

10 years of Bumrah | From jet lag to centre stage: The night Jasprit Bumrah announced himself

NEW DELHI, JAN 23: It was my first trip to Australia as a young cricket journalist, and I had no sense then that I was about to witness the birth of greatness. That tour also marked the international debut of Jasprit Bumrah, who would go on to become India's finest fast bowler—and one of the game's GOATs. This Friday marks ten years since that first appearance. His beginning, like so many remarkable careers, arrived without warning or ceremony, forged instead in chaos. The BCCI's senior selection committee decided to take a punt on a young fast bowler from Gujarat for India's T20 series in Australia. Bumrah was barely known outside IPL circles, where his awkward, almost jarring action for the Mumbai Indians had made him intriguing, if not entirely trusted. Before he could even pack his bags for Adelaide alongside Yuvraj Singh, Ashish Nehra, Hardik Pandya



and others, Bumrah was told his plans had changed. He wasn't joining the T20 squad just yet. Instead, he was flying to Sydney. There was no ticket to Adelaide waiting. Bumrah would travel first to Sydney instead. The arrangement was simple and unsentimental. Bumrah would travel with the T20 players who were also part of the ODI squad, reach Sydney a day before India's fifth and final ODI against Australia, and—most likely—remain a spectator. For me, touring Australia for the first time, Bumrah's journey felt like a footnote. He wasn't in the ODI squad. He wasn't expected to play. Just another promising name passing through. The match, Bhuvneshwar Kumar was ruled out with a fracture in his left thumb. The obvious replacement was left-arm seamer Barinder Sran. But MS Dhoni, never one for obvious choices, looked elsewhere.

Adam Milne ruled out of T20 World Cup due to hamstring injury, Kyle Jamieson announced as replacement

MUMBAI, JAN 23: New Zealand pacer Adam Milne was ruled out of the upcoming T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka due to a hamstring injury he sustained while playing for Sunrisers Eastern Cape in the SA20. The 33-year-old picked up the injury while bowling his first over against MI Cape Town on Sunday. Kyle Jamieson, who is currently with the T20I squad in India for the ongoing five-match series, has been named as his replacement. Jamieson was a travelling reserve with the World Cup squad. Teams can amend their World Cup squads until January 31. "We're all gutted for Adam. He'd worked so hard to get himself ready for the tourna-



ment and was looking back to his best in his eight games for the Eastern Cape Sunrisers. It's unfortunate timing for Adam, and we wish him a speedy recovery," New Zealand head coach Rob Walter said.

'What will I do with these runs?': Rohit Sharma on turning point after India failed to win 2019 ODI World Cup



MUMBAI, JAN 23: Former India skipper Rohit Sharma recently opened out on the shift in his mindset after the 2019 ODI World Cup after the team had fallen short of winning the trophy. Despite Rohit smacking 648 runs in the tournament, including 6 centuries, India fell to New

Zealand by 18 runs in the semifinal. Reflecting on the loss, Rohit said that got him thinking about what use those runs were if they couldn't help his country win the trophy. "The 2019 World Cup was a big lesson for me. I scored so many runs there, but we did not win the World Cup. So I

asked myself, what is the use of this? What will I do with these runs? Yes, they remain in your statistics column and all that, but for me, that was of no real use. That is when I decided that I would play for what makes me happy," he said on JioHotstar's 'Captain Rohit Sharma's Roadmap for T20 World Cup' show. "That is why I started thinking differently in 2020. What I eventually implemented in 2022 and 2023 took me two years to adapt to, from 2020 to 2022. I realised that I had to play with intent and without any fear. Otherwise, it does not matter how many times I got out in the 40s or in the 90s; it never bothered me at all," he added. The 38-year-old also said that when he was captain, he had to take out the stats-obsessed mindset from players in the team. "India is a very stats-obsessed country. We love talking about stats.

