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Odisha to host Athletics Continental Tour in August



Bhubaneswar (DMC): Odisha is all set to host the World Athletics Continental Tour (Bronze Level) for the first time at Kalinga Stadium here on August 10, 2025.

Informing this during a press conference held on Friday, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj shared details of this prestigious international athletics competition.

The event will witness the participation of over 150 athletes representing more than 10 countries, including India, Turkmenistan, Bhutan, Philippines, South Korea, Malaysia, Iraq, Vietnam, Republic of Cameroon, Sri Lanka, Iran and the Maldives. A total of 20 events will be held during the tournament.

"This is a proud moment for Odisha," said the Sports Minister. "Hosting the World Athletics Continental Tour for the first time in our state reflects our commitment to sporting excellence. We are taking all necessary steps to ensure the event's smooth and successful conduct—from world-class infrastructure to hospitality."

He further added that Odisha has already created a distinct identity in hosting international sporting events. "Our athletes have brought laurels to the state by excelling in various global competitions. I am

confident they will deliver outstanding performances in this tournament as well," he said.

Sandeep Mehta, Secretary General of the Athletics Federation of India, said, "We are proud to host the World Athletics Continental Tour (Bronze Level) in India. With world-class athletes competing, this promises to be a spectacular event and Odisha provides the perfect setting for its successful conduct."

The Tour is an annual series of independent track and field athletic competitions, recognised by World Athletics (formerly known as the IAAF). The Tour forms the second tier of international one-day meetings after the Diamond League. First held in 2020, it replaced the IAAF World Challenge series. Initially divided into three levels – Gold, Silver and Bronze – the Tour was expanded in 2022 with the fourth tier: Challenger.

Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma, Principal Secretary, Sports and Youth Services Department, Government of Odisha, Deepankar Mahapatra, Director, Sports and Youth Services Department, and B.E. Stanley Jones, Treasurer, Athletics Federation of India were present in the press conference.

PM to distribute over 51K appointment letters

New Delhi (HS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly appointed youth in various government departments and organisations on July 12 via video conferencing. He will also address the appointees on the occasion.

RozgarMela is a step towards fulfilment of Prime Minister's commitment to accord highest priority to employment generation. The RozgarMela will play a significant role in providing meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in nation building.



More than 10 lakh recruitment letters have been issued so far through the RozgarMelas across the country.

The 16th RozgarMela will be held at 47 locations across the country. The recruitments are taking place across Central Government Ministries and Departments.

The new recruits, selected from across the country, will be joining the Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Posts, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Labour & Employment among other departments and ministries.

RS 802 CR PROJECT TO DECONGEST RAIL CORRIDOR IN STATE SOON

Bhubaneswar (DMC): Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw has sanctioned the Cuttack–Nergundi 4th Line (15.99 km) along with a rail flyover at Nergundi, at an estimated cost of Rs 802.9 crore.

The East Coast Railway (ECoR), in a release on Friday, said that this project will significantly enhance the capacity and efficiency of train operations in Howrah–Chennai mainline section and Cuttack–Paradip section.

"The Cuttack–Nergundi section is part of the Howrah–Chennai High-Density Network (HDN). This corridor currently faces heavy congestion due to traffic from Paradip Port intersecting

the mainline at Cuttack. With no direct junction arrangements at Cuttack for Talcher-bound trains, significant delays often occur due to surface-level crossings. The fourth line and rail flyover are designed to decongest this corridor by separating port-bound traffic from the mainline routes, particularly between Cuttack and Dhenkanal. This will help reduce detention of passenger and Mail/Express trains in the mainline section operating to and from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar," it said.

The ECoR further stated that Mail/Express trains are sometimes detained because of operational restrictions due to the

crossing at Nergundi. "The sanctioned project will help ease these constraints, improve punctuality, and facilitate smoother movement of more coaching trains. It will also aid in the segregation of coaching and freight traffic in the section. Trains bypassing the mainline route will no longer be delayed, enhancing operational efficiency," it said.

Two new river bridges across the Mahanadi and Birupa rivers will also be constructed as part of the project. The line, including the flyover, will be equipped with Kavach safety features and a 2x25 kV electrified system, enabling a maximum permissible speed of 130 kmph, it added.



