

## Olympics 2024: Men's Hockey: India wins a Bronze MEDAL

August 8, 2024

Paris, France: Men's Hockey: The Indian men's hockey team, led by **Harmanpreet Singh**, gave their goalkeeper **PR Sreejesh** a fitting farewell by winning the bronze medal. Although they didn't clinch silver or gold, their performance was remarkable.

Historically, India's hockey team has been incredibly successful, winning a total of eight gold medals in the Olympics (1928, 1932, 1936, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1964, and 1980). Alongside these gold medals, they've also secured one silver and four bronze medals, making them one of the most accomplished teams in Olympic history.

At Paris the Indian men's hockey team gave a good account in a fierce competition, even though a Gold or a Silver medal proved to be elusive.

This is India's 13th Olympic medal in hockey, and their fourth bronze. It is also the first time since 1972 that India have back-to-back Olympic medals in hockey.

**Captain Harmanpreet** finished the Olympics with ten goals, and is on course to finish this tournament as the top-scorer. For context, no other Indian scored more than two goals.

**Coach Craig Fulton** has always spoken about building his team on the back of **their ability to defend. the Indian backline, shored up by the returning Amit** Rohidas stood strong, and didn't give away any chances from open play. A bulk of this Team are now double Olympic medallists. As captain Harmanpreet Singh said after the match, "**hockey is back**".

-- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on PATNAIK's CONTRIBUTION for REVIVING HOCKEY --

Naveen Patnaik, the former Chief Minister of Odisha, played a pivotal role in the resurgence of Indian hockey. His vision and commitment transformed the sport, especially during the Paris 2024 Olympics, where the Indian men's hockey team secured their second consecutive bronze medal. Patnaik, an avid hockey fan who was a goalkeeper during his school days, personally congratulated the players, including Odisha's own **Amit Rohidas**



***Naveen Patnaik (b. 16 October 1946)***

***Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Odisha Legislative Assembly from 19 June 2024,  
Chief Minister of Odisha from 5 March 2000 to 11 June 2024,  
Member of Odisha Legislative Assembly from 5 March 2000,  
Union Minister of Mines, Govt of India from 19 March 1998 to 4 March 2000,  
President of Biju Janata Dal from 26 December 1997,  
Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from 12 April 1997 to 4 March 2000.***

In 2018, Odisha's State Government stepped in as the **official sponsor of both the Indian men's and women's hockey teams**. This partnership was crucial when the sport faced financial challenges after Sahara's exit as the primary sponsor.

Under **Patnaik's** leadership, **Odisha** became the "hockey capital" of India. The State committed a substantial investment of ₹120 crore, which was later extended for ten more years, ensuring continued support until 2033. The current Chief Minister, **Mohan Charan Majhi**, further extended the sponsorship until 2036, emphasizing Odisha's long-term commitment to the sport.

**Odisha** developed **WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE** for **HOCKEY**: The **Rourkela Hockey Stadium**, with a seating capacity of 20,000, stands as the **world's largest hockey stadium**. It hosted the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in 2018 and 2023, providing Indian teams with top-notch facilities.



*India, Odisha, **Rourkela Hockey Stadium** for field hockey, synthetic AstroTurf, with nylon grass: constructed and maintained by SAIL.*

The stadium has been host to World Hockey Junior World Cup and been a training centre to most of the international Hockey players of India. Odisha continues to organize international tournaments, including the **FIH Men's Series Finals** and the **Olympic Hockey Qualifiers** in 2019. These initiatives have created an environment for training and competition at the highest level.



*M. Hamid Ansari, Vice President of India, at the inauguration of **Biju Patnaik Rural Hockey Championship***

The Stadium is the **Home Ground of Odisha Hockey Team**. Situated on the middle of Sector-5 and Sector-6 areas on the side of the main road leading to Sector-6. Office of the DGM (sports) of Rourkela Steel Plant, the highest body of SAIL, RSP for propagating and nurturing the budding sports talents of the area is located here.

**SAIL Hockey Academy:** This academy has been helping identify talents and shaping their skills to make them represent the National Team in International Competitions.

India's Historic Campaign: India secured their spot at the Paris Olympics by winning the gold medal at the Asian Games in the previous year.

