

Sports Authority of India

National Sports Day celebrated at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium

New Delhi, 29 August: Major Dhyan Chand is arguably the greatest hockey player to have played for India and one of the best in the world. Such was his mastery over the game, that he was referred to by platitudes as *Wizard* and *Magician*. Like every year, India celebrated National Sports Day on Dhyan Chand's 113th birth anniversary, honouring his achievements, efforts and legacy.

A function to celebrate National Sports Day was held earlier today at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium graced by some of India's finest athletes as well as officials from Sports Authority of India and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport. Among the athletes who graced today's function were Karnam Malleswari, Bronze medalist in Weightlifting, 2000 Olympics; Harbinder Singh, three-time Olympic medalist in Men's Hockey (1964, 1968 and 1972); MP Ganesh, bronze medalist, Men's Hockey (1972 Olympics); Romeo James, member, Indian Men's Hockey team (1984 Olympics); Devesh Chauhan, member, Indian Men's Hockey team (2000 and 2004 Olympics) and Manjusha Kanwar, former India Badminton player.

Shri Rahul Bhatnagar, Secretary (Sports), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, said "Sports has come a long way in India over the past four-five years, if you look at our performance at the current Asian Games, we are getting medals in sports like Rowing and Wushu. Even the medals won in Badminton and Table Tennis are commendable, because the competition in these events at the Asian Games is world-class."

Neelam Kapur, Director-General, Sports Authority of India, said "What Dhyan Chand achieved back in the 1920s and 1930s is remembered even today. The occasion of National Sports Day reminds all of us that if we can bring the same level to our performances, how much more we can achieve than what we already have. At SAI we have a huge responsibility towards Indian sports, if we all work together with full conviction, we can change many things for the better."

Karnam Malleswari, Bronze medalist at 2000 Olympics, said, "On the occasion of National Sports Day, I congratulate all athletes who have won medals for India at the Asian Games and wish luck to those whose events are still coming up. The support coming from SAI and the Sports Ministry has been a huge motivating factor for the athletes. On behalf of all of them I am grateful for the support."