

# GOLDEN ARM: ON NEERAJ CHOPRA'S WIN AS ONE INDIA'S GREATEST SPORTING SUCCESSES

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[Neeraj Chopra's silver in men's javelin at the World Athletics Championships](#) in Eugene, United States, marks one of India's greatest sporting successes. Even as the [celebratory euphoria over his stunning Olympic triumph](#) from last year is yet to fully die down, Chopra produced another brilliant show to savour with his maiden podium finish at the Worlds. It is admittedly not the precious yellow metal that everyone craves for, but the medal is worth its weight in gold, for it is the first for an Indian male, and the second ever after Anju Bobby George's bronze in women's long jump (Paris, 2003). The affable 24-year-old now has a rich and enviable collection of medals, the latest silver adding to the golds in the World Junior Championships (2016), Asian Championships (2017), Commonwealth Games (2018), Asian Games (2018) and the Olympics (2021). In a small window of half-a-dozen years, he has accomplished what many dream of over an entire career. But like most great champions, Chopra is not satisfied and already appears to have reassessed his targets — of “changing the colour of medal” to gold at the next Worlds and winning the Diamond League crown. It is the same spirit displayed by Swedish pole-vaulter Armand Duplantis, holder of every big title and world record, who found the energy and motivation to obliterate his own best mark (6.16m, outdoors) by scaling 6.21m in a glorious last act as the Championships drew to a close.

While it is true that Chopra's legacy was already gold-coated, courtesy the epoch-defining Olympic victory, the performance in Eugene enhanced it further. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Indians woke up on Sunday confident of Chopra securing a medal, with only the colour a matter of debate. Such expectation from an Indian track and field athlete was practically unheard of. Among the truest tests in sport is to handle this pressure, and relax into the moment. That Chopra managed this under less-than-ideal conditions — negotiating a thigh strain and a headwind — against a formidable opponent in defending champion Anderson Peters whose opening salvo was a whopping 90.21m throw, and still came up with an effort (88.13m) that was better than his Olympics mark (87.58m) is down to his genius. As Chopra redefines success for a nation that has often exulted, and been satisfied, with pint-sized accomplishments, a doping cloud hanging over Indian athletics has produced a sobering backdrop. High-profile athletes, including national record-holders, have been caught. If India aspires to catch up with world standards and march in tow, it is up to administrators and fellow athletes to get their acts together and lend the generational champion a helping hand.

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