



## Press Release

**New Delhi: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

### **Odisha Naval Tata Hockey's Munmuni Das determined to make her late father proud**

**New Delhi, December 19:** After her team's narrow defeat against the Sports Authority of India 'B' team, Munmuni was distraught but there was enough twinkle in her eyes to find where she belonged in the list of topscorers. Munmuni Das, 16, has been one of the most eye-catching players for the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High Performance Center, competing at the ongoing Khelo India Women's Hockey League Under 21.

Hailing from the Tinsukia district of Assam, Munmuni has scored three times from a total of four matches so far in the first phase of the league competition at the Major Dhyanchand Stadium in New Delhi. An absolute livewire during the matches, Munmuni mentioned whatever big she achieves in her life, she will dedicate to none but her late father Kaliya Das.

"I started playing hockey back in 2015 looking at the senior boys in school. Since then, I got this passion to play the sport. However, people in my village in Assam never supported hockey or any sport in particular. Being a girl, it was also next to impossible to pursue the sport. However, I started playing in some way and after some months, went on to play in the inter-state from where I earned my selection to be a part of the Sports Authority of India centre in Kokrajhar in 2017," Munmuni said. "My dad, who passed away a year back, used to support me a lot. I couldn't afford to even buy a hockey stick but papa used to arrange it. He was a salesman. It was difficult for him to support me, my mother and my sister for our education, family as well as my playing needs. But he never hesitated from helping me. I will never ever forget his role in helping me be where I am today."

Munmuni's all three goals so far have been field goals and her contribution in the team has been prominent from the very first match of the competition. Commenting on the team spirit of the team, she says, "I got a chance to give a trial at the Naval Tata Odisha in 2019 and I am here since then. Everyone in our team is from different States. Having said that, we have a very nice team bonding, we keep motivating each other during the matches and our combination is very good. We support each other whenever there are mistakes too. We don't have any discrimination inside our hostel too, be it for religious or other issues. We are very friendly and our coaches behave like our families. We celebrate festivals of all faith in our academy too."



Munmuni's link-up with Ashima Rout, another key player of the team who has four goals so far, makes the Naval Tata Odisha team's matches all the more beautiful. "Ashima is like my sister," Munmuni continued. "Whenever there are mistakes, we discuss about it after the match and are always looking forward to strengthening ourselves before the next match. We are just concerned on making our team win."

All geared up to help her get a good finish in the points table at the competition, Munmuni recalled the performance of the Indian hockey teams at the Tokyo Olympics earlier this year. "In Tokyo, our senior men's team didn't give up. They were losing 1-3 in the bronze medal match against Germany and from there, went on to win 5-4. That gave us a lot of inspiration. The women's team too tried their best and they gave a really good performance against Australia in the quarterfinals," she mentioned.

From being the only girl from her village to play hockey and return home late in the night through desolate jungles after cycling for 5-6 kms, Munmuni has come a long way. There is now only one aim she is working towards. "My papa's dream is to see me as an Olympian. To achieve that, I want to become as big a player as possible and want to give my 100 percent every time in the ground," she said.

**EOM**