

20 & still sprinting! A race for inclusivity

Meghna.Dhulia
@timesofindia.com

SETTING MILESTONES

5,55,535
finishers
since 2005



1,28,349
women
finishers



₹84.5 Cr
raised for
philanthropy



30% increase in
women participants
every year

74
nationalities at
the start line

Zero
waste to
landfill



LEAVING A MARK

2005 | 19,815 participated

2010 | Awarded the World Athletics Gold Label Race, with runners from 53 nationalities taking part at the start line

2011 | Following the Commonwealth Games at the JLN Stadium, Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) was the first major mass-participation event to return to the iconic venue

2016 | Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya, after his Rio Olympic victory, chose to run the marathon and conquered it with a winning time of **59:44**

2017 | Loganathan Suriya set the Indian Elite Women's record with a timing of **1:10:31**, also a national record

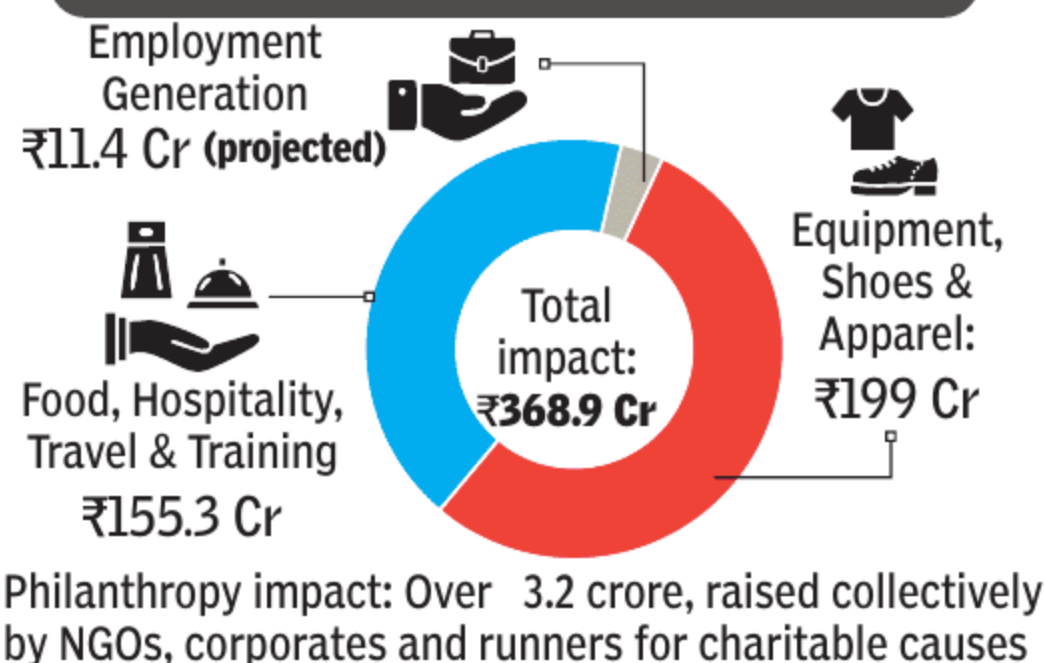
2020 | In response to the pandemic, the marathon went virtual for the first time, attracting **10,000+ participants**

2024 | Generated a remarkable socio-economic and health impact of **₹369 Cr**



Participants during last year's Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HEALTH IMPACT 2024



SETTING THE PACE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Water conservation: Leftover water is reused to nourish Delhi's green spaces

Low-carbon transport: E-autos and dedicated bicycle parking

Food redistribution: Surplus food from the event is donated to communities in need

Environmental partnerships: Collaborations with NGOs promote biodiversity and environmental awareness

ORGANISER SAYS

It is not just an event anymore; it has truly become a movement. Which other event has raised Rs 85 crore for charity, had over 500,000 finishers, 80% of whom never ran before, and grown from 85 women participants to 10,000 this year? This is what a revolution looks like

men are not only leading on the track, but shaping the entire race experience for others. VDHM also holds the World Athletics Gold Label Road Race distinction and has fuelled the rise of running events and clubs across north India.

The 2024 edition generated an estimated economic and health impact of Rs 360 crore and raised Rs 84.5 crore for charitable causes. Participants can

explore various categories—the Half Marathon, Open 10K, Great Delhi Run (4.5km), Senior Citizens' Run (2.5km), and Champions with Disability (2.5km).

The marathon has witnessed remarkable athletic feats, with Olympic legend Eliud Kipchoge clocking 59:44 on Delhi's streets in 2016. In 2020, blazing course records were set by Amedework Waleegn (58:53) and Yalemzerf Yehua-

law (64:46), while India's Avinash Sable became the first national athlete to break the 61-minute barrier.

Beyond the competition, VDHM has been a force for social change. The #RunForZeroHunger movement provided 17 million meals over the past three years, and in 2025, every kilometre run will deliver a Poshan Pack to children and animals in need, with a target of five million packs, reflecting commitment to a healthier, hunger-free India.

In an effort aimed at empowering persons with disabilities to move from being participants to active contributors in

one of India's largest sporting events, VDHM, in a joint initiative with Saarathee, has integrated them as key volunteers during the expo and on race day.

On race day, registered participants enjoy free rides on Delhi Metro, using wristbands embedded with QR codes for seamless travel. Every runner crossing the finish line receives a medal crafted from

zinc sourced from Rajasthan's Zawar Mines and produced by Hindustan Zinc Limited. This year, VDHM has introduced the 'half marathon debutant programme', while also encouraging families to run together through the 'Home Run Squad'.



New Delhi: Celebrating two decades of running spirit, the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) marks its 20th milestone edition on Oct 12, tracing a journey that has transformed Delhi's mornings and India's sporting culture alike.

Since its inception in 2005, VDHM has done more than just fill the city's streets with runners; it has ignited a movement that redefined how the country views fitness, community and sport. It has also been a powerful platform for inclusion, empowering women, senior citizens and persons with disabilities to take centre stage and experience the thrill of crossing the finish line.

Two decades ago, the idea of a mass-participation sporting event taking over Delhi's streets was met with scepticism. Yet, on the Sunday morning of Oct 16, 2005, a few hundred dreamers laced up their shoes and set off, and the marathon captured the city's imagination. Today, VDHM is globally recognised as one of the fastest half-marathon courses in the world, offering runners a journey past Delhi's most iconic landmarks. Starting at dawn from Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the route winds past Kartavya Path and circles the India Gate.

"It is not just an event anymore; it has truly become a movement. Which other event has raised Rs 85 crore for charity, had over 500,000 finishers, 80% of whom never ran before, and grown from 85 women participants to 10,000 this year? This is what a revolution looks like," said Vivek Singh, joint MD, Procam International.

"If you really want to see a social and sporting revolution, it is VDHM. It brings together people from all walks of life, going beyond every kind of classification, from senior citizens to champions with disability. Every year, I see the same spirit — this year, 40,000 people have registered, and it's completely sold out," he added.

This year's edition marks the introduction of an all-women pacer squad in the Open 10K, demonstrating that wo-