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# Long shuttle for Mumbai shuttlers

## Lack of facilities hampers the growth of young city players, two of whom have qualified for World Junior Badminton

**G Krishnan** • MUMBAI

Two young shuttlers from Mumbai, **Harsheel Dani** and **Riya Pillai**, are preparing at the India camp in Lucknow for the World Junior Badminton to be held in Japan from October 25.



It has not been easy for Dani and Pillai. Dani, 16, travels from Vile Parle by local train to Goregaon Sports Club daily for training under former international player Uday Pawar whereas the 18-year-old Pillai commutes from Sion to South Mumbai's PG Hindu Gymkhana for fitness sessions in the morning and to Matunga in the afternoon for badminton skills.



Travelling takes a toll on the young shuttlers, unlike in the Pullela Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad or the Prakash Padukone Academy in Bangalore where everything is provided under one roof. Says State coach Mangrish Palekar, "The main problem here is lack of proper infrastructure. We practise in clubs where the members are given preference. Our time at the courts are restricted. Besides, you need to travel a lot."

Dani said it was tough training in Mumbai with not much facilities like other centres in south India. "It would be of greater help if we stayed closer to the courts to avoid travelling. We need to focus on the game as I know I have limited time to play and that I have to give 100 per cent in each practice session," Dani said. Despite these drawbacks, Dani and Pillai have made it to the Indian team for their maiden World Junior appearances. They are determined to capitalise on this. Dani said: "The World Juniors will give me exposure and show me where I stand."

Palekar said: "It should give Riya the confidence to do well in the junior nationals (that will be in Imphal following the World Juniors) and she will be able to face her opponents with a better frame of mind."