

# Ruled out captaincy during IPL, told BCCI before Rohit's exit: Bumrah

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**PTI, LEEDS:** The peerless Jasprit Bumrah has revealed that he had ruled out Test captaincy during the IPL itself as part of his workload management, and had informed the BCCI of his desire to prioritise his bowling responsibilities over leadership duties.

During an interaction with former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik on Sky Sports Cricket, Bumrah explained the thought process behind his decision to turn down the Indian Test captaincy.

"There's no fancy stories to it. There is no controversy or a headlining statement that I was sacked. Before Rohit and Virat retired, I had spoken to the BCCI during the IPL about my workload going forward in a five-match series," Bumrah said.

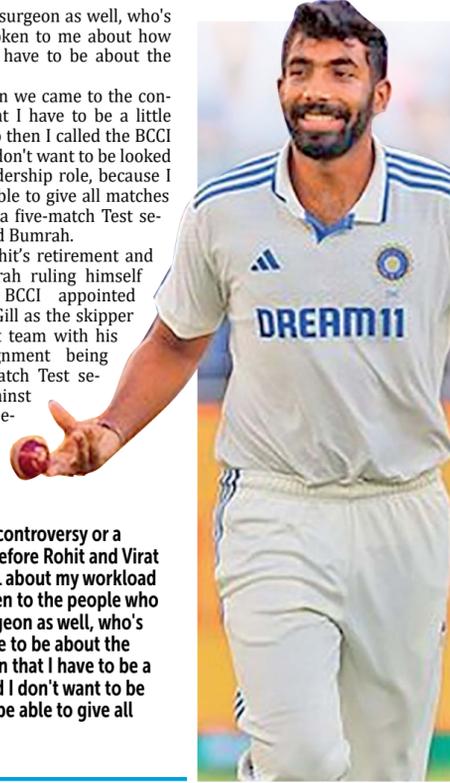
"I've spoken to the people who have managed my back, I've spoken

to the surgeon as well, who's always spoken to me about how smart you have to be about the workloads.

"And then we came to the conclusion that I have to be a little smarter. So then I called the BCCI and said I don't want to be looked at in a leadership role, because I won't be able to give all matches coming to a five-match Test series," added Bumrah.

After Rohit's retirement and with Bumrah ruling himself out, the BCCI appointed Shubman Gill as the skipper of the Test team with his first assignment being the five-match Test series against England, beginning in Leeds on Friday.

During



the interaction, Bumrah stressed on the need for continuity in leadership, particularly in a long series, something he would not be able to offer because of his heavy workload as the team's premier bowler.

"The BCCI was looking at me at (a) leadership (role). But then I had to say no as it's not fair for the team as well.

It's not fair to the team if in a five-Test series, three matches somebody else is leading and two matches somebody else is leading."

"I always wanted to put the team first, even if me being there as a player offers a lot more just not as a captain," Bumrah said.

"Captaincy is a position. But you always have leaders in the team and I wanted to do. Obviously, if I'm not careful, I don't know about the future, and I don't want to be in a situation where I have to abruptly go away from this format."

"So, I thought that for continuity, and it is only fair to the team

that you know the team goes in that direction, where they look at long-term and I could help in whatever way," he added.

Bumrah acknowledged that leading the Indian Test team is a huge honour but added that he loves the game more than captaincy.

"Captaincy meant a lot. I had worked very hard for it. But, unfortunately, sometimes you have to look after the bigger picture. I love cricket more than captaincy so I want to contribute more as a cricketer and to the Indian team as a player."

"Obviously ambitions are there but that's how it is and I called the BCCI and said that I don't want to be looked at in a leadership role," said the magnificent fast bowler.

As far as his participation in the England series in concerned, Bumrah is planning to play in at least three Test matches, including the opener at Headingley.

"Obviously, the number is not decided. First (Test) is definitely on, that is going to happen. Rest, we will see how things are, what is the workload and scenario... but yes, 3 Tests is what I can manage at the moment."

India head coach Gautam Gambhir had also said Bumrah could play three Tests in the coming weeks.

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– Jasprit Bumrah

## Four-day Tests for smaller nations: ICC

India, Australia, England to still play 5-day matches

**PTI, LONDON:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) is ready to sanction four-day Tests for smaller nations in the 2027-29 World Test Championship cycle but India, Australia and England can still play the traditional five-day matches, according to a report here.

