



HOCKEY INDIA

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2022 | VOL.60

WORLD GAMES ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



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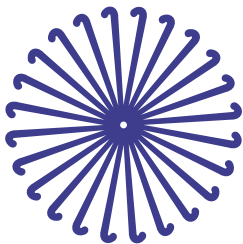


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Message from Hockey India President



Mr. Gyanendro Ningombam

Namaskar,

First and foremost, on behalf of Hockey India I would like to extend best wishes for the New Year to all of you. As we enter into 2022, we are glad to count on the unwavering support of the Odisha State Government and SAI for all of our endeavors here at Hockey India.

We had a vibrant beginning to the month of January, which saw fans of Indian Hockey participate in large numbers in voting for our stalwart PR Sreejesh as the World Games Athlete of the Year 2021. This global recognition was richly deserved for the Indian Men's Hockey team's longest serving member. We also saw Vandana Katariya receive national recognition by being conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award, which was a proud moment for Indian hockey. The month of January also saw the Indian Women's Hockey team return to action with the Women's Asia Cup 2022, where the team also clinched third place and secured qualification for the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022.

We once again had the opportunity to host premier international hockey with the FIH Hockey Pro League returning to Odisha in the month of February. Hosting this competition is not only a prestigious occasion for the state of Odisha, but it also presents our women's and men's national team another opportunity to match up against the best teams in the world. It was also a momentous occasion for the Women's team, who made their debut in the competition.

In summation, we have had a positive start to the year 2022, and everyone at Hockey India is committed to continuing in the same vein and striving to further elevate the stature of the sport in India.

Hockey India mourns the demise of legend Charanjit Singh

Hockey India on 27 January 2022 mourned the demise of hockey legend Padma Shri and Arjuna Awardee Charanjit Singh who passed away in Una district, Himachal Pradesh due to age-related complications. He was 92.

The two-time Olympian was part of India's glorious days. A charismatic halfback, Charanjit Singh had led the Indian team to a historic Gold Medal in 1964 Tokyo Olympics, beating Pakistan in the Final and was also part of the Indian team that won Silver in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome.

Born on 20 November 1929, Charanjit Singh was an alumni of Col. Brown Cambridge School, Dehradun and Punjab University. After his illustrious career in international hockey, he worked as Director of Physical Education department in Himachal Pradesh University, in Shimla.

When Hockey India had interviewed the legend in June, 2021 for the Hockey India Flashback Series in the lead up to the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020, he had fondly remembered the final against Pakistan during the Tokyo Olympics in 1964.

He had nostalgically stated, "Both the teams were regarded among the strongest teams during that time, and we had a very challenging outing against them. Moreover, you know, how intense it becomes when you play against Pakistan that too in the Final of the Olympics. The match was also interrupted briefly to cool down the tempers of both teams. I told my boys to focus on the game, rather than wasting time talking to them. We were tested hard but also showed great character, and won the match by a narrow 1-0 margin to return home with that historic Gold medal."





Hockey India congratulates Gurjit Kaur on completing 100 International Caps

Hockey India on 26 January, 2022 congratulated Indian Women's Hockey team defender Gurjit Kaur on completing 100 International Caps in her career. The ace drag-flicker reached this milestone during India's Semi Final clash against Korea in the Women's Asia Cup 2022. Since making her debut in 2014, Gurjit Kaur has been a mainstay in the team, making crucial contributions to the Indian team time and again by way of her goals from penalty corners. Gurjit Kaur also scored the solitary goal against Australia in the Quarter Finals of the Tokyo Olympics, sending the team to their first ever Semi Final in the Olympic Games.



Hockey India congratulates Vandana Katariya on completing 250 International Caps

Hockey India on 21 January, 2022 congratulated Indian Women's Hockey team forward Vandana Katariya on completing of 250 International Caps in her career. The skillful and experienced forward reached this milestone during the Indian Women's team's opening match against Malaysia at the Women's Asia Cup 2022 in Muscat, Oman. Since making her debut for the National team in 2009, Vandana Katariya has been an integral member of the team that won the Asian Champions Trophy in 2016, Asia Cup in 2017, and Asian Games Silver Medal in 2018, among other achievements.





Hockey India congratulates Akashdeep Singh on completing 200 International Caps

Hockey India on 8 February 2022 congratulated Akashdeep Singh on completing 200 International Caps with the Indian Men's Hockey team. The skillful forward reached this milestone during India's match against France in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 in South Africa. Akashdeep made his debut for Team India in the FIH Champions Trophy in 2012, and since then has been a vital member of the team that secured the Gold Medal in the Asian Games 2014, the Silver Medal in the FIH Champions Trophy in 2016, and the Gold Medal in the Asia Cup in 2017.



Hockey India congratulates PR Sreejesh on completing 250 international Caps

On 27 February, 2022, Hockey India congratulated ace goalkeeper PR Sreejesh on completing 250 International Caps in his career. The veteran goalkeeper reached this feat during India's second match against Spain in the FIH Hockey Pro League in Bhubaneswar. Arguably one of the best goalkeepers in the world, Sreejesh began his journey with the Indian Men's Hockey team in 2006 at the South Asian Games in Sri Lanka. He became a regular feature in the team in the year 2011 - when he stood out for his match-winning display in the Final of Asian Champions Trophy against Pakistan.





Indian Eves qualify for FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022, finish third at Asia Cup 2022

India Women's Hockey Team qualified for the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022 to be held in Spain & Netherlands after defeated Singapore 9-1 in the Pool A match at the Women's Asia Cup 2022. "Of course, our main goal was to qualify for the World Cup and we did that. It's really exciting to be present at the highest level of women's competition and compete with the best teams across the world," India Women's Hockey Chief Coach Janneke Schopman said.

