



## **Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026: Fergus Browning from Terengganu, Malaysia Blazes the Trail; Indian Asian Championship medallist Harshveer Singh Impresses, leads India Challenge in High-Speed Prologue**

**Pune, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026:** India's first-ever Continental multi-stage road race for men burst into life on Monday afternoon as the Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026 rolled out from Goodluck Chowk near Deccan Gymkhana.

The Prologue stage officially launched the five-day spectacle, thereby setting the competitive tone for what promises to be a landmark week in Indian cycling.

At exactly 1:30 pm, India's Sachin Desai of the Indian National Development Team became the first rider to roll out, with the crowd erupting in chants of "Sachin, Sachin" at the start point.

However, when the dust settled, it was **Fergus Browning** who stamped his authority on the opening day. Riding for **Terengganu Cycling Team, Malaysia** the Australian produced a blistering ride to stop the clock at **08:05:89 seconds**.

Averaging over 50 kilometres per hour, **Browning** not only claimed the fastest time but also earned the coveted **Yellow Jersey**, securing for Stage 1 beginning Tuesday.

*"I had gone out pretty hard and, with the downhill coming to the finish, you just try to hang on and go as fast as you can," Browning said after finishing first in Prologue. "I didn't really know what to expect coming here. Obviously, it's a race that's never happened before. Hats off to the race organisers, the roads already today were amazing and well patrolled, so, yeah, I can't complain. It was amazing. I'm definitely looking forward to the hillier stages. I prefer the climbs. But we get through day by day and see how the rest of the race unfolds." he adds*

The narrow margins at the top underlined the intensity of the contest. Browning's competitor **Dylan Hopkins** also from Australia, representing **Roojai Insurance Winspace, Thailand** finished second, just fractions behind with a time of **08:06:33**.

**Estonia's Andreas Miltiadis of Quick Pro Team** secured third place in **08:08:92**, followed by **Belgium's Yorben Lauryssen of Tarteletto-Isorex (08:11:49)**. Completing the top five was **Zeb Kyffin**, also from the **Terengganu** outfit, finishing seven seconds off the leader. Led by Browning, the top five riders will lead the 164 strong pelotons into Stage 1, having secured the front positions on the starting grid.

Among the home contingent, **Harshveer Singh Sekhon**, Indian National Team emerged as the fastest Indian and the third-fastest Asian, posting a time of **08:42:07** to secure the 26th starting position for Stage 1. He was followed by **Vishwajeet Singh**, Indian National Team who



finished in **08:47:33**, and **Naveen John**, Indian National Team who clocked **08:49:44**, placing them 35th and 43rd, respectively, on the starting grid for Stage 1.

Their performances reflected steady progress against an elite international field and ensured a respectable showing on a demanding opening day. It was a rare chance to measure themselves against UCI-level opposition on home roads, absorbing the demands of elite race speed, pacing and precision.

The Prologue ran from Goodluck Chowk to the Deccan Gymkhana bus stop, covering a fast, technical 7.5 km circuit through the city. Unlike mass-start stages, the format demanded focus and discipline, with 164 riders setting off individually at one-minute gaps.

Classified as a Union Cycliste Internationale 2.2 event, the Bajaj Pune Grand Tour carries tangible global significance. Performances here contribute valuable ranking points towards qualification for the LA 2028 Summer Olympics, elevating the stakes for riders from every continent.

Attention now shifts to Tuesday's Stage 1, the Mulshi–Maval Miles, which will roll out from TCS Circle in Hinjewadi Phase 3. Spanning 87.2 km with an elevation gain of 828 metres, the route blends urban stretches with sharp turns and rolling terrain, promising the first real test of team tactics and endurance.

With four more stages to come, from punishing ghat climbs to a dramatic city-centre finale, the Prologue has done its job. It has set the order, ignited the competition and announced that the Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026 is not merely underway, but already delivering on its promise as India's bold entry into world-class cycling.

### **Information About Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026**

Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026 is India's first-ever UCI 2.2 category multi-stage, five-day Continental Cycling Race for Men, marks a watershed moment for the India's presence in the global professional circuit. A gruelling 437-km route passes through the diverse terrains of Deccan Plateau and Sahyadri Ranges, the event has received an unprecedented field of 171 elite riders from 29 teams representing five continents and 35 countries. Organised by Pune District Administration, Government of Maharashtra under the aegis of Cycling Federation of India, the race combines high-performance sporting excellence, celebrating Pune's cultural heritage, historic landmarks and rural tourism through 9 talukas and 150 villages.

### **World-Class Infrastructure & Global Ambition**

Central to the Bajaj Pune Grand Tour's success is a massive infrastructure overhaul, highlighted by the rapid road construction, upgrades with safety protocols in just 75 days. This project is part of a broader district-wide initiative in upgrading the road infrastructure to meet stringent



UCI guidelines, ensuring top-tier safety and ride quality. By delivering this world-class arena, Bajaj Pune Grand Tour not only reclaims Pune's legacy as India's "Cycle Capital" but also establishes a permanent blueprint for sustainable urban-rural development and positions India as a premier destination for international sports tourism and elite competitive cycling.

#### **Race Stages:**

- **STAGE 1: MULSHI-MAVAL MILES (87.2 KM, Elevation 828 M):** Weaving through Pune's IT hub Hinjewadi, this opening stage combines flat sprints with sharp urban turns, focusing on landmarks and scenery, blending tech with nature.
- **21 Jan 2026: STAGE 2: MARATHA HERITAGE CIRCUIT (105.3 KM, Elevation 1051 M):** Cyclists will ascend the challenging ghats, facing steep gradients of the Purandar Fort, Sinhagad and Khadakwasla Lake, making the Day-2 a true test of endurance.
- **22 Jan 2026: STAGE 3: WESTERN GHATS GATEWAY (134 KM, Elevation 1024 M):** Stretching across the Deccan plateau from Purandar to Baramati, Day-3 favours speed and tactical prowess, with crosswinds and rolling terrain to keep competitors on edge.
- **23 Jan 2026: STAGE 4: PUNE PRIDE LOOP (95 KM, Elevation 578 M):** The final phase winds through the urban sprawls of Pune, passing through modernity and historic relevance like Shaniwar Wada, featuring technical sections and a dramatic finish.

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