



British tennis star Andy Murray holds aloft the Queen's Cup after winning the final against Jo-Wilfred Tsonga of France at Queen's Club in London yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

# Rohit coming of age

Cricket

PTI, Antigua

Even as the Indian cricket coach Duncan Fletcher joins the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Shane Warne in heaping praise on batsman Rohit Sharma, the purists only hope that it's not again just a case of false dawn.

For a batsman of Rohit's calibre, it is surprising that he has had a roller-coaster ride so far in his career and has struggled to foment his place in the Indian national side.

Rohit has inspired India to two of its three ODI wins in the ongoing series against the West Indies with unbeaten knocks of 68 and 86.

But his success in the past have almost inevitably followed a string of failures, which explains why his career still flounders at an average 30.63 after 64 games and why he is still not seen fit enough for Tests.

In 2008 in Australia, Rohit played two successive unbeaten knocks of 39 and 70 in a triangular series before his career fell in a mire and only 496 runs accrued over the next 33 one-day internationals with just two half centuries.

Left out in the cold in 2009, he made a roaring comeback in Zimbabwe last year with successive centuries against the hosts and Sri Lanka in a triangular before the almost inevitable rut hit him again - 290 runs from the next 17 one-day internationals with just one half century.

He has now yet again made screaming

headlines with two purest of knocks and critics believe that this time it is for real.

"He's far more disciplined now," concedes stand-in-skipper Suresh Raina.

Rohit himself said that he "wants this tour to count" for him.

While Raina feels that "it's the time he has spent with Sachin for Mumbai Indians", Rohit feels missing out on the World Cup was a catalyst and that he has worked "unbelievably hard on his cricket in the last three months".

Rohit actually never needed to work on his cricket, for many are convinced he is the most talented young batsman in the world. It's his mind which is said to have been his own worst enemy.

From the time he lazily walks up to the crease; languidly settles into his stance and strokes a few in the outfield, Rohit seems so superior to the mortals around him that he tends to get bored all too easily and throws it away.

He seems devoid of hunger; unmindful of the use he could be to himself and to his country. He has truckloads of time and this rare combination of technical astuteness and innovation which Ramnaresh Sarwan concedes "allows him to sneak upon you and within no time he has 40 on the board."

Ironically, the region which saw him touch his nadir in 2009 - only 15 runs from four ODIs - could restore him to the one-day side and earn him a Test cap.

## Jimmy defends Eng pacers

ANI, London

England fast bowler James Anderson has defended his fast bowling colleagues over their 'below-par performance' in last week's drawn second Test against Sri Lanka.

Anderson had missed the match at Lord's after suffering a side strain in the first Test.

In his absence, Stuart Broad, Steven Finn and Chris Tremlett had laboured to dismiss the Sri Lankan batsmen without much success.

"I think it was a one-off game. It was a flat pitch. It didn't look like it swung much so it was one of those games where things didn't quite go to plan," The Daily Telegraph quoted Anderson, as saying.

"But one below-average performance doesn't make us a bad bowling unit. We have had two years of good success. A lot has been made of the bowling attack last week and some of it has been a little bit harsh."

"On a flat pitch it can happen in Test cricket, you can have games where you struggle to get 20 wickets," he added.

## New football coach

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than Rubcic.

The NTMC also decided to start the national camp from June 22 as most of national team's players, who play for Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, will be available for the camp after that date. Assistant coaches Golam Zilani and Mahbubur Rahman Roxy will conduct the training camp until a new coach is appointed.

Accepting the blame for not giving enough time to prepare the national team ahead of pre-qualifiers, Roy said that some unplanned fixtures, nation-wide strikes from political parties and inclement weather left little time for the national team to prepare.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh-born Danish booter Jamal Bhuiyan arrived in Dhaka on Sunday after his call-up for the 27-member preliminary squad earlier.

"We will introduce him tomorrow (Tuesday) to the coaches. We have planned to arrange training for Jamal with the clubs' as we are yet to start the national camp," said Roy. NTMC member Imtiaz Sultan Jonny said, "We will get an idea about how talented he is after seeing those training sessions."

## Williams happy

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just getting back together and practising next to her and looking over and seeing her play so well. I'm like, okay, I've got to do better."

The younger Williams said she is more appreciative than ever of her career.

"This has given me a whole new perspective on my career and not taking things for granted. There were times when I'm like, 'Oh, another match, and this is so hard."

"But now I'm out here and I could have had a chance where I could never be out here again.

"Being at the top of your game, having to have something like that happen randomly was it's tough, and it really makes me appreciate things."

# Murray king of Queen's

Tennis

AFP, London

Britain's Andy Murray clinched his second Queen's title with a 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 victory over French fifth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the final on Monday.

Murray, who also won the Wimbledon warm-up event in 2009, is the first Briton to lift the Queen's trophy twice since Francis Gordon Lowe achieved his second of three titles in 1914.

It was also Murray's first ATP title since beating Roger Federer at the Shanghai Masters in October and earned the Scot a cheque for 77,500 euros (\$112,000).