India went on to finish in the third place at the Women's Asia Cup 2022, defeating China 2-0 in the Bronze medal match. It was goals by Sharmila Devi (13') and Gurjit Kaur (19') that helped the Savita-led side end the continental tournament with the third-place finish.

As preparations began for the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022, scheduled to begin from July 1st, Indian Women's Hockey Team was grouped in pool B along with England, New Zealand and China. India Women's Hockey Team Goalkeeper Savita spoke on the teams in their

pool and said that they will focus on their own preparations and strengths to prepare for the challenge.

"It is a tough pool with England (World No.3) and New Zealand (World No.8) who are ranked above us and China can always spring a surprise. As a team, we have always believed we need to focus on ourselves and not what the opponent can do. But now that we know who we play in the pool stage, we can plan our preparations accordingly and we look forward to the challenge," Savita said.

Savita also added that India Women's Hockey Team have gained confidence from their last stint at the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup in 2022, where they had made it to the top-eight for the first time, and from their historic Tokyo Olympics stint where they finished in fourth position.

"With the experience we have had over the past three-four years, particularly in big events like the Olympic Games in Tokyo, I feel we are better prepared mentally to do well this time at the World Cup," Savita said.

Draw announced for FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022

The Indian Women's Hockey team has been placed in Pool B along with England, New Zealand and China for the upcoming FIH Hockey Women's World Cup 2022 in Spain and Netherlands, which is scheduled to begin from July 1. The Indian Women's team secured their qualification for the tournament after finishing in Third Place in the Women's Asia Cup 2022 in Muscat.

ROAD TO THE FIH HOCKEY WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2022

Hosts	Pool A	Pool B	Pool C	Pool D
Spain	Netherlands	England	Argentina	Australia
Netherlands	Germany	New Zealand	Spain	Belgium
Euro Hockey Championship	Ireland	India	Korea	Japan
Belgium	Chile	China	Canada	South Africa
England				
Germany				
FIH Hockey Women's World Cup 2022 - European Qualifier				
Ireland				
Oceania Cup*				
Australia				
New Zealand				

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS
SOUTH AFRICA

PANAMERICAN CUP
ARGENTINA
CANADA

ASIA CUP
CHINA
INDIA
JAPAN
KOREA

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DRAW

Pool	Amstelveen	Terrassa
A	Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, Chile	
B		England, New Zealand, India, China
C		Argentina, Spain, Korea, Canada
D		Australia, Belgium, Japan, South Africa



Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Naveen Patnaik meets with India Men's and Women's Hockey teams in Bhubaneswar

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Naveen Patnaik met with the Indian Men's and Women's Hockey teams at the iconic Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on 21 February, 2022. On the occasion of the meeting, Hon'ble Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik posed with the Indian Hockey teams as he offered his best wishes to the players for the upcoming home leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22.







IOA President Dr. Narinder Dhruv Batra meets with Indian and Spanish Hockey teams in Bhubaneswar

IOA President Dr. Narinder Dhruv Batra met with the Indian Men's and Women's Hockey teams ahead of their respective FIH Hockey Pro League double headers against Spain in Bhubaneswar.

Dr. Batra also met the respective Captain and Coaches of the Spanish Men's and Women's Hockey teams to convey his best wishes for their fixtures against India.







WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

**MATCH 04
INDIA VS MALAYSIA
SCORE 9 - 0
AT MUSCAT, OMAN
21 JAN 2022**



WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

**MATCH 08
JAPAN VS INDIA
SCORE 2 - 0
AT MUSCAT, OMAN
23 JAN 2022**

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

**MATCH 12
INDIA VS SINGAPORE
SCORE 9 - 1
AT MUSCAT, OMAN
24 JAN 2022**



WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

**MATCH 15, 1ST SEMI FINAL
KOREA VS INDIA
SCORE 3 - 2
AT MUSCAT, OMAN
26 JAN 2022**

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

MATCH 19, 3/4 PLACE

INDIA VS CHINA

SCORE 2 - 0

AT MUSCAT, OMAN

28 JAN 2022



WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2022

21 - 28 Jan, 2022

Muscat, Oman

MATCH 4

FRIDAY, 21 JAN 2022



INDIA

9

VS

0

MALAYSIA



21:30 IST

MATCH 8

SUNDAY, 23 JAN 2022



JAPAN

2

VS

0

INDIA



20:30 IST

MATCH 12

MONDAY, 24 JAN 2022



INDIA

9

VS

1

SINGAPORE



20:30 IST

MATCH 15, 1ST SEMI FINAL

WEDNESDAY, 26 JAN 2022



KOREA

3

VS

2

INDIA



18:00 IST

MATCH 19, 3/4 PLACE

FRIDAY, 28 JAN 2022



INDIA

2

VS

0

CHINA



18:00 IST



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 05

CHINA (W) VS INDIA (W)

SCORE 1 - 7

AT SULTAN QABOOS SPORTS COMPLEX,
MUSCAT, 31 JAN 2022





MATCH 06

CHINA (W) VS INDIA (W)

SCORE 1 - 2

AT SULTAN QABOOS SPORTS COMPLEX,
MUSCAT, 01 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 07
FRANCE (M) VS INDIA (M)
SCORE 5 - 0
AT NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY,
POTCHEFSTROOM, 08 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 09
SOUTH AFRICA (M) VS INDIA (M)
SCORE 2 - 10
AT NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY,
POTCHEFSTROOM, 09 FEB 2022





