

Dhyanchand lauds Chouhan

By Our Staff Reporter

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Former Olympian Ashok Dhyanchand today claimed that the golden era of Indian hockey will certainly return if other states' chief ministers emulate the way Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan came forward to help the men's and women's national hockey teams.

"The way Chouhan came on his own, to provide financial assistance to the teams, it is praiseworthy," Dhyanchand told media here.

He said Chouhan also called up the then Hockey India (HI) President AK Mattoo and proposed to give Rs 25,000 each when the men's hockey team players were threatening a boycott over their allowances and dues.

Dhyanchand said that during the period he also urged Chouhan for financial aid to the women and the Chief Minister agreed to pay Rs 25,000 each to 100 men and women hockey players every year for three years.

"It was unfortunate that Mattoo did not put Chouhan's proposal before the belligerent hockey players when Mattoo went to talk to them in Pune," the ex-Olympian lamented.

Dhyanchand held the HI's present ad hoc committee responsible for the plight of Indian hockey. "When the Sahara Group gave Rs 1 crore to sponsor the men's hockey team and the players were using the company's logo, the Sahara Group was not asked to make payment," he pointed out.

The former International also supported the

former India captain Paragat Singh's allegation that Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Suresh Kalmadi is a "Sports Mafia" and alleged that the HI election was not being held due to Kalmadi.

"He is hatching a conspiracy to become HI president. After dissolving Indian Hockey Federation, IOA did not conduct election of HI even after six months and in the states' hockey associations also. Nominated officials are representing in most state associations," he said. Terming the present hockey team as 'nominated' not 'selected', Dhyanchand said that only two national hockey championships were held in the past 15 years and the players were selected on the basis of their performance in the national championship only.