

Odisha Emerges Champion in Both Boys' and Girls' U-14 Categories at National School Rugby Championship



Bhubaneswar, April 10, 2026: Odisha has delivered an outstanding performance at the 69th National School Games Federation of India (SGFI) Rugby Championship 2025-26, emerging as the champion in both the Under-14 boys' and girls' categories, underlining the State's growing excellence in school sports. In both categories, Bihar secured the runner-up position, while Maharashtra finished third, reflecting a highly competitive tournament marked by remarkable talent and sportsmanship. The closing ceremony of the Under-14 events held at Kalinga Stadium, was

graced by the Hon'ble Minister of School and Mass Education, Shri Nityananda Gond, as the Chief Guest. In his address, he lauded the determination, discipline, and enthusiasm of the young athletes, stating that such platforms not only nurture sporting talent but also build character, resilience, and confidence among the youth. He extended his heartfelt blessings to all participants and urged them to continue striving for excellence in both sports and life. Dr. N. Thirumala Naik, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School and Mass Education Department, commended the players for their commitment

and sportsmanship. He underscored that participation in sports plays a vital role in the holistic development of children, promoting teamwork, discipline, and leadership skills, which are essential for shaping responsible citizens. Director of Secondary Education, Shri Birendra Korkara, formally welcomed the dignitaries and emphasised the importance of institutional support in fostering a vibrant sports culture at the school level. Shri Priyadarshi Mishra, President of the Odisha Rugby Football Association, spoke about the transformative role of school sports in personality development and expressed gratitude to all stakehold-

ers for their collective efforts in making the championship a grand success. The Tournament Observer, Shri Arvind Yadav, praised the high standards of competition and appreciated Odisha's efficient hosting. He noted that such initiatives are instrumental in strengthening rugby at the grassroots level and inspiring young athletes across the country. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Shri Jyoti Prasad Parida, Assistant Director (Physical Education), who acknowledged the contributions of all departments, officials, and participants in ensuring the successful conduct of the championship.

In a Landmark First, DCM Pravati Parida Launches Mission Shakti Self-Defence Training for 5,000 SHG Women

Bhubaneswar, 9/4/2026: Deputy Chief Minister Mrs. Pravati Parida, and Minister to WCD, Mission Shakti and Tourism, on Wednesday launched a Self-Defence Training Programme for 5,000 women Self Help Group (SHG) members in its pilot phase at Mission Shakti Bhawan, Bhubaneswar, in the presence of Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar, Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW). Addressing the gathering, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida said, "Empowering women is not limited to financial independence; it must also ensure their safety, dignity and confidence. This self-defence training programme will equip our SHG women with the strength and skills to move fearlessly, take independent decisions and actively participate in economic activities." Speaking on the occasion, NCW Chairperson Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar emphasised the importance of institutional support for women's safety and capacity building. She stated that ini-

tiatives like these play a crucial role in enabling women to become self-reliant and confident, while contributing meaningfully to society and the economy. The programme, implemented by the Department of Mission Shakti in partnership with NCW, aims to provide self-defence and personal safety training to SHG women. In the pilot phase, it will cover 5,000 members across five districts - Khordha, Cuttack, Puri, Keonjhar and Ganjam. The initiative seeks to enhance women's mobility, ensure safer participation in market linkages, and strengthen the foundation of women-led development in the state. The event was attended by Mrs. Shobhna Mohanty, Chairperson, Odisha State Commission for Women, Mrs. Mansi Nimbhal, (IAS) Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Mission Shakti Department, and Mr. Shailendra Kumar Jena, Additional Secretary, Mission Shakti Department, along with other senior officials and stakeholders.



Odia Pakhya: 18,000 'Barnabodha' and 'Shishulekha' Books Distributed on Shishu Katha Divas



Bhubaneswar 7th April, 2026 The Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department is celebrating Odia Pakhya across the state from 1st April to 14th April. The seventh day of the celebration was observed as "Shishu Katha Divas". On the occasion, students in primary schools across various districts were distributed copies of Barnabodha and Shishulekha books. In addition, copies of the Bhagabata were presented to eminent persons and senior citizens. Approximately 18,000 copies of Barnabodha and Shishulekha were distributed among students, while 2,000 copies of the Bhagabata were also handed over on the day. A programme marking the occasion was held at PM Shri Sadashiv Government High School in Umerkote, Nabarangpur district, where School and Mass

Education Minister Shri Nityananda Gond, attended as the chief guest. He described the distribution of 'Barnabodha' and 'Shishulekha' books among students as a welcome initiative to promote reading habits and strengthen the foundation of Odia language learning. "Shishu Katha Divas" was also observed in various private schools and NGOs across the state. The initiative aims to promote Odia language and literature while helping students become familiar with the state's rich culture, traditions and folklore. It may be noted that the eighth day of Odia Pakhya, to be observed on 8th April, will feature a blood donation drive to be organized by the Higher Education and the Health & Family Welfare Department.

