England win battle, but Munro ensures N Zealand win the war

NZ face unbeaten Australia in Wednesday's final

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 yesterday. 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.

> "We played our best game today"

The narrow two-run winning margin was a bitter-sweet 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 three fours.

"Not that good," Morgan said when asked how he felt. "Given the start they got off to, with Colin Munro and Martin Guptill in that sort of form, there's a bit of dew around, the ball skidding on, it was quite difficult for our attack," he added.

"We played our best game today. Good enough to win the game but not good enough to go through to the final. We just haven't been good enough throughout this T20 campaign." After New Zealand's rollicking start, England spinners Adil Rashid and Liam Dawson quietened the pace through the middle of the innings.

New Zealand were 77 without loss after six overs when Rashid came on and quickly claimed Munro's wicket. Seven overs later, when Rashid was bowled out and Dawson had claimed the prized wicket of Kane Williamson, New Zealand were 108 for two with Guptill and Chapman primed to finish the innings off.

"At the top of the order, Colin Munro was brilliant," said Williamson, who also played tribute to the role played by Guptill, a century-maker against Australia two days ago. "Martin played so well through that middle period to suck it up after whacking it to all parts a few days ago, to do what the team required to get as close as we could to that total."

Dawson missed a caught-and-bowled chance from Guptill on 25, who then lashed out to reach 62 off 47 balls before he was dismissed in the 17th over. England skipper Morgan, who missed their last two matches because of a groin strain, hit six sixes and four fours in a crucial innings that ensured his side posted a competitive score. — AFP

HAMILTON: New Zealand's Martin Guptill (R) is bowled out as England's wicketkeeper Jos Buttler (L) looks on during the Twenty20 Tri Series international cricket match between New Zealand and England at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. —– AFP

SCOREBOARD

HAMILTON, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the tri-series Twenty20 match between New Zealand and England yesterday:

England	
J. Roy c Williamson b Boult	21
A. Hales c Williamson b Southee	1
D. Malan c Chapman b de Grandhomme	53
E. Morgan not out	80
J. Buttler st Seifert b Sodhi	2
S. Billings b Boult	6
D. Willey c Guptill b Southee	10
L. Dawson c Guptill b Boult	10
C. Jordan not out	6
Extras: (w 4, nb 1)	5
Total: (for seven wickets, 20 overs)	194

Did not bat: A. Rashid, T. Curran

Fall: 1-22 (Hales), 2-24 (Roy), 3-117 (Malan), 4-123 (Buttler), 5-165 (Billings), 6-176 (Willey), 7-187 (Dawson)

Bowling: Boult 4-0-50-3, Santner 2-0-32-0 (3w), Southee 4-0-22-2 (1w), de Grandhomme 4-0-32-1, Williamson 1-0-16-0, Sodhi 4-0-31-1 (1nb), Munro 1-0-11-0.

New Zealand	
M. Guptill b Malan	62
C. Munro c Willey b Rashid	57
K. Williamson b Dawson	8
M. Chapman not out	37
R. Taylor c Morgan b Curran	7
C. de Grandhomme not out	7
Extras: (b2, lb8, w2, nb2)	14
Total: (for 4 wickets; 20 overs)	192

Fall of wickets: 1-78 (Munro, 2-100 (Williamson), 3-164 (Guptill), 4-173 (Taylor)

Did not bat: T. Seifert, M. Santner, T. Southee, I. Sodhi, T. Boult

Bowling: Willey 3-0-33-0 (1w), Curran 3-0-32-1, Jordan 4-0-42-0 (1w, 2nb), Rashid 4-0-22-1, Dawson 4-0-27-1, Malan 2-0-27-1.

Result: England won by two runs

Series: New Zealand v Australia in final on Wednesday

Napoli, Juventus continue see-saw battle

MILAN: Napoli stayed one point ahead of Juventus at the top of Serie A yesterday after both teams won their ninth league games in a row, this time beating SPAL and Torino 1-0 respectively. Napoli captain Marek Hamsik thought he had scored a second, was booked for smashing into the corner flag and, to add insult to injury, saw the goal chalked off by the video assistant referee (VAR) after a two-minute delay.

The pattern was the same as the previous three weekends when Juventus, chasing a seventh successive title, played first, won and briefly went top only to be pulled back by their rivals. Juventus will also play first for the next three rounds of matches, a situation which has drawn complaints from Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri. Brazilian midfielder Allan finished off a typically incisive Napoli move to score the only goal in the sixth minute at rain-soaked San Paolo stadium. Hamsik's second-half goal was ruled out for off-side and, although replays showed it was the right decision, the incident raised more questions about the use of the video technology being trialled in Serie A, among others, this season.

