

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurates 5th Hockey India Senior Women's Inter-Department National Championship 2025

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Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, inaugurated the **5th Hockey India Senior Women's Inter-Department National Championship 2025** at Shivaji Stadium, New Delhi today. Chairman, Indian Oil, Shri A.S. Sahney; President of Hockey India, Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey; members of the Hockey India Federation, coaches, support staff, and enthusiastic students from various schools attended the event.



Addressing the gathering, Shri Puri highlighted the deep association of Indian Oil and other Oil Marketing Companies with the promotion of sports in the country. He said these companies have not only played a vital role in strengthening the nation's economy with their strong performance but have also consistently supported athletes, helping them achieve excellence at the national and international level.

Shri Puri recalled the inspirational journey of Indian hockey, mentioning how legends like Shri Harbinder Singh, Shri Zafar Iqbal, Shri Ajitpal Singh, Shri M.M. Somaya, and Shri Rajinder Singh inspired generations, including himself as a child when he first began following the sport.

He expressed happiness that Indian women's hockey has now risen to the global stage and is making the nation proud. Players such as Rani Rampal, Pritam Rani Siwach, Savita Punia, Vandana Katariya and many

others, he said, have brought immense glory to the country and serve as role models for the younger generation.

The Minister also underlined that the principles which drive success in diplomacy, governance and professional life—teamwork, discipline and fair play—are equally important in sports. He congratulated all the participating teams and expressed confidence that the championship would not only showcase exceptional talent but also inspire more young women to take up hockey.

Shri Puri noted that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is witnessing unprecedented focus on sports as a tool of youth empowerment and nation-building. India's focus on sports has intensified in recent years, with initiatives such as **Khelo India**, the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)**, and the **Fit India Movement** creating a strong ecosystem of support for athletes. Increased investments in sports infrastructure and special emphasis on women's sports are enabling Indian athletes to achieve record successes at the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and Olympics, while inspiring the next generation to take up sports professionally.

Concluding his address, Shri Puri conveyed best wishes to all 11 participating teams, urging them to compete with "discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship." He added, *"May this championship be remembered not just for victories on the field, but for the dreams it sparks, the friendships it builds, and the progress it inspires. Let the best team win, and let every participant emerge richer in experience and spirit. Together, we are building a stronger future for Indian sports, for Indian women, and for our nation."*

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