More important than any financial gain, this gutsy victory was the perfect confidence boost for the world number four ahead of Wimbledon, which starts in a week's time.

Murray arrived in west London to begin his grass-court campaign nursing serious concerns over the ankle ligament injury he suffered at the French Open.

But the second seed has been able to put aside those fears as the ankle held up well and the manner of this come-from-behind win will have pleased him even more.

Murray said: "Tsonga was playing a different sport to me in the first two sets. He's so much fun to watch.

"He was using variation on his serve, and a lot of aggression. But I managed to break him eventually.

"My ankle has got much better. This has been one of the most funs weeks I've had on the tour. I've loved it."

Tsonga had beaten Murray in a friendly game of table-tennis as they waited in vain for the rain to relent on Sunday, but it was not a lucky omen for the fifth seed in the rescheduled final.

Tsonga landed the first blow as he broke for a 4-2 lead when he correctly challenged that his forehand was in.

The flamboyant Frenchman has a well-deserved reputation as one of the game's great entertainers and he showed off his

trademark diving volley, as well as an athletic overhead smash, to keep Murray at bay in the next game.

Murray was struggling to find the majestic form that demolished three-time Wimbledon finalist Andy Roddick in less than an hour in the semi-finals.

Roddick had pleaded with Murray to "keep it social" during that rout but Tsonga was a far more obdurate opponent.

Even when Murray produced a sublime pass on the run to bring up two break points at 3-5, Tsonga came up with a perfect forehand followed by a big serve to get out of trouble and clinch the first set.

Tsonga, who had the added incentive of avenging last year's quarter-final defeat by Murray at Wimbledon, won the point of the match to make it 2-2 in the second set by keeping his balance to chase down a net cord and then a lob before driving a blistering forehand winner.

To his credit, Murray kept battling away. He had four break points for a 5-3 lead, but Tsonga found a way out of trouble each time.

Tsonga had two break points of his own at 5-5 and this time Murray caught a break as a net cord saved the second.

Both players were at their best now and Murray's remarkable forehand through his legs was met with more Tsonga acrobatics as the Frenchman held serve to set up a tie-break.

Murray would not be denied though. He kept the pressure on and, aided by some wayward Tsonga ground-strokes, he easily won the breaker to earn a final set decider.

It was Murray who threatened first at 1-1, but the Scot squandered his ninth and 10th break points of the match.

There was no sign of Murray easing off, however, and he finally broke for the first time when Tsonga drifted a forehand wide in the fifth game.

Murray's confidence was sky-high and he moved 5-3 ahead with another between-the-legs winner from an acute angle near the net.

There was no way back for Tsonga and he finally seemed to surrender as Murray served out the win.

## Windies score 249 for 8

SPORT DESK

It was Kieron Pollard's turn to avert disaster for the West Indies as the burly Trinidadian scored a face-saving 70 in the 4th ODI against India at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua yesterday to help his team notch up a competitive 249.

Sent in to bat, West Indies were soon in familiar disarray, losing opener Danza Hyatt and experienced bat Ramnaresh Sarwan within five overs to India's new ball pair of Praveen Kumar and Ishant Sharma. Opener Lendl Simmons kept one end going with an impressive 78-ball 67, but the home team's frailty against spinners was on display at the other end with leg-spinner Amit Mishra extracting Darren Bravo and Marlon Samuels in quick time.

All seemed lost when Simmons was run out with the scoreboard reading 103 for 5. As has been seen throughout the five-match series, West Indies' batting seem to rely more on their lower order batting than their top order. Yesterday as well, it was Pollard who arrested the slide with a much-needed innings of 70 that contained six 4s and two 6s, building a 96-run partnership with keeper Carlton Baugh.

Pollard's dismissal to off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin brought in the hero of the third match, Andre Russell, who reprised his deeds with an innings of 25 from 14 balls, inclusive of three 4s and one 6 to give the Windies their highest score of the series. India lead the five-match series 3-0.

## BFF to start

FROM PAGE 16

damage to the credibility of the football federation. He placed his written request with paperclippings.

Meanwhile, supporters' group of Abahani, Mohammedan and Muktiyoddha Sangsad jointly placed a memorandum yesterday addressed to BFF president Kazi Salahuddin demanding measures to stop match fixing. About a hundred supporters from those three clubs along with a fan group of Brothers Union demonstrated their protests in front of the BFF house before placing their demand.

# Caroline clinches home crown

Tennis

AFP, Copenhagen

Top-ranked Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark won her second straight Sony Ericsson Open title Sunday, beating fourth-seeded Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-4 in the final.

Wozniacki did not lose a set all week in Copenhagen, and the 20-year-old Dane dominated from start to finish to claim her fifth WTA title of the year in front of a sellout home crowd at the indoor Forum Arena.

"It's a special feeling on my home court, but it wouldn't have been quite so special without the support," she said.

The 38th-ranked Safarova had lost the first set in all her matches at the tournament, and on Sunday she again started poorly in an error-filled opening set.

As in previous matches, the Czech lefty gradually improved her game, but against the world's top-ranked player, there was to be no repeat of her earlier comebacks.

