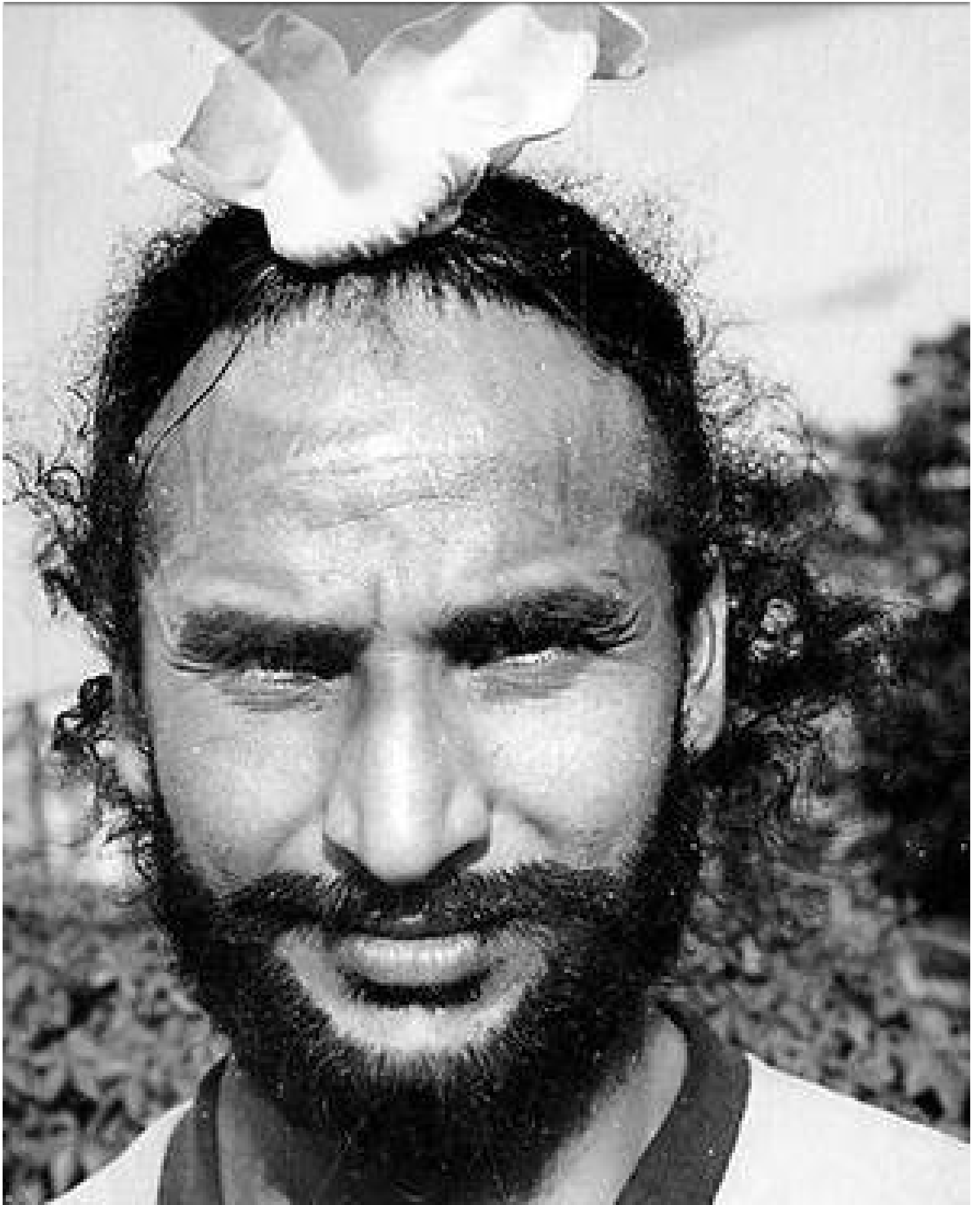


SPORT

Winning is a source of National pride: Onkar





Hopes India can emulate 1975 WC win

Onkar Singh was a second year student of Lyallpur Khalsa College (Jalandhar) in 1975 when India lifted the men's hockey World Cup in Kuala Lumpur.

A young midfielder on the champion team then, picking up lessons watching and playing with India stars like midfield ace Ajit Pal Singh, he is currently the Sports Director, Guru Nanak Khalsa College (Mumbai) and responsible for initiating students into sports activities.

"India hosting the 2018 hockey World Cup (November 2018, Bhubaneswar) is great. I hope the national team follows in our footsteps and wins. Watching our National flag go up at the victory ceremony, hearing our National anthem will make every Indian proud."

India defeated Pakistan 2-1 in a hard-fought final to return home with the 1975 World Cup.

"We felt proud at the victory ceremony when the entire stadium stood to watch the *tiranga* raised and made the audience listen to the *Jana Gana Mana*. "Winning is a source of national pride whether it is the hockey World Cup, the Olympics or Asian Games in any sport," he said.

Onkar's hockey dream is far from fulfilled, seeing India struggle to make a mark at the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

"In the 43 years after the victory at Kuala Lumpur, we have not qualified for a World Cup men's final. At the Asian Games 2018 in Indonesia, India faced Pakistan in a placings match and returned with the bronze medal," he lamented. For Onkar, two-time World Cupper (1975 KL and 1982 Mumbai) and later Indian Railways regular, the absence of cohesion is something which stands out in recent squads.

"Teams are low on understanding. The coordination between forwards and midfield, between midfield and defence, is missing," he said.

Watching India's struggle in Indonesia, he felt with better positioning, the team will be able to overpower opponents.

India great Ajit Pal Singh is among the VIPs listed for an event here on Friday to promote World Cup 2018, organised by the Odisha government. Four years ago in 2014, Hockey India had felicitated the 1975 champion squad in New Delhi at a public function, gave each member Rs. 1.75 lakh as a token of appreciation.

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