

India Emerging as a Sports Tourism Epicentre – Raksha Khadse

Luke Mudgway Clinches Pune Grand Tour 2026, Li-Ning Star Wins Team Title

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India is steadily emerging as a global hub for sports tourism by hosting international-level competitions and attracting world-class athletes, said Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Smt. Raksha Khadse, on Thursday. She described this progress as a matter of pride for the nation.





Union Minister of State for Sports & Youth Welfare Smt. Raksha Khadse, along with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, inaugurated the final phase of the **Pune Grand Tour 2026** at the Shri Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Mhalunge-Balewadi, by flagging off the event.



MP Medha Kulkarni, UCI Director General Amina Lanaya, Asian Cycling Federation President Dato Amarjit Singh Gill, Cycling Federation of India General Secretary Maninder Pal Singh, actor Aamir Khan, Pune Police Commissioner Vinaykumar Choubey, and several other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Smt. Khadse said she was pleased to see the Maharashtra Government and Pune district administration successfully organizing the Pune Grand Tour at international standards. She added that in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of '**Developed India-2047**', the sports sector will play a vital role in

the nation's growth. India, she said, is making continuous progress in sports through the effective use of "soft power," supported by robust infrastructure created with the cooperation of government agencies and sponsors.



Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said the competition received an overwhelming response from both urban and rural areas. Youth, women, farmers, students, and sportspersons actively participated in the event. He further noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is making concerted efforts to position India as a future host of the Olympic Games, and assured that the state government will continue organizing international-level sporting events.

The final phase of the **Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026** concluded at Balgandharva Rangamandir, Pune. The prize distribution ceremony was conducted by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Smt. Raksha Khadse.



On this occasion, Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil, MP Medha Kulkarni, UCI Director General Amina Lanaya, UCI Vice President and Asian Cycling Federation President Dato Amarjeet Singh Gill, CFI General Secretary Maninder Pal Singh, actor Aamir Khan, Departmental Commissioner Dr. Chandrakant Pulkundwar, District Magistrate Jitendra Dudi, Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar, Pimpri-Chinchwad Police Commissioner Vinay Kumar Choubey, Pune Municipal Corporation Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner Shravan Hardikar, along with several other dignitaries, were present.

Luke Mudgway of Li-Ning Star Wins Overall Title

Li-Ning Star team member **Luke Mudgway** won the championship of the Pune Grand Tour 2026, while his team **Li-Ning Star** also secured the championship in the team category.

After receiving the **Open Category Championship**, Luke reflected on his victory, emphasizing teamwork over individual effort:

"Winning the overall title was truly a collective achievement," he said. "My team has been incredible, supporting me from start to finish. As you saw in the last two days, other teams also had strong riders, but we managed to secure the victory with contributions from three different teammates. This win required immense effort, dedication, and constant courage from everyone. This victory is for my team."

Smt. Khadse congratulated all the champions and stated that India has become a favourable destination for sports events, with a growing culture and enthusiasm for sports across the country.

Other Winners

- **Polka Dot Jersey (King of the Mountains):** Clement Alleno (Burgos Burpellet BH Team)
- **Orange Jersey (Best Asian Cyclist):** Jambaljamts Sainbayar (Burgos Burpellet BH Team)
- **White Jersey (Best Young Cyclist):** Tijssen Vigo (Netherlands)
- **Blue Jersey (Best Indian Cyclist):** Harshveer Singh Sekhon
- **Best Three Indian Cyclists:** Harshveer Singh Sekhon, Manav Sarda, Dinesh Kumar

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