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India has depth to field several T20 teams: SKY

'Batting a mix of instinct and reaction and team effort behind 80 per cent win rate'

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S T20 World Cup-winning captain Suryakumar Yadav believes the country's talent pool in the shortest format has grown so vast that it could comfortably field two or even three international-quality teams at the same time, underlining the depth created by a thriving domestic structure and franchise ecosystem.

The flamboyant batter, who has overseen a period of remarkable consistency since taking over the leadership after the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, credited the steady pipeline of players emerging from domestic competitions and the Indian Premier League for strengthening India's dominance in T20 cricket.

Since Suryakumar took over the captaincy in 2024 -- right after Rohit Sharma stepped down following the World Cup victory in Barbados -- the Indian team has won 42 of the 52 matches played, reflecting team's domi-



nance in a fickle format.

In a podcast interview with PTI Videos on Sunday, Suryakumar called the current group "the best T20 team India has produced", adding that India's depth in T20 cricket is now too evident to be downplayed.

"If you talk about talent, I feel you can find talent regularly. There is IPL cricket, franchise cricket, then there is domestic cricket. You can see how many players come every year. So you can make as many teams as you want in T20 when I am talking about T20," Suryakumar said.

"So I feel talent is unlimited. If you can make two-three

playing XIs, our base is so strong, of the Indian team. So this is not a modest and diplomatic reply. But now it is so strong, so there is no shame in telling the truth," he said.

Suryakumar credited the team's success coming into the World Cup to a collective approach in the dressing room, saying a shared vision among players and support staff helped produce an impressive 80 per cent win rate in a notoriously unpredictable format.

Even with that success rate, the World Cup was not going to be a cake-walk because as Suryakumar noted, "we played bilateral matches one way, and in ICC tournament something

else happened."

For this reason, he needed to motivate the team to maintain the winning streak in the Feb 7 to March 8 tournament.

"I don't pay too much attention to statistics but I hate losing any game. If everyone in the dressing room moves in the same direction, only then can you achieve such a percentage," he said.

Known for his 360-degree strokeplay, Suryakumar described batting in T20 cricket as largely a reactive sport, with preparation accounting for only part of the process. "I feel batting is about 70-75 per cent reaction. The remaining 25 per cent is instinct, what you decide to do in the moment. Once you enter the ground, you are almost in autopilot mode. You try to bat with rhythm and according to the situation," he said.

He also traced the origins of his unconventional range of shots to childhood rubber-ball games in Mumbai, where uneven boundary sizes forced him to improvise.

Indian women's team to feature in FIH Hockey Nation Cup

LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND): The Indian women's team will feature in the FIH Hockey Nations Cup to be held in Auckland, New Zealand from June 15 to 21.

The Hockey Nations Cup was launched in 2021 to offer a top-level competition to the best-ranked teams not participating in the Hockey Pro League, and give the winning team an option to be promoted in it the following season. The Indian women's hockey team was relegated from the Pro League 2024-25 after finishing at the bottom of the nine-team standings.

Apart from India, hosts New Zealand, USA, Japan, Korea, Chile, Scotland and France, who were promoted via the Hockey Nations Cup 2, will take part in the event.

The men's event will be held in Cape Town and will involve South Africa, New Zealand, France, Korea, Japan, Wales, Malaysia, along with Scotland, who were promoted via the Hockey Nations Cup 2, as well as Ireland, who were relegated from the 2024-25 season of the Hockey Pro League.

ORLEANS MASTERS SUPER 300

Ayush, Tanvi to lead Indian challenge; Injured Prannoy pulls out

ORLEANS (FRANCE): Youngsters Ayush Shetty and Tanvi Sharma will lead India's challenge at the USD 250,000 Orleans Masters Super 300 badminton tournament beginning here on Tuesday after senior shuttler HS Prannoy pulled out due to a shoulder injury.

Prannoy, who was originally slated to face top seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in the opening round, was forced to withdraw after experiencing shoulder pain during the Swiss Open in Basel last week. While the cause of his discomfort was unclear initially, the Indian had decided to pull out of his match against Japan's Koki Watanabe to avoid aggravating the injury.

"The shoulder pain developed after travelling to the Swiss Open. We didn't know the reason then, so I decided to withdraw and fly back," Prannoy told PTI. "After a scan it showed a slight tear. It is a minor thing and hopefully I should be okay soon," added the seasoned pro, who is targeting a return at the Asian Championships to be held from April 7 to 12 in Ningbo, China.

All eyes will be on eighth seed world No. 25 Ayush Shetty, who won the US Open Super 300 last year, as he opens his campaign against Lee Chia Hao of Chinese Taipei.

Former world No. 1 and currently ranked 30th, Kidambi Srikanth will face Denmark's Magnus Johannesen.

