Hitman shows he is good at the waiting game too

It's time for the other Indian batsmen to join the party, following the sound start provided by Rohit



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR

Cast in the blue shade, Rohit Sharma seems a different persona. His luminous talent was never in doubt but the same potential was never fully harnessed in Tests.

But throw him into an ODI, allow a fast bowler to steam in or a spinner to amble down and just watch Rohit transform. There is assurance in his gait and a nonchalance to the way he plays his strokes all over the park. It is no surprise that he has lorded over the format and has even struck three double hundreds!

Second skin

Dominance is his obvious second skin but, on Wednesday as India buckled down to chase South Africa's 227 at the Hampshire Bowl in Southampton, the opener revealed that he does possess patience too in abundance.

The pursuit wasn't easy, the rival fast bowlers were probing around off-stump and Kagiso Rabada and Chris Morris used the bouncer to telling effect. Rohit played and missed a few, tried to hook some and edged but, importantly for India, he stayed at the crease. This wasn't about being a pretty picture, it was all about lasting the course.

The result was an outstanding 122 spread over 144 deliveries, and studded with 13 fours and two sixes. This seemed more like a Test hundred in the way it was constructed and it turned out to be a match-winning effort during which he shared partnerships ranging from the small to the significantly larger ones with diverse partners like Virat Kohli, K.L. Rahul and M.S. Dhoni.

Rohit kept the scoreboard ticking over, and when the opportunity presented itself, clattered his fours and the

Though he was watchful, never was he bogged down and that kept the required



New dimension: The zen monk-like version of Rohit Sharma did the job for India in its opener against the Proteas. • AP

run-rate under check.

There was game-awareness and fierce focus, and an excited Kohli later termed it as Rohit's finest ever ODI

hundred. "I think in my opinion this is by far his best ODI innings because of the kind

of pressure the first game

brings from a World Cup

point of view. "And then I know, as a bat-

sman, when you go in and a few balls bounce like that, it's not easy to gather yourself

again and play in a calm manner. A lot of times batsmen tend to hit their way out of the situation. But he was very composed," Kohli said.

Rain mars practice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Indian team woke up to a wet Friday at

London. The rain, largely a

persistent drizzle, continued unabated well into the afternoon before the sun peeped out at 2.30 p.m. The inclement

weather threw a spanner into the squad's plans to train at the Oval and, consequently, the scheduled practice session in the morning was cancelled.

India will take on Australia here on Sunday but rains have been forecast for the weekend.

Rohit, who first turned out for India in 2007, is among the squad's senior professionals and his ton against the Proteas will help India step in with an extra zing in the games ahead. It is a good trend to nurse especially for a batsman who was not picked for the 2011 World Cup squad and had to subsequently fight his way back into the unit.

He is also part of a feared opening combine with Shikhar Dhawan.

The latter too needs to click and once this duo prospers in the first Power-Play, India will have a base to launch into a huge score or

Carlos Braithwaite • AFP

dicated by the third umpire.

helped when standing um-

for our side," Naib said on

The side's mood was not

commence a fruitful chase. Importantly, the pressure on Kohli, the batsman, will diminish if the rest of the cast contribute handsomely.

Rohit has made a start and it is time for the others to join the party. Finally, the hit-man has

shown that there is joy too in the forward-defensive shot even in the nerve-jangling arena of ODIs.

Rohit the sixth-gear enforcer is a known entity. But this zen monk-like version of his can also be of equal service when the pitches display some life and the bowlers smell a wicket. India will not complain.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka split points after wash out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed was left frustrated after Friday's World Cup match against Sri Lanka was abandoned without a ball being bowled following persistent rain in Bristol.

The game was was eventually called off in the afternoon, with both teams being awarded a point.

