18TH OLYMPIAD CONCLUDES AT TOKYO

SOLEMN SCENES MARK OCCASION

From T. D. PARTHASARATHY


The 18th Olympiad came to a close here to-day amidst scenes of solemnity.

Only India's hockey players took part in the concluding function, the other members of the contingent having left Tokyo for India.

Mr. Avery Brundage, President of the International Olympic Committee, officially pronouncing the Games closed after the Mexican Flag was hoisted and the Mexican National Anthem was played, called upon the youth of all countries to assemble four years from now at Mexico City to celebrate the 19th Olympiad. He concluded: "May the youth of all nations display cheerfulness and concord so that the Olympic torch will be carried on with even greater eagerness, courage and honour for the good of humanity throughout the ages." Everyone was full of praise for the wonderful organisng capacity of the Japanese. The Indians should all be proud of Japan, along with other Asians since it has showed to the world that an Asian nation could conduct this greatest of all sports festivals surpassing what others have done before.

Reuter adds:

Fireworks fizzed and spluttered in the floodlit stadium to-night to round off the Games—the first in Asia and by general consent the most successful of them all.

The Emperor and Empress of Japan and 75,000 people crammed the oval bowl to watch the hour-long closing ceremony under sullen skies and despite a chill wind. Showers caused gaily coloured Japanese umbrellas to be put into action and raincoats to be donned.

The Japanese National Anthem was played, then there was a parade by the Flag-bearers of the 94 competing nations.

There was a specially loud cheer when the Ethiopian Flag passed the Emperor, for it was carried by the dual Marathon winner, Abebe Bikila.

The Flag-bearers took up their places in the middle of the arena as brass bands blared out. Then came the athletes, not as at the opening ceremony, nation by nation, but a motley throng, all nations, men and women competitors mingled together. They cheered and waved to the fans who waved white handkerchiefs back in the "Sayonara" (farewell) salute.

Competitors rambled around the track, stopping to take pictures. Loudspeakers asked them if they would "kindly proceed more quickly" and march eight abreast instead of informally.

The flags of Greece (the pioneer), Japan (the host) and Mexico (the next host) were raised to the floodlit masts above the electric board and their National Anthems were played, while standard Bearers dipped flags in honour.

As Mr. Brundage concluded his speech the Stadium was plunged into darkness save for the floodlit flag poles and the Olympic Flame burning brightly under the dark sky. The bands playing the Olympic Hymn looked like glow worms against the darkened crowd. Seconds later the flame was snuffed out and planes, green and red lights twinkling, flew round the open bowl.

The Olympic Flag was lowered, not to be raised again for four years. Eight Japanese sailors bore it briskly out of the Stadium. "Auld Lang Syne" was then sung as Japanese girls with torches formed a circle of light, waving their firebrands to and fro in time with the parting song.

On the giant results board electric lights proclaimed: "We meet again in Mexico City 1968."

Out went the Standard Bearers; out went the athletes; back to his Palace went the Emperor and away went the huge crowd to their homes. The Games were over.

HOCKEY TRIUMPH: India's goal-keeper, Laxman, waving from the winners' stand after being presented with the Olympic gold medal after India's victory over Pakistan in the final at Tokyo on Friday. Members of the Pakistan team (silver medallists) are on the left and the Australian side (bronze medallists) on the right.

—A.P. Radio Photo.

V. J. Peter (right), the Indian inside-right, intercepting Pakistan's Muhammad Asad and Muhammad Rashid during the Olympic hockey final at Tokyo. —A.P. Radio Photo.