'I'll pick up a beer, I deserve one...': Record holder Stan Wawrinka after another five-set win at Australian Open

NEW DELHI, JAN 23: With his 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (3) win over Arthur Gea in the second round of the Australian Open, 2014 Australian champion Stan Wawrinka played in the 58th five-set match in his career. Wawrinka's record is the most of any player in the Open Era and his win on Thursday at the KIA Arena also meant that he became the first man 40 or older to reach the third round a grand slam since 1978, when Ken Roswell achieved the feat at the age of 44. Wawrinka had announced earlier that this would be his last year of playing as a professional player and as the former world number three completed the win, the 40-year-old shared how he deserved this win and how he is trying to last as long as possible in the tournament. "I'll pick up a beer. I deserve one! Exhausted! It's my last Australian Open, so I'm trying to last as long as possible. Not only I had fun,



but you gave me so much energy. I'm not young any more so I need the extra," Wawrinka told. win was Wawrinka's 31st in a five-set match in his career. The match went on for four hour and 33 minutes and is currently the longest match in this year's Australian Open. The last set went into a tie-break with the Swiss winning it 7-3 to advance to the next round, where he will face world number nine Taylor Fritz, the 2024 US

Open runner-up. When asked where he would rate Thursday's win, Wawrinka spoke about how he is trying to stay in the present and how is pushing the limits. Never compare the past. That's really never a good idea. For me, I'm always trying to stay in the present, living with what's happening in the present. Of course, after a tough year like last year, knowing it's my last one here, my last Australian Open, my last year, it's really special.

Coughing, vomiting, relocating: Air pollution takes toll on Indian athletes as foreign players flag issue to International Olympic Committee

MUMBAI, JAN 23: At the India Open last week, international badminton stars questioned Delhi's place on the global calendar, citing health concerns from the toxic air. Some of them even complained to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). "We can confirm that the IOC Athletes' Commission has received the information and is in touch," the IOC told. Dronacharya Award-winning hockey coach Pritam Sivach is worried. At the Sports Authority of India's Sonepat centre, dust and toxic air have left her players coughing and allergic. "They fall sick, recover and fall sick again. It doesn't end," she said. The doctors are blunt: the air and water are unfit. Decathlete Tejaswin Shankar said winter training in Delhi is no longer about grit, but pollution. Shankar, who hails from Delhi, left in November to train in Bhubaneswar first, South Africa later and the US now. The "extremely difficult" summer brings no relief. "There are real physiological costs for athletes in Delhi," he said. At the premier National Institute of Sport in Patiala, the talk is more about "unbearable summers". "It becomes difficult to even stand outside in the heat for five minutes," former Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra had said earlier. Training in such conditions, he had said, was "extremely difficult". For foreign sportspersons touring India, the risk is occasional — and one they can choose to avoid, as Denmark shuttler Anders Antonsen did at the India Open. There is no such luxury for Indian athletes.

How toxic air is impacting India's athletes: 2023 Jr WC team captain recalls her ordeal, 'Developed breathing problems, persistent coughing, throat infections and allergies'

NEW DELHI, JAN 23: The window for athletes to train is shrinking in and around the National Capital Region because of toxic air in winter and searing summers. As the country makes a pitch for the 2036 Olympics, wrestling, athletics and para-athletics, cycling, shooting, hockey and also experts — on the impact of the conditions on health and training. International badminton stars, in Delhi last week for the India Open, have complained to the International Olympic Committee about the air pollution, and have cited health concerns. This happened some time ago. During a routine training session, I was chasing the ball at my usual pace when, all of a sudden, my breathing became unusually heavy. Within moments, it turned into a harsh bout of coughing, and the breathlessness kept getting worse. I had never experienced anything like it before, and for a while, I could not understand what was happening to my body. A visit to the doctor