It is the first match at the

World Cup in England and

Wales to be abandoned without a result. Both teams now have

three points, with one win and a loss apiece. After a couple of inspections, umpires Nigel Llong and Ian Gould decided to call

off the game at 3:46 p.m. local time. The sky was still cloudy when the final inspection was held, keeping in mind a

20-over-a-side game. It was a blow to Pakistan's bid to reach the semifinals and Sarfaraz said: "As a team we really wanted to play this match, especially after gaining momentum with the win against England. It is unfortunate that we were not able

to play. "Our next match is against



Dull sight: Persistent rain ensured that the Pakistan-Sri Lanka match was a non-starter. • AFP

Australia. Like other teams in the tournament they are also a tough opponent and they also have momentum as they have won their first two matches."

Pakistan lost to the West

Indies by seven wickets at Trent Bridge before beating

wicket defeat against New Zealand before pulling off a

England by 14 runs at the same venue on Monday. Sri Lanka crashed to a 10-

34-run win against Afghanistan in a rain-affected game. Sarfaraz remains confi-

dent Pakistan can still push for a last-four place in the 10team tournament despite the Sri Lanka washout.

Next assignment

SRI LANKA: June 11 vs Bangladesh, Bristol, 3 p.m. PAKISTAN: June 12 vs Australia, Taunton, 3 p.m

Brathwaite questions umpiring decisions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NOTTINGHAM

Carlos Brathwaite said the West Indies were on the wrong end of too much poor umpiring following a 15-run World Cup defeat by champion Australia as Michael Holding slammed an "atrocious" display by the match officials.

West Indies opener Chris Gayle and captain Jason Holder were both twice given out on the field at Trent Bridge on Thursday but, on both sets of occasions, saw their decision to review vin-

pire Chris Gaffaney missed a Mitchell Starc no-ball the delivery before the left-arm

Where they stand													
Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR							
New Zealand	2	2	0	0	4	2.279							
Australia	2	2	0	0	4	1.059							
Sri Lanka	3	1	1	1	3	-1.517							
Pakistan	3	1	1	1	3	-2.412							
West Indies	2	1	1	0	2	2.054							
England	2	1	1	0	2	0.900							
India	1	1	0	0	2	0.302							
Bangladesh	2	1	1	0	2	0.008							
South Africa	3	0	3	0	0	-0.952							
Afghanistan	2	0	2	0	0	-1.264							
*till the Pakistan-S	*till the Pakistan-Sri Lanka match on June 7												

quick dismissed Gayle for 21. Brathwaite accepted Gaffaney and Sri Lanka's Ruchira Palliyaguruge were doing their best, but he made no attempt to hide his annoyance after the West Indies fell short chasing a target of 289 in Nottingham.

"I don't know if I'll be fined for saying it but I just think that the umpiring was a bit frustrating," Brathwaite told reporters.

"Even when we were bowling we thought a few balls close to head height were called wides.

"And obviously three decisions...as far as I can remember being dodgy, it was frustrating and sent ripples through the dressing room," the all-rounder added.

"To lose Chris in a chase of 280, who can probably get 180 of them himself obvious ly, broke the start that we wanted to have. But the umpires do their job, they try to do it to the best of their ability, we as players go out there to do our job as well, so there was no confrontation between the players and the umpires."

England keen to be back on track

Won't panic, says captain Morgan ahead of Bangladesh clash

PREVIEWS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Eoin Morgan says England will not panic as it attempts to get its World Cup campaign back on track against Bangladesh following its chastening defeat against Pakistan.

The hosts started its bid to win its first-ever World Cup with a comprehensive 104run victory against South Africa before it stumbled in the second game, losing by 14 runs.

Captain Morgan said En-



tacking from their powerful batsmen and they are also aggressive as a bowling unit, boasting the pace of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood. "All we talked about is

sticking to what we do well, looking at our strengths," he said in his pre-match press conference in the Welsh capital on Friday. "Previous to the tourna-

ment starting we talked about losing games - how would we react? What would



we counter that with?

to focusing on ourselves, and get the best out of

England rotated its attack

"Everything comes back how we win games of cricket

at Trent Bridge, bringing in

Mark Wood for Liam Plunkett. Conditions are expected to be more seamer-friendly in Wales, meaning Plunkett could return in place of a spinner.

> where the wicket is under covers," Morgan said. "The pitches here have been a bit greener and more seamerfriendly so that's a potential (option), yeah."

