



# 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.

"We want to speak to Kohli once he is back, all three of us along with the respective people concerned," Ganguly said, adding that Kohli made no recommendation. "We will explain to him that coaches want to function in a certain way and make sure that everybody is on the same page before we make the announcement, because once we make do, it has to be till the (2019) World Cup."



**Zimbabwe all-rounder Sikander Raza had a telling effect with both bat and ball in yesterday's historic result achieved by winning the fifth ODI against Sri Lanka in Hambantota. (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L) He took three wickets with his off-spin to restrict Sri Lanka to a manageable total, then he struck a nerveless 27 in a tense chase that he finished off with a six to give Zimbabwe their first away series win in eight years and first over Sri Lanka. The first of their three wins in this series was also Zimbabwe's first win over Sri Lanka in Sri Lanka.**

PHOTOS: AFP

# It's a difficult climate: Mash

STAR SPORT DESK



With questions swirling in the backrooms of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) surrounding the captaincy future of Bangladesh's most successful ODI leader Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the man himself has come out saying that it is a difficult 'climate' to play cricket in.

Speaking to ESPNcricinfo, Narail's most feted export talked about the questions he routinely faces about his form and fitness.

"After the first two matches of almost every series, the calls come for my removal. It is tough to play in this way. I know that after two matches in a series, I will hear things about my departure. It is a challenge that I have taken on.

"For example, in Ireland in May, I gave away 58 runs in 6.3 overs against New Zealand. I felt I had a lack of bowling in my system so the next day I bowled more in the nets and then again bowled in front of the head coach [Chandika Hathursingha] and bowling coach Courtney Walsh. I spoke to both of them, and then through bowling to just the wicketkeeper [in nets], I corrected my problems. I am doing as much as possible but it becomes hard to play cricket in this climate."

His retirement from T20Is after the two matches in Sri Lanka in April came in much the same climate, and Bangladesh's historic run to the ICC Champions Trophy semifinals under his ODI leadership has still left room for concerns as far as the planning for

the 2019 World Cup goes. BCB president Nazmul Hassan had said recently that Mashrafe quitting T20Is was evidence of long-term planning.

Some of the concern has had to do with his diminishing pace and some fielding lapses, but according to ESPNcricinfo's report, the first of those concerns is unfounded. "Since the Afghanistan ODI series at home in September 2016, he has been the team's highest wicket-taker with 28 wickets at 28.89... Mashrafe is one of the two Bangladesh bowlers during this period to have conceded runs at less than five

an over (having played a minimum of five games)," the report said.

"I don't think about [the questions]. It is hard not to, but I don't give it much time or attention. What I fear, however, is that such a thing has the potential of puzzling the dressing room.

"I see that overall I am fine so it becomes a bit painful at times. But I hardly give it time. I only look out for personal attacks or when an environment is being created, which I can pick up on. I am strong in my place, and I know my job is to perform as a player," the report quoted Mashrafe as saying.



**Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was, as usual, the life of the party when the players started fitness training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, but he has been feeling the heat from questions surrounding his captaincy future.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# Lewis cashes in on skipper's incentive

PTI, Kingston



West Indies skipper Carlos Brathwaite said he was happy with the way his team expressed themselves on the field after an Evin Lewis-inspired nine-wicket pummelling of India in the one-off T20I in Kingston on Sunday.

There was also a special incentive for the batsmen to do well.

"Very happy. Yesterday [Saturday] we asked for the batters to go out and express themselves. I gave them the captain's incentive, whoever goes and gets a fifty gets half my match fee. We wanted to put smiles on the faces of the fans and that's what we come back to do," said Brathwaite.

It was opener Lewis who cashed in on the prize by racing to an unbeaten 125, the highest score in a T20I chase, off just 62 balls. As a result, West Indies cantered past India's total of 190 with nine wickets and nine balls to spare.

"We wanted to wrestle the game back against them. We've seen the IPL, we know how Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowls at the death and we wanted to make him bowl more in the first few overs and that's a box ticked."

Brathwaite also heaped praise on Lewis and Keshrick Williams for their performance.

"Evin just played magnificently. He just played on, played through so big kudos to him. It was a good score

LEWIS'S LASHES
Evin Lewis's 125 is the highest T20I score by a West Indian, and the third highest T20I score overall behind Aaron Finch's 156 and Glenn Maxwell's 145.
Lewis's innings is the highest score in a T20I chase.
The 12 sixes the Trinidadian left-hander hit is the third-highest in a T20I innings, behind Finch's 14 and Richard Levi's 13.
Lewis is also the third batsman to have two centuries in T20Is. The other two are Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum



on the board, but we always knew we could get it," he said.

"Keshrick Williams has produced a fantastic performance, carries it on from Pakistan to Afghanistan and here. His figures might not reflect it, but he got [Virat] Kohli out, the direct hit, and in the sixth over he had two new batsmen in and that certainly helped," he added.

Lewis, who was adjudged the player of the match, said he was not doing well in the last few ODIs but he always kept believing in himself.

"It was a good game. Quality bowlers, and once you get a hundred against a team like India, it's a good hundred. Five games in a row, in the ODIs, I didn't do well. But I kept believing in my ability and today [Sunday] I came out trumps," Lewis said.

"Chris [Gayle] going after the bowling makes it easier for me to score, so I'm thankful to bat with him and I hope I can keep doing my best for the West Indies," he added.

India skipper Kohli was critical of India's performance, saying his team was sloppy with both the bat and ball and did not deserve to win.

The left-handed Lewis got a couple of reprieves with Mohammed Shami and Dinesh Karthik being the offenders.

"Even in the first innings, we could have added 25-30 extra. We were on course for 230. And in the field as well, we dropped a few chances and if you don't grab them you don't deserve to win," Kohli said after the match.

## PAY DISPUTE Mystery backers' millions to benefit Aus cricketers

SMH



Australia's players have been boosted in their pay war with Cricket Australia by the injection of millions of dollars in "loans" from several wealthy backers that will ensure their hardship fund lasts until Christmas.

With players due to be out of pocket for the first time when their monthly pay does not land in bank accounts on July 15 the Australian Cricketers' Association will begin to dip into a pool of money set aside to support them.

Fairfax Media can reveal that fund has been significantly enhanced in size by financial assistance from several backers that runs into the millions.

According to sources, the cash injections have come from several high net-worth individuals, some from the business world and with links to cricket and others who

have a general love of the game, but who want to remain anonymous.

The identities of those who have come forward to supplement the ACA's funds to pay unemployed players are even not known by many at the players' union itself.

The millions in additional cash now at the ACA's disposal is a major development as it will enable them to finance the union's hardship fund until December if required, Fairfax Media was told on Monday. If the dispute drags on that long the Ashes, due to begin in Brisbane on November 23, will be endangered.

It is believed the ACA intends to pay the mystery financial supporters back after a new deal is agreed.

However, that would depend on CA agreeing to provide back pay to players to cover their period of unemployment under the terms of a new MOU.

The ACA is unlikely to agree to a new MOU unless players are backpaid from July 1.