brought some clarity. He explained that I had developed a respiratory condition triggered by air pollution in Sonepat, where I train at the Sports Authority of India centre. Sonepat, much like nearby Delhi, suffers from extremely poor air quality during the winter months. To make matters worse, there is a rice factory close to our training facility, and the dust from it constantly hangs in the air. What followed was a difficult six-month period. I struggled with breathing issues, persistent coughing,

throat infections and allergies. I would start to feel better for a few days, only to fall sick again, trapped in a frustrating cycle. Medication eventually helped, and I am much better now, but even today there are days when breathing does not come easily. And then, there's severe itching when I start to sweat while playing. Pollution has a direct impact on our training. Running becomes harder, breathing becomes laboured, and many of us develop allergies. When you are unable to breathe prop-

erly, you are forced to cut short your playing time, no matter how motivated you are. In winter, warm-ups take longer and our practice sessions stretch to two or two-and-a-half hours. In summer, sessions are shorter, but we are given breaks in between to recover. While I am not scared that my long-term growth will be affected, I believe we learn to manage and adapt, better conditions would certainly help us perform at a higher level. Another concern is the condition of our turf. Due to the surrounding dust, it deteriorates quickly and becomes slippery, leading to frequent injuries. Regular cleaning could go a long way in preventing this and ensuring player safety. I have experienced training in Bangalore as well, and the difference is striking. The weather there is far more balanced. Not too hot, not too cold, which allows us to train longer and better. In such conditions, if a player comfortably plays for 10 minutes, she can push himself to 12.

Under-19 World Cup: Ayush Mhatre's form in focus as India face New Zealand in league finale

MUMBAI, JAN 23: For all the promise Ayush Mhatre carries, the India U-19 captain enters the World Cup clash against New Zealand in Bulawayo on Saturday with unresolved questions over his form. Runs have dried up, dismissals have come early and the aggression that once defined his rise has increasingly looked at odds with the demands of the one-day format. In a side built around top-order foundations, Mhatre's prolonged lean patch has become impossible to ignore. Mhatre's recent returns make for grim reading. After a breezy 49 in the warm-ups against England, the competitive matches have seen a sharp dip. In the opener against the USA, he perished for 19. Two days later, against a disciplined Bangladesh attack, he lasted only 12 balls, falling for six. Before the World Cup, the 18-year-old endured a difficult time with the bat in the Under-19 Asia Cup as well, making 65 runs in five outings that included three single-digit



scores. India's expectations from Mhatre are rooted in his pedigree. In his short List A career, he has made 458 runs in seven matches at an average of 65.42. Yet, that pedigree has not translated into runs when India have needed them most. The right-hander's dismissals point to a recurring flaw against the rising ball. Against the USA, he hooked without control and picked out

deep fine leg; against Bangladesh, he fell to a similar mistimed slash off a short-and-wide delivery. Too often, the intent has arrived before the assessment. Hard hands outside off stump, premeditated aggression against the new ball and an unwillingness to absorb early pressure have made him vulnerable in the first ten overs. While such methods can be masked in T20 cricket, 50-

over cricket is far less forgiving. The issue isn't a lack of talent; it's a lack of ODI temperament. Mhatre, a natural stroke-maker, has appeared caught in the T20 trap. His dismissals have often been the result of "slam-bang" intent on wickets that demand an initial period of respect. Mhatre's poor run isn't just a personal crisis, it's a structural one for India. When the captain falls early, it triggers a domino effect that has forced the middle-order into salvage mode. Against Bangladesh, India were 12/2 within the first three overs. It took a Herculean effort from 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi (72) and Abhigyan Kundu (80) to reconstruct the innings. Instead of building innings in phases, India have relied on recovery acts rather than control. The burden has shifted onto the middle and lower-order batters to either consolidate or counter-attack, thereby shrinking their margin for error.