Bangladesh, which has beaten England at the past two World Cups, is in a similar position to England, having followed a win over South Africa with a loss to New Zealand

"We'll see another day

"It is going to be a difficult game, they're a good side. I think people underestimate them but we certainly don't," Morgan said.

"Their senior players especially have played a lot of games, more so than our senior players. They are a threat but hopefully we can play well and overcome it."

Kiwis ready to counter Afghan spin: Taylor

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ross Taylor insists New Zealand is ready for a trial by spin against Afghanistan on Saturday as it looks to keep its winning momentum going in the World Cup.

New Zealand, which was finalist in the 2015 edition, has relied on its paceman to get favourable results, but Taylor believes tackling spin will be key against the Asian minnows at Taunton.

Lot of spin

"I think against Afghanistan, they have a lot of spin there, so something to factor in," said Taylor, who has recorded three 40 plus scores in his last four ODI innings.

"But two from two, that was what we wanted to do and we were able to do it."

Taylor beloves that Ferguson, with his express pace, is the key man for the Black Caps. "Lockie, he just gives you that X-factor. Obviously our fastest bowler.

"He is going to be a key

factor for us if we're going to feature in this tournament," said Taylor. "I think he's creating pressure for the guy at the other end (to take wickets)," he added.

Afghanistan, which is playing just its second 50-over World Cup, has lost its two games in the tournament so far but not without a fight. Leg-spinner Rashid Khan

leads the charge with Mohammed Nabi, who returned figures of 4-30 with his off spin in their previous loss against Sri Lanka.

But it's the batting that has let them down as they were dismissed for 152 in their revised chase of 187 in a rain-hit game Cardiff on Tuesday.

Shahzad out of WC

Wicketkeeper-batsman Shahzad was ruled out on Thursday after suffering a recurrence of a nagging knee injury.

Naib admitted losing Mohammad Shahzad for the



rest of the World Cup is a Friday. "Shahzad is a great major blow to his side's player for Afghanistan. He did a lot. I'm also upset for hopes of upsetting the odds in the tournament. him -- the last two, three "Obviously it's a big loss weeks he's been struggling

with his knee.



order to come up trumps. • ALEX DAVIDSON/GETTY IMAGES

Key strength: England captain Eoin Morgan said his team's tactics have been based on attacking batting and aggressive bowling. • GARETH COPLEY/GETTY IMAGES

Nadal's masterclass too good for Federer

Defending champion hands out the Swiss his worst Grand Slam defeat in 11 years; Djokovic-Thiem match suspended

ROLAND GARROS

REUTERS

Before this French Open semifinal match-up it had been all about the dizzying numbers and statistics, but once great foes Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal stepped on to Court Philippe Chatrier, all that mattered was both men's preternatural ability to strike a small yellow ball.

On Friday, it was Nadal's swinging, looping, whipcrack style which prevailed over Federer's finesse and near-perfect timing as he reached his 12th Roland Garros final 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

The Spaniard had never lost to Federer in their five previous French Open meetings, but hadn't beaten the Swiss in their last five matches overall, a run stretching back five years

Something had to give. But for all the anticipation, in the event it was Federer's winning streak that gave way with no little brutality.

Suiting his style

Simply put, the swirling, gusty winds inside Court Philippe Chatrier far better suited the Spaniard's style which has more safety built in, his heavily top-spun shots clearing the net by some distance, and it resulted in his most



Thriving on attack: Rafael Nadal's swinging, looping, whip-crack style prevailed over Federer's finesse and near-perfect timing in the much-anticipated last-four clash on Friday. • REUTERS

one-sided Grand Slam triumph over Federer since beating him 6-1, 6-3, 6-0 here in 2008. "I don't find any sparring partners... playing like Federer. There are no two people like Federer on this planet. Luckily, actually," Nadal said.

"It's incredible, congratulations to Roger... incredible to play at that level aged 37. He's probably the best player in history, it's a great pleasure to play with him."

The wind barely dropped all match with both players buffeted throughout, and rubbing grit from their eyes from time to time.

