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HOCKEY

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Powerful: Narinder Kaur (right) is one of the three former Indian players in Blue Warriors team. — M. AZHAR ARIF / The Star



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KUALA LUMPUR: Former Indian captain Ritu Rani enjoys playing hockey for Blue Warriors in the Malaysian Women's League as there is no competitive hockey league for women in India.

Ritu, who has represented India 244 times in the last 11 years, said the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHF) should be congratulated for introducing the women's league in 2015.

"In India a lot of money is invested for the men's Hockey India League (HIL), which is the richest league in the world. Top players from all over the world have played in the HIL.

"But sadly no women's league was ever introduced in India although there are many talented and potential players in my country," said the 26-year-old Haryana woman.

Ritu wants her Blue Warriors, who have qualified for their third consecutive final, to win the Vivian May Soars Cup.

They face league champions PKS Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten)-KPT today at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

Blue Warriors won the overall Cup in 2016 but last year they lost to Terengganu Ladies in the penalty shootout.

Blue Warriors and Uniten are the only unbeaten teams in the league and both teams secured 27 points in 12 matches.

But Uniten won the league title on better goal difference.

Besides Ritu, Blue Warriors also have the services of two other former Indian players Reena Ritu and Narinder Kaur.

Blue Warriors and Uniten met twice in the league matches and on both occasions the matches ended in (1-1) and (2-2) draws.

Ritu, who has scored 12 goals in the league, said their ultimate goal is to end Uniten's unbeaten run and win their second overall title.

"I have faith in my teammates and believe that we will rise to the occasion and get the better of them.

"I also want to return next year to continue playing for Blue Warriors," she said.