

NEWS BRIEF

Tilak, Washington report to BCCI CoE in bid to regain full fitness for T20 World Cup

New Delhi: India players Tilak Varma and Washington Sundar have checked into the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru in a bid to regain full fitness ahead of the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup starting on February 7. Tilak, a manstay in India's T20I set-up, was ruled out of the first three games of the five-match series against New Zealand, starting in Nagpur on Wednesday, after undergoing an emergency surgery in Rajkot earlier this month for a lower abdominal issue while playing for Hyderabad in the Vijay Hazare Trophy league stage. Washington, on the other hand, suffered a left rib injury while bowling in the ODI series opener against New Zealand in Vadodara on January 11 and has been ruled out of the entire T20I series. In place of Washington, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi is in the squad, while Tilak is replaced by right-handed batter Shreyas Iyer for the first three games.

"Yes, both Tilak and Washington are at CoE for their respective rehab programmes. For Washington, further tests will be done, and rehab will start as per their outcome. In terms of Tilak, he is yet to be assessed as of now.

"But it is understood that efforts will be made in such a way that becomes fully fit to join the Indian team for the last two T20Is in Visakhapatnam and Thiruvananthapuram."

sources familiar with the matter told on Tuesday. Sources have also informed that India's Test vice-captain, wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, could report to the CoE later this week for starting his rehab for a right side-strain. Pant picked up the injury while batting in the practice session on the eve of the ODI series opener against New Zealand in Vadodara on January 10.

"Too early for judgements, give him more time": Gujarat Titans COO on Gill's ODI captaincy

New Delhi: Gujarat Titans Chief Operating Officer Colonel Avinder Singh backed Indian star batter Shubman Gill's captaincy in ODIs and added that his recent poor form in T20Is is just a "hiccup" in his life as a cricketer. After delivering a promising start as captain with a 2-2 draw against England in which he scored 75 runs, including four centuries, Gill has not been able to bring in that same form and leadership in white-ball cricket. Speaking to ANI recently on the sidelines of his franchise's Junior Titans' programme, third edition, Avinder said on Gill's captaincy, "I think it is very, very early days to start passing judgment on his credibility as a captain. We need to give him more time. You see, it was just this year, just the last year, that he was captain for the first time in England. And everybody was talking about, you know, how the team is and how England is going to crush us, but you saw what the result was. I am sure you would agree that his captaincy played a big role in, you know, the series being drawn." Avinder hailed Gill for showing the right doses of calmness and aggression as a captain when needed, and for commanding the respect of his contemporaries and seniors. "I think what is more important for a captain is to be able to gain the respect of his contemporaries. Whether they are senior to him by virtue of having played earlier or somebody who, you know, debuted after him. And I think that there is no doubt on the fact that he has the respect of his colleagues, his contemporaries and his peers. I do not think anybody doubts that part. I think it is too early to start passing judgment," he added. In ODIs, his side has lost both their series by 1-2 against Australia away from home last year and recently against New Zealand at home.

You pushed Indian badminton forward: Yuvraj hails Saina Nehwal's 'incredible career'

New Delhi: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh congratulated Olympic medalist Saina Nehwal, one of India's most outstanding badminton players, who has announced her retirement from competitive sports after nearly two years of absence due to a chronic knee issue. The 2012 London Olympics bronze medalist last played a competitive badminton match at the 2023 Singapore Open and had not officially announced her retirement until Monday, when, during a podcast, the ace shuttlecock said that she had left the court on her own terms and "there was no need to announce it."

"Well played, Saina! Congratulations on an incredible career. You pushed Indian badminton forward and inspired a generation. Wishing you the very best for what's next," Yuvraj wrote on X, congratulating the badminton ace on a remarkable career.

"I don't want to change my identity": Suryakumar



AGENCY

NAGPUR: Ahead of the first T20I against New Zealand on Wednesday, India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav has remained optimistic about his poor form in the shortest format.

The right-handed batter had a forgetful run with the bat in T20I cricket in 2025. Suryakumar failed to register a single fifty in 21 matches and 19 innings. SKY scored 218 runs at a below average of

13.62 and a highest score of unbeaten 47.

During the pre-match press conference, Suryakumar said he has been batting really well in the nets and doesn't want to change his identity, which has brought him success over the last three to four years.

The India T20I captain added that he would love to bat the same way, and if everything doesn't go well, he

will go back to the drawing board and come back stronger.