Tharun Mannepilli, fresh from a quarterfinal finish at last week's Swiss Open, takes on



Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei in his opening game. World No. 42 Kiran George will face third seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

In women's singles, Tanvi Sharma, the silver medalist at last year's BWF Junior World Championships, will take on Thailand's Supanida Katethong, while Malvika Bansod will continue her quest for glory after returning to action from a major injury when she faces Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei.

Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj will meet Japan's Manami Suizu, while Annol Kharb will be up against Turkey's Neslihan Arin.

In women's doubles, Devika Sihag and Isharani Baruah will take on a pair coming through the qualifiers. The men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and M R Arjun will face the Chinese Taipei duo of Lai Po Yu and Tsai Fu Cheng.

In women's doubles, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam will be up against the fourth-seeded Japanese pair of Rui Hirokami and Sayaka Hobara.

Bumrah creates an impact in every game: Aakash Chopra

NEW DELHI

FORMER India opener Aakash Chopra says pace ace Jasprit Bumrah is guaranteed to deliver in every match for the Mumbai Indians (MI) in IPL 2026, but warned that the five-time Indian Premier League (IPL) champions face a complex puzzle to solve to fit their array of overseas talent into their playing eleven.

Bumrah picked 18 wickets in 12 games at an average of 17.56 and an economy rate of 6.68 in IPL 2025. MI will kick-

start their campaign at home against three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on March 29 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The side had reached Qualifier 2 in IPL 2025 before losing to eventual runners-up Punjab Kings.

"If your name is Jasprit Bumrah, the pressure comes automatically. He is that kind of bowler. He creates an impact in every game, guarantees you a wicket, and restricts the opposition. That responsibility brings a lot of pressure because his four overs are the

most precious thing for MI. Bowl one over in the power-play, keep one for the middle phase, and two at the death.

"That is Bumrah -- that pressure is not going anywhere. Whether Boult bowls well or Deepak Chahar is fully fit, Bumrah's pressure stays with him. But if Boult is fit, MI will want to continue with him. Fit, available, in form. They will want the new ball to move around a little with Boult and Deepak Chahar. "Shardul Thakur is a capable replacement for Cha-



har, but it does not necessarily mean that he plays ahead of him. A fit Deepak Chahar, a fit Trent Boult, Bumrah, and Hardik Pandya will be MI's four starting pacers. Corbin Bosch is waiting in the wings. He is a very good all-rounder. But again, you cannot play all overseas players," said Chopra on JioStar.

NATIONAL TENPIN BOWLING C'SHIPS

Kishan, Preemal crowned champions

BENGALURU: Former national champion Kishan R of Karnataka clinched his second national title in the men's division at the ARC 34th National Tenpin Bowling Championships, which concluded at Amoeba, Church Street, Bengaluru, on Monday.

In the women's division, Preemal J. of Karnataka captured her maiden national title, ending a 15-year wait for Karnataka in this division.

In the Championship Match played based on cumulative pinfall of two games, top-seeded Kishan produced a composed performance to gain a lead of 17 pins in Game 1 (208-191). He extended his lead in the 2nd game, scoring a high game of 244 to Aakash's 238, seal-



ing the Title with an overall margin of 23 pins (452-429).

In the Championship Match, fourth-seeded Preemal J. took an early lead of 20 pins in the first game with 188 against top-seeded Sabina Athica (Tamil Nadu) (168). Despite a close second game, Preemal maintained her composure

to secure victory, claiming her maiden National Title by a margin of 24 pins (332-308).

Special prizes: Most Promising Player: Anirudhan Sanjeevi (TN) and Suchita S. Kumar (KER)

The largest number of scores above 225 in the Men's division: Kishan R. (KAR) (11)

The largest number of scores above 200 in the Women's division: Sabeena Athica (TN) (4)

Highest block of 6 games in Men's division: Kishan R (KAR) (1369 pins)

Highest block of 6 games in Women's division: Sabeena Athica (TN) (1122 pins).

BJP MP's remarks on namaz draw flak from Oppn

ALIGARH (UP)

THE remarks of a BJP MP that he does not know what Eid or Ramzan is while opposing namaz in this Uttar Pradesh district have gone viral on social media, drawing criticism from opposition politicians, even as community leaders have

appealed for calm.

When reporters asked BJP MP Satish Gautam on Sunday about a local AIMIM leader's demand for permission to hold Eid prayers at the exhibition grounds here, he said he is not interested in such festivals and does not even know their names. "I do not

know what Eid or Ramzan is. I am least interested in them," Gautam said.

He also accused Muslims of "illegally occupying huge tracts of land during the Samajwadi Party's rule" in Uttar Pradesh and questioned the need for additional space for prayers. "There is no need to give

them the ground. They have the Eidgah for prayers," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said.

He further said that Muslims are among the major beneficiaries of the present BJP-led government's welfare schemes. "They are getting more than their due share, so what else

do they want from us now?" he asked.

Reacting to the MP's remarks, former Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union president Salman Imtiaz said Gautam is known for frequently making "senseless and provocative statements" and that both Hindus and Muslims

ignore such comments in the interest of peace.

