



IT'S TIME INDIA STARTS TALKING ABOUT SINGLES, SAYS MAHESH BHUPATHI | 24

STRIKER ANTOINE GRIEZMANN ON TARGET AS ATLETICO MADRID BEAT GETAFE IN LA LIGA | 24



# MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Dominant Djokovic Brushes Aside Nadal For Record 7th Australian Open Crown

TIMES IN MELBOURNE

Prajwal.Hegde@timesgroup.com

Melbourne: Novak Djokovic was so far ahead in the Australian Open final, he was out of sight. The winner-ripping, chest-thumping 31-year-old put on a spectacular show on Sunday night at the packed to the rafters Rod Laver Arena. The top seed painted the lines, ran his opponent around court as if the 17-time major winner Rafael Nadal was a kindergarten kid looking for a spare wheel, he toyed and teased en route to a clinical 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 win.

Djokovic's two hours and four minutes on court in which he hit 34 winners saw him claim a record seventh Australian Open title, the first man in history to do so. The Serb sank to the court, letting out a loud shout that echoed across the stadium, before raising his hands in triumph as one section of the crowd sat stunned while the other was on its feet, celebrating a great performance.

"A year ago, I had a surgery on my elbow, now to be standing here having won three of four Grand Slam titles is amazing. I'm speechless," Djokovic, who has now won 15 major titles, three of them in succession, said. "A trophy like this is more special when you have someone so close in your life to share it with, my family, my wife Jelena, son Stefan and daughter Tara. They have sacrificed a lot for me to live my dream. I hope not to ever take that for granted."

The world No. 1, who took home \$4,100,000 and 2000 points for the victory, had warm words for the Spaniard, who crossed the net to congratulate his opponent. "You came back from injury and since September you hadn't played until here, you've defined fighting spirit and resilience," he said.

Nadal, who was off the pace right from the start in what was his first tournament in five months, said: "Today, I had somebody

who played much better than me. Even if this night was not for me, it was important to be here, coming back from injury. I will keep fighting, keep working for the most important titles. Sometimes in these tough moments I have been injured, sometimes it is the opponent who is better."

Djokovic was a blast in his opening essay, while Nadal — sporting a tee the colour of Tang, the fruit-flavored favourite of the 70s, the cut off sleeves lending to the retro blend — stumbled in his first service game. The remodelled serve, broken only twice so far in the tournament, was busted at 15 when a Nadal forehand landed long. On the other hand, the Serb was cutting like a knife. The Spaniard failed to win a point on Djokovic's first two service games. It wasn't until the fourth game that Nadal got on the scoreboard and that after fighting off a break point.

Nadal, showed signs of a fight back when he held to love in the eighth game. He then won his first point of the set on his opponent's serve. Though Nadal got more play in the second set it wasn't quite enough to make a match of it, given how impressive Djokovic was, his play matching the electric blue of his tee.

Mistimed shots, inconsistency, doubts and a net cord gave the Serb an early break in the fifth game. Nadal, egged on by his fans, then had a hint of a chance in the next game, but the Serb shut him out — fists clenched and eyes blazing — he broke again and then served out at love.

As supreme as Djokovic was in the first two sets, only four unforced errors against his opponent's count of 20, Nadal was all over the place — slow, soft, uncertain. The duo's 53rd meeting was quickly turning into Djokovic's party. Nadal took a toilet break at the end of the second set, not because he needed to but because he wanted to grab at anything that might trigger a shift in momentum.

Down 15-40 in the third game of the third set, Nadal staged a counter to save the first break point, but a delicate drop shot forced the error, putting the Serb ahead in the contest.



## FINAL STATS

1-Novak Djokovic bt 2-Rafael Nadal  
6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in 2 hours 4 minutes

Djokovic		Nadal
8	Aces	3
0	Double Faults	2
34	Winners	21
9	Unforced errors	28
5/8	Break point conv.	0/1
89	Total points won	53

KING OF THE COURT: Novak Djokovic exults after winning the final



When I contemplate the journey I have had the last 12 months, the surgery exactly 12 months ago, to be standing here managing to win this title and three of the four majors is amazing. I'm speechless.