The wind factor While the conditions were tough for both men, as Federer wistfully reflected, the gusts probably knocked the wind out of his game more than Nadal's.

"It was incredibly windy," Federer said. "So you're trying to see how much can you do or can you not do? Are you playing flatter or with more spin?

"Are you keeping the ball in play? Are you going for

stuff? I think that was basically the story of the first set, more or less.

"Holding serve against the wind with Rafa's quality on the return is just really hard, you know? He barely misses any. And then when he's in the rally, he plays with great spin on the forehand, great sort of control on the back-

THE RESULTS

Semifinals: Men: 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt 3-Roger Federer (Sui) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Women: 8-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt Amanda Anisimova (USA) 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-3; Marketa Vondrousova (Cze) bt 26-Johanna Konta (GBr) 7-5, 7-6(2).

Nadal	MATCH STATS	Federer				
3	Aces	3				
1	Double faults	1				
72	1st serve (%)	59				
6/16	Break points	2/4 17/35				
9/20	Net points won					
33	Winners	25				
19	Unforced errors	34				
102	Total points	79				
193	Fastest serve kmph	197				

"So it's just really hard to find holes, especially in the wind, if you're trying to hit through the ball, which is really difficult, actually."

Later, top seed Novak Diokovic's semifinal clash with Dominic Thiem was halted for the day in the third set due to deteriorating weather conditions.

The Austrian fourth seed was leading 6-2, 3-6, 3-1 against the World No.1 when the players left the court.

sion, taken after Wednes-

day's play was washed out

and prompted by fears of

more rain Friday, was "un-

fair and inappropriate".

Former World No.1 Amelie

Mauresmo of France said it

When she steps onto Cha-

"I watched (compatriot)

trier on Saturday, it will be

Vondrousova's first expe-

Lucie Safarova when she

played finals there in 2015

was a "disgrace".

rience of the arena.

Easy to get carried away, says Gill

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA BELAGAVI

Earlier this year, when Shubman Gill joined up with the Indian senior team in New Zealand, Virat Kohli was asked what he thought of the teenager. "Shubman is a very exciting talent," he said. "I saw him bat in the nets and I was like, wow I was not even 10 per cent of that when I was 19."

Gill smiles when reminded of the Indian captain's praise for him. "It makes you feel really good but I think he was being very generous, really kind with his words," he says, on the eve of India-A's second oneday match against Sri Lanka-A at the KSCA Stadium here.

Gill endured a difficult senior debut on that New Zealand tour, making scores of nine and seven in the two ODIs he played. But that call-up, as a short-term replacement for K.L. Rahul, was a sign that he was in the selectors' thoughts.

"It was a great feeling to represent the country," he says. "I wasn't expecting the call but I had had a good Ranji Trophy season, so I wasn't really surprised. Conditions were different (in New Zealand) but it was not as if the bowling was something I hadn't faced before. Because of the A tours and the IPL, that margin has decreased."

In the immediate after-

math of India's victory in the 2018 U-19 World Cup, there was predictably a clamour to fast-track Gill and Prithvi Shaw - two of the tournament's stars - into the senior team But Gill says his focus has always been on the present.

"You have to be patient. You don't get picked after one good performance. You have to keep doing it season after season. I'm well aware of the fact that not everyone who does well at U19 level is guaranteed to do well at the senior level."

It is easy, Gill admits, to get carried away by all the fame and attention. "How much time does it take to lose your way? It takes years to develop good habits and only a fraction of a second to go off-track. Credit goes to my parents for how they have brought me up. It's easy to get off-balance, but you have to keep working hard,"

Last season, Gill aggregated 728 runs for Punjab in the Ranji Trophy, with a top score of 268 against Tamil Nadu. He is hungry for big runs in first-class cricket, he states.

"When I was growing up, I used to score big hundreds in multi-day cricket at the U-14 and 16 levels. I want to do that continuously in the Ranji Trophy. If you're not doing well in First Class cricket, I don't think you'll get picked for India."

