



## Raza propels Zimbabwe to historic series win

AFP, Hambantota

Sikandar Raza starred with the bat and ball to help Zimbabwe edge out Sri Lanka by three wickets and clinch a historic series victory in the fifth one-day international on Monday.

Taking the series 3-2 in Hambantota, the 11th-ranked Zimbabwe registered their maiden series win in Sri Lanka and first overseas triumph in eight years.

Off-spinner Raza claimed three wickets to restrict the hosts to 203-8 after Zimbabwe elected to field first. He then anchored a tense chase with an unbeaten 27 as the visitors won with 71 balls to spare.

Zimbabwe opener Hamilton Masakadza top-scored with a fluent 73 before rookie off-spinner Akila Dananjaya struck back with four wickets to rattle the Zimbabwe middle-order.

The visitors slipped from 137-1 to 175-7 – losing six wickets for 38 runs – but Raza and skipper Graeme Cremer (11 not out) hung on for an unbeaten 29-run stand as the perennial underdogs erupted in celebrations.

"Happy that Sikandar came to the party. It turned around very quickly but happy we pulled it off in the end," an elated Cremer said following their win.

"This win is very special, fans must be jumping around back home. We knew we're playing good enough cricket to put them under pressure."

Earlier the Pakistan-born Raza, who opened the bowling for the visiting side, returned with impressive figures of 3-21.

Raza, named player of the match, was

complemented by Cremer, who took two wickets with his wily leg-spin, most notably the prized scalp of his opposite number Angelo Mathews (24).

"Raza is a definite weapon with the new ball. I was hoping for a breakthrough or two and he gave us that in the powerplay," Cremer said.

Sri Lanka suffered from a lack of partnerships but opener Danushka Gunathilaka (52) and Asela Gunaratne (59 not out) hit gritty half-centuries to steady the home side.

The hosts slipped to 153-8 in the 42nd over before Gunaratne and Dushmantha Chameera (18 not out) put on an unbeaten 50-run stand for the ninth wicket.

Mathews said even though the conditions were "tough" for batting, their final run tally was far below what was expected.

"Credit to Zimbabwe, they gave us a really tough time and we didn't have any answers," said a disappointed Mathews.

The defeat was Sri Lanka's worst bilateral ODI series in recent times.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA:** 203 for 8 in 50 overs (Gunathilaka 52, Mathews 24, Gunaratne 59 not out, Chameera 18 not out; Raza 3-21, Cremer 2-23)

**ZIMBABWE:** 204 for 7 in 38.1 overs (Masakadza 73, Mire 43, Musakanda 37, Raza 27 not out; Malinga 2-44, Dananjaya 4-47)

**Result:** Zimbabwe won by three wickets and clinched the 5-match series 3-2.

**Player-of-the-match:** Sikandar Raza.

**Player-of-the-series:** Hamilton Masakadza.

### New coach only after asking Kohli

REUTERS, Mumbai

The Cricket Advisory Committee of the Indian board (BCCI) interviewed five candidates for the head coach's post yesterday but said it will name Anil Kumble's successor only after consulting captain Virat Kohli, who is in the United States.

The CAC, comprised of former players Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman, interviewed Indians Ravi Shastri, Virender Sehwag and Lalchand Rajput, Australian Tom Moody and Englishman Richard Pybus to fill the vacant position, the BCCI said in a statement.

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