Napoli's stadium announcer, known as "Decibel Bellini" had gone through his entire ear-splitting celebratory routine and SPAL were ready to kick off before the referee signalled that he was reviewing the goal.

As replays showed that Hamsik was fractionally offside, the Slovak was seen to gesture to the linesman asking why he had not raised his flag. Juventus overcame an early injury to striker Gonzalo Higuain as they edged their less glamorous neighbours in the Derby della Mole.

Higuain appeared to twist his ankle and soldiered on for another 10 minutes before being replaced by Federico Bernadeschi, who set up the goal when he pulled the ball back for Alex Sandro to tap in just after the half hour.

Torino, who missed an early chance when Andrea Belotti failed to control Joel Obi's pass with the goal at his mercy, lost confidence after falling behind and never looked like turning around the game. Juventus have won seven and drawn one of their last eight matches against Torino. Napoli have 66 points from 25 games with Juventus on 65 and AS Roma a huge 15 behind in third place. — Reuters

Kumar rips through S Africa to lead India to T20 victory

JOHANNESBURG: Seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar took career-best figures of 5-24 to help India ease to a 28-run victory over South Africa in the opening Twenty20 International of their three-game series at the Wanderers yesterday.

Having been sent in to bat, India plundered 203 for five from their 20 overs on a flat batting wicket as opener Shikhar Dhawan hit a superb 72 from 39 balls. It is India's highest innings total against South Africa in the shortest format of the game, with debutant seamer Junior Dala (2-47 in four overs) the most successful home bowler.

South Africa were in the game until Kumar's final over when he picked up the key wicket of Reeza Hendricks (70 from 50 balls), and then dismissed Heinrich Klaasen (16) and Chris Morris (0) in successive balls, before Dane Paterson (1) was the fourth wicket to fall as he was run out.

The home side ended their innings on 175 for nine, continuing their struggles against the tourists in the limited overs matches on the tour having been thrashed 5-1 in the one-day international series.

South Africa were dealt a blow before the start of the match as their best batsman AB de Villiers was ruled out of the series with a knee injury. The second Twenty20 clash will be played in Pretoria on Wednesday, with the final game on Saturday in Cape Town. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

JOHANNESBURG Scores in the first Twenty20 international between South Africa and India at the Wanderers Stadium yesterday.

India			
R. Sharma c Klaasen b Dala	21	J. Duminy c Raina b Kumar	3
S. Dhawan c Klaasen b Phehlukwayo	72	D. Miller c Dhawan b Pandya	9
S. Raina c and b Dala	15	F. Behardien c Pandey b Chahal	39
V. Kohli lbw b Shamsi	26	H. Klaasen c Raina b Kumar	16
M. Pandey not out	29	A. Phehlukwayo c Chahal b Unadkat	13
M. Dhoni b Morris	16	C. Morris c Raina b Kumar	0
H. Pandya not out	13	D. Paterson run out (Pandya)	1
Extras (lb2, w9)	11	J. Dala not out	2
Total (5 wkts, 20 overs)	203	T. Shamsi not out	0
Fall of wickets: 1-23 (Sharma), 2-49 (Raina), 3-108 (Kohli), 4-155 (Dhawan), 5-183 (Dhoni)		Extras (b1, lb1, nb1, w5)	8
Bowling: Paterson 4-0-48-0 (1w), Dala 4-0-47-2 (3w), Morris 4-0-39-1 (3w), Shamsi 4-0-37-1 (1w), Smuts 2-0-14-0, Phehlukwayo 2-0-16-1 (1w)		Total (9 wkts, 20 overs)	175
Did not bat: B. Kumar, J. Unadkat, J. Bumrah, Y. Chahal		Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Smuts), 2-38 (Duminy), 3-48 (Miller), 4-129 (Behardien), 5-154 (Hendricks), 6-158 (Klaasen), 7-158 (Morris), 8-159 (Paterson), 9-175 (Phehlukwayo)	
		Bowling: Kumar 4-0-24-5, Unadkat 4-0-33-1 (1w), Bumrah 4-0-32-0 (1nb), Pandya 4-0-45-1 (3w), Chahal 4-0-39-1 (1w).	
South Africa			
J. Smuts c Dhawan b Kumar	14	Result: India won by 28 runs	
R. Hendricks c Dhoni b Kumar	70	Series: India lead the three-match series 1-0	

Mendis drives Sri Lanka to T20 series sweep

SYLHET: Opener Kusal Mendis hit a blazing half-century as Sri Lanka thrashed Bangladesh by 75 runs in the second Twenty20 international to complete a 2-0 series sweep yesterday. Sri Lanka rode on Mendis' 70 off 42 deliveries to post 210-4 and then bowled out the hosts for 135 in Sylhet.