Toxic air wake-up call: Biggest limiter is I can't do strenuous training because my lungs are going to be impacted, writes Tejaswin Shankar



MUMBAI, JAN 23: The window for athletes to train is shrinking in and around the National Capital Region because of toxic air in winter and searing summers. As the country makes a pitch for the 2036 Olympics, a wide range of sports — boxing, wrestling, athletics and para-athletics, cycling, shooting, hockey and also experts — on the impact of the conditions on health and

training. International badminton stars, in Delhi last week for the India Open, have complained to the International Olympic Committee about the air pollution, and have cited health concerns. The biggest change has been the pollution over the last few years for some reason. I've been in Delhi for so many years, I've trained pretty much for the last 10-15 years, but I

feel in the last seven to eight years, the pollution has for some reason exponentially increased. We know that when there's more particles in the air, it becomes extremely hard to breathe. Now when you're doing physical activity and your heart rate goes up, that just means that your body needs more oxygen to be able to convert all that into energy and be able to sustain your heart rate, which is now not 100 beats per minute, but 160 beats per minute. So for that to happen, the uptake of air is a lot higher. And the expectation is that, through the respiratory process, the body is able to consume more oxygen. What's happened over the last few years is now the uptake of oxygen has not been as much, but the uptake of pollution has increased because the particulate in the air has increased also.

Manchester United midfielder Casemiro to leave at end of season

MUMBAI, JAN 23: Manchester United midfielder Casemiro will leave the Premier League side at the end of the season upon the expiry of his contract, the club said. The 33-year-old does have a one-year extension option, but the club has chosen not to activate it according to a team source. United's decision not to extend or renew his contract was made far in advance of Thursday's announcement as part of long-term squad overhaul plans. Casemiro had requested the club confirm his summer departure at this time. "I will carry Manchester United with me throughout my entire life," Casemiro said. "From the first day that I walked out at this beautiful stadium, I felt the passion of Old Trafford and the love that I now share with our supporters of this special club." The Brazilian arrived at Old Trafford in August 2022 from Real Madrid for a fee of around 60 million pounds (\$80.90 million), and the five-time Champions League winner became the anchor of the team's midfield, scoring 21 goals in 146 games. Casemiro played a key role in helping United win the 2023 League Cup, scoring a header in their 2-0 win over Newcastle United in the final. He was also a part of United's FA Cup-winning team in 2024. "It's not time to say goodbye; there are many more memories to create during the next four months," he said. "We still have a lot to fight for together; my complete focus will, as always, remain on giving my everything to help our club to succeed." United are fifth in the league standings, 15 points behind leaders Arsenal who they play at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday. United are riding high from their 2-0 derby win over Manchester City on Saturday in a thrilling debut for caretaker manager Michael Carrick after the sacking of Ruben Amorim.

PV Sindhu set to be a speaker in 23rd edition of Harvard India Conference

NEW DELHI, JAN 23: The 23rd edition of India Conference which is organised by students at Harvard will see India badminton star PV Sindhu as a speaker. Sindhu will be among a host of dignitaries who'll be speaking at the conference alongside actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas as well as politician Shashi Tharoor (who will be the keynote speaker). The conference set to be held jointly by Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School will encompass 2 days – February 14-15. The theme of this year's conference is "The India we Imagine". "This theme invites reflection on the values, complexities, and possibilities shaping India's future by spotlighting voices that provoke and inspire our collective imagination. Through three subthemes, we explore the diverse forces shaping India's identity, progress, and path forward. Together, these



threads weave our vision for India's future," the official synopsis reads on the official website. Announcing Sindhu's participation in the event, the Harvard Conference Instagram posted, "We're honoured to welcome P.V. Sindhu! (@pvsindhu1) Trailblazing athlete, Olympic medalist, and inspiration to millions across the world. PV Sindhu's journey has redefined Indian badminton. She made history as

the first Indian woman to win an @olympics silver medal at the 2016 Summer Games, and remains one of only two Indian badminton players ever to claim an Olympic medal. She is a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, and Arjuna Award, and continues to encourage a generation to dream beyond boundaries and chase excellence with dedication and heart."