Odia Paksha: Heritage Marathon Flags Off from Mukteswar Temple

Bhubaneswar, 5th April 2026: On the fifth day of the 'Odia Paksha' (Odia Fortnight) celebrations, the Department of Sports and Youth Services, Government of Odisha, organized a mega 'Heritage Marathon' (Heritage Run) in the capital's historic Ekamra Kshetra today. The run commenced at 5:30 AM from the premises of the Mukteswar Temple, a masterpiece of Odishan architecture. The route showcased the city's rich cultural landscape, passing through: Rameswar Temple, Vivekananda Marg, Utkal Kanika Galleria Mall, Lewis Road, BJB College, Rabi Talkies Square. The marathon concluded at the historic Rajarani Temple. More than a Thousand of participants, including athletes, youth, persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), and local citizens, joined senior officials in the event. The gathering took a collective pledge to protect and promote the rich heritage and monuments of Odisha. The top performers of the Heritage Marathon were honored for their achievement: Chandan Samal - First Place Siddharth Kumar Mishra - Second Place Vijay Agrawal - Third Place The winners were presented with medals and felicitated. Additionally, the Department of Sports and Youth Services awarded medals to all participants to acknowledge their enthusiasm and contribution to the cause. The Hon'ble MLA of Ekamra, Shri Babu Singh attending as the Chief Guest, emphasized that the marathon



is more than just a sporting event; it is a vital initiative to connect the younger generation with their roots. "Our ancient temples and monuments are symbols of Odia identity (Asmita), and their preservation is our moral responsibility," he stated. He further expressed his gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Majhi and Hon'ble Minister for Sports and Youth Services, Shri Suryabanshi Suraj, for spearheading this campaign to bridge the gap between the youth and the state's glorious history. The event featured a distinguished lineup of guests from the spheres of government, athletics, and entertainment. Leading the delegation from the Sports and Youth Services Department were Commissioner-cum-Secretary Shri Bhupendra Singh Poonia, alongside Additional Secretaries Shri Ashok Kumar Panda and Shri Bijay Kumar Swain. The gathering was further elevated by the presence of Olympian Ms. Anuradha Biswal and popular Odia film actress Ms. Sivani Sangita, blending administrative leadership with star power.

Union Minister Annapurna Devi Launches 8th 'Poshan Pakhya' 'Poshan Pakhya' to be observed from April 9 to April 23

Bhubaneswar, 9/4/ 2026: Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Annapurna Devi, formally inaugurated the 8th edition of Poshan Pakhya 2026, today at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. On this occasion, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Women and Child Development Department, Odisha, Dr. Mrinalini Darswal, was present and highlighted the state's significant initiatives towards building a 'Suposhit Odisha' (well-nourished Odisha). This year, Poshan Pakhya will be observed from April 9 to April 23, with a strong focus on early childhood development, particularly the critical brain development phase in the first six years of a child's life. The campaign



is centered around five key themes: ensuring optimal nutrition for mothers and children, early stimulation for

children aged 0-3 years, play-based learning for children aged 3-6 years, the role of parents in reducing screen

time (mobile phones and laptops), and strengthening Anganwadi centres. In this context, a state-level programme was also organized at the conference hall of W & CD Department, Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, where officials from various allied departments participated. Anganwadi workers, along with state and district-level officials from across Odisha, joined the programme through virtual mode. In line with the Government of India's guidelines, the State Government has committed to creating widespread awareness at the grassroots level over the next 15 days, aiming to transform holistic child development into a people's movement.

