

Shanti Pereira Eyes Asian Games 2026 Sprint Double Defence In Aichi-Nagoya â?? Can Singaporeâ??s Sprint Queen Repeat?

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The Asian Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, are still three months away â?? but for Shanti Pereira, the countdown has already begun in earnest. Singaporeâ??s sprint queen, fresh from completing a back-to-back sprint double at the SEA Games 2025 in Bangkok, is now setting her sights on history in Japan: a defence of the Asian Games titles she won so memorably in Hangzhou in 2023.

It is an ambition that, if realised, would write Pereira into the annals of Singaporean sport in a way that even her remarkable career to date has not yet managed. For the full picture on Singaporeâ??s Games squad, read our Asian Games 2026 squad feature, and follow Team Singaporeâ??s journey in our Sports section.



Shanti Pereira is targeting back-to-back Asian Games sprint gold in Aichi-Nagoya 2026.

Defending What She Won

When Shanti Pereira crossed the finish line in the womenâ??s 200m final at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games, she made Singaporean athletic history. Her gold in the 200m â?? the first Athletics medal Singapore had claimed at the Asian Games since 1974 â?? was a moment that transcended sport. A silver in the 100m the same week added a second continental medal, and Pereira returned home as one of the most decorated Singapore athletes of her generation.

Defending those titles in Aichi-Nagoya will be no straightforward task. In the three years since Hangzhou, the Asian sprint landscape has continued to evolve. Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Gulf state athletes have pushed personal bests with regularity, and the gap between South-east Asia and the continental elite has narrowed in ways that make every final an unpredictable contest. Pereira knows this better than anyone â?? and she has prepared accordingly.

Fresh From SEA Games Glory

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Shanti Pereira wins the 200m at SEA Games 2025 in Bangkok. Photo: SNOC/Kelly Wong

What gives Pereira every reason for confidence is the form she produced heading into 2026. At the SEA Games in Bangkok in December 2025, she retained both the 100m and 200m titles â?? running 11.37 seconds and 23.05 seconds respectively â?? to complete a sprint double for the second successive SEA Games. It was her fourth SEA Games gold medal in the 200m, having previously won in 2015, 2021 and 2023. In all four sprints, she crossed the line first. There has simply been no better female sprinter in South-east Asia over the past decade.

Even as she celebrated in Bangkok, Pereira was candid about wanting more. â??Iâ??m really happy I managed to win today, but kind of disappointed though,â?• she said after the 200m final. â??I wish I did a better time today.â?• The self-critique was telling: her personal best of 22.81 seconds in the 200m, set earlier in 2025, signals she knows she has more to give. The Asian Games will be the stage where that ambition is truly tested.

The Road to Aichi-Nagoya

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Pereira said she had hoped to clock a better time, but acknowledged it was mission accomplished in Bangkok. Photo: SportSG/Jeremy Lee

The Asian Games 2026 run from 19 September to 4 October in the Japanese prefectures of Aichi and Nagoya. For Singapore athletics, the Games represent the marquee event of 2026 â?? a step above the SEA Games in competitive intensity, where athletes from all 45 member nations across the continent converge. Pereiraâ??s programme is expected to cover the 100m, 200m and potentially the

4x100m relay â?? the same combination that brought her continental glory in Hangzhou three years ago.

Under her long-time coach Luis Cunha â?? to whom she has attributed much of her success â?? Pereira has spent recent seasons building a deeper foundation of explosive strength and speed endurance. The work has been painstaking and, at times, unglamorous. But it has produced an athlete who is stronger and more resilient at 30 than she was at 25, which augurs well for what lies ahead in Japan.

As one of Singaporeâ??s most celebrated spexScholars supported by Sport Singapore, Pereira benefits from the full infrastructure of the national high-performance system â?? including sports science, strength and conditioning support, and access to competition opportunities at the highest level. That investment has been instrumental in her rise from a promising junior to Asiaâ??s leading female sprinter.

What Victory Would Mean

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Back-to-back Asian Games sprint gold would write Pereiraâ??s name into the record books at an entirely new level. No Singaporean athlete has ever won consecutive Asian Games gold medals in athletics â?? and achieving it in Japan, on a continent where competition has never been fiercer, would stand as one of the greatest individual achievements in Singaporeâ??s sporting history.

Beyond the individual accolades, Pereiraâ??s sustained excellence has opened new doors for Singapore athletics. Marc Brian Louisâ?? silver in the menâ??s 200m at SEA Games 2025 â?? breaking his own national record twice in a single session â?? demonstrated that Singapore is developing real sprint depth. The Asian Games could be the stage where that depth is tested at the highest level, and where a new generation of Singaporean sprinters announces itself to the continent.

Pereira, characteristically, frames it simply. She is proud of what she has achieved. She knows she can go faster. And she carries the privilege of being Singaporeâ??s sprint queen with a quiet, determined grace that inspires everyone who watches her compete.

The Asian Games are 19 September. Singapore is watching. Shanti Pereira is ready.

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