FH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 11

FRANCE (M) VS INDIA (M)

SCORE 2 - 10

AT NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY,
POTCHEFSTROOM, 12 FEB 2022



FH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 14

SOUTH AFRICA (M) VS INDIA (M)

SCORE 2 - 10

AT NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY,
POTCHEFSTROOM, 13 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

DIGNITARIES





FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 25

INDIA (M) VS SPAIN (M)

SCORE 5 - 4

AT KALINGA STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

26 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 15

INDIA (W) VS SPAIN (W)

SCORE 2 - 1

AT KALINGA STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

26 FEB 2022





FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 16

INDIA (W) VS SPAIN (W)

SCORE 3 - 4

AT KALINGA STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

27 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

MATCH 26

INDIA (M) VS SPAIN (M)

SCORE 3 - 5

AT KALINGA STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

27 FEB 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE 2021-2022 (MEN)

08 - 27 FEB, 2022

MATCH 7

21:30 IST

TUESDAY, 08 FEB 2022



FRANCE

0



5

INDIA



POTCHEFSTROOM, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST

MATCH 9

21:30 IST

WEDNESDAY, 09 FEB 2022



SOUTH AFRICA

2



10

INDIA



POTCHEFSTROOM, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST

MATCH 11

21:30 IST

SATURDAY, 12 FEB 2022



FRANCE

5



2

INDIA



POTCHEFSTROOM, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST

MATCH 13

21:30 IST

SUNDAY, 13 FEB 2022



SOUTH AFRICA

2



10

INDIA



POTCHEFSTROOM, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST

MATCH 25

19:30 IST

SATURDAY, 26 FEB 2022



INDIA

5



4

SPAIN



KALINGA HOCKEY STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

MATCH 26

19:30 IST

SUNDAY, 27 FEB 2022



INDIA

3



5

SPAIN



KALINGA HOCKEY STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

*Up to 28 Feb 2022



FIH PRO LEAGUE

2021/22

FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE 2021-2022 (WOMEN) 31 JAN - 27 FEB, 2022

MATCH 5

16:30 IST

MONDAY, 31 JAN 2022



CHINA

1



7

INDIA



SULTAN GABOOS COMPLEX, MUSCAT

MATCH 6

16:30 IST

TUESDAY, 01 FEB 2022



CHINA

1



2

INDIA



SULTAN GABOOS COMPLEX, MUSCAT

MATCH 15

17:00 IST

SATURDAY, 26 FEB 2022



INDIA

2



1

SPAIN



KALINGA HOCKEY STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

MATCH 16

17:00 IST

SUNDAY, 27 FEB 2022



INDIA

3



4

SPAIN



KALINGA HOCKEY STADIUM, BHUBANESWAR

*Up to 28 Feb 2022

Two new Scientific Advisors and Women's Team Analytical Coach appointed with the National Team's

With an aim to build on their historic Tokyo Olympics 2020 campaign, the appointment of new Women's Team Analytical Coach and Scientific Advisors for both Senior Men and Women's Hockey teams was announced on 10 January, 2022. Patrick Tshutshani takes over as Women's Analytical Coach, while Taren Naidoo (Senior. Women's Team) and Mitchell Pemberton (Senior Men's Team) will be the new Scientific Advisors of the squad Indian Hockey Teams.

Tshutshani in his previous roles was the Director/ Head Coach of Field Hockey Canada Junior Women's Team. He had coached the Field Hockey Canada Junior Women's Hockey Team that clinched the 2021 Women's Pan America Junior Championship title.

Taren Naidoo took charge as Scientific Advisor for the Indian eves. With an experience of nearly 10 years, Naidoo previously worked as Head Hockey Sports Scientist and strength and conditioning specialist for both South African Men and Women's Hockey Teams.



Mitchell Pemberton
Scientific Advisor - Men



Taren Naidoo
Scientific Advisor - Women



Patrick Tshutshani
Analytical Coach - Women



FEATURE STORY

Maiden Hockey India Inter-Department National Championships stepping stone for budding stars



For over a decade, the Hockey India Annual National Championships have been a launch pad for hockey players who aspire to make it to the national squad. Take for example, Neha Goyal and Navneet Kaur who were waiting on the heels of getting a break into the Senior Core group and the moment came in 2017 when their noteworthy performances at the Hockey India Senior National Championship helped them secure a place in the Women’s Core group and eventually they earned their place in the National Team in 2017.



With the National body for hockey expanding the domestic calendar with exclusive tournaments for Departments last year, new talented players have made it to the national program and have also earned their first international cap for India.



Jugraj Singh, Abhishek and Sukhjeet – all three made their international debut during India’s campaign at the FIH Hockey Pro League over the past month and have been a good addition to the team’s mix – making the talent pool more competitive.

Jugraj Singh earned his maiden call-up for the Indian National camp on the back of this performance at the 1st Hockey India Senior Men Inter-Department National Championship 2021; an exclusive tournament for PSUs.

"This tournament for departments was organised for the first time, and I got selected for the camp. I feel very lucky and it is a great initiative by Hockey India. It has opened the gates for players like me," Jugraj said.



Abhishek, who debuted for India in South Africa during the FIH Pro League, caught the eyes of the India selectors after his performance at the 1st Hockey India Senior

Men Inter-Department National Championship 2021, Bengaluru, Karnataka in December. He was the 2nd highest goal-scorer in the tournament, scoring 6 goals for Punjab National Bank, and helping his team finish third in the tournament.

