

## IPL 2025: DC's Karun Nair grabs long-standing chance with fairytale comeback knock



**New Delhi, April 16 :** Think of those frightening and desperate times when you prayed to the Almighty and manifested for a second chance in continuing to do something that you truly love in life. Think of the moment when that second chance finally arrives, and it becomes your responsibility to make the most of it. Something similar happened in case of Karun Nair – one of the members of a rare club of hitting a triple century in Tests. But on December 10, 2022, with his fingers crossed, Nair wrote, “Dear cricket, give me one more chance.” It was a time when Nair was out of Karnataka team across all formats and the sight of breaking into the Indian team again was far away. The thing with social media nowadays is, when an athlete performs well after grabbing a long-standing

ing chance, the posts made in their desperate times, where light at the end of the tunnel wasn't visible, immediately come back into the picture. When Nair lit up Arun Jaitley Stadium by striking a 40-ball 89 against Mumbai Indians on Sunday, it was clearly understandable that his old desperate tweet made headlines again. Playing his first IPL game after nearly three years, Nair announced his return to IPL with a breathtaking half-century coming after 2520 days, especially after being introduced as an impact player and when DC's chase of 206 was 0/1. In front of him were Deepak Chahar, Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah, who all came under hammering from Nair's breathtaking assault. “Look, obviously, we lost an important player in Faf, and we always knew – the few of us batters who

are sitting outside who should be and have to be ready at any given time. So, mentally, I was ready, and obviously looking forward to the chance, whenever it came.” “I felt confident. I felt like I'm well-prepared to play in the IPL if given the opportunity, so it was all about me preparing the way that I have been all through the season, and waiting for my chance.” “I was doing my bit to prepare and be ready for the game, and then it's always a tough call for the team management to pick 11 or 12 players. I've always respected that, and for me it's about preparing and keeping the same process that I've followed, which has worked for me, and just being ready to go out there and perform for the team,” said Nair in the post-match press conference. Nair's stunning attack on Bumrah, arguably the best bowler in the cricketing world, was the best illustration of his readiness. Despite playing just the second game on his return to the game and still being some time away from being at his peak best, Bumrah remains a major threat to most batters – except for Nair on a warm Sunday evening. Nair's onslaught on Bumrah began with him lofting over cover for four, before slashing him between cover and point for another boundary. The real treat came out in the final over of the powerplay as Nair was quick to get into position and whip Bumrah effortlessly over deep backward square leg, where the longer square boundary was and also earned an applause from Hardik Pandya. On the third ball, Bumrah couldn't nail his yorker and Nair made the most of it by slicing through the backward point fence for four more.

But the standout shot was Nair lofting inside-out against a slower delivery from Bumrah for six over extra cover. By the time powerplay was over, Nair reached his fifty off 22 balls and Bumrah's figures read as 0-29 in two overs. “Obviously, I was confident and I was in the flow and I didn't want to stop the flow. It was about picking the right balls and playing to the areas that I wanted to play. He is the best bowler at the moment in world cricket. So, I had to be very watchful of where he is going to bowl. But again, I just backed myself and backed the areas that I wanted to score.” “Quite honestly, I had the confidence that I've played before and I know how it's going to be, and it's nothing different, and I'm not going to be facing anything new. But in my mind it was just about going out there and giving myself a few balls and just getting used to the speed of the game and the atmosphere.” “I just told myself, give yourself time, play normal shots, and then improvise when needed, and fortunately everything came off and I am happy that I batted well. But again, like I said, I would have loved that if the team had gone through and won the game,” added Nair on his plan of countering Bumrah. On Sunday, Nair's impressive performance against MI's bowlers would convince the DC think-tank that they are better off having him in the top order. That seems possible considering Jake Fraser-McGurk is enduring a lean run, while Faf du Plessis has been in and out due to injuries. Moreover, till December 2022, Nair's strike-rate was at 131.15 in T20s. But from January 2023, when his resurgence period began, the strike-rate now

stands at a healthy 171.87. “I don't think my strike rate has ever been low. It's always been high, but yes, I can agree that it's a bit higher now. In the last two seasons, I've been batting well. I haven't changed anything. But I've obviously worked hard to play the shots that I want to play and execute that well,” added Nair. Amidst the fireworks Nair brought out, the Bengaluru-based batter still had one lament – of not making DC win. After he was outfoxed by a ripper from Mitchell Santner, DC crumbled like nine pins and crashed to an unexpected 12-run defeat, their first loss of this season. “For me, it was important that the team wins, but that didn't happen. There is no point in talking about my own game because I played well but could not finish. I am disappointed about that but I will learn from this match and improve on it in the next match.” “Obviously, it was easier used to the set batters to play than for new batters. For me, it was very important for the set batters to be there. We lost the wickets in regular intervals so it was difficult for us in the end. Having said that, he bowled well and put us under pressure. Again, we can learn from this and improve on it. We will prepare well for the next match,” added Nair. Back in December 2022, Nair publicly pleaded for ‘one more chance’ to thrive in cricket on X. But on Sunday evening, Nair's resounding IPL comeback through a breathtaking fifty not only lit up the stadium but has also created a selection headache for DC. The sheer power of Nair's performance underlines that second chances, both in life and cricket, can be manifested, seized and leveraged to their full potential.

