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Shooting Sports in India

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Shooting Sports in India

India’s first individual Olympic gold did not come from athletics or wrestling. It came from shooting. Abhinav Bindra won it with a 10-metre air rifle at Beijing 2008. India has won seven Olympic shooting medals so far. The sport is run by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

1 What is the NRAI, and who started it?

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) is the national body for shooting. It was formed on 17 April 1951. Its aim was to develop shooting as a sport and to train civilians for self-defence.

Who was its first president?

- G.V. Mavlankar was the founder and first president.
- He was also the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- Govind Ballabh Pant and Lal Bahadur Shastri were later presidents.
- Y.B. Chavan, a Home Minister, also held the post.

What did the Lok Sabha do in 1953?

- The Lok Sabha passed a resolution in 1953.
- It asked the NRAI to give training through rifle associations across India.

Think it through. Why were early NRAI presidents leaders of the government?

Shooting was new as an organised sport. Senior leaders gave it weight and support. Indian shooters had not yet won an Olympic medal.

What is the memory hook?

Think “1951, Mavlankar, Speaker”. The founder and the date go together.

> **Quick check 1.** The NRAI was formed in 1951. *(True or False?)*
>
> See answer ↓

Sources: thenrai.org

2 How did Abhinav Bindra win India's first individual Olympic gold?

Abhinav Bindra won the men’s 10-metre air rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. His final total was 700.5. He was the first Indian to win an individual Olympic gold medal.

Why was it a big moment?



Abhinav Bindra, India’s first individual Olympic gold medallist, meeting President Pratibha Patil in New Delhi. Photo: President’s Secretariat, Wikimedia Commons, GODL-India.

- It was India’s first Olympic gold since the men’s hockey team won at Moscow in 1980.
- Hockey is a team event. Bindra’s gold was India’s first in a single-person event.
- The win inspired young shooters across India.

Is it India’s only individual gold?

- No. Neeraj Chopra won an individual gold in javelin at Tokyo 2020.
- So Bindra’s gold was the first, not the only one.

Think it through. Why do we say “first individual” and not just “first”?

India had won gold before in team hockey. “Individual” means one athlete alone on the podium. Bindra was the first Indian to do that.

What is the memory hook?

Think “2008, 10 m air rifle, 700.5”. Year, event and score.

> **Quick check 2.** Bindra's 2008 gold is the only individual Olympic gold India has ever won. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: tribuneindia.com; issf-sports.org

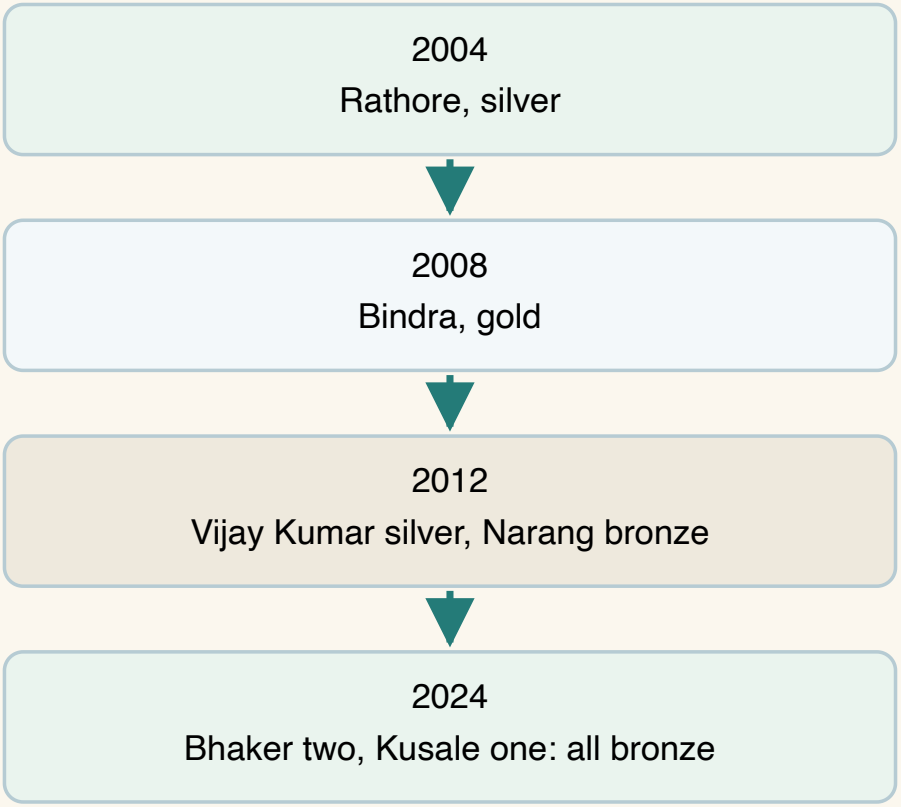
3 Who won India's shooting medals at Athens 2004 and London 2012?