"I had a good domestic season in 2021, and I was hoping to be included in the 33-core probable group and when I found out that I was selected in the squad, I was quite happy and felt that my hard work is reaping rewards now," Abhishek said.

With a re-structured domestic calendar, the competition to make it to the national program for Junior and Senior Men and Women is on the rise and it will bound to help hockey grow further in the country with aspiring players being recognised for their performances.





FEATURE STORY

"There is so much to learn every day in the senior setup," says young Indian Women's hockey forward Mariana Kujur

For young forward Mariana Kujur, hockey has always been a way of life. The 22-year-old player, who hails from the hockey belt Sundargarh in Odisha, made her debut for the senior national team during the Asian Champions Trophy in December 2021. She was part of the Indian Eves' third-place finish at the Women's Asia Cup 2022 in Muscat earlier this year and also featured in the squad for the FIH Pro League double-header against China.

Currently part of the Senior Women's Core Proplable group, Mariana expressed, "I am grateful for this opportunity. It's a special feeling to be a part of the setup. There is so much to learn every day, and I am glad that I got to play all four matches at the Women's Asia Cup, which is a very prestigious tournament in the international calendar."

Mariana was rewarded with one goal for her efforts in the Women's Asia Cup 2022 campaign. She contributed to the team's 9-1 victory over Singapore, which helped the Indian Women's team advance to the Semi-Final of the tournament as well as seal a spot for the 2022 FIH Women's Hockey World Cup to be held in Spain & Netherlands.

"I really wanted to use the opportunity to perform the role, which I was assigned to and I am very happy that I could contribute to the team's win. But, it was a team effort and my senior's support helped me perform well in the tournament. It really helped me gain confidence. Also, really excited that we could qualify for the World Cup and that was one of

our biggest targets of the tournament, so it's a great feeling to play the role in achieving the target," said Mariana.

Speaking about being part of the same team which features one of her idols Deep Grace Ekka, Mariana said, "Deep Grace is such a cool-headed player. She never lets the opponents get the better of her even in pressure situations. There is a lot that I can learn from her and she's been quite supportive all along. She always advices me to play my natural game and not feel the pressure of playing for the Senior side. I think that way, all the players have been quite supportive and I am really looking forward to making the most out of the opportunity."



FEATURE STORY

"We are pretty excited to play FIH Hockey Pro League games against top teams," says experienced midfielder Monika

Having kick-started their debut FIH Hockey Pro League campaign on a positive note; with three wins in their four outings thus far, the Indian Women's Hockey midfielder Monika stated that these matches against top-level teams will help them prepare for the upcoming major tournaments.

"Firstly, we are pretty excited to play Pro League games against top teams. It will help us prepare for this busy 2022 year. We would like to benefit from these matches for major tournaments like the Asian and Commonwealth Games, as well as the World Cup. We can have an understanding of where the Indian team stands from these matches," stated Monika.

The Indian eves picked up 7-1 and 2-1 wins over China in their opening Pro League matches in Muscat and went on to register a come-from-behind 2-1 win in their first game against Spain at Kalinga Hockey Stadium. However, they lost 3-4 in their second match of the two-legged tie against the World No. 6 Spanish side. Reflecting on the campaign so far, the experienced midfielder said, "We began really well in Muscat against China, winning both the matches helped us gain the confidence. And, the matches against Spain were a different ball game altogether. Matches were really challenging, but I would say it was a great learning experience for us as a team, and we can now implement those lessons in the upcoming matches."

The 28-year-old was one of the key figures in the Indian team's third-place finish at Women's Asia Cup 2022 in Muscat earlier this



year. Having scored three goals in five matches, the midfielder said, "I would like to say that the structure and playing style is totally different to what we used to play before. Being a midfielder, I am playing as a striker as well, so it is quite exciting."

"The speed of our game has changed, we have started playing fast-paced attacking hockey. I am very happy with the structure that we are playing in now, with two strikers and the two midfielders, we are creating a lot of goalscoring opportunities. So, we are really enjoying this style and as you saw in the Women's Asia Cup and Pro League matches against China as well, it created a lot of difference," she explained.



COVER STORY

PR Sreejesh becomes first male Indian athlete to win the World Games Athlete of the Year

In January this year, experienced Indian hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who was part of the men's team that claimed the Bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics, became only the second India athlete to win the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year for his 2021 performances.

In 2020, Rani became the first Indian athlete to be voted as the World Games Athlete of the year following her incredible performances in 2019 where she had helped her team clinch Olympic Qualification after defeating USA. She had also played a crucial role in the team's success at the FIH Series Final that Year.

In a global fan vote conducted on TheWorldGames.org, Sreejesh finished well clear at the top of the 24-strong nomination list, with his tally of 1,27,647 votes being almost twice as many as the second-placed athlete, Spain's Sport Climbing ace Albert Ginés Lopez, who garnered 67,428 votes.

Speaking about the Award, the shot-stopper -- who was also voted as FIH Goalkeeper of the Year for 2021 -- said: "I'm very honoured to win this award. First of all, a big thank you to FIH for nominating me for this award, and secondly, thanks to all the Indian hockey lovers around the world, who voted for me."

"By getting nominated I did my part, but the rest was done by the fans and hockey lovers. So, this award goes to them, and I think they deserve this award more than me. It's a big moment for Indian Hockey as well because everyone in the hockey community, all the hockey federations around the world voted for me, so it's great to see that support from the hockey family," Sreejesh, a veteran of 250 senior international matches, who achieved this milestone during India's second match against Spain at the FIH Hockey Pro League.





he became the only second Indian athlete to win this honour. I would like to thank FIH, the hockey community around the world, and of course, all his fans for supporting him and voting him to win this award. It's a big achievement for him as well as to Indian hockey."