Gopalaswami to oversee BCCI elections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Former Chief Election Commissioner, N. Gopalaswami, will be the electoral officer for the BCCI elections to be held on October 22, according to decision taken by CoA on Friday.

"He comes with great experience and we decided to hand over the responsibility to him to ensure a proper election process," one of the members of the Board said.

The process will begin on June 30, with the electoral officer preparing an protocol in consultation with the CoA, which shall be communicated to all State associations.

The schedule:

Sept. 14: Completion of elections of State associations.

Sept. 30: Preparation of the electoral roll of nominees qualified the

elections. Oct. 22: BCCI election.



Thrilled: Marketa Vondrousova's straight set win over Johanna Konta has made her the first teen in a Paris final since Ana Ivanovic in 2007. • AP

Barty to take on Vondrousova for the crown

Eighth seed rallies to stop Anisimova, while the teenager edges out Konta

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ashleigh Barty and Marketa Vondrousova set-up a Roland Garros final showdown on Friday, shrugging off a sexism row which had seen their semifinals shifted away from the tournament's showpiece court.

Barty reached her first final at the Majors, coming back from a set and 0-3 down to defeat 17-year-old Amanda Anisimova 6-7(4), 6-3, 6-3 in a rollercoaster match.

Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova also made sure of her place in a maiden final at the Slams by edging out Britain's Johanna Konta 7-5,

While Vondrousova is the first teenager in a Paris final since Ana Ivanovic in 2007, eighth seed Barty, 23, is the first Australian in a French Open final since Samantha Stosur finished runner-up in

Amazing

"That was amazing, both good and bad," said Barty who will rise to the top three in the rankings next week. "It was the hardest thing that I ever had to do.

way I fought especially in the conditions which were cold and windy. "Now I can't wait for the final, it's incredible."

"I am really proud of the

Both matches got underway after accusations of sexism were made against the organisers who had decided to shift the matches away from the showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier.

The main arena had already been scheduled to stage the men's semifinals between Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic against Dominic Thiem.

The WTA said the deci-

when I was junior, but I never played there. So it's going to be something huge," she

India fumbles and stumbles its way past Poland, enters semifinals

HSF

UTHRA GANESAN

Just over two months ago, the Indian men's hockey team had thumped Poland 10-0 at the Azlan Shah Cup. On Friday, against the same opponent with largely the same side, the Indians fumbled, and stuttered to a 3-1 win in Pool A at the Hockey Series Finals here.

The unbeaten Indian team is now assured of playing the semifinals. That would be of little comfort to coach Graham Reid, who had warned

against letting the focus drop against a defensive Poland. The opponents lived up to their reputation but the In-

Friday's match was all about erratic passes, wayward shooting and messed up defence. The first warning sign came within 30 seconds of the start, Poland earning a penalty corner but unable to convert, much to India's relief.

Resolute defence

dians did not.

Given the resolute defending it did, an early lead might well have led Poland to park

As it happened, the Indians found it difficult to break past the Polish defence even otherwise.

And when they did, they came up against Maciej Pacanowski, the Polish goalkeeper who staved off half a dozen chances including two back-to-back shots from Simranjeet Singh and Akashdeep Singh.

India could also manage to convert only one of its five penalty corners and the forwards - Gursahibjit Singh, Akashdeep, Mandeep and Simranjeet – just could not

manage to get their shot angles right. Ramandeep, playing more of a feeder, managed to set them up repeatedly, only to see the ball rolling away before Manpreet Singh managed to lob in a rebound after Harman-

preet Singh's attempt. Poland stepped up to attack and Mateusz Hulboj made no mistake in tapping in the rising ball to level scores. Hardik Singh was the culprit and Krishan Pathak completely blinded and out of position.

The Indians managed to stick to their structure better

4 Go with fresh information

6 Deceive and invite scorn (8)

7 Work done by this guy at the

8 The one turnaround for actor

start of day when required

in the second half but the basic errors in trapping and passing continued to haunt the side.

Need to regroup

If improvement and process are the focus for Reid going ahead, the Indian team would do well to regroup sooner than later.

Japan or South Africa the likely opponents in the semifinals and the final would be tougher.

