

Vedanta Aluminium's Lanjigarh Sports Initiative empowers rural athletes to qualify for Odisha State Athletics Meet

PBD BUREAU

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VEDANTA Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has reached a new milestone through its Vedanta Lanjigarh Sports Initiative, with two athletes qualifying for the 71st Odisha State Athletics Meet, set to take place in Cuttack. This achievement follows their exceptional performance at the District Athletics Meet 2025, organized by the District Athletic Association, Kalahandi. The company continues to advance grassroots sports development in rural Odisha with its focused community development programs.

The district-level championship saw participation from over 400 athletes across Kalahandi district. Representing the Vedanta Lanjigarh Sports Initiative, 26 ath-

letes competed and secured 22 medals, highlighting the success of the company's structured, holistic approach to sports development. The athletes qualifying for the State Championship include Hemasagar Patra, who will compete in the Under-23 category in the 400 metres and 1500 metres events, and Bhushan Manjhi, also in the Under-23 category, who will participate in the 100 metres and 200 metres events.

Commenting on the achievement, Mr. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, CEO of Vedanta Alumina Business, said, "Sports has the power to build resilience, instil discipline and create opportunities for social transformation. The success of these young athletes reflects the immense sporting talent that exists in rural India and the effectiveness of our structured training ecosystem. At Vedanta



Aluminium, we remain committed to enabling youth to aspire higher and compete at state, national and international platforms."

Through the initiative, athletes receive expert coaching, nutritional support, sports kits, and uniforms, with technical guidance from former Olympian Rahul Banerjee. Currently, Vedanta Lanjigarh is training over 100 rural youth in athletics and archery, pro-

viding them with pathways to excel.

Highlighting the initiative's significance, Jagmohan Pattnaik, Vice President of the Odisha Cricket Association and General Secretary of the Kalahandi Athletic Association, said, "Kalahandi district holds immense potential in sports, particularly athletics. The platform created by Vedanta Lanjigarh is a significant step in the

right direction. Such structured support will enable rural youth to achieve excellence and bring laurels to the district and the state."

Sharing insights from the ground, Samir Manda, Athletic Coach of the Vedanta Lanjigarh Sports Initiative, said, "These results reflect the dedication of the athletes and the impact of consistent, scientific training. With access to proper coaching and exposure, rural athletes can compete with the best. This achievement is only the beginning, and we are confident many more will emerge at state and national levels."

Through its community-led sports initiatives, Vedanta Lanjigarh continues to nurture talent and promote inclusive development, reinforcing its commitment to empowering communities and building confident futures through sports.