Safarova converted her only break point in the match to even the second set at 2-2, but Wozniacki sealed the win in 1 hour, 7 minutes.

Wozniacki has won 17 WTA titles.

Despite her dominance on the WTA circuit, Wozniacki has yet to win a major title. The former junior Wimbledon champion will again aim to silence the skeptics when the year's third Grand Slam tournament begins at the All England Club on June 20.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Larger portion

5 Belle of the ball, maybe

8 Enos' grandpa

12 Conception

13 Wrath

14 Missile shelter

15 Standard

16 Bando of baseball

17 Despot

18 Saw things in the dark?

20 Sleeping sickness carrier

22 Mainlander's memento

23 Slip up

24 Green gem

27 Full exposure

32 "The Greatest"

33 Helgenberger series

34 "Barney Miller" actor

35 Periods of relief

38 Mail carrier (Abbr.)

39 Hall-of-Famer Williams

40 Stannum

42 Not digital

45 Impact

49 For fear that

50 Novelist Radcliffe

52 Colorful fish

53 Appointment

54 Fond du —, Wis.

Solution time: 25 mins.

55 Toy block name

56 Lacked originality

57 Candle count

58 Skittish wildlife

DOWN

1 Have an objection

2 Stench

3 Withered

4 Mexican entree

5 Separate

6 Detergent brand

7 Region

8 Toward the rear, nautically

9 Woe

10 "Oh, woe!"

11 Still others

19 Yours truly

21 Witness

24 Mayo container

25 Hearty brew

26 Aversion

28 Work with

29 Length from here to there

30 Bribe

31 "Help!"

36 Struck repeatedly

37 Altar affirmative

38 Open out

41 In that case

42 "M\*A\*S\*H" star

43 Tide type

44 Festive

46 Duel tool

47 Zoo structure

48 Hammer-wielding deity

51 Kvetch

### TESTS THROUGH TIME



VICTOR TRUMPER

## When passion ruled

Talk to anyone enamoured of the charms of cricket and they will probably talk with misty eyes of the 'Golden Age'.

This period, generally agreed to be the 24 years between 1890 and 1914, saw some of the greatest stars of all time gracing the game. Most of the great cricketers were amateurs. They played cricket out of love for the sport, and not because of financial considerations. Indeed, most of the great names of the period had other jobs, and cricket was their passion.

The game in England was lit bright with the likes of KS Ranjitsinghi, CB Fry, Gilbert Jessop, and of course WG Grace. The overarching characteristic of the period was the romance brought to the game by these characters. Ranji changed batsmanship forever with his delicate wristwork opening up new areas of scoring, and his extraordinary batting lives on in today's 360 degree strokeplay.

If you think Virender Sehwag is the epitome of aggressive batsmanship, you probably have not heard of Gilbert Jessop. An all-rounder capable of brutal batting, many of his best innings were scored at a rate of almost 100 runs/hour, that too on uncovered pitches. In his debut for his native Gloucestershire, he came to the crease to save a hatrick, and hit the first ball for four. In 1902, he won the Oval Test against Australia single-handedly. Coming in at 48 for 5 he, he smashed a 75-minute 104.

Among the professional cricketers, England's fast medium bowler Sydney Barnes was one for the ages. He averaged an unbelievable 8.06 runs per wicket in 27 Tests, a figure that is unlikely ever to be challenged.

The man that best exemplified the period, however, was the Australian amateur Victor Trumper. Even with the presence of the supreme Don Bradman in its annals, Trumper occupies a place of unparalleled reverence in Australian cricket.

By all accounts, what set him apart was his batting on pitches marred by rain. In these near-impossible circumstances, he not only batted with grace, but had the hand-eye coordination to dominate the bowlers.

Stories abound of Trumper -- in which sense he was the Australian equivalent of England's monumental Dr. Grace. But there the comparison ends, as Grace was the epitome of the roguish amateur who would bend laws to his will, while Trumper was the personification of cricket's elusive spirit.

He once played in a club game with a small bat that belonged to a boy, and duly dispatched all comers to all corners for a swashbuckling century. His Test exploits were modest by modern-day standards -- an average of 39 from 48 Tests -- but batting in those times was fairly more difficult than it is now. Above all, he was an entertainer, often throwing caution to the wind to stamp his authority on the bowlers with his luminous strokeplay. In that sense, he might not have been out of place in today's game after all.

He died in 1915 from Bright's disease, and was mourned by all of Australia.

The 'Golden Age' was brought to an abrupt and poignant close by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1914. Not only was cricket halted for five years, but many cricketers lost their lives in combat, ensuring that cricket would never be the same again.

-- Sakeb Subhan

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CRYPTOQUIP

R Z D K S Z K J N C L L X H N V T J K  
K O S K X L N X M L R Z K O L S H I L V  
C N H J L D I R W O K X T H J O S D L :  
D N M V R L H D ' C N M W L H D .  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A PERSON MAILS  
SOME LETTERS VIA SAME-DAY DELIVERY,  
WOULD YOU SAY THEY'RE SENT POST-HASTE?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals P