



Sri Lanka batsman Mahela Jayawardene pulls one during his blitzkrieg hundred against Canada at the Suriyawewa Mahinda Rajapakse Stadium in Hambantota yesterday.

PHOTO:
AFP

SL annihilate Canada

AFP, Hambantota

Veteran batsman Mahela Jayawardene scored a sparkling century as Sri Lanka crushed Canada by 210 runs in their opening World Cup match at Mahinda Rajapakse Stadium on Sunday.

The 33-year-old scored his 100 off 80 balls for his 13th one-day hundred -- his second in World Cups and the fourth fastest in the history of the event -- which boosted his team's total to 332-7, much to the enjoyment of a sell-out 35,000 crowd.

New-ball bowlers Nuwan Kulasekara (3-16) and Thisara Prereera (3-24) combined to bundle Canada out for 122 in 36.5 overs.

The lop-sided contest once again gave weight to the International Cricket Council's decision to cut

down the next World Cup -- to be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand in 2015 -- to the top 10 teams, minus minor nations.

Earlier in the day New Zealand had mauled Kenya by 10 wickets in Chennai, after bowling out Kenya for just 69.

Canada, who promised much by putting up a valiant fight against England during their 16-run defeat in a warm-up last week, found the co-hosts too tough to handle in both batting and bowling in the Group A clash.

Skipper Kumar Sangakkara mixed up his bowling options as Canada lost wickets at regular intervals once their most experienced batsman John Davison had been bowled off Perera's first delivery of the second over.

Hard-hitting Rizwan Cheema top-scored with 37, including two

sixes off world record wicket taker Muttiah Muralidaran, while skipper Ashish Bagai, with 22, showed some resistance.

Earlier, Jayawardene laid the foundation for Sri Lanka's big total with an invaluable third wicket partnership of 179 with Sangakkara, who made 92.

Jayawardene and Sangakkara built on the platform set by opener Tillakaratne Dilshan (50) after Sri Lanka won the toss at this new ground which became the 177th one-day venue.

Jayawardene completed his hundred with a single off spinner Davison after facing just 80 deliveries - the fastest by a Sri Lankan in the World Cup, beating Sanath Jayasuriya's 85-ball ton against Bangladesh at Port of Spain four years ago.

But Davison dismissed him in the

same over, caught at short fine-leg after Jayawardene had hit nine boundaries and a six.

Sri Lanka lost a cluster of wickets in the death overs, but Angelo Mathews (21) and Thilan Samaraweera (18 not out) ensured they got past 300.

Dilshan (50) and Upul Tharanga put on a quick 63 for the first wicket by the 12th over before a mix-up between the two sent Tharanga back, run out for 19.

Dilshan fell just after scoring his third World Cup half-century, holing out at deep cover to Davison after hitting eight boundaries off 59 deliveries.

It was then left to Jayawardene and Sangakkara to punish a hapless Canadian attack, depleted by an injury to spearhead Henry Osinde who walked off the field due to a

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8

Mahela might go after WC

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka vice-captain Mahela Jayawardene said Sunday he may quit international cricket after the World Cup.

"This will be my fourth, and quite possibly, last World Cup, depending on form, fitness and the plans of the selectors in 2015," Jayawardene told the Sunday Times newspaper.

Jayawardene, 33, a stylish right-hand batsman, captained the side that reached the final of the 2007 World Cup when they lost to Australia, shattering their hopes of emulating the 1996 title-winning team.

"In 2007, we played really well and came agonisingly close to repeating the heroics of our 1996 team. We've lost some superstars, but gained a really talented group of cricketers," he said, referring to 1996 stars like Sanath Jayasuriya, Chaminda Vaas, who have been left out of the current team.

However, record bowler Muttiah Muralitharan remains the sole survivor of the 1996 dream team and will also be playing his last World Cup. Muralitharan announced his retirement from international cricket last July.

Sri Lanka were taking on Canada in their opening match on Sunday at the newly-built Mahinda Rajapakse Stadium in Hambantota.

Pakistan, Kenya, Australia, Zimbabwe and New Zealand make up Group A.

New Zealand toy with Kenya

AFP, Chennai

New Zealand thrashed Kenya by 10 wickets in the World Cup on Sunday, making a mockery of the African nation's campaign to feature at the slimmed-down 2015 edition.

Fast bowler Hamish Bennett finished with 4-16, his best figures in nine one-day internationals, while Tim Southee and Jacob Oram took three wickets each to bowl out the minnows for just 69 off just 23.5 overs.

It was Kenya's lowest World Cup total and the fifth

worst in tournament history.

Their capitulation came at the worst possible time for the sport's second-tier nations with the International Cricket Council determined to have a 10-nation World Cup, instead of the current 14 teams, in four years' time.

New Zealand openers Martin Guptill (39) and Brendon McCullum (26) raced to the target in only eight overs to bring an early end to the game played before near-empty stands in 30-degree heat at the 50,000-capacity Chidambaram Stadium.

Guptill hit two sixes and

five fours in his 32-ball knock. McCullum, batting in his favourite position, hit four fours, three of them in what turned out to be the final over by Kenya captain Jimmy Kamande.

"I don't think it was the wicket, it was the areas

New Zealand bowled," said Kamande. "We've got to be more positive in whatever we do. They came very hard at us. We have to learn from this performance today."

Bennett, named man-of-the-match, said it was good to bounce back in tough

conditions after the 117-run defeat to India in a warm-up game last week.

"It had been tough for us after the India game," he said.

"Hopefully it won't get much hotter than this for the rest of the tournament. It is pretty tough to get used to."

SCORES IN BRIEF

KENYA: 69 all out in 23.5 overs (Waters 16, Obuya 14, Patel 16 not out; Southee 3-13, Bennett 4-16, Oram 3-2)

NEW ZEALAND: 72 for no loss in 8 overs (Guptill 39 not out, McCullum 26 not out)

Result: New Zealand won by 10 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Hamish Bennett.

TEN WORST WC TOTALS

Team	Total	Opposition	Venue	WC edition
Canada	36	Sri Lanka	Paarl	2003
Canada	45	England	Manchester	1979
Namibia	45	Australia	Potchefstroom	2003
Scotland	68	West Indies	Leicester	1999
Kenya	69	New Zealand	Chennai	2011
Pakistan	74	England	Adelaide	1992
Ireland	77	Sri Lanka	St George's	2007
Bermuda	78	Sri Lanka	Port of Spain	2007
Namibia	84	Pakistan	Kimberley	2003
Sri Lanka	86	West Indies	Manchester	1975

Kenya looking for an answer

AFP, Chennai

Kenya captain Jimmy Kamande was left struggling for answers after a 10-wicket World Cup mauling at the hands of New Zealand nudged them closer to exile from cricket's most exclusive club.

Sunday's match, which was supposed to last 100 overs, was over in less than 32 as the Black Caps dismissed Kenya for 69 before racing to their target off just 48 balls at the Chidambaram Stadium.

It was Kenya's lowest World Cup total and the fifth

worst in tournament history. Their capitulation came at the worst possible time for the sport's second-tier nations with the International Cricket Council (ICC) determined to have a 10-nation World Cup, instead of the current 14 teams, in four years' time.

"It's for ICC to decide to play 10 teams or 15," said Kamande.



New Zealand pacer Hamish Bennett (2nd L) does high-five with a teammate after dismissing Steve Tikolo of Kenya during their one-sided match of the World Cup at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday. Kenya were bowled out for 69 which the Kiwis overhauled in 8 overs.

PHOTO:
AFP

Kiwis keep feet on the ground

AFP, Chennai

New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori said his team must not lower their guard against tougher opposition after cantering to an easy 10-wicket win over Kenya in the World Cup on Sunday.

Kiwi fast bowlers skittled the hapless African nation for 69 in 23.5 overs before knocking off the required runs in just eight overs at the Chidambaram Stadium for a winning start to their campaign.

"We didn't expect that the game would get over so quickly," Vettori said. "It was nice. We are happy with how we performed. But we don't expect all other matches to be this easy."

"I think bowling full and straight is going to be the key in this part of world. We will keep the same intensity for every game."

Hamish Bennett grabbed 4-16 off five overs while Tim Southee and Jacob Oram chipped in with three wickets each.

The emphatic nature of win will set the Kiwis up nicely for their next match against defending champions Australia in Nagpur on February 25.

"To be able to bowl this well and allow the batsmen to have such a small chase is always pleasing," Vettori said.

"It's pretty important for us to stand up there and perform. Australia is one of the favourites for the competition so if we do well there we know we are in good stead."