



# THE CRADLE OF INDIAN HOCKEY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## INSIDE

Dr Mahboob Alam joins Nehru  
Society .....2  
Founder Members Honoured .....2  
Australian Michael Jack Nobbs  
appointed hockey Chief Coach .....2

20TH SULTAN AZLAN SHAH CUP HOCKEY  
India disappoints .....2

63RD NATIONAL MEN'S HOCKEY  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
Maiden title win for Haryana .....3

7TH FIH WOMEN'S CHAMPION  
CHALLENGE-I  
Indian women finish Seventh .....4

DELHI TO HOST OLYMPIC QUALIFIER  
AND CHAMPIONS TROPHY .....4  
Society's Office now at Lajpat Nagar .....4

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## *From the Presidents's Desk*



Ever since its inception in 1964, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society has been fortunate in having the services of several high-ranking personalities, who helped us promote the game at all levels. The latest to join the ranks is Dr Mahboob Alam, IPS, Inspector General of Police, Rapid Action Force, CRPF, as one of the Vice-Presidents. The Society is honoured and hopes his wisdom will help us march forward and help the game reach its pristine glory of the past.

The Society held a unique function on June 6 to honour some of the old members for their selfless devotion and dedication for the cause of Indian hockey. The Society honoured about a dozen members by presenting shawls and mementos. It was a touching moment for all the gathering at the function. Those honoured included Maj Gen Virendra Singh, Shri Ashwini Kumar, Shri S Hamid, Cdr G Nandy Singh, Shri Shiv Kumar Varma, Shri Kula Nand Sharma, Shri A S Thakur and the late Shri K G Kakkar.

Even as the Indian men's team prepares to qualify for next year's London Olympics, the team finished a disappointing sixth among seven participants in the prestigious Azlan Shah Cup at Ipoh in May, India had been joint winners with South Korea at the last edition. Ironically, the Indians lost to the same opponents 1-2 in a match to decide 5-6 places after having lost to the same rivals 2-3 in a Pool game.

The men's nationals was revived and was organised by Hockey India at Bhopal As many as 32 teams participated. Haryana won their maiden title beating Karnataka 2-1 in the final.

Indian men's poor show at Ipoh seems to have caught up with the women too as they finished seventh among eight entrants in the Electric Ireland FIH Women's Champion Challenge I tournament at Dublin. The women crashed out in the quarter-finals, losing by a solitary goal to Japan, who went onto bat USA 3-2 in the final to emerge champions.

India has been awarded to conduct the first qualifiers for London Olympics in Delhi during February 15-26 next year. The same city will also play host to the Champions Trophy from December 3-11 this year.

Having missed the opportunity to qualify for the Beijing Olympics in 2008 (first time in 70 years), all eyes will be on the Indian men's hockey team at the qualifiers in New Delhi early next year. With the support of the home crowd, one hopes the team would live up to expectations and erase bad memories. Here is wishing the team the very best

(Arun Subhashchandra Yadav)



## DR. MAHBOOB ALAM JOINS NEHRU SOCIETY

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society got another shot in the arm with Dr Mahboob Alam, IPS, Inspector General of Police, Rapid Action Force, CRPF, agreeing to be one of the Vice-Presidents. His

experience and vast knowledge will surely benefit the Society and help it in promoting and developing the game of hockey.

## FOUNDER MEMBERS HONOURED

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society at a function held on June 6, 2011 honoured some of the old members of the Society for their selfless devotion and dedication for the cause of Indian hockey in particular and the Society in general. For close to five decades, most of these individuals had worked relentlessly against all odds to take the Nehru Society to its present dizzy heights through their dedication and determination. If the series of tournaments conducted annually by the Society is looked forward to with eagerness and great expectations by players (both domestic and foreign), officials and spectators alike, major credit should go to these selfless officials who worked day-in and

day-out to make every event a grand success.