The move to reduce matches by one day would be a significant change and can help smaller nations to play more Tests and longer series.

"During discussions last week at the WTC final at Lord's, the ICC chair, Jay Shah, is understood to have expressed his support for four-day Tests, with a view to sanctioning them in time for the 2027-29 WTC cycle," a report in 'The Guardian' newspaper said.

"England, Australia and India would still be permitted to schedule five-Test series of five-day matches for the Ashes, the Bor-

der-Gavaskar Trophy and the newly named Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, the first iteration of which begins with the first Test between England and India at Headingley on Friday."

The ICC first sanctioned four-day Tests for bilateral contests in 2017. England played Zimbabwe over four days at Trent Bridge last month after four-day Tests against Ireland in 2019 and 2023. According to the report, "many smaller nations are reluctant to host Tests due to the time they take out of the schedule and the cost, but a move to four-day cricket would enable an entire three-Test series to be played in less than three weeks."

"In four-day Tests the playing hours are extended to mandate a minimum of 98 overs per day rather than 90 overs to mitigate the time lost," it said.

## Death threats, abuse highlight dark side of tennis betting: Katie

**AP, LONDON:** British tennis player Katie Boulter has told the BBC she received death threats targeting her and her family during the French Open, saying in an interview that online abuse has become the norm and that she is worried about the impact it will have on younger players.

Boulter, who is 28-year-old and ranked No. 39 in the WTA, said she believes many of the abusive messages are sent by people who are placing bets on tennis matches.

The messages threatening her loved ones was sent during her French Open first-round match against Carole Monnet on May 29. After losing the first-set tie-break, Boulter won the match 6-7 (4), 6-1, 6-1.

But the loss of the tie-breaker prompted the outrage. "Hope you get cancer," said one message. Another mentioned damaging her "grandmother's grave if

she's not dead by tomorrow" and "candles and a coffin for your entire family."

A third said: "Go to hell, I lost money my mother sent me."

Boulter, who shared with the BBC screenshots of the messages, said she is worried about the toll the widespread abuse takes on younger players.

"At the very start of my career, it's probably something I took very personally... getting comments about the way you look," she said. "It becomes more apparent every single time you go on your phone.

"I think it increases in number and it also increases in the level of things that people say. I don't think there's anything off the

cards now." Many other players have previously reported online abuse.

In a bid to try to protect athletes from that sort of abuse, the International Tennis Federation (ITF), Women's Tennis Association (WTA), All England Lawn Tennis Club and United States Tennis Association in 2023 launched the Threat Matrix.

Despite years of reporting online abuse, Boulter said the volume has become overwhelming — and her concern now lies with protecting those coming up behind her. "I think that by the end of where I am right now, I think there is just too many to almost do that," she said. "As a tennis player, I just

want to see and protect some of the younger players that come through and try to find a way around this whole situation."

According to statistics provided to the BBC by data science firm Signify, the ITF and WTA, about 8,000 abusive, violent or threatening messages were sent publicly to 458 tennis players through their social media accounts in 2024.

Boulter, who received abuse after wins as well as losses, said a lot of it comes from people who have placed bets on her matches.

"As far as death threats, it's just not something you want to be reading straight after an emotional loss," she said. "A lot of the time you get it after you win as well."

Boulter said she is getting ready for the level of abuse to increase when she plays at Wimbledon, her home Grand Slam.

The grass-court tournament starts June 30.



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## Chelsea win opener, Benfica deny Boca Juniors

**AFP, PHILADELPHIA (United States):** Chelsea began their Club World Cup campaign with a 2-0 victory against Los Angeles FC in a largely empty stadium on Monday as Brazilian giants Flamengo also got off to a winning start and a Benfica comeback denied Boca Juniors in a stormy encounter.

As the inaugural 32-team tournament gradually kicks into gear in the United States, Chelsea followed fellow European heavyweights Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich by claiming three points in their first group outing.

**CLUB WORLD CUP**

Yet while UEFA Champions League winners PSG were ominous against Atletico Madrid on Sunday, and Bayern put 10 past Auckland City, the Premier League team were more solid than spectacular against LAFC in Atlanta.

Pedro Neto and Enzo Fernandez got the goals for Enzo Maresca's side in the Group D match before nearly 50,000 empty seats at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium -- not a great look for the tournament organisers.

