



It's not easy to move from No. 3 to No. 5 or 6 but I love finishing for team: Tilak Varma

BENGALURU, OCT 18: India vice-captain Tilak Varma admitted that dropping down the order from No. 3 was not easy, but he is trusting his skill enhancement and mental preparation to ace the demands of his new role.

Tilak has been batting either at No. 5 or 6 in T20Is for a while now, and, for him, it came down to working on his game constantly to come up trumps.

"It's not that easy to change the numbers from 3 to 5 and 6. It will be slightly challenging. But I have been working on that. How can I finish the games? I have said that I love finishing the games for the country," said Tilak after the washed-out fifth and final T20I against the West Indies here on Saturday night.

"So, for me as an individual, if you see, it will be easier batting at 3. But unfortunately, now I should bat at 5 or 6 because we have got that combination at the top right now."

From nine matches, the left-hander averages 65.66 while batting at number six, at a strike rate of 195. In 26 combined innings at 5 and 6, he averages 46 at a strike rate of 158.

But Ishan Kishan's arrival, skipper Shreyas Iyer's presence at No. 4 and the management's decision to stick with the Abhishek Sharma-Sanju Samson combination at the top meant a mandatory demotion for Tilak. The Hyderabad batter is aware of the situation.

"Kishan is batting at number 3 now, and he is batting really brilliantly there. So, for me now, I think there is no option but to bat at 5 and 6 and do the job for the team.



"So, I am mentally prepared for that role. And if you see the last few games, I have won from there. So, I am pretty confident to do well there as well," he added. The 23-year-old said he has been working tirelessly in the nets to improve his range of shots and skill level to meet the challenges of batting lower down the order.

"Yeah, we should do that, otherwise, it will be slightly tough. When you go in to bat as a finisher, if a slower one comes into your arc, you should go for 6. Otherwise, if you see in T20, most of the time, if you go into that role of 5 or 6, you will get a maximum of 5 to 6 overs to bat.

"So, I have changed personally. I have been in this role in my childhood as well. I have got the shots going all over the ground. So, I am confident that if I bat at 3 or 5, I have got the technique to adapt. So, if I practise for 1 or 2 days, I can do any role for the team.

"Now, if I come back to

No. 3, I can adapt after a day or two of practice. I am confident of batting anywhere," he noted.

The Indian team has been going through a busy schedule over the last few months, playing across the United Kingdom, Japan and India. The players will now travel to New Zealand soon for an all-format tour.

Tilak conceded that it has been tough but asserted that mental toughness is necessary to play at the highest level.

"It will be slightly challenging. But as professional cricketers, we can't give any excuse because when we play back-to-back series, there will be different time zones and all those things. We are used to it now. If you see, for any youngster coming into the team, it will be slightly challenging.

"But again, you are playing for the country and at the highest level. So, as I said, you should be mentally strong enough to prepare for any challenge, any condi-

tions so that you can become a bigger player," he added.

The 23-year-old hoped to translate the positives from the series against the West Indies into good performances in New Zealand.

"There have been quite a few good things. Especially in the batting, every game we have scored over 200 plus. So, that's a big positive, and that too, we haven't got a proper all-rounder in the team. We have played both Nitish (Reddy) and (Shivam) Dubey as well. But both have done decently well.

"Then Naman (Dhir) bowled well under pressure. As an off-spinner, bowling to right-handers, and that too against a big-gun team like the West Indies.

"So, there are a few good points for us to take into the upcoming series. As a team, we have introspected a few things in the bowling as well. So, hopefully, we will do well in the New Zealand series," he said.

DPS students shine at Inter-Zonal District-Level Football Competition

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, OCT 18

Students of Delhi Public School, Jammu, brought laurels to the school and their parents by securing 1st position in the Inter-Zonal District-Level Football Competition organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports at Khel Gaon, Nagrota, from September 1 to 3, 2026.

The students represented the school in the Under-19 category: - Syed Adil Abbas (XII-G); - Vassal Qayoom (XII-H) and Joshua (XII-B)

The winners were awarded certificates of merit in recognition of their achievement. They received training under the expert



guidance of Mr. Alfred Jacob, the School Football Coach.

The management of DPS Jammu, including Sh. M.K.

Ajatshatru Singh Ji (President, RCT), Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Ji (Pro-Vice Chairperson), and Sh. S.S. Sodhi Ji (Director), along

with Ms. Ruchi Chabra (Principal) and the school staff, congratulated the students and their parents on this achievement.

Sopore XI enter Kilo North Kashmir T20 Premier League Final

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, OCT 18

Sopore XI reached into the final of the Kilo North Kashmir T20 Premier League after defeating Friends XI Lolab in the second semi-final at Chandigarh Cricket Ground, Lolab, with an impressive all-round performance.