"Every game we play in a series is crucial. We try to get something out of it. I have been batting really well at the nets and also talking about the runs; it will definitely come, but at the same time, I can't do things differently. I don't want to change my identity. What has given me success in the past 3-4 years, I would like to bat the same

way. And then if performance comes, I will take it. If it doesn't come, then I will go back to the drawing board, practice again, work hard and come back stronger," Suryakumar said.

Suryakumar Yadav said that Team India will miss star players Tilak Varma and Washington Sundar, who are ruled out due to respective injuries. However, the India T20I captain highlighted that other players are grabbing

opportunities and performing well for the side in the absence of Varma and Sundar.

"Injury is a big part of a sportsman's life. So, we can't do anything about it. It's not in anyone's control. But at the same time, someone else will get an opportunity to play. I mean, we will obviously miss Tilak and Washington as well. They have done so much for the Indian team whenever they have played this format. But at the same time, someone will have to play in their place. We can't go without nine people. But yeah, someone will get an opportunity, and I wish them all the best," India T20I captain said.

On January 16, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed that all-rounder Washington Sundar was ruled out of the five-match T20I series against New Zealand.

Earlier, Sundar underwent scans after reporting an acute onset of discomfort in his lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on January 11.

An in-person consultation with an expert followed, which confirmed that Sundar had a side strain and advised rest for a few days, after which he will report to the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE) for further management of his injury.

Santner confident after New Zealand's recent wins ahead of 1st T20I

AGENCY

NAGPUR: New Zealand's T20I team captain Mitchell Santner said that having recent successes against India across different formats gives the team an edge over the Men in Blue, ahead of the five-match India vs New Zealand T20I series, set to begin on Wednesday at Nagpur. New Zealand will be coming into the T20I series after an impressive 2-1 series win over the Shubman Gill-led Team India in the three-match ODI series. Led by Michael Bracewell, New Zealand put up a special fight to win the series against an Indian team that saw ODI giants Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli return. The Kiwis, despite missing key New Zealand players like

Nagpur T20I, Santner said that the team enjoys playing India in India, and the recent successes do give his team an advantage. He emphasised that the series is both about winning and preparing well for the T20 World Cup 2026 by competing against a strong team in similar conditions, calling it an exciting and valuable

ing into the T20 World Cup 2026. It's about playing a great team in similar conditions to what we are gonna face in the World Cup. In terms of preparations for the series, it's going to be a great series," Santner said.

Notably, Santner gave a 'Player of the Match' performance against India in the group-stage match of the T20

World Cup 2016, hosted in India, and helped New Zealand defeat the hosts by 47 runs in a low-scoring.

Santner reflected fondly on his match-winning performance against India in the 2016 T20 World Cup, calling it a special memory from his first tour of India.

He praised the passionate

crowds and fan support,

saying players love touring

India. "I hope it's similar to what it was 10 years ago. But I can't imagine it is. It was great memories. I guess it was my first trip to India. Not really knowing what to expect, but, you know, turning up, playing in front of 50,000 people in the World Cup, it was awesome. And it's been the same every time we've come back."

series. "It obviously gives us an edge.

We love playing India, and we love

playing in India. We have had some

recent successes against India in dif-

ferent formats. We are looking for-

ward to the series. The aim, first of all,

is obviously to win the series but also

have good enough preparation lead-

ing into the T20 World Cup 2026. It's

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Speaking at the pre-match press conference ahead of the

MI wicketkeeper Kamalini ruled out of remainder of WPL, Vaishnavi named replacement



AGENCY

MUMBAI: Mumbai Indians (MI) wicketkeeper-batter G Kamalini has been ruled out of the remainder of the WPL season due to an injury, with defending champions MI picking Vaishnavi Sharma as a replacement for the remainder of the WPL 2026.

Seventeen-year-old Kamalini had played 5 matches in the ongoing season before being ruled out of the season due to an injury.

"Mumbai Indians (MI) picked Vaishnavi Sharma as a replacement for G Kamalini for the remainder of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026.

Vaishnavi Sharma will join MI for Rs 30 Lakh, WPL said in a release.

The left-arm spinner Vaishnavi, who was a member of India's triumphant

ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup squad of 2025, has played 5 T20Is for

India, scalping five wickets from the same.

MI had a shaky start to their WPL campaign, as they have managed to register just two wins in five games. Despite the last two results not quite going their way, the defending champions managed to hold onto the number two spot on the points table, thanks to their superior net run-rate.

With three league games remaining before the playoffs, MI quickly need to get the pieces of this puzzle together when they play bottom placed Delhi Capitals at the BCA Stadium, Kotambli on Tuesday.

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