Imtiaz, now associated with the Congress and a former contestant for the Aligarh City Assembly seat, alleged that Gautam's remarks were intended at diverting attention from internal disputes within the city unit of the BJP.



Man kills 2 in-laws during Panchayat; wife critical

BAREILLY (UP)

A man on Monday allegedly stabbed his mother-in-law and brother-in-law to death and seriously injured his wife during a panchayat in Rahrura Chaudhary village in Bareilly district, police said.

The accused, identified as Afsar Khan, fled after the attack and police teams have been deployed to trace him, Bareilly Additional SP Manush Pareek said.

"Raids are being conducted at several locations and the accused will be arrested soon," he added.

According to the police, the victims have been identified as 19-year-old Adil and his 45-year-old mother Asma, while the accused's wife Saima sustained serious stab injuries and is undergoing treatment in a hospital where her condition is stated to be critical. Family members said Afsar Khan had a violent temperament and frequently quarrelled with his wife over minor issues, forc-



ing her to repeatedly return to her parental home. Saima had reportedly refused to go back with him due to his aggressive behaviour.

They said the accused had earlier been arrested in 2022 for allegedly killing his maternal uncle in the Bithri Chainpur police station area and had recently returned to the village after securing bail from a court.

The police said Saima had submitted a written complaint at Izzatnagar police station on Sunday alleging that her husband was threatening to kill her and her family members. On Monday, villagers convened a panchayat to resolve the dispute when the accused allegedly attacked the family members with a knife before fleeing, the police said.

'Embezzlement' of Rs 11.4-cr scholarship funds

CBI registers FIR against govt officials in 5 states

NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case into the alleged siphoning of more than Rs 11.4 crore from scholarship funds intended for students with disabilities by "non-existent" institutes and students, officials said Monday.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed an FIR against unidentified public servants and nodal officers in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir for allegedly embezzling funds from the Umbrella Scholarship Scheme, launched in 2018 after six scholarship schemes including the Post-matric Scholarship for Students with



Disabilities were merged, the agency said.

Scholarships under this scheme were available to students of classes 11 and 12, as well as in post-matriculation diploma and certificate courses. Bachelor's degree and diploma and master's degree and diploma from any university recognised by UGC/AICTE were also funded under

these scholarships.

"The objective and allowances of the scheme for the post-metric scholarship, including the details of maintenance allowance, disability allowance, reimbursement of compulsory non-refundable fees and book allowance, are referred to in the scheme book (scholarship scheme for students with disabilities)," the

CBI said.

The central agency had launched a preliminary enquiry last year on a complaint from the secretary of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, alleging that Rs 11.41 crore in scholarships had been paid to 926 students related to 28 institutes, which were either fake or showed serious malpractices during an inspection by the ministry.

During the enquiry, it surfaced that many of these institutions were non-existent or were closed while still claiming funds from the National Scholarship Portal, according to the FIR.

Hoax cyanide gas email threat alarms Bhopal office

BHOPAL

AN email threatening to "blow up" the premises of a Madhya Pradesh government office here using cyanide gas cylinders on Monday prompted precautionary evacuation, officials said.

The threat turned out to be a hoax after police personnel searched the office of the Weights and Measures Department in the MP Nagar area.

"While checking mails, I came across a message at 10:20 AM stating that 16 cylinders filled with cyanide gas had been placed inside the department office and would go off around 1 pm," office superintendent Shyam Solanki told PTI.

He contacted his seniors, and the police were informed. Bomb disposal squad personnel and police teams with sniffer dogs rushed to the spot and searched the premises, he said, adding that the office



was evacuated as a precaution.

Solanki said the police did not find any cylinders or explosives in the office. Officials said similar threatening emails had earlier targeted People's University and AIIMS in Bhopal, but those alerts also proved false.

Bhopal City Zone 2 Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vivek Singh stated that the investigation is underway to identify the sender of the email. He suspected that a gang was behind such emails nationwide, using fake names. Department officers and workers' leader Umashankar Tiwari said staffers resumed work at 1:10 PM.



Venugopal urges LS Speaker to revoke 8 MPs' suspension

NEW DELHI: Congress leader K C Venugopal urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday to revoke the suspension of eight opposition members, saying they were suspended "unfairly".

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Venugopal said Parliament has seen countless protests but suspending MPs is a "disturbing new trend" that cannot be allowed to continue.

Birla said a decision of the Lok Sabha cannot be discussed on the floor of the House and disallowed Venugopal to speak further. Later, in a post on X, the Congress leader said he had raised concern over the "unfair suspension of 8 Opposition MPs for this Session". "Rose in the Lok Sabha to raise concern over the unfair suspension of 8 Opposition MPs for this

Session. Parliament has seen countless protests but the suspension of MPs is a disturbing new trend, which cannot be allowed to continue. This suspension should be revoked immediately," he said. The eight opposition members were suspended during the first part of the Budget Session for "unruly" behaviour. They were suspended for the entire session.