



India's first sports & innovation festival,  
January 18-19, 2020  
Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

### PRESS RELEASE

**SPORT IT 2020 will enhance outcome of Odisha's efforts to bring innovation to sports: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik**

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19, 2020:**

**SPORT IT 2020**, India's first sports and innovation festival organised by Xavier Emlyon Business School (XEBS) and Sports and Youth Services Department, Government of Odisha, came to a grand end with Chief Minister of Odisha Honourable Naveen Patnaik exhorting startups and entrepreneurs to invest in sports sector of the State.

**Addressing the Valedictory Ceremony at Kalinga Stadium, Shri Naveen Patnaik said:** "I appreciate the unique venture of the Xavier Emlyon Business School, Bhubaneswar and the Sports & Youth Services Department in hosting SPORT-IT 2020, India's first ever sports and innovation festival here in Bhubaneswar. With SPORT IT 2020, we want to create an inclusive platform that would not only celebrate sports innovation and entrepreneurship; but also involve sportspersons, sports startups, high performance centres and students in a significant way. It will encourage the participants from the Sports fraternity to meet, exchange knowledge, and learn from one another."

Welcoming sports entrepreneurs, investors and students from across India and foreign nations to Bhubaneswar, he said, it was a matter of happiness that Odisha has been conferred with Sports-Star Ace Award for the consecutive second year as the Best State for Sports Promotion in the entire country. This reflects the commitment of Odisha Government for development of sport. “I am sure the festival will enhance the outcome of our efforts to bring innovation to sports and promote a sporting culture among the youth,” the Chief Minister said.

The Odisha Government has also invited the startup entrepreneurs who participated in the event for an interaction for future association.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister handed over the Best Startup Award to Funngage, a curated and integrated sports platform from Delhi, which received a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh as announced by emlyon business school, France. Similarly, he also felicitated the team who won the Hackathon contest that included tennis player Chinmay Pradhan, para athlete Dileshwar Rao, Program Manager, Naval Tata Hockey Academy Debashis Nayak, basketball coach Rajesh Singh and Professor Sports Sovan Patnaik. They would be flying to Lyon in September to attend the biggest sports innovation festival in Europe, Sports Unlimitech.

MSME and Industries Minister Shri Dibya Shankar Mishra, Sports and Youth Services Minister Shri Tushar Kanti Behera felicitated all 12 startup entrepreneurs who participated in the sports and innovation festival.

While the Industries Minister appreciated the unique concept of sports, innovation and entrepreneurship, the Sports Minister said Government’s endeavours will take sports development to new heights in Odisha.

The valedictory function was also attended by Secretary, Sports and Youth Services Department Shri Vishal Kumar Dev, Director, Sports Shri R Vineel Krishna, Vice Chancellor of Xavier Univesity Fr. Tony Uvari, SJ, Founder of SAI International School Shri Bijay Sahoo and MD of Gupta Power Shri Mahendra Gupta.

Chairman of XEBS Ashley Fernandes, who offered the vote of thanks, announced that they were planning an Indo-French Sports Tech Incubator soon. “This is not the end, it’s the beginning of a transformation. At XEBS, we share common values. With the Government of Odisha, together we want to build an efficient and inclusive SportTech. SPORT IT 2020 is the foundation of this Indo-French sport hub. Cross fertilization,

between education, entrepreneurship, innovation and inclusion is now a reality...only in Odisha!," he said.

Over 1600 students including differently-abled and intellectually-challenged children also took part in the festival over two days and enjoyed the sports zones while also interacting with the entrepreneurs making SPORT IT 2020 a unique inclusive platform.

### **Day 1:**

SPORT IT 2020 was kicked off in grand style by Sports and Youth Services Minister Shri Tusharkanti Behera at Kalinga Stadium on Saturday.

Shri Behera, in presence of Hockey legend and Chairman of Hockey Promotion Council Dilip Tirkey, Hockey India CEO Elena Norman and XEBS Chairman Ashley Fernandes, announced the festival open with the sound of a whistle.

More than 1,200 students from various schools and colleges including 25 differently-abled children were present during the inauguration of the festival which aims to create an inclusive platform that would not only celebrate sports innovation and entrepreneurship but also involve sportspersons, sports startups, high performance centres as well as students in a significant way.

Held under the auspices of XEBS-Ahluwalia Centre of Excellence for Sports Management, a unique collaboration between Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, emlyon business school, France, Department of Sports and Youth Services, Government of Odisha and KJS Ahluwalia Group, SPORT IT 2020 is a unique Indo-French collaboration and first of its kind in the country.

Addressing the audience, Minister Shri Behera said: "Odisha Government is working in the direction of taking sports to a different level altogether and encourage sports entrepreneurship to increase employment. The Government wants sports enthusiasts and students to explore the possibility of entrepreneurship and startups in the field of sports. Sports is not limited to physical fitness and entertainment anymore. It has gained immense popularity as business now. The festival aims at exploring this possibility in Odisha."

In his address, Shri Tirkey said, SPORT IT 2020 is completely different from other sports events organised in the State, especially in Bhubaneswar so far. He urged investors to invest in State's sports sector and join Odisha Government's efforts to make Bhubaneswar the sports capital of the country.

Hockey India CEO Elena Norman hailed Sports and Youth Services Department and XEBS for creating such a platform for youngsters and popularise sports. XEBS Chairman Ashley Fernandes encouraged students to take part in the sporting activities in large numbers and enjoy the experience.

As many as 12 start-ups in the fields of sports technology, nutrition, flow monitoring, site management, virtual reality and e-games are participating in the festival. Startups like Fast and Up, PlayO, Str8bat, Sportify Parenting, SeeHow, Shapecrunch, Funngae, KarKhana Makerspace, SportsScience India, NexSB and Akela Adventure engaged visitors to the festival.

Entrepreneurs and investors also engaged in sharing ideas at the Start-up Village in a roundtable discussion on sports and education, wellness, innovation and inclusion.

A major attraction at the event was the Sports Marathon at the festival venue where high performance centres and sports associations of Odisha including Odisha FC, Naval Tata Hockey Academy, Gurukul Tennis, Odisha Table Tennis association, Utkal Karate School, Big Orange Bash, Decathlon and a group of para athletes had set up sports zones.

Hundreds of students took part in football, hockey, shooting, table tennis, tennis, basketball and karate. Players from Odisha FC also joined for an interaction and fun time with the students. Some of the students also went for a guided tour of the Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance Centre.

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Besides this, students including a group from France participated in the 'Sports Hackathon' organised in association with Start-up Odisha and Sports Unlimitech, the biggest sports and innovation festival in Europe, at XIMB.

Sports Unlimitech will sponsor the winning team of the hackathon to Lyon in September for the second edition of their festival while Start-Up Odisha has offered pre-incubation and mentoring support.

The event was partnered by Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry and French Clubs like Olympique Lyonnais, Lou Rugby, LDLC ASVEL Féminin, LDLC Asvel, TONY PARKER ADEQUAT ACADEMY and CSR partners such as Sport dans la ville and Play and Learn. Gupta Power was the principal sponsor of the event

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