Sopore XI will now face Pathan Panthers Lolab in the tournament's grand finale, setting the stage for an exciting title clash between the two finalists.

Meanwhile, NCC Narbal will take on Friends XI Lolab in the third-place play-off scheduled for Monday, October 19. Both teams will be eager to finish their campaign on a winning note and secure a podium finish.

The tournament, which began with the participation of 101 teams, has emerged as a significant platform for promoting local cricketing talent and



encouraging sporting excellence across North Kashmir. The competition has also highlighted the unifying spirit of cricket,

bringing together teams and cricket enthusiasts from different areas.

With the finalists now confirmed, all eyes are on

the grand finale, where Sopore XI and Pathan Panthers Lolab will vie for the coveted championship title.

Delhi Half Marathon men's race: 29-year-old Charles Matata wins with course record, Alemu takes women's crown

NEW DELHI, OCT 18: Kenya's Charles Matata shattered the course record to win the men's elite race at the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon, while Ethiopia's Wudinesh Alemu took the women's crown as nearly 40,000 people turned up on the streets of the national capital on Sunday morning.

Matata clocked 58 minutes and 52 seconds to complete the 21.097 km distance at the iconic Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium and better the previous course record of 58:53, set by Ethiopia's Amedework Walegn in 2020, by one

second. It was also Matata's personal best in the half marathon, bettering his earlier PB of 59:15 recorded in May this year.

The 29-year-old Matata's feat of setting a new course record was noteworthy as the humidity was high at around 90 per cent and the temperature of around 21 degrees Celsius was not ideal for long-distance running. He finished second here in the 2023 edition with a time of 1:00:05.

He will pocket an additional USD 12,000 (Rs 11,39,586) for breaking the

event record of one of Asia's premier road races, besides the winner's purse of USD 27,000 (Rs 25,64,068).

Matata's twin brother, Alex, had won the 2025 edition with a time of 59 minutes and 50 seconds.

Earlier in May, Charles won the title at the Riga Half Marathon in Latvia with a time of 59:15. Before that, in April, he finished second at the Istanbul Half Marathon after being edged out by Alex in a photo finish, with both being credited with a time of 60:01. He won the Beijing Half Marathon last year.

ADC Kulgam inaugurates Divisional-Level Kho Kho Championships

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, OCT 18

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kulgam, Vikar Ahmad Giri, today inaugurated the Divisional-Level Kho Kho Championships for Boys Under-19 and Under-14 categories and the Inter-District UT-Level Netball Tournament at Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS), Kulgam.

The events are being organised by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K, and hosted by the District Youth Services and Sports Office, Kulgam, to promote sportsmanship, discipline and physical fitness among youth.

On the occasion, the ADC highlighted the importance of sports in the overall development of youth and urged the participants to exhibit discipline, teamwork and a spirit of fair play. He also appreciated the depart-



ment's efforts in providing young sportspersons opportunities to showcase their talent at different lev-

els. The competitions have brought together young athletes from various dis-

tricts, providing them a platform to demonstrate their sporting skills and competitive spirit.

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, OCT 18

Anirudh of Delhi, Bharat Kesari and Asian Bronze medallist, clinched the prestigious title of the 19th Mission Dosti International Dangal, organised by the Katra Indian Style Wrestling Association as part of Navratra Utsav 2026.

In the main title bout carrying a prize of 22.5 lakh, Anirudh defeated Maharashtra Kesari Shiva by 4-0 in a closely contested encounter. Benia Min of J&K Police defeated Iranian wrestler Ali Mohammad to win the second main bout worth 21.5 lakh, while Ishaq Mohd (Lallu) defeated Aman of Mirzapur Academy, Delhi, in the third main bout carrying a prize of 21 lakh.

Young wrestler Thappa of Doda also impressed the audience by defeating Iranian wrestler Raza 5-2, while Benia Min registered another impressive victory over an Iranian opponent with a score of 7-1. J&K Police wrestler Mir Khan was adjudged the Best



Wrestler of the event.

Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma was the chief guest and presented the titles in the presence of MLA Katra Baldev Raj Sharma and MLA Udampur Pawan Kumar Gupta. The day-long event featured 21 bouts, with wrestlers from Jammu and Kashmir delivering impressive performances against competi-

tors from outside the Union Territory and abroad.

The event also witnessed a vibrant display of local culture and traditions, accompanied by drum beats from special troupes from Reasi and neighbouring Himachal Pradesh.

The Dangal was organised by the Katra Indian Style Wrestling Association with support from

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, NHPC, J&K Tourism Department, J&K Bank and Janta Katra.

Chairman of the Association Shiv Kumar Sharma appreciated the wrestlers and supporters, emphasising the promotion of young wrestling talent from Jammu and Kashmir through competitions against national and international wrestler.