On the occasion, Society President, Shri Arun Subhashchandra Yadav, Union Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries, presented a shawl and memento to the members for their tireless services. The honoured members were: Maj Gen Virendra Singh (Life President), Shri Ashwini Kumar (Founder Member), Sri S Hamid (Vice-President), Cdr G Nandy Singh (Hony General Secretary), Shri Shiv Kumar Varma (Hony Secretary & Founder Member), Shri. Kula Nand Sharma (Hony Joint Secretary), Shri A S Thakur (Ex Assistant Secretary) and Shri K G Kakkar (Hony Joint Secretary, posthumous).

## AUSTRALIAN MICHAEL JACK NOBBS CHIEF COACH

The search for a foreign coach for Indian men's hockey team finally ended with Australia's Michael Jack Nobbs being named for the job for a five-year term period till the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Nobbs, 57, was a part of Australian team that finished fourth at the 1984 Olympics. Netherlands' Jacques Brinkman and Roelant Oeltmans were the other contenders but Nobbs was seen as the best man for India. The former Aussie centre-half was chosen over the Dutch duo after deliberations lasting over two days.

India has been looking for a foreign coach since Spaniard Jose Brasa's contract expired after the Asian Games last year. Hockey India then handed the reins to national coach Harendra Singh for last month's Azlan Shah Cup but he failed to produce desired results in the tournament.

At present Nobbs will bring one support staff from

Australia in exercise physiologist David Jhon. Nobbs has nearly two decades of coaching experience and has extensively worked at the grassroots in Western Australia. Nobbs had served as assistant coach of the Japan women's team (1993-1999) and then as their chief coach (2007-08). He is also a club coach in Australia. Nobbs has been brought up on Indian hockey, trained by Indian coaches to play the Indian way.

Eight-time Olympic gold medalist India is yet to qualify for London 2012. It gives Nobbs ample time to revive the national sport and bring it to its glory days.

The Nehru Hockey Society wishes all the best to both Chief Coach Michael Nobbs and Hockey India and firmly believes their joint endeavour will soon bring back the lost glory of Indian hockey. A new chapter has begun in Indian hockey.

## 20<sup>TH</sup> SULTAN AZLAN SHAH CUP : A SHOWPIECE OF ASIAN HOCKEY India disappoints

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition held this year at Ipoh during May 5-15-2011 was supposed to be a stepping stone to qualify for next year's London Olympic Games. After having failed to win a place in the last Games at Beijing in 2008, the Indian men's hockey team's focus had been on qualifying for London. The Azlan Shah Cup at Ipoh, India's favourite venue, was a great opportunity for the team to earn a place. But a poor finish – sixth among seven teams – means that India have to wait a

bit longer and fight their way to earn a ticket to London. Things are getting tougher for the Indian team, which had finished as winners and joint winners in the last two editions of Sultan Azlan Shah Cup. ironically, India lost to last year's joint winners South Korea 1-2 in the match to decide 5- 6 places. The Arjun Halappa-led team had also lost 2-3 to the Koreans in their Pool game earlier.

The feature of Indian team's performance or rather



non-performance in the entire tournament was that the team led on most occasions before losing to their opponents, To-begin with, India squandered a 2-0 lead before succumbing 2-3 to Korea in their opening game. After a poor show came a stunning display. A fine hat-trick by 23-year-old Rupinder Pal Singh gave India a convincing 3-1 win over Great Britain. India earned as many as five penalty corners in the match, converting two of them.

Playing against Australia, the World, Olympic and Commonwealth champions, has always been a nightmare for the Indians. There were a few umpiring errors in this game which came under attack from both teams. Rupinder Pal Singh converted a penalty corner to give India a decent 1-1 draw against the Aussies. India's best show came against hosts Malaysia, whom they beat 5-2 and thus avenged their loss in the Asian Games semi-final in Guangzhou. India scored three goals in the first 22 minutes and never looked back. But the match of the tournament, at least for Indian and Pakistani hockey-followers, proved a big disappointment for the Indians. Having beaten Pakistan in almost all encounters in recent past, the 1-3 defeat at the hands of their traditional rivals came as a rude shock. The Indians had led 1-0 at the breather.