## IPL 2025: How decisive ball change rule helped MI clinch thrilling win

**New Delhi, April 16 :** In the run-up to IPL 2025, the ruling to allow the team bowling second in an evening match to get the ball changed anytime after the eleventh over, in a bid to counter the dew factor, was cited by many insiders in the tournament as a good news for a side defending totals. At the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Sunday evening, the ball change rule brought out a decisive twist in Mumbai Indians' quest to defend 205/5 on a pitch that wasn't flat per se. Just after Jasprit Bumrah removed Axar Patel, MI opted to make the ball change. It made sense as super sopplers were at work during the innings break and timeout to ensure dew doesn't have an upper hand. A ball change followed shortly after Jasprit Bumrah removed Axar Patel, and the game was about to take a decisive twist. Kam Sharma, coming in as the impact player for MI, and Mitchell Santner managed to get better control over their craft with the changed ball, which also crucially helped them extract extra bounce, turn and grip. It meant that the cross-bat shots and lofts, which were the staple shots of batters in the match so far owing to the 60m and 66m square boundaries, became the ones fraught with high risk. That strategy worked well for MI as Kam had Tristan Stubbs holing out to long-off and then caught the edge off KL Rahul's booming sweep off



needed off 27 balls. That became more dire when Trent Boult executed five yorkers in a three-run 17th over. The usual expectation from MI was that they would bowl Hardik Pandya for the 18th and 20th overs, while giving Bumrah the penultimate over. But MI

sprung a surprise by making Santner bowl the 18th, which raised a few eyebrows, and when Vipraj Nigam hit him for a six and a four on the first two balls, DC threatened to grab another heist of a victory, just

fifth ball, Santner considerably slowed the delivery coming in from round the wicket and pushed it wide outside the off-stump. Nigam had no time to respond to Santner's slowest ball in the game and he was easily stumped by Ryan Rickleton. After that, despite Ashutosh swatting Bumrah for two fours, MI conjured up three run-outs to grab the win in the penultimate over, including Santner getting a direct hit right from short mid-wicket. “You can say that it (the ball change) was a game-changing moment. When the ball was going one way, it was wet while it was coming back. But the situation was such that we had to take wickets, as they were going at 10-11 runs per over. So, my and Mitchell Santner's role was to take wickets in between. When a new seam comes into play after the ball change, the seam is upright, so it gives you purchase from the wicket, and that was beneficial.” “In such matches, every wicket is important, considering the way they were playing, and how their batting was going on. Obviously, KL is a big name for them, and they finished the game very well in the last match. So all the wickets were important for us at that time. I knew how the ball will go well on the wicket. I didn't expect for dew to come, because in the first innings, I think there was no dew. But as a spinner, you have to take wickets in

between if you want to win games. After Karun got out, the momentum of the game was broken, and two or three wickets came together,” elaborated Kam, the Player of the Match for his 3-36, in the post-game press conference. Before the ball change, MI's spin duo of Kam and Santner had taken two wickets off 44 runs at an economy rate of 1.1. But after the ball change, the duo got three wickets off 31 runs at an economy rate of 7.75. Overall, their figures made for a neat read, 5-75 and economy rate at 9.37. For Kam, playing an impactful hand in MI's win rekindled memories of him picking 13 wickets in the side's title-winning campaign in 2017. After that, with stints at Chennai Super Kings (CSK), where he was a part of a title-winning team twice) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), Kam was unable to leave a similar impact. But on Sunday, in his first game for MI in IPL, at a venue that he knows by the back of his hand, Kam cracked the game open for the side to make a roaring comeback and win the game. “First of all, it's a good moment. I came back after 6-7 years. Where I finished in 2017, I just wanted to continue from there. Actually IPL is such a tournament that you can't predict that you will be in the playing 11 or 12.” “You have to believe yourself that whenever you get a chance, you have to perform.

## Indigenous Knowledge At The Intersection of Culture and Conservation



The Eastern Himalayas among the most biodiverse and ecologically rich regions on Earth. With glacial peaks in the north feeding rivers, lakes and waterfalls downstream, the entire landscape functions as a living system where every organism plays a synergistic role in sustaining life. These water systems nourish dense forest ecologies that house a vast array of endangered, endemic and vulnerable species. Yet, what makes this region exceptional is not just its biodiversity, but the intricate relationship shared between its ecosystems and the indigenous communities that have preserved them for generations.