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi pays floral tribute to Late Daulat Vaishnaw, father of Union Minister Aswini Vaishnaw at Chinmoy Mission on Lodhi Road in New Delhi on Friday.

Students paraded in underwear during Goa University festival

Panaji (HS): The Goa State Human Rights Commission has issued notice to the vice-chancellor of Goa University over an alleged incident in which male students were paraded in their underwear

during a cultural festival at the institution earlier this year, an official said on Friday.

The commission on Thursday issued a notice to Vice-Chancellor Harilal B Menon, asking him to



appear before it and submit a reply by July 23. A senior official from the University said the incident occurred during an inter-departmental festival called "Frolic" held in February.

"During a competition called 'Third Degree', the jury asked the participants to strip to their underwear," he said. The rights panel took suo motu cognisance of a report about the incident that appeared in a newspaper this week. The commission, in its notice, stated that it was taking suo motu cognisance of the matter, which prima facie makes out violations of the human rights of the students.

Condemning the incident, National Students Union of India (NSUI) leader Naushad Chaud-

hury said that female students were part of the crowd that attended the festival.

"Students were not allowed to leave. It was an embarrassing situation for both male and female students present there," he said.

The NSUI has planned protests against the event. The opposition Goa Forward Party (GFP) was the first to bring the incident to the fore in the media. GFP chief Vijai Sardesai said that his party had questioned the authorities about the incident.

WEAPON SYSTEM

India successfully tests Astra missile with indigenous RF seeker

Bhubaneswar (DMC): The DRDO & IAF on Friday successfully test-fired beyond visual range air-to-air missile Astra with indigenous radio frequency (RF) seeker from Sukhoi-30 MK-I off Odisha coast.

According to the Ministry of Defence, two missiles were fired against high-speed unmanned aerial targets at different ranges, target aspects and launch platform conditions. Both tests achieved pinpoint accuracy, destroying the targets mid-air. "The flawless performance of the Astra weapon system was validated through flight data captured by range tracking instruments deployed at the Integrated Test Range in



Chandipur," it said.

These successful flight tests have re-established the accuracy

and reliable performance of Astra weapon system with indigenous seeker, the Ministry added.

Astra, with a strike range of over 100 km, gives pilots the ability to neutralise threats long

before they come into visual contact. In addition to various laboratories of DRDO, more than 50 public and private industries including Hindustan Aeronautics Limited have contributed towards development of the weapon system.

Notably, Odisha has imposed a two-day ban on marine fishing on July 17 and 18 in view of DRDO's scheduled missile tests from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasore district and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Bhadrak district. This temporary restriction applies to the coastal districts – Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, and Jagatsinghpur.

22 Maoists lay down arms in Narayanpur

Raipur (HS): As many as 22 Maoists, including a divisional committee member, carrying a bounty of Rs 8 lakh on his head, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Friday.

According to the police, the surrendered Naxalites were active in the Abhujmadh area and carried a collective rewards of Rs 37.5 lakh. They belonged to the Kutul, Nelnar and Indravati area committees under the Maad division of the banned CPI (Maoist).

The 22 turned themselves in before senior police, Border Security Force (BSF) and Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officials.

The surrendered rebels told officials that they were disenchanted with the "hollow" Maoist ideology and growing internal differences within the banned outfit, Narayanpur Superintendent of Police Robinson Guria said.

"They were also influenced by the development work being carried out in the Maad area in

the district, including rapid construction of roads, and wanted to lead a normal life," he said.

Among those who laid down arms are MankuKunjam (33), a divisional committee member, with a reward of Rs 8 lakh and three area committee members, identified as HidmeKunjam (28), PunnaLal alias Boti (26) and SaniramKorram (25) with bounties of Rs 5 lakh each, the police said.

Eleven others had a bounty of Rs 1 lakh each, while the remaining seven carried a reward of Rs 50,000 each, an official said.

Narayanpur police, its District Reserve Guard, ITBP and BSF have played a key role in their surrender. The development has caused a huge blow to the top Maoist cadres. The dream of Naxal-free Maad is now taking shape, Guria said.

All the surrendered Naxalites were provided assistance of Rs 50,000 each and would be rehabilitated as per the government's policy, he added.