



Sports and Youth Services, Department  
Government of Odisha

## **Kalinga Hockey Stadium echoes with Bande Utkala Janani as sportspersons and eminent cine artists unite to honour Covid 19 warriors**

**Bhubaneswar, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2020:** The entire Kalinga Hockey Stadium echoed with ‘**Bande Utkala Janani**’ today, as prominent sportspersons of Odisha and renowned artists from the Odia film industry united in solidarity at the iconic stadium and passionately sang the anthem to honour Covid -19 warriors.

Sports legends including Padmashree Dr. Dilip Ku Tirkey, Anuradha Biswal, Shradhanjali Samantray Debasis Mohanty, Dutee Chand, Amiya Mallick, Pramod Bhagat, Padmini Rout, Valena Valentina, along with renowned singers Mahaprasad Kar and Nazia Alam, and cine stars Archita Sahoo and Bhumika Dash amongst others came together in this congregation organized by Department of Sports and Youth services.

The event was to honour Hon’ble Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik’s appeal to Odia community across the world to acknowledge the sacrifices of the Covid -19 warriors. Hon’ble Minister for Sports and Youth Services, Shri Tusharkanti Behera, Secretary Sports, Shri Vishal K Dev, Director Sports, Shri R Vineel Krishna, officials from the Sports Department, and young athletes from the State sports fraternity participated in this to instill and inspire a sense of pride and commitment to the cause.

**The gathering followed appropriate social distancing and related protocols.**

Kalinga Hockey Stadium that had its packed galleries roar and cheer for the players of the FIH Pro League on the Hockey turf earlier this year, today, echoed in unison for our front line warriors who have relentlessly fought over the last few months risking their lives to keep the public safe from the corona pandemic. Today, the mortality rate in Odisha is the least in the country and in the world and Odia society owes this to the Covid -19 warriors both from the private and government sectors.

Speaking on this significant occasion, **Hon’ble Sports Minister, Shri Tusharkanti Behera**, said, “Our Stadium that has always celebrated the spirit of sports and sportspersons, today, stood in solidarity with our front line warriors who have ensured that our families are safe while they battle the virus that

has adversely affected the citizens worldwide. Here in Odisha too, situations could have snowballed if not for our corona warriors, across sectors. My heart felt Thank you to each one of them “

Expressing his deepest gratitude, Hockey legend, **Padmashree Dr Dilip Kumar Tirkey** said, “I urge, everyone gathered here and those watching us from their home, to act responsibly, follow guidelines like wearing mask and social distancing to stay safe and allowing our front line workers to stay safe. This would be our biggest contribution to them.”

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