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From the President's Desk

It pains me to inform that the last quarter of the year 2011, under review, started with a shocking news. We deeply mourn the sad demise of our respected Life President (Emeritus) Major General Virendra Singh (Retd), who breathed his last on October 7. We solemnly pledge to walk on the path shown by him.

The Society successfully conducted the nation's renowned three age-group and 48th Senior Nehru Hockey Tournaments. The 18th edition of the Girls (u-17) tournament, the first of the series, took place at the Madhya Pradesh Government's Women's Hockey Academy ground at Kampoo, Gwalior during October 10-19. I record our grateful thanks to the Sports Department of the M.P. Government for their active help and co-operation to make the event a grand success. The other three events including the 48th ONGC Nehru Senior Tournament shifted to the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi where a 34-day-long festival of higher level hockey took place since October 22.

The Nehru Hockey Society wishes both men and women Hockey teams good luck for the forthcoming Olympic Qualifiers tournament to be held in Delhi during February 18-26, 2012. The Society would like both the teams qualify for the London Olympics next year and bring back the pristine glory.

It gives me immense pleasure to announce that Shri H.S. Hanspal, former M.P. and now a Member of the National Minority Commission and Shri Subhash Kapur, Chairman, Steelbird Hi-Tech India Ltd. have joined the Society as Vice-Presidents. I am sure, their vast knowledge and experience will surely benefit the Society in more ways than one. I am also glad to announce that the 19th edition of the SAIL-Nehru Champion Colleges Hockey Tournament will take place at the Burton Park, Jalandhar during February 1-8, 2012.

I take this opportunity to extend a happy and prosperous New Year to all the hockey players, sponsors, advertisers. Media and last but not the least millions of hockey admirers of our National game. Let us hope that the New Year shall bring happier days for Indian hockey.



(Arun Subhashchandra Yadav)



Respectful Homage

MAJOR GENERAL VIRENDRA SINGH

(April 4, 1917-October 7, 2011)

We, the members and Office-bearers of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society, deeply mourn the sad demise of our respected Life President (Emeritus) Major General Virendra Singh (Retd), who breathed his last on October 7, 2011 at his residence in Delhi after a brief illness.

Born on April 4, 1917, the General was widely admired for his humanitarian and philanthropic outlook in life. The most notable of his multifarious social work was in the service of the disabled members of the community as the oldest soldier of the famous Cheshire Movement in India. Besides this, he also made quite a significant effort to promote the country's national game of Hockey at grassroots level through the Society. He joined the Society, first as Chairman, Managing Committee in 1972. He became Chairman, Tournament Committee in 1976. He then took over as Vice-President in 1993 and was elevated to Emeritus Life President in 2010 in appreciation of more than three decades of commendable services rendered by him for the welfare of the Society. We solemnly pledge to walk on the path shown by him.

May his noble soul rest in peace !

Five Jewels of nehru hockey* * *

18TH NEHRU GIRLS (U-17) HOCKEY TOURNAMENT (OCT. 10-19, 2011) Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Shahabad retains the trophy

The much eagerly awaited Nehru Hockey Society's big chain of four most popular annual age-group hockey tournaments began on October 10 with the inauguration of the 18th edition of the Girls (U-17) tournament at the Sprawling Complex of the Madhya Pradesh Government's Women's Hockey Academy ground at Kampoo (Gwalior), thanks to overwhelming support and co-operation of the Sports Administration of the States. We also acknowledge with thanks the support and patronage provided by Shrimant Yashodha Raje Scindia M.P. and former Minister of Sports, M.P. Govt. Thanks are also due to the Society's livewire Secretary, Shri Kukoo Walia, who has successfully cemented a strong bond of lasting mutual respect, help and co-operation between the two eminent establishments – Madhya Pradesh Government and the Nehru Hockey Society. A friend in need is a friend indeed ! In this enterprise, the tournament authorities received blessings and guidance from its dynamic President, Shri Arun Subhashchandra Yadav.

This popular tournament was inaugurated by Shrimant Yashodha Raje Scindia, M.P. and former Sports Minister of the M.P. Government, in the presence of distinguished personalities of the city and hockey enthusiasts. This tournament was sponsored by the Power Grid Corporation of India and supported by the Sports Department of the State Government. The tournament this year attracted 22 teams across the country through various process as required to enter this tournament. They also included last year's Champions Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School, Shahabad Markanda. Of them, 15 teams played in Preliminary League. They were divided into five groups of three teams each. The five group toppers entered the Super League where they met seven seeded teams. These 12 teams were divided into four groups of three teams each. The four Semi-finalists emerged from this Super League. In the first Semi-final, the first-timer Kiddies Corner School, Gwalior thumped Govt. Girls High School, Bariatu (Jharkhand) four goals to nil. Lily Chanu of the winning team was adjudged the "Player of the Match".