Odisha Emerges as a National Leader in AMRUT 2.0 Implementation, Strengthening Urban Water Infrastructure

Bhubaneswar, 07.04.2026: Odisha continues to set benchmarks in urban development with its exemplary performance under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0, emerging as a leading state in implementation and service delivery. Launched in October 2021 and extended up to March 2027, AMRUT 2.0 aims to ensure universal water supply, rejuvenation of water bodies and improved urban infrastructure across cities. In Odisha, the mission has witnessed significant progress across 89 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), with 345 projects approved at an estimated cost of Rs. 4030.18 crore, covering both water supply and waterbody rejuvenation initiatives. Demonstrating strong execution, 99 projects have already been completed, while the remaining are progressing steadily across various stages of implementation. The State has achieved near-total utilization of available funds, reflecting robust financial planning and efficient project management.



Under AMRUT 2.0, Odisha has made notable strides in strengthening urban water infrastructure. Seven Water Treatment Plants with a combined capacity of 43 MLD have been commissioned, benefitting 2.83 lakhs of citizens. In addition, 24x7 water supply systems have been operationalised in key urban centres, alongside the provision of over 2.7 lakh household water connections. Overall, more than

5 lakh urban residents have directly benefited from these interventions. Hon'ble Minister, Housing & Urban Development, Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said, "Securing the top rank under AMRUT 2.0 reflects Odisha's focused approach towards ensuring reliable water access and stronger urban infrastructure. Our priority is clear— every household should have access to safe water,

every city should have efficient systems and every ULB should be Empowered to deliver better services. We will continue to build cities that are resilient, inclusive and future-ready, aligned with the vision of a Viksit Odisha. " The State has also actively leveraged complementary initiatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Under "Pay Jal Survekshan" and "Jai Hi AMRUT" programmes, Odisha has secured incentives and is advancing projects for improved water management and reuse. Community-driven initiatives such as "AMRUT Mitra and Women for Tree" programmes have further strengthened environmental sustainability, with plantation drives and waterbody rejuvenation undertaken through women Self Help Groups. In a forward-looking approach, Odisha has initiated innovative financing mechanisms under the "Credit Enhancement Initiative", enabling smaller ULBs to undertake infrastructure projects and expand service delivery.

IAS Probationers Gain Comprehensive Exposure to Urban Governance and Development Initiatives

Bhubaneswar, April 8, 2026: As part of their administrative training and orientation, IAS Probationers engaged with the Housing & Urban Development Department through a structured programme on April 8, comprising high-level interactions and field visits. The probationers interacted with ACS Smt. Usha Padhee, along with DMA Shri Arindam Dakua and other senior officers, who provided an overview of key achievements, flagship schemes, and priority areas of intervention. The session offered valuable insights into institutional frameworks, policy implementation, and the functioning of various wings involved in urban service delivery. The interaction also enabled a meaningful exchange of ideas, helping the probationers understand administrative coordination, programme execution, and emerging challenges in urban development. Subsequently, the probationers visited Buddha Vihar to observe Affordable Housing projects under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), gaining first-hand expo-



sure to on-ground implementation and beneficiary-centric approaches. The programme further included visits to the Odisha Urban Academy, a Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP), and a Water Treatment Plant (WTP), where officials briefed them on urban sanitation and water supply systems. Detailed insights were shared on treatment processes, operational mechanisms, infrastructure management, and service delivery frameworks. Overall, the initiative aimed to enhance knowledge and practical understanding of IAS Probationers on urban governance, infrastructure systems, and public service delivery mechanisms, thereby preparing them for effective administrative responsibilities.

Review Meeting Chaired by Principal Secretary on Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation Operations

Bhubaneswar, April 9, 2026: A high-level review meeting was convened at the Department of Water Resources conference hall to evaluate the performance of the Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation chaired by Smt. Shubha Sarma, Principal Secretary of the Department of Water Resources. Discussion was focused on the progress of Lift Irrigation infrastructures and future strategic blueprints for the state. The meeting was attended by OLIC Managing Director Shri Bichitra Kumar Samal, Additional Secretary to Govt. Ms. Lina Kumari Xess, and district level OLIC officials who provided critical field-level updates and project data. The discussion centred on ensuring an

adequate irrigation for farmland during both the Rabi and Kharif seasons by keeping lift irrigation projects fully operational. A comprehensive plan was outlined for the restoration of defunct Community Lift Irrigation Projects (CLIP), as well as Deep Bore Wells both conventional & solar-powered and shallow tubewells across various districts. To ensure the timely completion of projects, emphasis was placed on preparing monthly expenditure plans for the effective utilization of the 2026-27 fiscal budget. Furthermore, the department decided to develop a robust online database to facilitate real-time monitoring and management of all irrigation projects.