Following their humiliating loss to Pakistan, India suffered one of its worst ever showing against New Zealand when they were humbled 7-3. India took the lead three times in the match but slumped in the second half, conceding as many as five goals. Indians were outplayed by the pace, precision and punch of the New Zealand attack. India finished with seven points from six games and ended up fifth in standings at the end of their league phase.

Rupinder Pal Singh, who shared the top-Scorer's slot along with Pakistan's Sohail Abbas with six goals, was the only Indian selected by a panel of coaches from among the players for the Sulan Azlan Shah XI at the end of the tournament.

Australia added another feather to their cap by winning the final – their sixth triumph in the Azlan Shah Cup – by beating Pakistan 3-2 after the teams were deadlocked 2-2 at the end of regulation period. The Australians had last won the Cup in 2007. Great Britain beat New Zealand 4-2 to finish third.

**Final positions :** 1. Australia 2. Pakistan 3. Great Britain 4. New Zealand 5. South Korea 6. India 7. Malaysia.

## **63<sup>RD</sup> NATIONAL MEN'S HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP (RANGASWAMY CUP) BHOPAL JUNE 10-19, 2011**

### **MAIDEN TITLE WIN FOR HARYANA**

The first senior national men's hockey championship, organised by Hockey India (HI) since it was formed in 2009, was held in Bhopal during June 10-19, 2011. In all, 32 teams participated in the tournament that was played on a league-cum-knockout format. The teams were divided into eight pools. The winner of each pool qualified for the quarter-finals.

Probables for the coaching camps for the national team for various international competitions in 2011 and 2012 were to be selected after the tournament. The men's team will compete in the Asian Champions Trophy at Ordos, China in early September followed by a Test series and a four-nation tournament in Australia in October. India will then play in the men's Champions Trophy in Delhi in December and also host the 1st Olympic qualifier Feb 15-26.

Initial matches were mostly one-sided affairs, Punjab trouncing Gujarat 25-0, and Railways overwhelmed Tripura 28-0. Similarly, Punjab, (bt Uttarakhand 12-0), Chandigarh (bt Rajasthan 17-2) and Uttar Pradesh (bt Kerala 15-1) also recorded big wins. Air India (bt Kerala 18-0), Karnataka (bt Rajasthan 14-

2) and MP Hockey Academy (bt Andaman & Nicobar Islands 17-0) proved too strong for some of their opponents in the league phase.

Following teams made it to the quarterfinals: Punjab, Karnataka, Bihar, Air India, Jharkhand, Haryana, Indian Railways and Orissa. In the quarters, Punjab beat Bihar 9-0, Karnataka beat Air India 2-1, Jharkhand defeated Indian Railways 2-1 and Haryana overcame Orissa 3-2.

In the semi-finals, Karnataka beat Punjab (2-1) and Haryana edged past Jharkhand 8-7 in tie break after the scoreline of 1-1 in regulation time. Punjab beat Jharkhand 4-1 for third place, while Haryana won the championship by beating Karnataka 2-1.

In the 52 matches played before the semi-finals, as many as 456 penalty corners were awarded to various teams. However, only 124 of them were converted into goals. A poor conversion rate of 28 per cent only.

**Result (final) :** Haryana (2) bt Karnataka XI (1)

**Third place :** Punjab (4) bt Jharkhand (1)



# 7TH FIH WOMEN'S CHAMPION CHALLENGE – I AT DUBLIN (IRELAND) JUNE 18-26,2011

## INDIAN WOMEN FINISH SEVENTH

India came from behind to beat Azerbaijan 3-1 and finish seventh in the Electric Ireland FIH Women's Champions Challenge I Hockey Tournament at Dublin. India had trounced Azerbaijan 6-1 in their earlier round Robin Pool match. Indian women had earlier lost to south Africa 0-2 in a 5-8 position match.

