Odisha T20 League – CM Trophy 2026 Begins with Grand Opening at Barabati Stadium; OCL Iron and Steels Limited's Keonjhar Miners Make League Debut

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Kataka, Sep 23: The **Odisha T20 League – CM Trophy 2026** was officially inaugurated on Sunday, September 20, 2026, at the historic **Barabati Stadium in Kataka**, marking the beginning of the state's T20 cricket tournament. The grand opening ceremony brought together the state's cricketing fraternity, sporting personalities, dignitaries, franchise owners, players and cricket enthusiasts.



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, Chief Minister of Odisha, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and officially declared the tournament open. The ceremony also witnessed the unveiling of the tournament trophy, setting the stage for the competition featuring six teams.

The inauguration was attended by Shri Suryabanshi Suraj, Minister, Sports & Youth Services Department, Shri Bhartuhari Mahatab, MP, Kataka and other elected representatives and senior members of the Odisha Cricket Association . The event also saw the presence of OCA office bearers and representatives from affiliated units.

Adding to the cricketing significance of the occasion, former India cricketers and league brand ambassadors Suresh Raina and Debashish Mohanty were present at the ceremony and were felicitated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Franchise owners and team representatives were also felicitated during the inauguration. Shri Manish Khemmka, Franchise Owner of Keonjhar Miners, was felicitated by the Odisha Cricket Association and was present at the ceremony alongside the team.

The ceremony also featured the unveiling of the new jerseys of all six participating teams, giving fans their first look at the teams as they embarked on their respective campaigns. The traditional ringing of the bell formally marked the commencement of the tournament.

Speaking on the occasion, **Manish Khemmka,** Chairman & Managing Director, OCL Iron & Steels Limited, said,

"The opening of the Odisha T20 League marks an exciting beginning for cricket in the state, and we are proud to see the Keonjhar Miners take the field as representatives of the region. For OCL, this association goes beyond participating in a tournament.It is about building a strong sporting identity for Keonjhar, supporting emerging talent and creating a team that the people of the region can connect with and take pride in. We look forward to building this association over the long term and contributing to the growth of cricket at the grassroots level across Odisha."

The celebrations featured a special dance performance by actress Mouni Roy, followed by a fireworks display, before the opening match between Kataka Panthers and Sambalpur Warriors. Keonjhar Miners, backed by OCL Iron & Steels Limited, made their tournament debut on September 21 against Bhubaneswar Tigers in Match 2. OCL's association with the team reflects its focus on building a strong sporting identity for Keonjhar, supporting emerging cricketing talent and fostering grassroots sports development and community engagement. The tournament will continue through September 29, bringing six teams together on Odisha's T20 cricketing stage.