Three more medals came before Paris 2024. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore won the first in 2004. Two came at London in 2012. They show a pattern: a medal came at 2004, 2008 and 2012.

What did each shooter win?



President Pranab Mukherjee honours Gagan Narang, the London 2012 bronze medallist, in New Delhi. Credit: President's Secretariat, Wikimedia Commons, GODL-India.



Seven medals in all. Original explanatory diagram.

- Athens 2004: Rathore won silver in the men’s double trap.
- London 2012: Vijay Kumar won silver in the men’s 25-metre rapid fire pistol.
- London 2012: Gagan Narang won bronze in the men’s 10-metre air rifle.

Why was Rathore’s silver special?

- It was India’s first Olympic shooting medal.

Think it through. Why is the 10-metre air rifle named twice in the medal list?

Bindra won gold in it in 2008. Narang won bronze in it in 2012. One event gave India two different medals.

What is the memory hook?

Think “Rathore silver, Bindra gold, Vijay silver, Narang bronze”. The order is 2004, 2008, 2012, 2012.

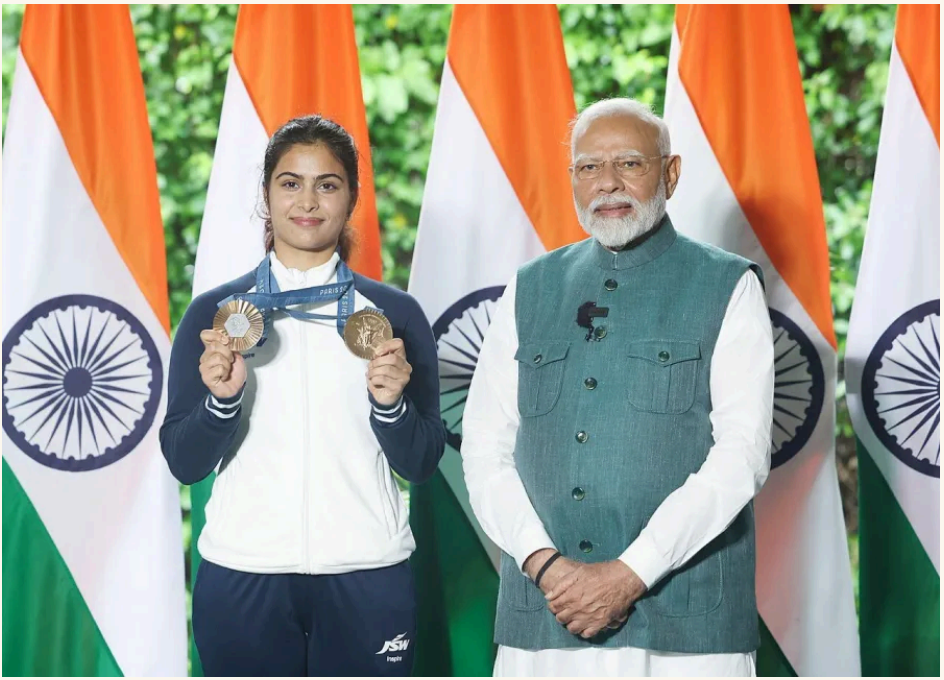
> **Quick check 3.** Rathore's silver at Athens 2004 was India's first Olympic shooting medal. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: sportskeeda.com; presidentofindia.nic.in; moneylife.in

