**~One of the biggest highlights of 2021 was the successful completion of FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Bhubaneswar 2021 ~**

**New Delhi, 30 December 2021:** For Hockey India, the year 2021 was eventful. While both Indian Men's and Women's Hockey Teams created history at Tokyo Olympics, the federation successfully brought the domestic calendar back on track. After an unexpected halt last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was filled with some enthralling action, including the recently concluded FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Bhubaneswar 2021 that headlined the last 12 months.

The year 2021 started on a positive note, with national teams returning to international hockey after a year's wait. The Senior Women's team toured to Argentina and Germany, while Junior Women's side had a successful Chile tour in the month of January. Indian Men's hockey team too successfully toured Europe and Argentina at the start of this year.

On the other hand, the domestic calendar got underway with the 11th Hockey India Sub Junior Women National Championship 2021 held in Simedga, Jharkhand in March adhering to Hockey India SOPs and covid protocols laid by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the State Government. The 11th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship too was held in the same month in Jind, Haryana.

With an aim to maximise athlete participation and develop the sport in states, union territories, departments/ institutional units and academies, Hockey India introduced exclusive tournaments for academies and departments/ institutions across various categories in the domestic calendar.

The inaugural edition of the 1st Hockey India Sub Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021 and the 1st Hockey India Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021 were successfully held in March at the iconic Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneshwar.

In August, the Indian hockey contingent created history at the prestigious Tokyo Olympics. While the Men's team ended the 41-year Olympic medal drought by clinching the Bronze, the Women's team inspired the whole country with their historic fourth-place finish at the quadrennial Games.

Following their Olympics success, both the teams achieved their highest-ever FIH World Rankings. Manpreet-led side climbed up to 3rd spot, while the Indian eves moved up to 9th position in the FIH World Rankings by the end of 2021. The Indian hockey contingent also made a clean sweep at the FIH Hockey Stars Awards 2020-21 by winning in all eight categories.  Additionally, the Indian hockey teams were felicitated by Central and State Governments and various stakeholders in the country. The Odisha State Government, extended its partnership with the national teams for 10 more years. In November, members of the Men's and Women's teams were also conferred with national awards for their heroics in Tokyo.

After months of lockdown in the country due to the second wave of the deadly COVID-19 virus, the domestic season got resumed in October.  The season recommenced with the 1st Hockey India Sub Junior Men Academy National Championship 2021 followed by 1st Hockey India Junior Men Academy National Championships 2021 held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The 11th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship 2021, Simdega, Jharkhand and the 11th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2021, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, the 1st Hockey India Senior Women Inter-Department National Championship 2021 held in Kolkata, West Bengal were successfully staged in the same month.

In December, Hockey India successfully organised as many as three national championships- 11th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship Pimpri Chinchwad 2021, 11th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship 2021, Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu and the 1st Hockey India Senior Men Inter-Department National Championship 2021 held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

One of the biggest highlights of this challenging year was the successful completion of FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Bhubaneswar 2021. This was the first marquee international hockey tournament held in India after the dreaded virus halted all the sporting events in 2020. Government of India, Odisha State Government and Hockey India ensured a Covid-free environment was provided to players and officials from the top 16 participating countries.

Apart from developing the players, Hockey India also emphasised on developing the Coaches from the grassroots. Hence, continuing the unique Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway, the apex body conducted Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway Level 'Basic' Coaching Courses (Online) and Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway Level '1' & '2' Coaching Courses conducted Face-to-Face in this eventful year.

Making the best use of technology, Hockey India launched two unique online portals- Heroes Connect and Photo Library. Heroes Connect is a unique web-responsive platform, which has been launched to curate a detailed database of Indian Men's and Women's Hockey Team members, while Photo Library is introduced to innovate and further enhance the popularity of the Indian Hockey Teams globally.

Reflecting on the successful 2021, Hockey India President Mr. Gyanendro Ningombam said, "It was truly a remarkable year for Hockey India. Apart from the historic feats at Tokyo Olympics, we were also successful in bringing the domestic calendar back on track. After a year's gap, we successfully staged various national championships this year, adhering to COVID guidelines laid by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the respective State Governments. Despite many challenges, Hockey India continued to conduct coaching courses for development of Hockey coaches in the country and also in their pursuit to create new and engaging initiatives such as Heroes Connect and the Photo Library. Moreover, the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Bhubaneswar 2021 was a huge success. Each member of our team and the Odisha State Government, worked day and night to successfully stage this marquee event in these challenging times. I also extend my deepest gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik ji for playing a pivotal role in bringing back international hockey to the country."

"We are hopeful that 2022 will be full of enthralling action, and we look forward to hosting the FIH Pro League Men and Women Matches, which is scheduled in February. If everything goes well in terms of the pandemic, we hopefully also be able to welcome back our fans in the stadiums," added Mr Ningombam.