

Press Release

Sports Authority of India

Sports Minister felicitates victorious women's hockey team, assures them of all support for Tokyo 2020

New Delhi, 25 June, 2019: Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister, Youth Affairs and Sports, met the Indian women's hockey team today and congratulated them for their victory at the FIH Series Finals that were held in Hiroshima, Japan from June 15-23. With this India has moved one step closer towards qualifying for next year's Tokyo Olympics, as they will now participate in the 14-team FIH Olympic Qualifiers to be held later this year. The qualifiers will be a bilateral two-match series, from where the winners of each of the seven matches will qualify for the Olympics.

India remained unbeaten throughout their campaign, scoring 29 goals and conceding just four. The women's team recorded convincing victories over Chile, beating them 4-2 in the semifinal, and hosts and Asian Games champions Japan, for 3-1 in the final.

Penalty corner specialist Gurjit Kaur was India's leading goal scorer at the tournament with 11 goals. Captain Rani Rampal added one more accolade to her growing profile, as she was adjudged the Player of the Tournament. There was also a special performance from 19-year-old Lalremsiami who played the semifinal and final, despite receiving news that her father had expired the day before the semifinal encounter.

The Indian women's hockey team has played the Summer Olympics on two previous occasions, in 1980, where they finished fourth, and in 2016. With their improving fortunes on the global stage, having reached the semifinals of the 2018 Commonwealth Games and earning a silver at the Asian Games, India will look to seal a berth in Tokyo later this year.

Speaking about the achievement of the team, the Sports Minister said, "The Indian women's hockey team has played very well, and made us proud. The ministry will extend all support to players, both individually and as a team. I will visit their training center in Bengaluru to meet their coaches and discuss the requirements of the team. India has a good chance of qualifying for the Olympics and winning a medal in hockey."