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The two images of Sri Lanka's opener Kusal Mendis (L) and his Bangladesh counterpart Tamim Iqbal (R) illustrate the gap between the two sides. While the tourists were calm and poised to pounce on anything loose, the hosts lost their shape and composure during yesterday's second and final T20I in Sylhet.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

BD-SL SCOREBOARD					
SRI LANKA		R/B		4s/6s	
Gunathilaka c Tamim b Soumya		42/37		3/2	
K Mendis c Mahedi b Mustafizur		70/42		6/3	
Thisara c Soumya b Jayed		31/17		3/1	
Tharanga c Soumya b Saif		25/13		4/1	
Shanaka not out		30/11		5/1	
Chandimal not out		2/1		0/0	
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-7)		10			
Total: (For 4 wks in 20 overs)		210			
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-149, 3-160, 4-205.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Jayed	4	0	45	1	
Nazmul	4	0	28	0	
Mahedi	2	0	25	0	
Mustafizur	4	0	39	1	
Saif	4	0	46	1	
Soumya	2	0	25	1	
BANGLADESH		R/B		4s/6s	
Tamim c Dananjaya b Aponso		29/23		2/2	
Soumya c J Mendis b Dananjaya		0/4		0/0	
Mushfiqur c Thisara b Madushanka		6/3		0/1	
Mithun c J Mendis b Madushanka		5/3		1/0	
Mahmud run out					
(J Mendis/Udana)		41/31		4/1	
Ariful lbw b J Mendis		2/3		0/0	
Saif c Vandersay b Udana		20/21		1/1	
Mahedi c Udana b Shanaka		11/11		1/0	
Mustafizur b Gunathilaka		8/9		1/0	
Jayed st Chandimal b Gunathilaka		2/3		0/0	
Nazmul not out		1/1		0/0	
Extras: (w-10)		10			
Total: (all out in 18.4 overs)		135			
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-14, 3-22, 4-59, 5-68, 6-110, 7-113, 8-132, 9-132, 10-135.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Madushanka	2.1	0	23	2	
Dananjaya	4	1	20	1	
Shanaka	1.5	0	5	1	
Thisara	3	0	33	0	
Aponso	4	0	31	1	
J Mendis	1	0	8	1	
Udana	2	0	12	1	
Gunathilaka	0.4	0	3	2	
Result: Sri Lanka won by 75 runs.					
Player-of-the-match: Kusal Mendis.					
Player-of-the-series: Kusal Mendis.					



AL-AMIN from Sylhet

Sri Lanka plundered 210 runs in what was Bangladesh's first-ever International game at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday. And the brief fireworks on top of the grass bank, which was understandably done to mark the special occasion, hardly matched the evening pyrotechnics of the visiting team much to the disappointment of a packed audience. If you are a follower of Bangladesh cricket you could easily guess that the game as a contest was all but over. Your prior knowledge of Bangladesh's highest successful chase, 165 against the West Indies, is an event that happened long ago in 2007. So it was hardly surprising that they limped to a 75-run loss yesterday. Bangladesh have never been even a decent team in the shortest format of the game. They hardly have the understanding of how to bowl in a T20 game. They also lack the necessary understanding of how to build a T20 innings. And this particular game can give you plenty of evidence to establish those statements. The Lankans were not forceful when they came out to bat on a beautiful wicket where the ball came on nicely. What they did was use the length balls in their merry way and the Bangladesh bowlers, save left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam, kept on feeding them. Young right-arm pace bowler Mohammed Saifuddin, who was punished in the first game, hardly learnt from his mistakes. He

went for 46 runs in his four overs. Local boy Abu Jayed, who made his Bangladesh debut yesterday, also paid the price of feeding length balls after he was hit for a six off what was a slightly wayward yorker. Left-arm pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman bowled a brilliant 17th over, in which he conceded just three. That raised Bangladesh's hopes of restricting the Lankans below the 200-run mark. But he

was also the culprit of feeding those length deliveries in the 19th over when he was struck for four boundaries. Young off-spinning all-rounder Mahedi Hasan was hit for 25 runs in his two overs. He might learn from his Sri Lankan counterpart Akila Dananjaya how to bowl with the new ball. After winning the toss Bangladesh opted to field understandably because it was tough to grip the ball under the floodlights



Rookie off-spinner Nazmul Islam, with none for 28 from his four overs, was the only Bangladesh bowler to concede less than 9.75 runs an over in the second T20I against Sri Lanka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Smith looks forward to pace challenge

AFP, Johannesburg

A refreshed Australia captain Steve Smith is looking forward to the challenge of taking on South Africa's fast bowlers in a four-Test series starting in Durban on March 1. His sentiment may not be shared by the tailenders of both teams, though. When Australia beat England 4-0 in their recent home Ashes series, the tourists' lower order was blown away by aggressive short-pitched bowling from pace trio Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins. Smith said on Saturday he expected his bowlers to "go down a similar path" in South Africa, even though the hosts have the firepower to hit back through Kagiso Rabada, Morne Morkel and new find Lungi Ngidi. "There could be some good short-pitched bowling from both sides, to the batters, to the tail, everyone from both sides," said Smith. "I think it's great. I'm excited by it. You love coming up against the best bowlers around the world."

