

Indian football's finest assemble in Odisha as Kalinga Super Cup kicks off in style

~ Odisha Sports Minister graced the opening day ~

~ East Bengal edged past Hyderabad 3-2 in the opener; Mohun Bagan Super Giant defeated Sreenidi Deccan FC 2-1 in the second match ~

Bhubaneswar, 09 January 2024: The much awaited Kalinga Super Cup, which features India's finest football clubs kicked off at the Kalinga Stadium today and will continue till 28 January. Sports & Youth Services Minister, Odisha, Shri Tusharkanti Behera, graced the Group A match between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Sreenidi Deccan FC on the opening day of the Kalinga Super Cup 2024 and wished the two teams ahead of the match. He was joined by Shri Ashirbad Behera, Secretary, Football Association of Odisha.

Later, Shri Jayanarayan Mishra, Hon'ble MLA and Leader of Opposition, Odisha Legislative Assembly handed out Player of the match award to Mohun Bagan's Asish Rai.

The marquee tournament commenced with a Group A fixture between East Bengal FC and Hyderabad FC, with former registering a thrilling 3-2 win held at Pitch 1 earlier today.

The Sports Minister also wished the participating teams the best. He said, "We are delighted to be hosting the Kalinga Super Cup 2024 in Bhubaneswar. These are really exciting times for us and hosting back-to-back marquee football events strengthens our vision for the sport. I extend my warmest welcome to all the participating clubs and their passionate fans who would be travelling from across the country."

The popularity of football is on the rise and the Sports & Youth Services Department in association with AIFF & FAO has undertaken several initiatives and has been at the forefront of football development in the state, including hosting top national and international football events, creating world class infrastructure and running coaching & training programs. Emphasis is also on giving an early exposure to young kids with the Pay & Play schemes run by the department.

The Odisha Football Academy, Capital Football Arena and the Bhubaneswar Football Academy in the capital city, have FIFA standard pitches and are the training grounds for all the participating teams.

Noteworthy to mention, that the home side Odisha FC are the defending champions of the tournament and will be vying for the coveted trophy.

The top-ranked team from each group will advance to the semi-finals. The champion of the final will secure a spot in the 2024-25 AFC Champions League 2.