New signing Liam Delap



Chelsea's Argentinian midfielder Enzo Fernandez celebrates after scoring a goal during the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 Group D match against Los Angeles FC at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta

made his debut as a substitute and helped set up Fernandez's strike, with Chelsea hoping to reestablish themselves among the elite after their recent UEFA Conference League triumph and Champions League qualification.

Maresca when asked about the crowd, as just over 22,000 attended the 71,000-capacity venue for a game played at 3:00 pm

local time on a Monday.

LAFC were late qualifiers for the tournament, beating Club America in a play-off last month to replace banned Mexican side Club Leon. Chelsea went ahead just after the half-hour mark when Nicolas Jackson released Neto and the Portuguese winger turned inside LA defender Ryan Hollingshead before beating goalkeeper Hugo Lloris

with a powerful strike.

Former Chelsea striker Olivier Giroud came on at half time for the Americans and Steve Cherundolo's team improved in the second half. However, Delap entered the fray for Chelsea and made the killer second goal, crossing for the arriving Fernandez to control and finish. Chelsea's next game will be against Flamengo, who began their

campaign by easing to a 2-0 win against Esperance of Tunisia in Philadelphia.

Uruguayan international Giorgian de Arrascaeta gave the Brazilian giants a 17th-minute lead from an assist by Luiz Araujo, who made it 2-0 with 20 minutes remaining.

It was a dominant display from Flamengo, who fielded a strong side featuring several Brazil internationals and gave a debut to Italy midfielder Jorginho following his arrival from Arsenal.

Jorginho will face former club Chelsea when the teams meet in their second match on Friday. Flamengo coach Filipe Luis is also an ex-player at Stamford Bridge. There were vast sections of empty seats at Lincoln Financial Field too, with just 25,797 fans in a stadium that can hold close to 70,000.

In contrast, there was close to a full house, and a raucous atmosphere, in Miami as Boca and Benfica played out an entertaining 2-2 draw in Group C.

The majority of the

crowd was backing Boca and the Argentines roared into a two-goal lead, Miguel Merentiel and Rodrigo Battaglia both scoring in the first half.

Two-time European champions Benfica were given a lifeline in first-half stoppage time when Boca's Carlos Palacios mistimed a challenge on Nicolas Otamendi and after a VAR review -- which included a red card for protesting from the already substituted Boca midfielder Ander Herrera -- a penalty was awarded.

Veteran Angel di Maria converted from the spot to make it 2-1, but Benfica then had Andrea Belotti sent off in the 71st minute after a wild, high-footed kick into the head of Ayrton Costa.

But with six minutes remaining the Portuguese side equalised as Otamendi headed in to make it 2-2.

A disappointing result for Boca was compounded by a late red card for Nicolas Figal, who was dismissed for an ugly challenge on Florentino Luis.

### RESULTS

**Boca Juniors 2 (Merentiel 21, Battaglia 27) Benfica 2 (Di Maria 45+3-pen, Otamendi 84), Chelsea 2 (Neto 34, Fernandez 79) Los Angeles FC 0, Flamengo 2 (De Arrascaeta 17, Luiz Araujo 70) Esperance 0**

### shorttakes

#### India reach Leeds via train for series opener, Rana added as cover

**LEEDS:** Pacer Harshit Rana has been included in the India Test squad as a cover and travelled with the rest of the team via train to reach Leeds, the venue for the series opener against England. Rana was part of the India A squad and played the first unofficial test against England Lions in Canterbury. The tall pacer had made his debut in Australia last year but was not included in the 18-man squad for the five Tests in England. The 23-year-old from Delhi has played two Tests, five ODIs and a T20. Rana was seen exiting the Leeds train station with the rest of the squad members. The team had travelled to Leeds from London. The first Test begins at Headingley on June 20. India played an intra-squad game against India A at Beckenham, their sole warm-up game for the series.

#### New Zealand women's captain Sophie Devine to retire from ODIs after World Cup

**AUCKLAND:** New Zealand women's team captain and prolific all-rounder Sophie Devine will retire from the ODIs after the World Cup in India and Sri Lanka later this year. "It feels like the right time for me to start stepping away. I feel very fortunate to have NZC's support in finding a solution that means I can still give to the White Ferns," said Devine in a statement issued by New Zealand Cricket on Tuesday. Devine's statement came ahead of the announcement of the 17 centrally contracted players by New Zealand Cricket (NZC) on Wednesday. She will remain available for T20I cricket on a "casual playing arrangement" but will not be centrally contracted. Her decision to retire after the ODI World Cup in India and Sri Lanka from September 30 to November 2 came after Devine took a break from cricket to prioritise her mental health in January. She will lead the team in the ODI World Cup in September.

