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**Indian Men's Hockey Team leaves for FIH Hockey Pro League 2023/24 in Europe**

*~The Harmanpreet Singh-led side will take on Argentina and Belgium in Antwerp followed by matches against Germany and Great Britain in London starting 22nd May~*

**Bengaluru, 14th May 2024**: The Indian Men's Hockey Team left for Antwerp, Belgium in the early hours of Tuesday morning for the Europe leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2023/24 where the winner of this season will be determined. India, currently placed third in the points table, behind table toppers Netherlands and Australia, will take on hosts Belgium and Argentina in Antwerp between 22nd May to 26th May followed by matches against Germany and Great Britain from 1st June to 9th June in London.

While India will be vying to finish the prestigious league with top honours, they will also be focused on eliminating any chinks in their armour ahead of the Olympic Games in Paris starting this July. "The team is quite excited to get back on the road again for yet another challenging outing where we will take on world's best teams in the FIH Hockey Pro League," expressed Captain Harmanpreet Singh ahead of the team's departure.

"We will be travelling on the back of a very intense training camp at SAI, Bengaluru over the past few weeks where we focused on our conditioning and played intra-squad matches regularly. The team is shaping well and the Pro League is an important event for us to iron out the flaws in our execution ahead of the Olympics," asserted the ace dragflicker.

Harmanpreet further emphasized that the matches in Antwerp and London will not only give insights into their own game and how they are faring as a unit but the matches will also provide them insights into the opponents' game against whom they will be fighting for a spot in the Semi-Finals at Paris 2024. "We have Belgium and Argentina in our pool at the Olympics along with Australia, Ireland and New Zealand. We play Belgium and Argentina both in Antwerp. We are also trying out the best combinations before the final squad is selected for the Olympics. Hence, the Pro League outing is crucial in our preparations for Paris as well as for players to make it to the 16-member squad for Paris," added Harmanpreet, who currently is among the top 3 highest goal scorers this season with six goals.

India will begin their European leg on 22nd May with their opening match against Argentina, followed by back-to-back matches against Belgium on 23rd and 25th May. They will take on Argentina again on 26th May before moving on to the final leg in London where they play Germany on 1st and 8th June and take on hosts Great Britain on 2nd and 9th June. "In the past few seasons of the Pro League, we have finished at third position. It will be great to finish on top this time and we are quite optimistic about it," the Captain signed off.

Please see the attached images of the team from Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru.
Also attached is the schedule of Pro League.

**HOCKEY INDIA TEAM PARTNERS**

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*Team Partner*

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**About HOCKEY INDIA**

HOCKEY INDIA (HI) is the governing body with exclusive mandate to direct and conduct all activities for both men and women's hockey in India. It is recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of India as the sole body responsible towards promoting Hockey in India.

Headquartered in New Delhi, Hockey India was established on 20th May, 2009 and is affiliated to the International Hockey Federation (FIH), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF).

Committed to the development of Hockey in the country, Hockey India with the assistance of Sports Authority of India and Department of Sports, Government of India, trains players at sub-junior, junior and senior level. The governing body engages in Coaching the coaches with International Standard certification programs, educates and equips technical officials and umpires to find a foothold in international arena, provides world-class infrastructure and International exposure for the players besides regular international competition. Hockey India has also pioneered in bringing top International hockey events to India such as the FIH Men's World Cup in 2010 and 2018, FIH Champions Trophy in 2014, FIH Junior Men's World Cup in 2016 and 2021, FIH Hockey World League Final in 2017. With its vision to popularize the game and constantly promote it, Hockey India brought the Indian Men's Hockey Team into the top three in the world. Hockey India is also dedicated to getting the Indian Women's Hockey Team into the top three in the world.

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**About ODISHA**

Odisha - the Eastern State of India - is known for its love for Hockey and over the years it has evolved to be the Global Hub of Hockey. The State successfully hosted the Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar 2018, followed by the FIH Men's Series Finals Bhubaneswar Odisha, FIH Olympic Qualifiers Odisha, and FIH Hockey Pro League 2020-21. Odisha has previously hosted the Champions Trophy 2014 and the Odisha Men's Hockey World League Final Bhubaneswar 2017. Odisha also hosted the FIH Men's Hockey Junior World Cup in 2021.

Kalinga Lancers, the team owned by the State, were the winners in the Hockey India League 2017. Taking a step further towards realising the dream of restoring the glory of Indian Hockey at the global level, the State is sponsoring the Indian Hockey Teams till 2033.

Odisha also hosted the FIH Odisha Hockey Men’s World Cup 2023.

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