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HOCKEY

Deliver and more funds will flow in

AFTER 24 years, Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) president Datuk Seri Subahan Kamal expressed confidence in national men's coach A. Arul Selvaraj and his team's ability to qualify for the Olympics.

A spot in the Paris Olympics will also secure additional funds for MHC from their main sponsor, Tenaga Nasional Berhad.

Arul's side are in Group A of the Olympic Qualifier in Oman and begin their campaign against China tomorrow, followed by Britain and Pakistan.

The initial target is reaching the semi-finals, followed by aiming for a podium finish to secure a ticket to the Paris Olympics.

Group B consists of New Zealand, Chile, Canada and Germany.

"I am satisfied with the dedication and commitment that Arul has shown in preparing his players for the assignment. I believe these players will give their best to become Olympians in Oman," said Subahan.

"Many players will be playing in their last Olympic cycle, and they deserve a spot in Paris as they have given their best.

"I believe in Arul and his men, as they are well-prepared to face the challenges."

Malaysia last played in the Olympics at the 2000 Sydney Games.

"MHC needs at least RM16 million a year to prepare its national teams for assignments. Tenaga sponsors RM4 million annually plus a target.

"If we end a season in the top 10 of the world rankings, they will give us RM5 million, and RM6 million if we are in the top 8.

"That's why our players need to qualify for the Paris Olympics. MHC will have more funds to develop its teams," Subahan added. **Jugjet Singh**