Getty Images



Djokovic broke his tie with Roger Federer and Roy Emerson for most Australian Open men's titles. He also broke a tie with Pete Sampras for third-most Grand Slam trophies; Djokovic (15 titles) now trails only Federer (20) and Nadal (17)

JODI RIGHT TOH FUTURE BRIGHT  
Tax Saving and Wealth Creation

ELSS  
Equity Linked  
Savings Scheme

www.iciprpfm.com

An investor education initiative by  
**ICICI PRUDENTIAL MUTUAL FUND**  
TARAKKI KAREINI

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

## Novak: Not looking at Roger's feat now

Prajwal.Hegde@timesgroup.com

Melbourne: Novak Djokovic is 15 going on 20.

The world No. 1, who passed his idol, American legend Pete Sampras, on the Grand Slam scale when he claimed a record seventh Australian Open title, didn't say it in so many words, but he might as well have screamed, "watch out, Roger, I'm coming for your record."

Roger Federer, the superstar Swiss' 20 major titles that raised the bar for men's tennis, is suddenly not looking as unbeatable as it once did. World No. 2 Rafael Nadal is in second position with 17 and the Serb is right behind them.

"I'm aware that making history of the sport that I truly love is something special. It motivates me," the 31-year-old acknowledged. "I'm not trying to think too much in advance. I want to focus on improving my game and maintaining the overall well-being that I have — mental, physical, emotional. I want to compete at such a high level and have a shot at eventually getting closer to Roger's record."

Djokovic, of the fast-improving serve and rapier return, said he always backs himself. "I don't want to sound arrogant, but I always believe in myself. That's the biggest secret of my success, always digging deep in the moments when you're facing adversity, visualizing yourself as a winner, trying to be in a positive state of mind."

He added: "I'm a true believer in visualization. I had to do it 12 months ago after the surgery because I wasn't playing well, I wasn't feeling good on the court, I was ques-



Djokovic with the trophy

tioning everything. It was highly unlikely I would be holding three Slams."

Djokovic, who can be the holder of all four Slams for the second time in his career — after his 2015-16 run — should he win the French Open in June, a title Nadal has won 11 times, said he wouldn't go so far as to say that he had figured out the Spaniard.

"I don't want that to bounce back at me in any way in the future. I might have figured him out for the match, but not for life," he said. "I'm sure we're still going to have a lot of matches against each other on different surfaces. I look forward to it. This rivalry has been the most significant rivalry, the one that impacted me on a personal and professional level than most in my life."

Nadal said he didn't have the extra gear he needed against Djokovic in the final.

"Five months without competing. That something else probably I don't have it yet," the world No. 2 said. "I was playing great in offensive positions in the two weeks, but not that much on the defensive game. To play against a player like him, playing the way he played tonight, I needed that defensive game to finally have the chance to be offensive."

## Career Slam for Herbert-Mahut duo

Melbourne: Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut completed a career Grand Slam in men's doubles by winning the Australian Open on Sunday.

The French pair beat Henri Kontinen of Finland and John Peers of Australia 6-4, 7-6 (1) in the final. Herbert and Mahut now own four major doubles titles. They won the US Open in 2015, Wimbledon in 2016 and the French Open in 2018. AP



Rafael Nadal with the runner-up trophy

## NOVAK GRAPH

Born: May 22, 1987 in Belgrade

Age: 31

Grand Slam titles: 15

Australian Open: 7 (2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019)

French Open: 1 (2016)

Wimbledon: 4 (2011, 2014, 2015, 2018)

US Open: 3 (2011, 2015, 2018)

ATP Finals titles: 5

ATP World Tour Masters 1000 series: 32

Has held the No. 1 spot in ATP rankings for over 230 weeks

Eighth player in history to achieve the career Grand Slam, third to hold all four major titles at once

Only male player to have won all nine of the Masters 1000 tournaments



Congratulations @DjokerNole — King of AO and lots, lots more to come. You make it look easy, it's not. Your dedication and hard work is there for all to see. More records await. Rocket.

