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Celebrating National Sports Day: PNB's Unwavering Commitment to Hockey

On the radiant canvas of National Sports Day, Punjab National Bank (PNB), paints a vibrant celebration of its deep-rooted connection with the world of hockey. Beyond its stature as nation's leading public sector bank, PNB emerges as a resolute pillar not only for the nation's financial landscape but also for the glorious tapestry of Indian hockey.

In an era when hockey was experiencing neglect, PNB stepped in as a beacon of support, resolutely safeguarding and nurturing the national sport of India. The credit for establishing the PNB Hockey Academy in 2002 goes to none other than Shri Ajit Pal Singh, the former Captain of the Indian Hockey Team. The academy's inception marked a turning point, as it welcomed 25 players under the age of 16, with PNB wholeheartedly shouldering the logistical expenses. These players underwent training for a span of three years, with extensions to five years.

In 2004, the bank formed its Hockey team of senior players, starting with 8 and growing to 25 members, allowing them to participate in all major national level hockey tournaments. With this, early victories, including wins in the Delhi Hockey League (2005) and All India Hockey Tournaments in Nainital and Mandi (2005).

The esteemed players of the PNB Senior Hockey Team, including Pramod, Ranjit Singh, Binod Singh, and Joga Singh, have made an enduring impact on the sport. These players have proudly represented India and excelled in domestic under-20 matches, as well as national tournaments.

The PNB Senior Hockey Team's impact is evident through numerous success stories. Ranjit Singh, a senior team player, attributes his journey to the academy, highlighting its role in his progression to Team India and victories in international tournaments like the Azlan Shah Cup and Asian Cup in 2008. Another standout, PNB's Shamsher Singh, secured Bronze in the 2020 Olympics, Silver in the Commonwealth Games, and actively participated in the World Cup, receiving the prestigious Arjuna Award.

Currently, the Indian Hockey Team proudly features four accomplished players from PNB: Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shamsher Singh, and Mandeep Mor. Their journey testifies to the enduring partnership between PNB and the Senior Hockey Team, cultivating sportsmanship and intense competition among both emerging and seasoned players. Adding to the ever-growing legacy, this year in March, a new chapter of triumph was etched in PNB's affiliation with hockey as Sukhjeet Singh's outstanding performance earned him the '*Player of the Match*' title in India's win against Germany during the FIH (International Hockey Federation) Pro League. In August as well, Shamsher Singh (Arjuna Award recipient) and Sukhjeet Singh, with their exceptional prowess, clinched victory at the Asian Champions Trophy 2023. Same month, the Indian Hockey team brought silver medal in Commonwealth games.

PNB's commitment to hockey goes beyond the field. The bank has actively nurtured international hockey talents, seamlessly integrating them into diverse roles within the banking sector – from Branch Managers to Customer Service professionals and Human Resources specialists. Notably, several players also joined critical roles within government entities like Indian Railways, Indian Oil, ONGC, Indian Navy, and Indian Army.

On National Sports Day, PNB reaffirms unwavering commitment to hockey's essence and fostering this remarkable sporting legacy. PNB Senior Hockey Team stands as a beacon of national pride, fuelling passion for the sport.

(The author of the article is Sanjay Varshneya, Chief General Manager - Corporate Communications, PNB)
