

## Kalinga Super Cup 2024 Set to Thrill Football Fans in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar 7 January 2024:** –

In yet another significant development for sports in Odisha, the state is all set to host the 2024 edition of the Super Cup, now branded as the Kalinga Super Cup with Odisha supporting this tournament. The marquee tournament will commence on 9 January with the final scheduled to be held on January 28, with matches taking place at the Kalinga Sports Complex in Bhubaneswar. The tournament will see 16 teams (12 from the Indian Super League and four from the I-League) divided into four groups of four teams each.

Speaking ahead of the tournament, Secretary, Sports & Youth Services Department, Shri Vineel Krishna said, “We are looking forward to hosting the finest football clubs from all over the country. Football is growing rapidly in Odisha and hosting back-to-back football events strengthens our ecosystem. Today, we have the best of sports infrastructure and facilities including five FIFA standard pitches where the teams will be able to train without any clash in schedule. All arrangements are being made in association with All India Football Federation and Football Association of Odisha to ensure the clubs and the fans have the best of experience in Odisha. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to all the participating clubs.”

The Kalinga Super Cup will follow a similar structure to the previous editions, where the highest-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. Notably, Odisha FC holds the title as the defending champions, having triumphed over Bengaluru FC in the 2023 final held in Kozhikode.

Noteworthy to mention, Odisha has a deep connection with football. It used to host the Kalinga Cup, one of India's oldest all-India football tournaments, which was held at the historic Barbati Stadium in Odisha. It was instituted by Odisha's legendary statesman and former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik in 1962. This annual event was organised by Football Association of Odisha and the Sports & Youth Services Department, Govt of Odisha, and saw participation from some of the leading sports clubs of the country and was a significant football event in the country. It not only offered exposure but also played a crucial role in producing talented footballers from the state.

The competition follows a series of initiatives deployed by the government of Odisha towards the promotion and development of football. Recently, Hon Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the AIFF-FIFA Talent Academy in Bhubaneswar in the presence of Arsene Wenger, chief of global football development at FIFA.

Furthermore, Odisha also hosted the India vs. Qatar match in the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup 2027 joint qualifier. Additionally, Bhubaneswar serves as the home base for the India U16 and U19 teams, frequently hosting their training camps. Odisha has also forged a partnership with ISL club, Odisha FC to strengthen grassroots efforts, providing the club with the prestigious Kalinga Stadium as their home ground.