South Africa won the game in a wet and drizzly affair that saw few chances in the soggy atmosphere. World record goal scorer Pietie Coetzee scored the lone goal of the first half 23 minutes into action. Coetzee had the chance to double the lead on a penalty shot five minutes later, but India's Yogita Bali came up with the big save to keep India's hopes alive. But as the rain steadily got harder in the second half, the scoring chances dwindled. The majority of action that the goaltenders saw was on penalty corners that ultimately missed the mark. Lesle-Ann George put in a rebound shot win in the dying minutes of the game to secure the victory and bring the final to 2-0.

India had earlier crashed out in the quarter-finals, losing 0-1 to Japan. The match was well contested with both teams displaying a degree of caution. In the second half, the Indian forwards made repeated forays into the Japanese striking circle but the forwardline of Rani, captain Saba Anjum and Jasjit Kaur Handa could not get the better of an alert Sakiyo Asano in front of the

opposition goal. Japan, however, scored the all-important goal in a swift turnover through Mitsuhasi, who pushed home the ball past Indian custodian Yogita Bali.

Skipper Saba Anjum led from the front scoring three goals to help India thrash Azerbaijan 6-1 and advance into the quarter-finals. India, who led 5-0 at the half time, were in total domination in their last Pool B round robin fixture.

The Indian team qualified for this eight-nation event after winning the FIH Champions Challenge II at Kazan, (Russia)2009. Eight teams were drawn in two pools and the matches were conducted on a league-cum-knockout format. India were drawn in pool B alongside Spain, Azerbaijan and hosts Ireland while Pool-A comprised Japan, South Africa, United States and Scotland.

Experienced striker Saba Anjum led the team in the absence of regular skipper Surinder Kaur, who opted out of the event citing family problems.

Japan emerged winners beating United States of America 3-2 in the final, after trailing 0-2 at one stage. Japan were world ranked 9 while USA were 13<sup>th</sup> in world rankings.

**Final positions:** 1. Japan 2. USA 3.Scotland 4.Spain 5.South Africa 6. Ireland 7.India 8. Azerbaijan.

## Delhi to host Olympic Qualifier, Champions Trophy

India will be one of the three hosts that will conduct qualification matches for the London Olympics hockey tournament next year. Belgium and Japan will be the other two nations that will conduct qualifiers. The men's and women's tournaments will run in parallel. Both the Indian men's and women's teams will play in the qualifiers in New Delhi from February 15-26, 2012, with a total of six men's and six women's teams participating. India has also been allotted the FIH Champions Trophy (New Delhi) from December 3-11 this year.

International Hockey Federation (FIH)has announced the official dates for major competitions for the year ahead, the six Olympic Qualification tournaments. The Olympic Qualifiers (Qualification Tournaments) for London 2012 Olympics will be hosted by three nations (India, Belgium and Japan). (The FIH Champions Challenge 1 from November 26 - December 4 in Johannesburg, (South Africa) and overlapping the

FIH Champions Trophy in New Delhi (India) from December 3 to December 11,2011 will complete the calendar of 2011. The FIH Women's Champions Trophy in Argentina from January 28 to February 5, 2012 will mark the starting one of the busiest year in recent times, which has Olympics, Qualifiers in addition to regular annual tournaments of FIH.

Both Indian Men's and Women's team will play in the first qualifiers in New Delhi from February 15-26,2012 with the total of six men's and six women's teams. The Second Olympic Qualifier will be hosted by Belgium from March 14-25,2012 in Beerschot. Followed by the third Olympic Qualifier in Kakamigahara (Japan) from April 25 - May 6,2012. All three Olympic Qualification Tournaments will host the men's and women's tournaments at the same time, is the final opportunity for teams to qualify for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

The Nehru Society had to undergo some hardships in the past few years for lack of proper accommodation for its working staff. With the Shivaji Stadium, Society's birthplace, undergoing renovation for the Commonwealth Games, we were initially forced to move to Modern School (Barakhamba Road) two years ago. And now (since March 7,2011), since the Shivaji Stadium is not yet ready, we have been functioning from 7 C, Raghunath Mandir Road, Amar Colony, Lajpat Nagar IV, New Delhi-110 024.

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