The World Games is a multi-sport event staged every four years by the International World Games Association with the support of the International Olympic Committee. The World Games are staged over a period of 11 days, with more than 30 sports in the program.

Indoor Hockey was featured as an invitational sport at The World Games in 2005, which took place in Duisburg, Germany. Hockey will have a presence with sports demonstrations during The World Games 2022, which takes place in Birmingham, the USA between July 7-17, 2022.

Sreejesh has been part of India's several incredible victories and in his career spanning over a decade, he has stood like a wall in India's goalpost --- contributing to the team's rise in world ranking.

He delighted us with his amazing performance in the Tokyo Olympic Games where India finished on the podium for the first time in 41 years. He continues to be India's backbone in defence, expressed Hockey India President Gyanendro Ningombam who congratulated the ace goalkeeper who was also awarded the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award.

Congratulating Sreejesh, Hockey India President Gyanendro Ningombam said, "On behalf of Hockey India, I congratulate Sreejesh for winning the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year 2021 Award. This is a very proud and special moment for India as





Mariana Kujur, Sangita Kumari make debut for India Women's Hockey Team; Abhishek, Jugraj Singh, Sukhjeet Singh debut for India Men's Hockey Team



With both the India Men's Hockey Senior Team and Women's Hockey Senior Team participating in important competitions over the past couple of months, several players were handed their debuts. The talented young forward Mariana Kujur who hails from the hockey belt Sundargarh in Odisha, and is a product of the Panposh Academy, made her debut for India at the Women's Asia Cup 2022 in Muscat, Oman, where she featured for the team in every match, and scored a goal.

"I am grateful for this opportunity. The Women's Asia Cup is a very prestigious tournament in the international calendar and I really wanted to use this opportunity to perform the role I've been assigned and live up to the team's expectations," Mariana said, on being given the opportunity.

The Indian Women's Hockey team also saw a new face in promising young forward Sangita Kumari from Jharkhand, in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 matches against Spain at

the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar. Sangita made her debut in the second leg and scored a goal in the 10th minute of the match for India.

For India Men's Hockey Team, young India dragflicker Jugraj Singh made his debut in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 matches in South Africa and scored three goals in four games, which consisted of a hat-trick against the Proteas.

Speaking on his performance on the tour, Jugraj Singh, who hails from Attari, Amritsar, said, "Making my debut in an important event like FIH Hockey Pro League was definitely an emotional moment for me and getting a hat-trick only in my second game for India (against South Africa) was very special. It's amazing how much support I have received from the entire team and I believe there is a lot for me to learn from each of their experiences."

Another young India forward, Abhishek, also made his debut in South Africa, where he played three games and managed to get a goal on the board. The 22-year-old, who hails from the Sonipat district in Haryana, said that he will never forget his first goal for the India Men's Senior Team.

"As a player, you always want to score as many goals in your career as you can. But you always tend to remember the first goal. I am pleased I was able to open my account against South Africa and I will never forget that moment," he said.

Abhishek also found his name in the squad for the double-header against Spain in

Bhubaneswar, and scored another goal in the second game against Spain at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium.

"I learned a lot playing during the matches. It is very different from the style of hockey that I have played before at the national level as it was a lot quicker and more challenging. But I am happy with my performance and I feel I grew a lot as a player," he said.

The 25-year-old forward Sukhjeet Singh, who hails from Punjab, also received a call-up for the first time in India Men's Senior Team in the double-header against Spain. Sukhjeet made his debut in the second game against Spain and managed to get a goal in the match.





FEATURE STORY

“We believe Tokyo Olympics Bronze medal was just the beginning,” says India midfielder Nilakanta Sharma

Indian Men's Hockey midfielder Nilakanta Sharma, who played a crucial role in India's Bronze Medal-winning campaign at the Tokyo Olympics, expressed that he is very fortunate to have had the chance of representing the country at some of the largest platforms in the world. Nilakanta, who was the only Manipuri player to be part of the historic Tokyo Olympics squad, also said that winning the bronze medal was just the beginning for India Men's Hockey Team.

"I have been quite fortunate in my career so far and I will continue to work hard, and execute my role in the team as expected of me. Most of us in the team believe the Olympic medal was just the beginning. We have set certain targets in this Olympic cycle and we are focused on achieving those targets," Nilakanta stated.

The 26-year-old also went on to recall the struggles he faced early on in his life and explained how hockey changed his life.

"I am from a humble family background. My father made a living as a priest in the temple near my home. I picked up the hockey stick with a hope to represent India. I looked up to players like Chinglensana Singh and Kothajit Singh who were also from my state. I knew doing well will not only bring great recognition but would also help me improve the living conditions of my family," he said.



Nilakanta was part of the junior India team in 2014 that lifted the Sultan of Johor Cup beating Great Britain in the Final. Having proved his mettle in the Junior ranks, with his exceptional skills as a midfielder in the squad that was crowned Junior World Champions in 2016, Nilakanta was called up to represent the Senior side in 2017.



Since then, he has become an integral part of the India Men's Senior Team under and is a trusted lieutenant of India captain Manpreet Singh. Nilakanta went on to add that his hardwork paid off and expressed delight for hockey becoming a popular sport in his home state.

"Looking back, the struggles have really paid off and today I have built a new house for my parents in Imphal. My parents encouraged me every step of the way and I am happy through hockey I have been able to give them a better life. The respect and love we have received from the people of Manipur after the Olympic success has truly been overwhelming. In Manipur, football is most popular but now after our Olympic success many youngsters in that region believe they can make a career out of hockey," he said.