#### Smriti Mandhana reclaims top spot in ODI batting rankings

**DUBAI:** India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday moved up to the top spot in ICC ODI batting rankings for the first time since 2019 after South Africa skipper Laura Wolvaardt lost 19 rating points in the latest update. Mandhana has a total of 727 rating points followed by England captain Natalie Sciver-Brunet at 719. Wolvaardt is now third with 719 points. The next two Indian batters in the list after Mandhana are Jemimah Rodrigues and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who are placed 14th and 15th respectively. India and England are set to face off in five T20Is and three ODIs later this month. Mandhana is also ranked fourth in the list of batters in T20Is.

#### India junior women's hockey team ends tour of Europe with loss to Netherlands

**UTRECHT (Netherlands):** The Indian junior women's hockey team concluded their successful tour of Europe with a 2-3 shootout loss to hosts Netherlands after a goalless draw in regulation time. Coming into the match with four consecutive wins under their belt -- three against Belgium and one against Australia -- India displayed grit and composure against a technically strong Dutch outfit in what turned out to be a tightly-contested encounter. Despite both teams creating several scoring opportunities over the four quarters, neither side could break the deadlock, thanks to disciplined defending and impressive goalkeeping at both ends. The match proceeded to a shootout, where Lalrinpui and Priyanka Yadav converted their chances for India. However, the Netherlands edged ahead with successful strikes from Imme de Leeuw, Roos Alkemade, and Lotte Rust. The European tour was part of their preparation for the Women's Junior World Cup in December.

#### Test series against India on par with Ashes in terms of commercial importance: ECB

**LONDON:** The upcoming five-match Test rubber between India and England is commercially as important as the Ashes, feels the ECB's chief executive Richard Gould, who is banking on the series to recapture the imagination of English fans after an underwhelming international summer in 2024. Last year, the country's sports fans were hooked on to the Paris Olympics and the Euro, Europe's biggest international football tournament. Empty seats at Lord's, after England's series win over Sri Lanka, did not paint a pretty picture as far as cricket was considered. This time however, Gould is optimistic of a bumper summer thanks to the widely-followed Indian team. "We know how big it is. It is a huge summer," Gould was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

#### FIFA lifts transfer ban on Mohun Bagan Super Giant

**KOLKATA:** The transfer ban on Mohun Bagan Super Giant was on Tuesday lifted by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee, clearing the way for the club to sign new players ahead of the upcoming season. The ban, imposed on May 5 over non-payment of dues to Australian striker Jason Cummings' former club Central Coast Mariners, was revoked following prompt action by the club. Mohun Bagan had submitted a 107-page document to FIFA and responded to two subsequent queries from the governing body. "Mohun Bagan submitted a 107-page document to FIFA and thereafter there were two queries, and finally the disciplinary committee has sent a mail lifting the ban," a Mohun Bagan Super Giant official told PTI. The transfer window opened on June 9, and the club can now proceed unhindered with its team-building efforts for the new season.

#### Pataudi Medal for India-England Series' winning captain

**NEW DELHI:** The Pataudi name will remain a part of the India-England cricket rivalry with the winning captain of the upcoming five-Test series set to be presented with a medal named after the royal family that has a rich connect with the game in both countries. The decision to rename the Pataudi Trophy to Tendulkar-Anderson Trophy was taken by the England and Wales Cricket Board. A formal announcement was due on the sidelines of the WTC final at Lord's last week but it was put off in light of the horrific Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad. With the planned ceremony not going ahead in the UK, a formal announcement on the renaming of the trophy is scheduled for June 19, a day before the series-opener at Leeds.

#### Marathon standby Shanto, Mushfiqur puts Bangladesh in control

**GALLE (Sri Lanka):** Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur Rahim stitched together an unbroken 247-run stand to put Bangladesh in a commanding position at 293-3 at the end of the first day of the first test against Sri Lanka. Shanto and Mushfiqur came together when Bangladesh were tottering at 45-3 and combined for the highest fourth-wicket partnership for Bangladesh in tests against Sri Lanka, eclipsing the 180-run alliance between Litton Das and Mominul Haque in 2018. It ruined a strong start for Sri Lanka, as offspinner Tharindu Ratnayake took two early wickets in his test debut for the hosts.