Rod Laver | TENNIS LEGEND

Nine errors... in 3 sets... Unfathomable... I have never seen @DjokerNole play a better match... Mastery at it's finest...

Chris Evert | TENNIS LEGEND

Unbelievable! @DjokerNole wins his 7th Australian Open title. A truly superhuman performance. Absolutely ruthless until the end vs Nadal.

Pat Cash | FORMER PLAYER

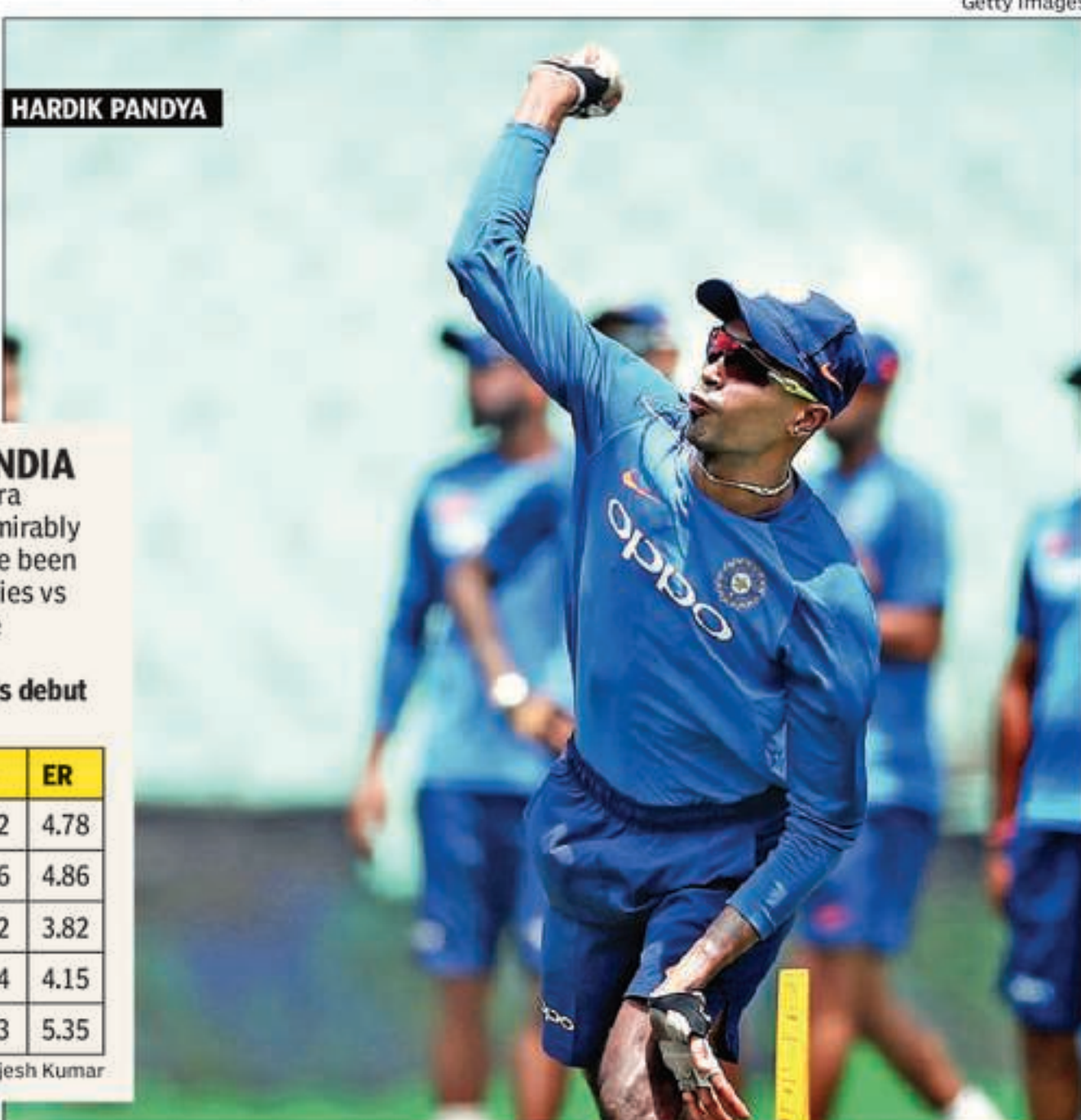
Unbelievable. Novak probably could have won, no matter who the opponent was.

