

Diamonds, meatballs and motors: How Olympians can win more than medals

AFP- While the International Olympic Committee does not give prize money to winners at Paris 2024, many nations and territories offer incentives to their athletes to come home with gold, silver or bronze.

Many are financial, but the rewards can be more eclectic – anything from exemption from compulsory military service to cars, cows, apartments and even free food deliveries.

Here, AFP Sport looks at some of what is on offer for gold, silver and bronze around the globe:

– South Korea –

An Olympic medal, of any colour, grants athletes exemption from 18 months of compulsory military service, which all able-bodied males must undertake by the age of 28.

A gold at the Asian Games does the same, which star footballer Son Heung-min famously achieved at Jakarta in 2018 to avoid his spell in combat fatigues.

The country's six archers at the Tokyo Games, who claimed four out of five golds, were all given cars by Hyundai, who sponsor the team.

– Poland –

Gold medalists in individual events receive a cash prize of 250,000 zlotys (\$63,000), a two-room apartment, a diamond, a painting and a holiday voucher.

Silver and bronze medal winners are also generously rewarded with cash and other gifts.

– Indonesia –

Apriyani Rahayu and Greysia Polii, who won badminton women's doubles gold at Tokyo three years ago, were reportedly pledged rewards ranging from new houses from a property developer to meatball restaurants from a social media influencer.

Apriyani was also promised five cows, a plot of land and a house by the district head of her hometown in Southeast Sulawesi, according to state news agency Antara.

Another report said state-owned enterprise PT Pegadaian promised to give the pair three kilograms of gold.

Tourism minister Sandiaga Uno said they could enjoy free holidays in the country's five premier tourism destinations.

– Jordan –

When athlete Ahmad Abu Ghaush won the country's first-ever gold medal – the men's 68 kg division in Taekwondo in Rio – the national Olympic committee gave him 100,000 dinars (\$140,000) and his coach around half that.

Abu Ghaush also received many other rewards and gifts from local companies including a car and a luxury watch, while King Abdullah II awarded him the First Class Order of Distinction.

– The Philippines –

Weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz was rewarded for winning the country's first ever gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics by being gifted two properties and a promotion to staff sergeant in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Abraham Tolentino, president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, told AFP he had previously given medallists houses and land at his own expense.

– Iraq –

According to officials, Iraq's football players were each given more than nine million dinars (\$7,200) and a plot of land for qualifying for the Olympics.

Weightlifter Ali Ammar Yasser received a car and a plot of land after qualifying for the Games, and has been promised a million dollars if he brings back the bronze medal or better.

– Malaysia –

Malaysia's first athlete to win an Olympic gold medal in Paris will not be going hungry, with one year's worth of free food orders promised by delivery and transport company Grab.

They will also receive a Chery SUV car as well as a luxury apartment from property developer Top Residency, the government said.

– India –

When Neeraj Chopra won javelin gold in Tokyo he was promised unlimited free air travel for a year by airline IndiGo and a new seven-seater SUV by a businessman.

– Singapore –

After Joseph Schooling made history at the Rio Games in 2016 by beating the great Michael Phelps to 100m butterfly gold, ride-hailing service Grab offered free transport for him and his family for a year, which he shared with a blind masseur and a para-swimmer.

Singapore Airlines chipped in with a million air miles, while the government gives one million Singapore dollars (\$750,000) for any gold medal.

– Hong Kong –

The Hong Kong government gave Paris gold medal-winning fencers

Vivian Kong and Cheung Ka-long lifetime travel tickets for the city's MTR subway system and promised the same to all other medallists.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club also gives individual gold medallists HK\$6 million (\$770,000).

Gymnasium chain Pure is offering lifetime memberships to all 35 Hong Kong athletes competing in Paris and the territory's Cathay Pacific airline said it would give all medal winners free business class travel for a year.

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