Kiwis in final despite defeat

AFP, Hamilton

An aggressive Colin Munro belted New Zealand into the Twenty20 tri-series final against Australia despite England claiming their final round-robin match by two runs in Hamilton on Sunday. Munro plundered the England attack at the top of the New Zealand innings, equalling the sixth-fastest half-century of all time in cricket's shortest form as he raced past 50 in just 18 deliveries. England, on the back of an unbeaten 80 by returning captain Eoin Morgan, posted 194 for seven after being sent into bat. New Zealand, with Martin Guptill adding 62 and Hong Kong-born Mark Chapman unbeaten on 37, made 192 for four in reply. The narrow two-run winning margin was a bittersweet result for Morgan. It provided a confidence-boosting first win in the series but England needed to win by 20 runs to overtake New Zealand on overall run-rate to face unbeaten Australia in Wednesday's final. New Zealand passed that target at the start of the 18th over but the groundwork had been laid by opener Munro's whirlwind 57 in a big-hitting innings that included seven sixes and



Despite Colin Munro's explosive 21-ball 57 providing New Zealand with a solid platform, the Kiwis succumbed to a two-run defeat in their tri-series T20I match against England in Hamilton yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kohli limps off, but India best SA

AFP, Johannesburg

Virat Kohli limped off the field before India completed another dominant performance over South Africa in the first T20I at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday. Shikhar Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar were mainly responsible for India's 28-run win, two days after the tourists completed a 5-1 thrashing in a ODI series. India captain Kohli left the field 13 overs into South Africa's innings after suffering a left leg strain while batting. "I tweaked my glute a little bit. Thankfully it's not my hamstring," he said. "I felt a little more stiffness so I decided to go off and not be stupid and tear a muscle." Dhawan made 72 in an Indian total of 203 for five after they were sent in to bat. Then opening bowler Kumar produced a masterly display as he claimed career-best figures of five for 24 as South Africa were restricted to 175 for nine.

'We are going nowhere'

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet



Stand-in Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad warned that if they keep on playing like this they are going nowhere, especially in the shortest version of cricket. "I think we are paying the price of the mistakes we are committing in every game. We will have to come out of this, I don't think we have any other option. If we keep on playing like this we will get the same result," Mahmudullah told reporters after his side's 75-run defeat in the second and final T20I at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday. When asked which department disappointed him the most, he blamed both bowling and batting. "We will have to have specific plans and we will have to back it up with our performance in the middle which we are not doing at the moment," said Mahmudullah, adding that in a T20 game a bowler must think of taking wickets and the batsmen should be courageous to take some risks. "We have started like bowling in the death overs from probably 12th or 13th over. On this kind of wicket you need early wickets. Otherwise it is very tough to get back into the game. You have to go for runs at the expense of wickets and if you can do that you have a chance to return to the game," he said while referring to Sri Lanka's bowling in the Powerplay overs. "In the batting we have all seen that we

failed to build partnerships. If you want to chase 200-plus you need to score more than 60 in the first Powerplay which we did in the last game. Unfortunately we could not do that today. There was scoreboard pressure. It's really disappointing for me," said Mahmudullah who fought a lone battle with 41. However, he put more focus on striking the right balance in the T20 format with right kind of players. "What we are probably trying to do is to strike the right combination, especially in T20 cricket. We are still working to find out the right combination and I hope we will be able to figure out it soon. Otherwise I'm afraid we will be in big trouble especially in T20 cricket," the captain warned. He said the faults were more about execution than planning. "You will have to have your own plan, you will have to be courageous. You will have to take risks. If you concede 12-13 runs and you are not trying something different then you are not going anywhere. In a T20 match the first six overs are very important. Our top-order batsmen will have to go hard even if there is a chance of losing wickets," Mahmudullah observed, adding: "Otherwise you simply can't survive in a T20 game." "It should be a collective decision from all the players about how to go about in T20 cricket. We will have to do some soul-searching and find out the faults and be honest in our confessions. We will then have to work out a plan so that the mistakes are minimised. If we can do that we can do better than we are doing now."



MAHMUDULLAH