Carlos Moya | NADAL'S COACH

## Focus on Hardik's inclusion as India look to seal ODI series

Unassailable Lead Would Be Fitting Revenge For 0-4 Loss To NZ In 2014

Mount Maunganui: With a well-deserved break on the cards, India captain Virat Kohli will be aiming to seal the five-match series when his team takes on a confused New Zealand in the third ODI, here on Monday. The Indian captain has been given a break as part of BCCI's workload management programme and he would ensure that he finishes his assignment Down Under on a high after the maiden Test and ODI victories in Australia.



HARDIK PANDYA

## WRIST MAGIC WORKING FOR INDIA

Wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal have been serving India's cause admirably in ODIs for more than a year now. They have been the standout performers in the ongoing series vs New Zealand too so far. The following table highlights their stellar returns:

Top ODI wicket-takers since Kuldeep Yadav's debut (June 23, 2017)

Bowler	For	M	Wkts	Ave	SR	ER
K Yadav	Ind	37	77	20.11	25.2	4.78
Y Chahal	Ind	34	60	24.85	30.6	4.86
R Khan	Afg	23	55	14.16	22.2	3.82
J Bumrah	Ind	28	52	18.30	26.4	4.15
A Rashid	Eng	29	49	27.10	30.3	5.35

Rajesh Kumar

An unassailable 3-0 lead would be a fitting revenge to India's abject 0-4 humiliation during the 2014 limited overs series.

One of the primary focus of Monday's encounter could be inclusion of Indian cricket's latest enfant terrible Hardik Pandya, who is coming back from provisional suspension for his loose talk on a TV chat show. Pandya's presence lends solidity and balance to the side and the skipper has time and again admitted it.

The Baroda all rounder's replacement Vijay Shankar is a decent cricketer but is yet to possess the X factor that Pandya has. Pandya is a few clicks quicker than Shankar whose bowling in the three ODIs that he has played has not been penetrative.

Pandya can also bat at No. 6 if situation arises and his busy approach in batting can also get the scoreboard ticking in middle overs as the skipper wants. Otherwise Indian team doesn't require much tinkering. New Zealand, on the other hand, have looked clueless against India's wrist-spin duo of Kul-

deep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, who accounted for 12 of the 20 wickets in the last two ODIs.

Kuldeep has looked the most menacing as he claimed two four-wicket hauls in the first two ODIs, while Chahal returned with two wickets in both the matches. Seamers Bhuvneshwar Ku-

mar and Mohammed Shami also have done their job well, getting crucial breakthroughs for the team.

India's batting too have complemented the bowlers, looking rock solid in both the games with Shikhar Dhawan's return to form lending the team the much-needed support at the top. PTI

## NEW ZEALAND POLICE ISSUES 'FUNNY WARNING'

Mount Maunganui: Highlighting Indian cricket team's domination of the hosts in a unique and amusing way, the Easter District Police of New Zealand has come up with a 'warning' for the citizens. India's win in the second ODI prompted the Easter District Police to praise the visitors on social media. "Police would like to issue a warning to members of the public about the exploits of a group touring the country at the moment," the post, accompanied by a group picture of the Indian team, on their

facebook account read. "Witnesses report seeing this group badly assault an innocent looking bunch of New Zealanders in both Napier and Mt. Maunganui in the last week. Extra care should be taken if you are carrying anything that looks like a cricket bat or ball."

The post found a chord with the fans with former New Zealand all-rounder Scott Styris also sharing a screenshot of the funny warning in his twitter accounts, saying: 'very clever'. PTI

## Chase joins elite list in WI win Hosts Swamp England By 381 Runs In 1st Test

Bridgetown: Roston Chase proved the unlikely bowling hero as the off-spinner destroyed England with career-best figures of eight for 60 as the West Indies crushed the visitors by 381 runs to win the first Test at Kensington Oval on Saturday.