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad top-scored for Bangladesh with 41 before being run out, with opener Tamim Iqbal making the only other meaningful contribution with 29. Sri Lanka paceman Shehan Madushanka, who left the field with an injured hamstring after bowling just 2.1 overs, and off-spinner Danushka Gunathilaka claimed two wickets each to wrap up a comprehensive victory. "We had a really bad couple of years. I think now players are getting some confidence. That's the main thing," Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal said after the win.

"Hope the boys do their best moving forward-we have a really good combination of youngsters and seniors." Mendis once again stood out for the visitors with his second successive fifty of the series, as his 98-run stand with fellow opener Gunathilaka gave Sri Lanka a solid start after being put into bat first. Mendis, who was named both man of the match and series, hit six fours and three sixes in reaching his T20 international career-best score, taking the attack to the opposition while Gunathilaka at the other end made a brisk 42. Bangladesh dropped Gunathilaka twice on 15 and 28 and had to wait until the 11th over for their first success in the game.

Number three Thisara Perera chipped in with a quick-fire 31. Upul Tharanga then hit 25, and Dasun Shanaka smashed an unbeaten 30 off 11 balls, to lift the score past the 200-run mark.

In reply, Bangladesh lost three early wickets for just 22 runs and never caught up with the ever-increasing required run-rate. Apart from Tamim and Mahmudullah, Mohammad Saifuddin and Mahedi Hasan were the only other batsmen to manage double figures for the hosts, who were all out after 18.4 overs. "You need to have partnerships when you are chasing 200-plus," said Mahmudullah. "You must have at least 60 to 75 runs in the powerplay. But today we succumbed to scoreboard pressure. I am feeling quite disappointed." Sri Lanka also won the preceding tri-nation one-day international tournament and a two-Test series by 1-0 in their successful month-long tour. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

SYLHET, Bangladesh: Scoreboard of the second and final Twenty20 international between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Sylhet yesterday:

Sri Lanka	
D. Gunathilaka c Tamim b Soumya	42
K. Mendis c Mahedi b Mustafizur	70
T. Perera c Soumya b Jayed	31
U. Tharanga c Soumya b Saifuddin	25
D. Shanaka not out	30
D. Chandimal not out	2
Extras (lb2, w7, nb1)	10
Total (4 wickets; 20 overs)	210

Fall of wickets: 1-98 (Gunathilaka), 2-149 (T. Perera), 3-160 (K. Mendis), 4-205 (Tharanga)

Did not bat: J. Mendis, A. Aponso, A. Dananjaya, S. Madushanka, I. Udana

Bowling: Jayed 4-0-45-1 (w3), Nazmul 4-0-28-0 (w1), Mahedi 2-0-25-0, Mustafizur 4-0-39-1 (nb1), Saifuddin 4-0-46-1 (w2), Soumya 2-0-25-1 (w1).

Bangladesh (target 211)	
Tamim Iqbal c Dananjaya b Aponso	29
Soumya Sarkar c J. Mendis b Dananjaya	0
Mushfiqur Rahim c T. Perera b Madushanka	6
Mohammad Mithun c J Mendis b Madushanka	5
Mahmudullah Riyad run out (Mendis/Udana)	41
Ariful Haque lbw b Mendis	2
Mohammad Saifuddin c sub b Udana	20
Mahedi Hasan c Udana b Shanaka	11
Mustafizur Rahman b Gunathilaka	8
Abu Jayed st Chandimal b Gunathilaka	2
Nazmul Islam not out	1
Extras (w10)	10
Total (all out; 18.4 overs)	135

Fall of wickets: 1-8 (Soumya), 2-14 (Mushfiqur), 3-22 (Mithun), 4-59 (Tamim), 5-68 (Ariful), 6-110 (Mahmudullah), 7-113 (Saifuddin) 8-132 (Mahedi), 9-132 (Mustafizur), 10-135 (Jayed)

Bowling: Madushanka 2.1-0-23-2 (w3), Dananjaya 4-1-20-1, Shanaka 1.5-0-5-1 (w1), T. Perera 3-0-33-0 (w2), Aponso 4-0-31-1, J. Mendis 1-0-8-1 (w1), Udana 2-0-12-1 (w3), Gunathilaka 0.4-0-3-2.

Result: Sri Lanka win by 75 runs

Series: Sri Lanka win the two-match series 2-0

SYLHET: Sri Lanka cricketer Kusal Mendis poses for a photo with the Man of The Match and the Man of the Series trophies following the presentation ceremony during the end the second Twenty20 (T20) cricket match. — AFP