With several major tournaments including the Asian Games 2022 in China and FIH Men's World Cup in January 2023 at home approaching, Nilakanta said that the team is focused on preparations for the coming events. "Definitely the biggest tournament for us this year is the Asian Games and we have set our target of securing Olympic qualification. At the Asian Champions Trophy, we got to see how other teams from the continent are performing and definitely we can't take anyone lightly," he said.

"A good outing this year in all major tournaments will help us for the Men's World Cup next year in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. It will obviously be a dream come true moment if we can finish on the podium. But for now, we are all focused on the FIH Hockey Pro League matches in Bhubaneswar. These matches will give us the right momentum ahead of the Asian Games," Nilakanta concluded.



FEATURE STORY

Vandana Katariya lone hockey player to be named for Padma Shri Award 2022

Seasoned Indian Women’s Hockey Team forward Vandana Katariya was named for the prestigious Padma Shri award earlier this year. The 29-year-old is one of nine athletes; and the only hockey player this year who has been named for the award, which will be conferred by the Hon’ble President of India.

Vandana, who hails from Roshnabad in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand, has 250 international caps for India. She has been part of an experienced attacking line for the Indian Women’s team and has been part of India’s several significant feats. She also became the first Indian women’s player to score a hat-trick of goals in an Olympic Games match which propelled the team to the knockout stage.

She contributed to India’s historic fourth place finish at the Tokyo Olympics and has also been part of India’s Gold medal win at the Asian Champions Trophy in 2016, Asia

Cup in 2017, Asian Games Bronze in 2014 and Silver in 2018 among several other achievements. The double Olympian started her career playing for the Railway Sports Promotion Board and made it to the Indian Junior Women’s team in 2006.



The versatile forward was the country’s top scorer at the FIH Hockey Junior World Cup Women 2013 in Monchengladbach, Germany where India won a Bronze Medal. The same year saw Vandana being a part of the team that won the Bronze Medal at the 8th Women’s Asia Cup in Malaysia.

Vandana, in her long career with India, has faced several challenges particularly from the patriarchal society in the northern state of India. But she always had the backing of her father Nahar who worked as a master technician at Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited. He would often put in double shifts while also tending to the home’s cattle which would provide additional income through means of selling milk.

Unfortunately for Vandana, only weeks before the team left for the Olympic Games, her father – who was her strongest supporter – passed away due to covid-related complications. She, however, chose to stay back in SAI, Bengaluru and not attend the funeral, which shows her dedicated and commitment to the team. “I feel it has been a very mixed year for me, losing my father was a big personal loss. He was my greater supporter and always stood like a rock beside me. I wish he was there to see how well we played at the Olympics and came so close to winning the medal.”

“The Padma Shri award is not just a recognition for my hardwork but also the sacrifices my father and my family had to make to support my career. I feel very fortunate to be receiving such a prestigious honour. Hockey has really given me more than I ever expected and I am very grateful to Hockey India, my teammates and all the coaching staff we have worked with over these years. I would not have been a better player without their efforts too.”

Congratulating Vandana on being named for the prestigious Padma Shri award, Gyanendro Ningombam, President, Hockey India said, “This is a very proud moment for women’s hockey. I congratulate Vandana on being named for the prestigious Padma Shri award. She has been one of the most experienced players in the women’s hockey team and has been part of the rise of women’s hockey at the world level over the past decade and I wish she continues to perform her best for the national team.”





FEATURE STORY



It will be bigger and more exciting: Indian Men's Hockey Team Captain Manpreet Singh on the one-year countdown for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar - Rourkela

As Hockey India and its Official Partner the Odisha State Government gears up to host FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar - Rourkela in January next year, the Indian Men's Hockey Team Captain Manpreet Singh expressed that the quadrennial event will be bigger and more exciting than the 2018 World Cup.

The 15th edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup will be staged in two cities, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, where a new world-class Hockey stadium with a seating capacity of over 20,000 is being constructed.

Expressing his about the marquee event, Manpreet said, "Playing in front of the crowd during the 2018 World Cup was one of the best experiences for us. The people from Odisha are very passionate about hockey and with two venues being utilised for the 2023 World Cup, I am sure it will be bigger and more exciting. The people of Odisha and the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik Ji have given so much to hockey, and we will



always be thankful for their love and support."

India will be hosting the Hockey World Cup for the record fourth time. It will hold a special significance for the country as India will be celebrating 75 years of Independence in 2023.

"We will be playing the prestigious event at home for the record fourth time, but this time it will be extra special as our country will be celebrating 75 years of independence. We will be fortunate to play a tournament like the World Cup on our home soil in front of our own people," said the 29-year-old.

With less than a year to go for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar - Rourkela, the midfielder stated that the team's plans are already in place and they will be approaching step-by-step for the marquee event, which is scheduled to be held from 13 January 2023 to 29 January 2023.

"The countdown is on for us! Our plans are already in place, and we just have to approach step-by-step for the World Cup. We've had a wonderful 2021, and we look to capitalise on it as we have a lot of important tournaments scheduled in 2022. So, we will take one tournament at a time, and prepare ourselves fully to play the marquee event at our home," he concluded.

HOCKEY TE CHARCHA PODCAST WITH HARMANPREET SINGH

As Hockey India podcast Hockey Te Charcha continues to gather interest from listeners across India and the globe, Indian Men's Hockey Team Vice Captain and FIH Men's Player of the Year 2021 Harmanpreet Singh became the latest high profile guest on the podcast series, which is aimed to give fans and listeners an insight into the hearts and minds of their favourite hockey players.