Set the improbable target of 628 to win, the tourists slid to ignominious defeat in bright sunshine on the fourth day, losing their last six wickets for 31 runs either side of the tea interval to be dismissed for 246, ending a winning streak of five matches.

It was the largest margin of victory by the West Indies on home soil and third largest anywhere in their 91 years as a Test-playing nation.

Chase made the most of a fourth day pitch showing more signs of wear but also benefited from poor shot selection by an England side that looked shell-shocked from the events of the previous two days when they were routed for just 77 in their first innings.

They then saw the West Indies mass 415 for six declared in the second innings with captain Jason Holder starring with an unbeaten double-century and wicket-keeper-batsman Shane Dowrich contributing 116 not out in an unbroken seventh-wicket partnership of 295.

Chase joined an elite list of West Indies' bowlers with eight wickets or more. He did not extract a great deal of turn from the Kensington Oval pitch in Barbados, but flighted



UNLIKELY ASSASSIN: Chase (left) celebrates an England wicket

the ball beautifully and, aided by some poor England batting, emerged with the figures of eight for 60.

"Looking at the wicket, I always thought I would come into play in the second innings," he said later. With the home team having opted for a line-up lacking a specialist spinner, captain Jason Holder had few options other than to use Chase, a batting all-rounder who entered the match with a Test bowling average of more than 40.

"The quicks set it up for us in the first innings and (spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed) told me I'm going to have to bowl 25 overs in the second innings, to get my mind ready for it, so I was always prepared to do some work, to give the pacers a rest," he said.

Chase's first wicket was perhaps his best and most important, clean bowling Rory Burns for 84 with a ball that found the gate between bat and pad. "I started to pick up some wickets

and it went from there," said Barbados-born Chase.

Only Jack Noreiga — 9/95 versus India at Port of Spain in 1971 — has taken more than eight wickets in an innings for West Indies. Chase joined a list with eight wickets that also comprises Colin Croft, Lance Gibbs, Curtley Ambrose, Devendra Bishoo, Shannon Gabriel, Michael Holding and Alf Valentine.

## Cook questions England's preparations for tour

Former England captain Alastair Cook has questioned the team's preparations for their West Indies tour. "Fail to prepare and you prepare to fail. That has become a cliché in sport but overuse does not erode its essential truth. Look at England over four days in Bridgetown," Cook wrote in his column for the Sunday Times. "They didn't have their fighting edge, and that is not surprising when you consider their pre-Test schedule." AGENCIES

## HOLDER FIRST WINDIES ALL-ROUNDER SINCE SOBERS TO TOP ICC RANKINGS

London: Jason Holder has become the first West Indian since cricket great Garfield Sobers to be named as the world's leading all-rounder following his superb display against England in Barbados.

West Indies captain Holder struck a commanding 202 not out and also took two useful first-innings wickets on his



have since been applied retrospectively to generations of former cricketers. Under that system Sobers — widely considered to be the best player cricket has known — last topped the rankings in 1974, the year of his retirement. AFP

## NUMBERS GAME

3 In case of a win in the third ODI at Mount Maunganui, India will record their second bilateral series triumph over New Zealand in New Zealand in ODIs. They had first won a bilateral series in NZ by a 3-1 margin under Mahendra Singh Dhoni's captaincy in 2008-09. With their win in the third ODI, India will be registering a hat-trick of wins vs New Zealand in New Zealand for the first time.

14 Runs needed by Ross Taylor (986 at an average of 39.44 in 28 matches) to become the third New Zealand batsman after Nathan Astle (1207) and Stephen Fleming (1098) to complete 1,000 runs or more vs India in ODIs.

16.50 Average registered by Indian spinners while taking 14 wickets at a strike rate of 20.7 in the first two matches of the present series against New Zealand. It is their best ever.

2012 The last instance when New Zealand lost three consecutive ODIs in a series at home — vs South Africa — one each at Wellington, Napier and Auckland, between February 25 and March 3.

—Rajesh Kumar