The other Semi-final was fought between last year's Champions Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School, Shahabad and Birsamunda Vidyapitha, Rourkela (Orissa). The Shahabad girls defeated Orissa girls 4-1. Puja Rani of the Shahabad School was declared the "Player of the Match".

The Summit clash took place between the Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Shahabad and Kiddies Corner School, Gwalior, which ended in a draw as both the teams remained locked up 0-0. Interestingly, the FIH's new revolutionary tie-breaker rule was introduced by Shri Kukoo Walia in this match, reportedly first time in the country. According to this rule, penalty strokes have been replaced by a penalty shoot-out between an attacking player and the opponent defender, not necessarily the goalkeeper. This is the latest experimental rule introduced by the World Body in all major FIH tournaments.

The Shahabad girls defeated the local favorites Kiddies Corner School girls 3-1 through this penalty shoot-out, and annexed the coveted trophy alongwith a cash award of Rs. 96,000. The Gwalior School girls got the runners-up trophy and a cash award of Rs. 64,000. For the third placed team, Govt. Girls High School, Bariatu defeated Birsamunda Vidyapitha, Rourkela 4-1 and earned a cash award of Rs. 32,000. The Geeta Bajaj Fair Play Trophy went to the Birsamunda Vidyapitha. The Baljeet Singh Memorial Best Player of the Tournament Award alongwith a sum of Rs 5,000 was given to Shyama Tidgam of Kiddies Corner School, Gwalior. The Coaches of the three top teams, namely Amarjeet, Shri Paramjit Singh and Sylvanus Dung Dung earned cash award of Rs. 8,000, Rs. 5,000 and Rs 3,000 respectively.

Smt Shamiksha Gupta, Mayor, Municipal Corporation of Gwalior, who was the Chief Guest of Honour, presided over the prize distribution ceremony in the presence of a huge crowd of hockey enthusiasts, distinguished guests, which included among others Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar, former Mayor and Shri Anurag Bansal, President, Gwalior Trade Fair Authority. Shri Kukoo Walia gave a vote of thanks.

29TH NEHRU SUB-JUNIOR BOYS (U-15) HOCKEY TOURNAMENT (OC. 22-31,2011)

Town High School, Sundergarh triumphs

Soon after the conclusion of the Nehru Girls (u-17) tournament at Gwalior, the other three tournaments of the Society shifted to the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in the Union Capital, where a 34-day-long (October 22 - November 25) festival of high level Indian hockey took place. The three tournaments were Sub-Junior Boys (u-15), Junior Boys (u-17) and the Senior tournament.

This tournament was inaugurated by Shri H.S. Kingra, CMD, National Scheduled Castes Finance Corporation in the presence of Shri R.R. Reddy, MLA of Andhra Pradesh. Twenty four teams representing various States across the country took part this year. They also included last year's finalists Birs Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela and runners-up Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, Ladowali Road, Jalandhar. Of them, 18 teams played in the preliminary league. These teams were divided into six groups of three teams each. The six group leaders then qualified to play with six seeded teams in Phase-II Super League. These 12 teams were divided into four groups. The four group champions emerged as Semi-finalists. In the first

Semi-final, Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Ladowali, Jalandhar beat Baba Gurmukh Singh Uttam Singh Sr. Sec. School, Khadoor Sahib, Taran Taran by three goals to two to enter the final. In the other Semi-final, Town High School, Sundergarh (Orissa) defeated their State-rivals Birs Munda Vidyapitha by four goals to one. In the final, the 2005 title-holder and two-times runners-up Town High School overcame an early deficit to take the last year's runners-up and 2009 champions Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Jalandhar 3-1 and won the glittering champions Trophy along with a cash award of Rs. 96,000. The Ladowali boys earned Rs. 64,000. In the match for the third place, last year's title-holder and three-times champions Birs Munda Vidyapitha defeated Taran Taran boys by a solitary goal and got Rs. 32,000 as cash award.

The final was presided over by the Society's Vice-President Dr. D.R. Saini in the presence of distinguished personalities, a number of Olympians, World Cuppers and hundreds of hockey enthusiasts. Shri Walia gave a vote of thanks.

40TH NEHRU JUNIOR BOYS (U-17) HOCKEY TOURNAMENT (OCT. 31 - NOV. 14,2011)

Govt. Model Sr.Sec. School, Ladowali annex the title 3rd time.

The Junior Boys (u-17) tournament closely followed the Sub-Junior Boys (u-15) event. The Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, Ladowali Road, Jalandhar, annexed this trophy for the third time. They defeated their arch-rivals Birs Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela (Orissa) 5-2. Earlier they were runners up for two consecutive years (2003-04). Orissa boys made it four times and two times runners-up. Notwithstanding the big margin of victory (5-2), this year, the match was a closely fought affair with both sides staying locked 2-2 in the first half. The Punjab team intensified the attack after the lemon break and scored three more goals as the Orissa boys crumbled under pressure.

Inaugurated by the Society's Vice-President, Dr. D.R. Saini, the 40th edition of this tournament attracted 26 teams, including last year's finalists, winners Birs Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela and runners-up Lyallpur Khalsa Sr. Sec. School, Jalandhar. The popularity of this tournament also attracted a foreign team viz Bangladesh Institute of Sports. Fifteen teams played in the preliminary league. They were divided into five groups of three teams each. The five group champions joined 7 seeded teams in Phase-II. They were divided into four groups of three teams each. The four group toppers qualified to play another four seeded teams in Phase-III Super League from where the four Semi-finalists emerged.

In the first Semi-final Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, Ladowali (Jalandhar) thrashed Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Jarkhar, Ludhiana (Punjab) scoring five goals to nil. In the other Semi-final, The Birs Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela beat Sat Guru Partap Singh Academy, Sri Bhaini Sahib, also from Ludhiana, 4-0. In the final, Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, Ladowali (Jalandhar) beat Birs Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela 5-2 and received the glittering trophy alongwith Rs. 96,000 as cash award. The Rourkela team earned Rs. 64,000. For the 3rd position Sat Guru Partap Singh Academy defeated Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Jarkhar 1-0 and received Rs. 32,000. The Coaches of the first three teams viz Avtar Singh, Bijay Kumar Lakra and Sardar Baldev Singh received Rs. 8,000, Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 3,000 respectively. The Foreign Participation Trophy went to the Bangladesh Institute of Sports, Bangladesh. Mandeep Singh of the Jalandhar team and Sumit Toppo of the Rourkela team were awarded cash prize of Rs. 11,000 each for their excellent performance in the game.

The final was presided over by the Society's President, Shri Arun Subhashchandra Yadav in the presence of a large number of distinguished guests, Olympians, World Cuppers and hockey enthusiasts. The Society's Secretary, Shri Kukoo Walia gave a vote of thanks.

48TH ONGC-NEHRU SENIOR HOCKEY TOURNAMENT (NOVEMBER 14-25,2011)

ONGC a deserving winner

Over a month-long grand exhibition of higher level hockey competitions held by the Nehru Hockey Society came to an end on November 25 with the final ceremony of the 48th edition of the Society's Senior tournament. Hockey of the highest order was once again witnessed by an exceptionally large spectators, including many who had made the country proud in the past, at the State-of-the-art Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi, where the Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) won the Senior Nehru Cup for the first time defeating Punjab National Bank team (PNB) 1-0. They were runners-up last year defeated by Air India. The ONGC avenged their 2-3 defeat at the hands of the PNB

in the quarter-final league. For the Bankmen this was their first entry in the final of this tournament.

In the quarter-final league, ONGC stood first with six points by eliminating Indian Oil 4-3, Central Railway 6-1 but lost to PNB 2-3. The PNB stood second in the same pool, with five points by defeating ONGC 3-2 and drew with both Indian Oil and Central Railways with an identical score of 2-2. The ONGC received a cash award of Rs. 2,50,000 (Rs 50,000 more than last year) alongwith the most coveted Nehru Gold Cup and the Japan trophy. The Bankmen were richer by Rs 1,25,000 (Rs. 25,000 more than last year) and received the Nehru Silver Cup.

As many as 17 teams took part this year. Out of them, 12 teams took part in the initial phase-I knock-out stage. They were placed in three groups. The three group leaders then joined five seeded teams in a league format. They were placed in two groups of four teams each in the quarter-final league. Air India and Bharat Petroleum with six points each were on top in Pool-A. While Pool-B as stated earlier saw ONGC and PNB topping the pool and reached the last four stage. In the 1st Semi-final, PNB beat Air India 4-2 while ONGC in the 2nd Semi-final ousted Bharat Petroleum, also 4-2. Air India finished third beating Bharat Petroleum 2-0 to receive the Hero Honda Hardline Trophy alongwith a cash award of Rs 75,000 (Rs. 25,000 more than last year). The most significant factor happened this year was that the fourth position team also earned a cash award of Rs 35,000, first time in the history of this tournament. The recipient was Bharat Petroleum.

Shri Satinder Sharma, who officiated in the final along with Shri Bhupinder Singh, was declared the "Best Umpire of the Tournament". He was the proud winner of the prestigious Sardar Gian Singh Memorial Best Umpire Trophy

alongwith a cash award of Rs. 10,000. The Lt. Gen. Harbaksh Singh Trophy was given to the Indian Air Force team.

Nehru Hockey Tournaments have always proved to be the premier breeding ground for aspiring hockey players across the country. Over the past 48 years, scores of players, who participated in the Nehru tournaments and exhibited their skills have gone on to represent the country at the highest level.

The President of the Society, Shri Arun Subhashchandra Yadav alongwith the Chief Guest, Shri N.K. Batra, Secretary General, Hockey India, presided over the prize distribution ceremony in the exalted presence of Shri H.S. Hanspal, former M.P., and now a member of the National Minority Commission, Shri Subhash Kapur, Chairman, Steelbird Hi-Tech India Ltd., Society Vice-President, Dr. D.R. Saini, ONGC's General Manager, Sh. Alok Misra, Dy GM Sh. V.K. Mahindru, HR Exec. Sh. R.K. Misra, PNB's Exec. Director, Smt. Usha Subramaniam, General Manager, Sh. S.M. Veerappan, Dy. GM Sh. S.M. Kaushik as also a number of former Olympians, World Cuppers and hockey enthusiasts. Shri Kukoo Walia gave a vote of thanks.

FIH CHAMPIONS CHALLENGE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT (NOV. 26-DEC.4,2011)

Indian hopes fizzled out

After going through a space of bad times in their recent tours in Australia and Malaysia, Indian hockey seems to have rapidly recovered to find once again a dignified place where it should be in World Hockey. However, as ill luck would have it, India missed a golden chance at the very last moment to win this prestigious FIH Champions Challenge Championship, held at the South African City of Johannesburg. This championship offered a place to its winners in the next edition of the coveted Champions Trophy, just a step forward towards the ultimate the Olympic Games, which for the first time in 78 years of India's participation, slipped away from its fatal grasp. Indian hockey, it may be recalled, failed to take part in the last Games at Beijing in 2008.

This year the Champions Challenge had eight teams. They were divided into two pools of four teams each. Pool-A comprised India, Belgium, Poland and hosts South Africa. The other pool had Argentina, Canada, Malaysia and Japan. India conceded a penultimate minute goal on a penalty-corner to allow Belgium score a 3-3 draw in their opening outing in the preliminary league. In an evenly-matched encounter, India scored three goals in the space of just 12 minutes but their joy soon vanished as they allowed their opponents to draw level after falling behind. India thus lost a golden chance to start with a victory. In their next match against South Africa, India dished out some entertaining hockey to defeat South Africa 7-4. Playing briskly to match their robust rivals, the Indians capitalized on their scoring opportunities that came their way after the hosts made it 4-4- in the 55th minute. India struck a purple patch with three goals in the last 15 minutes. In their last match of the pool against Poland, India spanked Poland 7-0. India completely dominated Poland in all departments of the game. India thus finished on top of the pool with seven points. Belgium also earned equal points but came second because of goal difference. Belgium defeated South Africa 2-1, Poland 7-3 and drew with India 3-3.

In an all-Asian quarter-final, India took on an unpredictable Malaysia, which despite finished last in their pool with only one point from three matches, as the new format allowed all the eight competing nations a place in the knock-out rounds. It may be recalled that it was Malaysia which proved a thorn and ousted the Indians in the Semi-final of the Beijing Asian Games last year. V.R. Raghunath slammed a golden goal in the last minute of extra time as India beat Malaysia 5-4 to advance to the Semi-final. In the other quarter-finals, Argentina beat Poland 5-1, Belgium beat Canada 4-0 and South Africa defeated Japan 3-2.

Drag-flicker Sandeep Singh converted two penalty-corners as India defeated South Africa 4-2 to set-up a title clash with Belgium. India had also beaten South Africa 7-4 in the preliminary league tie. Belgium defeated Argentina 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out to enter the final in the title clash, India squandered a two-goal advantage and conceded a last minute goal to lose 3-4 to Belgium. India, which won this event in 2001 at Kuala Lumpur, took a 2-0 and again-3-1 lead before a late rally by Belgium, whose star striker florent van Aubel caught the Indian defenders off-guard for a moment and scored the all-important winner just at the stroke of the hooter. This helped the Belgians not only to annex the coveted title but also a maiden place in next year's Champions Trophy in Australia. Lamentably, for India it was too near yet too far.

Incidentally, this defeat is reportedly India's 16th at World or Continental-level events. India have till now figured in 13 world-level finals, including the Olympics, World Cup and Champions Trophy, and 19 at the Continental-level. Of the 32 finals, India have won 16 and lost as many. Eleven of those 16 losses came against Pakistan.

Final Standing : 1. Belgium, 2. India, 3. South Africa, 4. Argentina, 5. Malaysia, 6. Poland, 7. Japan and 8. Canada



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