In another Pool A match, Russia seemed to come out keen to avenge its drubbing against India and slammed 12

goals against a hapless Uzbekistan. Khakimbov Khakimov scored the lone consolation goal for the minnows. Pool B saw Asian champion Japan stretched by Mexico before prevailing 3-1.

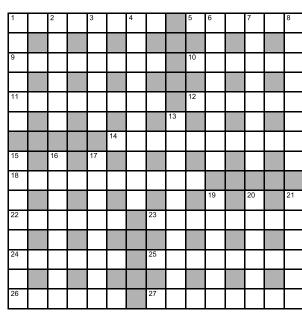
The results: Pool A: Russia 12 (Semen Matkovskiv 5. Alexander Skipersky 2, Sergey Lepeshkin, Alexey Sobolevskiy, Mikhail Proskuriakov, Marat Khairullin, Denis Starianko) bt Uzbekistan 1 (Khakimboy Khakimov); India 3 (Manpreet Singh 2, Harmanpreet Singh) bt Poland 1 (Mateusz Hulboj)

Pool B: Japan 3 (Hirotaka Zendana 2. Shota Yamada) bt Mexico 1 (Erik Hernandez).



crowd after scoring the second goal. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12647



ACROSS

- 1 City in Asia, not good surprisingly (8)
- 5 Perform with cat? (3.3)
- 10 A day before game, extremely
- 9 Climber edgy, then has gotten

flexible (8)

CM YK

nervous (2,4) 11 Nagging desire to have fish (8)

- 12 Get together and drink with basically money at stake (4,2)
- endangered species (5,5)

14 Poorly adapting, an

- 18 Version of the altered stationery (10)
- 22 Consider empty gallery at first for dance (6)
- 23 Downpour, it's blinding (8)
- 24 Thin layer over a creature (6) 25 Wife is primarily happy with
- 26 Striving hard (6)

lean needs (4,4)

- 27 Appear smaller, say, and continuous (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Farewell performance no good
 - unemotional (6)

2 Piece of music that's more

(set by Vulcan) 3 Business is about principles (6)

5 3 6 5 4 6 3 8 4

13 Straight to a matinee with each person following the other (3,2,1,4)

16 Infinity in entirety originally

15 Infamous tirade after slump

- 17 Prevent/stop deluge (8)
- 19 Penetrate large territory that's endless (6) 20 Dog perhaps domesticated by
- 21 Data about university's rank

an American in exile (6)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12646 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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FAITH

Acharya's importance

Hanuman's entry scene in the Ramayana is significant, because it has an important message for us, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. Rama and Lakshmana arrive on the banks of the river Pampa. Sugreeva is watching the brothers, and the sight of Rama and Lakshmana fills him with dread. He is afraid that they lack good intentions. The agitated monkey king tells his ministers that the two men must have been sent by Vali, and that their simple garments must have been chosen to deceive Sugriva into thinking they were harmless. Sugreeva and the other monkeys jumped from one peak to another, looking down at Rama and Lakshmana in fear. Hanuman's first words to Sugriva, and indeed his first words in the Ramayana, are words of assurance: "Do not be afraid." Hanuman says that Sugriva is safe on Mount Malaya, which Vali dare not approach because of a curse. "Where is Vali? I do not see him anywhere. Why do you fear him?" asks Hanuman.

Hanuman also offers advice to Sugriva and says that a ruler must be wise. An unwise ruler will never be able to offer good governance. But Sugriva is not convinced and says, 'The two men are armed. Overconfidence is dangerous." He then asks Hanuman to go and check if the two men who have arrived are trustworthy or if they are men sent by Vali. Hanuman goes to meet them as an ascetic.

Hanuman tells Rama and Lakshmana that their garments proclaim that they are ascetics, but they look like royalty and also wield bows. Rama is able to gauge from Hanuman's mode of speech that the latter is a great Vedic scholar. Thus, it was because Hanuman met Rama first that Sugriva was able to make friends with Him later on. This shows the importance of the Acharya in guiding us to the Supreme One.