Home to more than 200 indigenous tribes who speak over 400 languages, the Eastern Himalaya represents a cultural and ecological mosaic. Despite the diversity of cultures, languages and religions, indigenous communities here share a common ethos: a life built on conservation, sustainability and harmony with nature. Their intimate understanding of local ecosystems, passed down through generations via oral traditions, folklore and community practices, serves as an invaluable resource in contemporary efforts toward biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

In the riverine islands of Assam, particularly Majuli and its surrounding areas, the Mising community demonstrates a deep knowledge of aquatic ecosystems. While some engage in it for livelihood, majority continue to fish sustainably, taking only what they need. The annual floods also replenish the ponds and lakes with fish from the surrounding Brahmaputra. This approach ensures that the aquatic ecosystems remain balanced and that species populations are not depleted for commercial gain. Similar stories emerge across other indigenous communities in the region, where traditional knowledge of medicinal plants is central to treating wounds, fevers, and a range of ailments. However, these plants are used only when needed—demonstrating a profound respect for sustainability. Rather than harvesting for mass production or economic gain, the community relies on these plants in alignment with ecological balance and cultural values.

The Khasi community in Meghalaya is another example. Their extensive knowledge of forest mushrooms—many of which are considered delicacies—rarely translates to market commodification. Instead, these mushrooms are consumed within the

community in moderation. Beyond food systems, Khasi traditional knowledge is also embedded in their unique architectural practices. In Pynursla, they use the roots of the Rubber Tree (*Ficus Elastica*) to create living root bridges. These structures, crafted over decades, allow people to cross rivers while also nurturing the ecosystem below by preserving soil moisture and allowing water flow. Unlike modern infrastructure that often disrupts habitats, these bridges promote biodiversity, illustrating a sustainable relationship between humans and nature.

Sustainable architecture is

 **Nayanika Dutta**

a recurring theme in the region's indigenous heritage. Most communities in the Northeast region, like the Wangcho and Apatani tribes construct their homes from bamboo and wood, covering the roof with dry leaves—materials that are biodegradable, locally sourced and well-suited to the terrain. These homes provide them the warmth during harsh winters and also keep cool during hot summers. Similarly, the Bodo and Dimas communities use bamboo to construct storage structures like the Khalim and resilient homes that can withstand seasonal changes.

In flood-prone regions like Majuli and Dhemaji, the Mising community builds elevated homes called Chang Ghars. These stilt houses protect against flooding and double as shelters for livestock during dry seasons. Made using bamboo, wood and thatch, they eliminate the need for carbon-intensive construction materials and promote local resource efficiency. In recent years, even government policies have begun recognizing the value of indigenous practices. The Assam government's inclusion of Chang Ghars under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin

(PMAY-G) reflects an institutional acknowledgment of their climate-resilient architecture. Interestingly, these structures are now being adopted by non-indigenous communities, reflecting a wider acceptance of indigenous innovations.

Parallely, in the space of initiatives centering environmental restoration, agroforestry and habitat restoration are also deeply rooted in indigenous practices. Unlike monocropping, which depletes soil and biodiversity, indigenous farming systems prioritize crop diversity and ecological balance. Many households maintain small patches of forest with gardens, growing vegetables, fruits and medicinal plants that are friendly to the local ecosystem. These methods not only preserve

soil fertility and promote biodiversity, but also ensure food security in the face of climate uncertainties. Additionally, initiatives like the People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) aim to document indigenous species and traditional knowledge associated with their use. This not only preserves information but also ensures that communities retain agency over their intellectual and ecological heritage.

What sets indigenous knowledge apart is its dynamic, adaptable nature. Far from being static or archaic, it evolves alongside the environment. For instance, the Mising community has modified

traditional boat-making techniques to navigate the unpredictable Brahmaputra. Modern motors are now fitted to traditional wooden boats to adapt to changing water currents and increasing demands of commute. One can observe this practical evolution while traveling from Jorhat to Kartik Chapori, where Mising boatmen skillfully maneuver vessels with a blend of ancestral wisdom and contemporary adaptation.

Oral traditions, myths and community forest management play a vital role in preserving this knowledge. The Khasi sacred groves, for example, ensures long-term conservation by designating forest areas as spiritually significant. Similarly, the Mising people view trees as protectors and celestial bodies that anchor their respect for the environment. These cultural narratives provide ethical frameworks for environmental stewardship, reinforcing sustainable behaviors across generations.

In facing the modern crises of biodiversity loss and natural disasters, the world must look beyond conventional models of development and turn to indigenous wisdom that has proven its effectiveness for centuries. These communities do not view biodiversity as a resource to be exploited, but as kin to be protected. Their practices reflect an understanding of balance—between taking and giving, using and conserving. The Eastern Himalaya is more than just a biodiversity hotspot—it is a living example of how human life can coexist with nature through mutual respect and sustainable practices. As we move forward, it is imperative to mainstream indigenous knowledge into biodiversity action plans, climate policies and disaster resilience strategies.

*Balipara Foundation, Assam*