On the nineteenth episode of the series, Harmanpreet spoke about the factors that led to India's Bronze Medal success at the Tokyo Olympics, his role as Vice Captain of the National Team, and the story behind his prolific record with penalty corners, among other subjects.

Here are some excerpts from the insightful conversation with Harmanpreet Singh on Hockey Te Charcha:

On the context that led to India's success at the Olympic Games:

"Our team spent a lot of time together in lockdown last year before the Olympics. It was a difficult situation because we were not able to visit home in the initial months of lockdown, but facing that period of difficulty together prepared us for the challenges of the Olympics last year. Even after trailing 3-1 against a team like Germany in the Bronze medal match, it was our collective mindset in difficult situations which got us over the line eventually."

On handling the pressure of being Vice Captain of the Indian Men's Hockey Team:

"I really enjoy this additional responsibility of being Vice Captain. It has never felt like an added pressure because everyone in the team is able to communicate openly with each other. Of course, Manpreet and other senior players like Sree bhai (PR Sreejesh) also take responsibility to guide the team in training and match situations, so it is a collective effort on the part of the whole team to grow together."





On his proficiency as a drag-flicker:

“I was training in Ludhiana at the time when my coaches identified me as a potential drag flicker, but it was in the Surjit Hockey Academy in Jalandhar that I received proper training for the first time ever in taking penalty corners. I used to spend a lot of time individually before and after team practice hours to improve my drag flicks, and also had

the right kind of guidance from senior players in the academy. Then after I came into the national team, I saw players like Sardara Singh and Rupinder Pal Singh work on their game. Learning from them helped me improve my skills even further.”

Tune into the episode on Spotify to listen to the full Hockey Te Charcha podcast with Harmanpreet Singh.

HOCKEY TE CHARCHA

PODCAST

FEATURING HARMANPREET SINGH
INDIAN MEN'S HOCKEY ATHLETE

LIVE ON

Spotify

Infrastructure Development

DEVI LAL STADIUM, PANCHKULA

A big congratulations to Tau Devi Lal Stadium, Panchkula, Haryana for being granted FIH Category 2 field certificate based on its construction, performance and player welfare requirements.



RAILWAY HOCKEY STADIUM, GWALIOR

Railway Hockey Stadium, Gwalior, India has been granted FIH Category 2 field certificate based on its construction, performance and player welfare requirements.

SHAHEED BHAGAT SINGH STADIUM, FEROZEPUR

A big congratulations to Shaheed Bhagat Singh Stadium, Ferozepur, India for being granted FIH Category 2 field certificate based on its construction, performance and player welfare requirements.



Central Chronicle - Bhopal

Plans are in place: Manpreet on Hockey WC 2023

Manpreet Singh has been a key player for the Indian national hockey team since the Tokyo Olympics. He has scored 11 goals in 11 matches and is expected to be a key player in the upcoming World Cup.



The Sunday Guardian - New Delhi

Will be bigger and more exciting: Manpreet Singh on Hockey World Cup

Manpreet Singh believes the upcoming Hockey World Cup will be a bigger and more exciting event than the Tokyo Olympics. He expects to play a key role in the team's success.



Hindustan Times- Mumbai

India rally to triumph vs Spain

India's victory over Spain in the Hockey World Cup final was a historic moment for the team. The match was a thrilling encounter that showcased the team's skill and teamwork.



PRO LEAGUE RESULTS table with columns for Match, Score, and Date.

Forbes - National

FORWARD MARCH



Manpreet Singh's performance in the World Cup has been exceptional. He has shown great leadership and skill on the field, leading the team to victory.

Free Press - Bhopal

WOMEN'S HOCKEY WC ERKA SAYS A good outing in Asia Cup key to success in busy 2022

Erka Sanyal, captain of the Indian women's hockey team, believes a strong performance in the Asia Cup is crucial for success in the upcoming World Cup.



HT - Delhi

Sreejesh's new targets: World Cup medal and ticket to Paris

Sreejesh Singh has set new targets for himself, including winning a World Cup medal and earning a ticket to the Paris Olympics. He is determined to achieve these goals.



Orissa Post - Bhubaneswar

Sreejesh eyes World Cup medal

Sreejesh Singh is focused on winning a World Cup medal. He has been working hard in training and is confident about the team's chances.



The Indian Express - Mumbai

India land 1-2 blow on Spain with comeback wins

India's comeback wins against Spain in the Hockey World Cup were a significant achievement for the team. The matches were closely contested and showcased the team's resilience.



Morning India - Ranchi

Important to perform well in the Women's Hockey Asia Cup: Deep Grace Eeka

Deep Grace Eeka emphasizes the importance of performing well in the Women's Hockey Asia Cup. She believes it is a key step towards success in the World Cup.



The Times of India - Chandigarh

'Difficult' lockdown prepared as for challenges of Olympics

The Indian government has prepared for a difficult lockdown in case of challenges during the Olympics. The plan is to ensure the safety and health of the athletes and spectators.



Hindustan Times- Ranchi

Jugraj slams hat-trick as India thrash SA

Jugraj Singh's hat-trick performance in the Hockey World Cup was a highlight for the Indian team. The match against South Africa was a decisive victory for India.



India's victory over South Africa in the Hockey World Cup was a significant achievement. The team's performance was exceptional and showcased their skill and teamwork.



Orrisa Post - Bhubaneswar

Spain eyes arrive for FIH Pro League tie



Mumbai, Feb 22 The Spanish women's hockey team arrived in Bhubaneswar on Thursday ahead of its first FIH Pro League match on Saturday. The team, led by coach Juan Carlos Garcia, is expected to play against India in a high-stakes tie on Saturday.