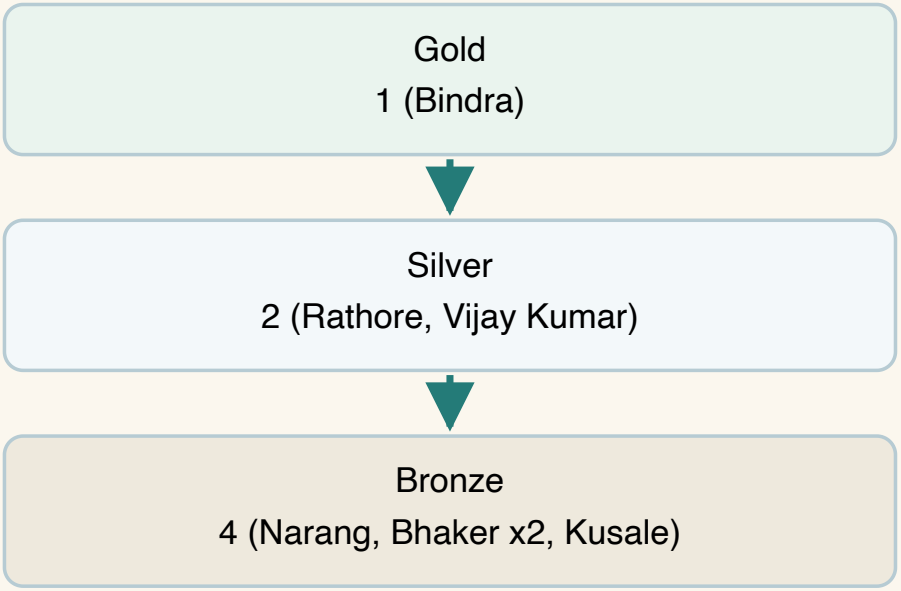
4 What did Indian shooters win at Paris 2024?

India won three shooting medals at Paris 2024. All three were bronze. It was India’s best-ever haul in a single sport at one Olympics. Before this, India had never won more than two medals in any one sport at a Games.

What did Manu Bhaker win?



Manu Bhaker with her two Paris 2024 bronze medals and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Photo: Prime Minister’s Office, Wikimedia Commons, GODL-India.



One gold, two silver, four bronze. Original explanatory diagram.

- She won bronze in the women’s 10-metre air pistol.
- She was the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal.
- She won a second bronze in the 10-metre air pistol mixed team, with Sarabjot Singh.
- She became the first Indian to win two medals at the same Olympics.

What did Swapnil Kusale win?

- He won bronze in the men’s 50-metre rifle three positions on 1 August.
- It was India’s first Olympic medal in that event.
- It was India’s third shooting medal at Paris.

What is the full count now?

- India has seven Olympic shooting medals: one gold, two silver and four bronze.
- The gold is Bindra's. The silvers are Rathore's and Vijay Kumar's.
- The bronzes are Narang's, Bhaker's two and Kusale's.

Think it through. Why was the mixed team medal a first for India?

It was India's first team medal in shooting.

What is the memory hook?

Think "Paris, three bronze, Bhaker two". Three medals, all bronze, two of them one woman's.

> **Quick check 4.** India won one gold, one silver and one bronze in shooting at Paris 2024. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: newindiasamachar.pib.gov.in; morungexpress.com

5 How does the government support Indian shooters?

Two central schemes help Indian athletes. They are the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Khelo India. Bhaker's journey is one example of that support.

What is TOPS?

- TOPS stands for Target Olympic Podium Scheme.
- It gives money to top athletes for training and competition.
- It pays for training and practice abroad.
- Bhaker received over Rs 1.35 crore under it for training and competition.

What is Khelo India?

