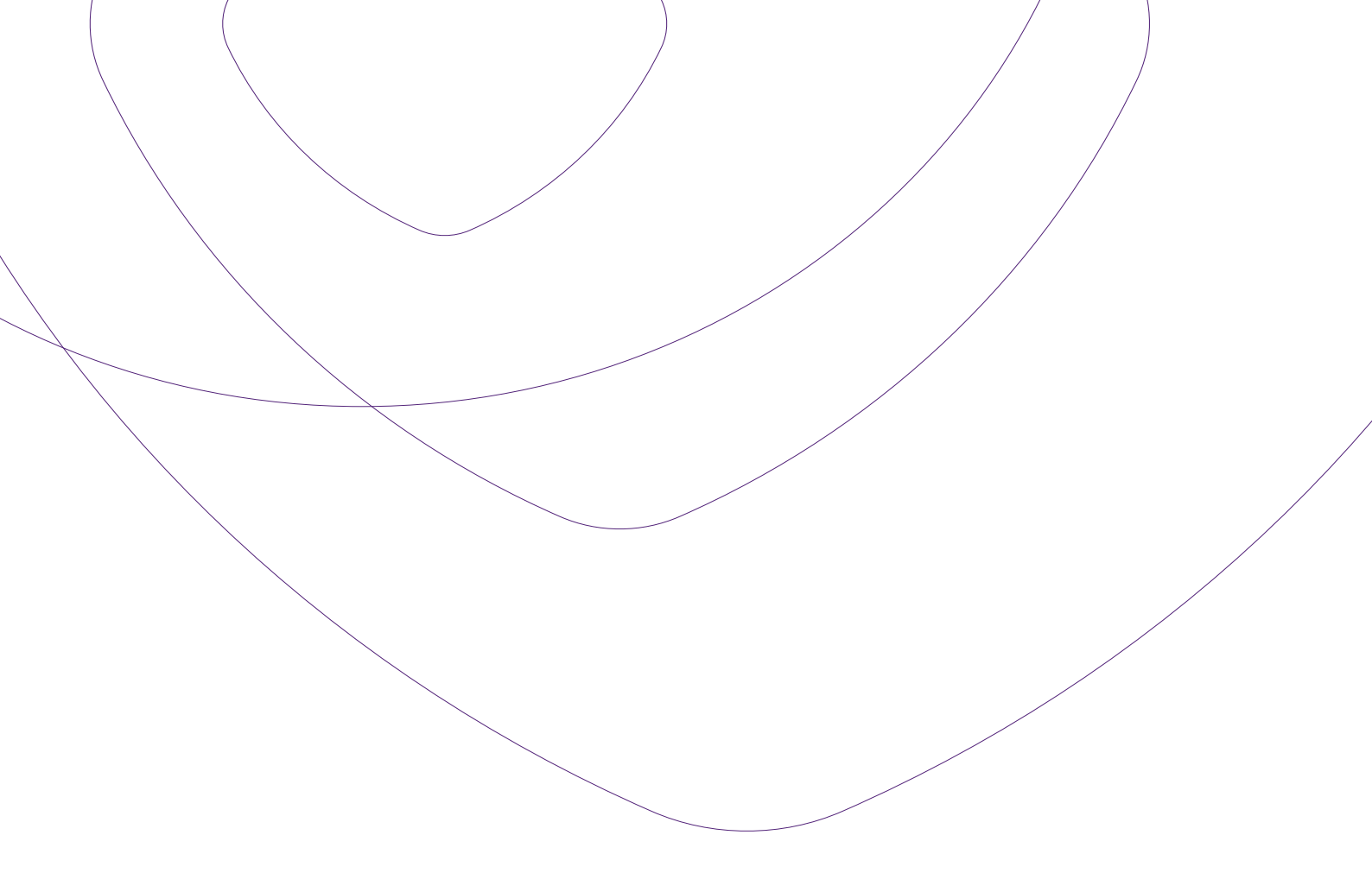
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