Starting in the top league for the first time, the Indians look set to face their two main rivals, Spain and Great Britain, in the second round of the tournament. The Spanish team, which won the World Cup in 2014, is considered one of the best in the world.

"We don't often get to play at home, so it's a great opportunity for us. We're looking forward to it," said a team official.

The Tribune - New Delhi

New year, new resolutions for women's hockey



New Delhi, Feb 22 The women's hockey team has set a target to finish the year with a clean sweep of the FIH Pro League. The team, led by coach Juan Carlos Garcia, is expected to play against India in a high-stakes tie on Saturday.

The team has a strong record in the Pro League, having won the title in 2019. They are looking to defend their title and finish the year with a clean sweep.

The team has a strong record in the Pro League, having won the title in 2019. They are looking to defend their title and finish the year with a clean sweep.

The Hindu - Chennai

Japan shock for India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUSCAT

Defending champion India was stunned 0-2 by reigning Asian Games gold medalist Japan in its second Pool A match of the women's Asia Cup hockey tournament on Sunday.

Japan scored through Naga Yuri (second minute) and Saki Tanaka (42nd). Yuri took full advantage of a sloppy Indian defence to slam home from the top of the circle.

Stung by the reverse, the Indians attacked in numbers and got two penalty corners. However, both were wasted. Japan's tight defence ensured that India, despite creating numerous chances, couldn't break through.

Though India dominated the proceedings in the second period too, it was Japan which doubled the lead through Tanaka.

India will play Singapore in its final pool match on Monday.

The result: Japan 2 (Yuri 2, Tanaka 42) bt India 0.

The Hindu - Chennai

I am happy with defensive structure: Schopman



MUSCAT The Dutch coach of the Indian women's hockey team, Pieter Schopman, expressed his satisfaction with the team's defensive structure during a press conference.

Schopman praised the team's defensive structure and their ability to create chances. He said that the team is looking to improve their overall performance in the Pro League.

Orrisa Post - Bhubaneswar

Spain test awaits India



Bhubaneswar, Feb 22 The Indian women's hockey team is set to face a tough test against Spain in their first FIH Pro League match on Saturday. The match is expected to be a high-stakes encounter.

Orrisa Post - Bhubaneswar

Spain turn tables on India



Bhubaneswar, Feb 22 The Indian women's hockey team was stunned 0-2 by Spain in their first FIH Pro League match on Saturday. The match was a significant setback for the team.

The Hindu - Delhi

Jugraj fashions India's big win over South Africa

Scores hat-trick in his second match



Dilpreet, 44 (10/10)

Jugraj, 4 (10/10)

PRO LEAGUE

MUSCAT Young drag-flicker Jugraj Singh, playing his second international match, performed a hat-trick as India hammered hosts South Africa 10-2 in the FIH Pro League on Wednesday.

Jugraj converted three penalty corners in the fourth, sixth and 23rd minutes, while Gursahib Singh (20th) and Dilpreet Singh (25th, 38th) scored a brace.

The others to find the target were Harmanpreet Singh (2nd), Abhishek (37th) and Vardaan Singh (71st). South Africa scored through Daniel Bell (44th)

off a penalty corner and a field strike from Richard Nutt (45th).

India dominated the contest, earning as many as 12 penalty corners and caring to an 8-0 lead at half-time.

After the change of ends, India extended its lead but South Africa showed some fight towards the end of the third quarter, scoring two goals in quick time. Dilpreet scored his second goal of the day with a fierce reverse hit from the top of the South African circle to make it 10-2 in favour of India.

The result: India 10 (Harmanpreet 2, Jugraj 4, 6 & 23, Abhishek 12, Gursahib 24 & 38, Vardaan 25 & 38, Vardaan 27 & 34, South Africa 2 (Bell 44, Nutt 45).

Pune Mirror - Pune

Rani, Savita, Gurjit among women's hockey probables

Mumbai Women's hockey selectors such as captain Sandeep Singh, coach Gurjit Singh, and other officials are expected to announce the final squad for the FIH Pro League tournament in Bhubaneswar.



Orrisa Post - Bhubaneswar

WARMING UP



Indian women's hockey team players warm up during their practice session at the Bhubaneswar stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The Pioneer - Bhubaneswar

FIH Pro League key to Indian women's performance in 2022 season: Sandeep

Bhubaneswar The Indian women's hockey team's performance in the FIH Pro League is expected to be a key indicator of their overall performance in the 2022 season, according to captain Sandeep Singh.



TEAMBIRTHDAYS

SENIOR MEN

JUNIOR MEN

MARCH

ASHIS KUMAR TOPNO

06

ATISH DODRAI

05

MANDEEP MOR

16

ROHIT

23

APRIL

KRISHAN B PATHAK

24

CHIRAN MEDAPPA

13

SENIOR WOMEN

MARCH

JUNIOR WOMEN

NAVJOT KAUR

07

JYOTI CHHATRI

08

SONIKA

20

HINA BANO

10

BALJEET KAUR

22

KSHETRIMAYUM SONIA DEVI

20

LALREMSIAMI

30

NISHI YADAV

22

LALRINDINKI

25

APRIL

PREETI DUBEY

07

MAMITA ORAM

02

REENA KHOKHAR

10

MADUGULA BHAVANI

03

VANDANA KATARIYA

15

SANSKRITI SARWAN

28

ISHIKA CHOUDHARY

15

MANITA

30

MARIANA KUJUR

20



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