- Khelo India is a scheme to find and groom young players.
- Of 117 athletes at the Paris Olympics, 28 came through Khelo India.

Think it through. Why does India fund athletes before the Games?

Training abroad and good equipment cost a lot. Without help, a talented shooter may never reach the Olympics.

What is the memory hook?

Think “TOPS tops up elite athletes; Khelo India finds the young”. One scheme is for the elite, the other for beginners.

> **Quick check 5.** TOPS is the scheme that finds and grooms young players. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: newindiasamachar.pib.gov.in

6 How has this topic been asked in exams?

Which traps repeat?

- Bindra’s 2008 gold was India’s first individual Olympic gold. It is not the only one.
- India’s first Olympic shooting medal was Rathore’s silver in 2004, not Bindra’s gold in 2008.
- The NRAI was formed in 1951. Its first president, Mavlankar, was the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- Paris 2024 gave India three shooting bronzes, not a gold or silver.
- Manu Bhaker won two medals at Paris. Kusale won the third.

- India’s seven shooting medals are one gold, two silver and four bronze.

What is the memory hook?

Think “2004 first medal, 2008 gold, 2024 three bronze”. Three dates cover most questions.

Practice MCQs

1. In which year was the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) formed?

A. 1947

B. 1961

C. 1951

D. 1971

See answer ↓

2. Abhinav Bindra won India's first individual Olympic gold in which event?

A. Men's 25 m rapid fire pistol

B. Men's 50 m rifle three positions

C. Men's 10 m air rifle

D. Men's double trap

See answer ↓

3. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore won India's first Olympic shooting medal in which event?

A. Women's 10 m air pistol

B. Men's 10 m air rifle

C. Men's 25 m rapid fire pistol

D. Men's double trap

See answer ↓

4. How many Olympic medals has India won in shooting up to Paris 2024?

A. Eight

B. Seven

C. Nine

D. Six

See answer ↓

5. Who partnered Manu Bhaker in the 10 m air pistol mixed team event at Paris 2024?

A. Sarabjot Singh

B. Swapnil Kusale

C. Arjun Babuta

D. Saurabh Chaudhary

See answer ↓

6. Swapnil Kusale won which medal at Paris 2024?

A. Bronze in the men's 10 m air rifle

B. Bronze in the men's 50 m rifle three positions

C. Gold in the men's 10 m air rifle

D. Silver in the women's 10 m air pistol

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.** The answer is **1951**. The NRAI was formed on 17 April 1951. G.V. Mavlankar, the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha, was its founder president. Memory hook: 1951, Mavlankar, Speaker. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** The answer is **men's 10 m air rifle**. He won it at Beijing 2008 with a total of 700.5. Double trap was Rathore's silver event. Memory hook: 2008, 10 m air rifle, 700.5. ↑ Q2
3. **D.** The answer is **men's double trap**. Rathore won silver at Athens 2004. It was India's first Olympic shooting medal. Memory hook: Rathore, double trap, 2004. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** The answer is **seven**. They are one gold, two silver and four bronze. Bindra has the gold. Rathore and Vijay Kumar have the silvers. Narang, Bhaker (two) and Kusale have the bronzes. ↑ Q4
5. **A.** The answer is **Sarabjot Singh**. Together they won bronze. It made Bhaker the first Indian to win two medals at one Olympics. Memory hook: Paris, Bhaker two. ↑ Q5
6. **B.** The answer is **bronze in the men's 50 m rifle three positions**. It was India's third shooting medal at Paris. It was also India's first Olympic medal in that event. ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** it is true. The NRAI history page gives 17 April 1951. ↑ 1
2. **False.** it is false. Neeraj Chopra won an individual javelin gold at Tokyo 2020. Bindra's was the first, not the only one. ↑ 2
3. **True.** it is true. Rathore's silver in men's double trap in 2004 came before Bindra's gold. ↑ 3
4. **False.** it is false. India won three bronze medals in shooting at Paris 2024. ↑ 4
5. **False.** it is false. That is Khelo India. TOPS funds elite athletes. ↑ 5

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