RSCL Executive Committee Charts Next Phase: Focus on Sustainability, Revenue Generation, and Project Completion.

Bhubaneswar, April 2026: The Executive Committee meeting of Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL), chaired by Additional Chief Secretary Smt. Usha Padhee, held in Kharabela Bhawan, deliberated on key strategic issues concerning the city's transition from project implementation to long-term sustainability and asset management. The agenda for discussion and approval was presented by Deenah Dastangeer, CEO RSCL. A major highlight of the meeting was the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), a flagship project with an investment of ₹106 crore. The ICCC has already operationalized 594 surveillance cameras across 109 locations and is now progressing towards automated e-Challan integration in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), aimed at strength-



ening traffic enforcement and urban governance. Emphasizing financial sustainability, Smt. Padhee highlighted the importance of value-based land utilization and innovative revenue generation. The Committee reviewed the monetization of completed smart city assets, which are currently generating an annual revenue of ₹4.13 crore, contributing

towards establishment and operational expenses. Addressing delays in project execution, the Committee decided to descope the balance work of the Auditorium and Convention Hall project—currently at 45% progress. The remaining work will be executed at the risk and cost of the agency to ensure accountability and timely completion. To ensure continuity of on-going and upcoming projects, including the Udit Nagar Market Complex and Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) facilities, the Committee proposed extending the tenure of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), along with the engagement of key officials and consultants. The meeting underscored RSCL's commitment to advancing a sustainable, efficient, and citizen-centric urban ecosystem for Rourkela, with a clear focus on long-term value creation.

Odisha's EMRS Students Make Mark in JEE Main 2026 8 Selected for Advanced Coaching



Bhubaneswar, 9 April 2026: In a significant boost to tribal education in Odisha, eleven students from Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) have successfully qualified in JEE Main 2026 (Phase-I), showcasing remarkable academic excellence. Leading the achievers is Avish Alam from EMRS Karanjia, who secured an impressive 97.50 percentile. Other successful candidates include Rinkirani Naik, Sunil Kumar Naik, and Sunia Hembram from EMRS Ranki; Samu Paleya from EMRS Karanjia; Estiphan Hembram, Pujarani Kisan, Deepa Kisan, Rabin Oram, and Salkhu Hembram from EMRS Lahunipara; and Thakur Murmu from EMRS Bhangriposi. Among the schools, EMRS Lahunipara re-

corded the highest number of qualifiers, with five students clearing the prestigious national-level engineering entrance examination. To further nurture their potential, eight of these high-performing students have been selected for specialized JEE Advanced coaching under the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) in New Delhi. The selected group includes three students each from EMRS Karanjia and EMRS Lahunipara, one from EMRS Ranki, and one from EMRS Bhangriposi. The students embarked on their journey to the national capital I, accompanied by escort teacher Priyanka Kumari. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to empowering tribal students by providing them with access to quality education and competitive opportunities in premier engineering institutions across the country. Pranati Patro, Joint Director of the Odisha Model Tribal Education Society, expressed her gratitude to the Commissioner of NESTS, Sri Ajeet Kumar Srivastav, for facilitating this initiative and supporting the aspirations of tribal students. The achievement marks a proud moment for Odisha's tribal education system and highlights the growing success of EMRS institutions in shaping future engineers and leaders.

U-14 Rugby Events Begin at 69th SGFI Championship in Bhubaneswar



Bhubaneswar, April 9, 2026: The Under-14 boys' and girls' competitions of the 69th National School Games Federation of India (SGFI) Rugby Championship 2025-26 commenced today at Kalinga Stadium, marking the continuation of the prestigious national-level school tournament. More than 300 students from 14 states, comprising both boys' and girls' teams, are participating in the Under-14 category, bringing vibrant energy and competitive spirit to the event. The Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School and Mass Education Department, Dr. N. Thirumala Naik, was present at the venue to welcome the young participants. He interacted with the players, encouraging them to perform to the best of their abilities and uphold the true spirit of sportsmanship. During his interaction, Dr. Naik appreciated the enthusiasm and dedication of the budding athletes and emphasized the importance of such championships in identifying and nurturing future talent at the grassroots level. Director of Secondary Education Shri Birendra Korkora and Assistant Director (P.E.T) Shri Jyoti Prasad Parida were also present on the occasion. They extended their best wishes to the participants and appreciated the smooth organization of the event. The matches witnessed enthusiastic participation and promising performances, reflecting the growing popularity of rugby among school students across the country.