The squad featured seasoned players like **goalkeeper PR Sreejesh** and **midfielder Manpreet Singh**, both making their fourth Olympic appearance.

Group Stage Battles: India found themselves in Pool B, alongside formidable opponents:

- Belgium (reigning Olympic champions)
- Australia (three-time world champions)
- Argentina
- New Zealand
- Ireland

The group stage matches were intense, with India facing each team once. Their performances were closely watched by fans worldwide.

Results and Standings:

India secured **victories against New Zealand and Ireland**, and they fought to a **draw against Argentina**.

India's consistent performance ensured their place in the knockout stage, the quarterfinalists.

Quarterfinals and Beyond:

The Indian team's journey continued as they advanced to the quarterfinals.

Their opponents in the knockout stage remained a mystery until the draw, but anticipation was high.

**FACING the CHAMPIONS:** In the quarterfinals, India faced the reigning Olympic champions, Belgium. India's unbeaten run came to an end. Belgium bounced back from one goal down to register a brilliant 2-1 win over India.

**SPAIN vs INDIA for the BRONZE:** The match was held at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium on Thursday. The Indian team, led by **Captain Harmanpreet Singh**, secured the Bronze medal by winning in a hard-fought match with Spain. **Harmanpreet Singh** scored two crucial goals in the 30th and 33rd minutes.

Hockey India President **Dr Dilip Tirkey** said, "This victory is a testament to the hard work, determination, and resilience of our players and support staff. Winning back-

to-back Olympic medals is an extraordinary achievement that reflects the resurgence of Indian hockey on the world stage.”

**CASH PRIZES: Hockey India** announced a cash prize of INR 15 lakhs for each player of the Indian Men's Hockey Team and INR 7.5 lakhs for each member of the support staff in recognition of their outstanding achievement at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The team secured a historic Bronze medal, defeating Spain 2-1, marking their second consecutive Olympic medal, an achievement last accomplished 52 years ago.

Indian goalkeeper **Parattu Raveendran Sreejesh** had announced that he would take retirement from first-class Hockey matches after the Paris Olympics. His wife **Aneeshya** is a former long-jumper and an Ayurveda doctor. She promised, “I will cook traditional Kerala food for him, vegetarian and non-vegetarian both. He loves it so much and I know he must be craving it.”

Hockey India Secretary General **Bhola Nath Singh** said that Hockey India will discuss with the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** and the Government of India regarding the appointment of PR Sreejesh as the Junior India Hockey team's head coach.

**Dr Dilip Tirkey** applauded Sreejesh by saying, “I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to PR Sreejesh for his stellar career and invaluable contributions to Indian hockey. His legacy will inspire future generations.”

**COLOR of HOCKEY STICKS: A Story from NDTV August 09, 2024:**

“Not many know that Sreejesh had used three special sticks in the Paris Olympics with his kids and wife's name written on it. In the quarterfinal match against Britain, he used the stick with Aneeshya's name on it.

"He has three sticks for the Paris games...One for penalty shootout and two for regular games. For regular matches, he used the sticks with our kids' names Anushree and Sriyansh written on them.

"For the shootout, he used the stick with my name written on it and it also has my favourite colour," said **Aneeshya**.

(Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/4dnur3uc> )

**Notes:** 1. Please read “India: Odisha: **Mohan Majhi** is the new Chief Minister: *Festival of Democracy: General Elections 2024*” dated June 11, 2024” at <https://diginews360.com/india-odisha-mohan-majhi-is-the-new-chief-minister/> . [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) includes a note on the ‘Vibrant Democracy of India’, EDITORIAL COMMENTS’, and, Title #5: **Interference by Khalistanis**.

2. Please read “India: General Election 2024: Interference by Khalistanis: Amritpal’s entry”, dated May 8, 2024 at <https://diginews360.com/india-general-election-2024-interference-by-khalistanis-amritpals-entry/> .

3. Please read “Canada: China Interferes in Elections; Celebration of Indian Democracy”, dated April 10, 2024 at <https://diginews360.com/canada-china-interferes-celebration-of-indian-democracy/> . Readers from all over the world are invited to read the EDITORIAL COMMENTS about the unprecedented FESTIVAL of DEMOCRACY in India, where General elections are scheduled to begin in India from 19 April 2024.

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