

RU cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Management moved into the final with a six-wicket victory over Law and Justice in the inter-department cricket tournament of Rajshahi University at the varsity ground yesterday.

Winning the toss, Law and Justice batted first and scored 104 runs all out in 23.4 overs.

Samu made highest 25 runs. Sanwar claimed 3 wickets for 25 runs.

In reply, Management reached the target of 105 runs losing four wickets in 19 overs.

Shohag scored highest 33 while Polish contributed 26 runs.

Moni and Babu claimed 3 wickets each for 32 and 20 runs respectively.

Earlier on Sunday, Finance and Banking reached the final beating Marketing in the first semifinal.

Goodwin feels for Zimbabwe

REUTERS, Melbourne

Former Zimbabwe batsman Murray Goodwin hopes World Cup matches will go ahead as planned in his country next month, but he believes the game is suffering there because of its poor administration.

The 30-year-old Goodwin, who last August turned down an offer to play for the country of his birth in the World Cup, has described the game in Zimbabwe as "unprofessional" and fears for its future if the matches are moved elsewhere.

"I think they must play there (in Zimbabwe), otherwise cricket will be pretty much a non-event in years to come," he told The Sunday Age newspaper.

"It's an absolute dog show -- what's happening there -- and it's not good for the cricket.

"But I also think it (a World Cup boycott) would be good in the sense that it would send a message to the (Zimbabwe) government to jack their ideas up about the country.

"That's the catch-22 situation but I think, as far as cricket development goes in the country and the financial situation, they must play there."

Both the British and Australian governments have raised concerns about playing World Cup matches in Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe's regime has attracted widespread criticism for its land reform programme.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is scheduled to meet in London on Tuesday to decide whether the England team should play their match against Zimbabwe in Harare on February 13.

Six of the 54 games in the February 9 to March 23 tournament, which is being staged mainly in South Africa, are scheduled to be played in Zimbabwe. Kenya is hosting two.

Goodwin, who played 19 Tests and 71 one-day internationals before returning to Western Australia for the 2000-01 domestic season, believes the administration of cricket in Zimbabwe has become too political.

"I do have regrets at the way players are treated over there," he said.

"A little bit has changed now, but it had to take a few of us to retire and leave the team in a bit of bother, I suppose.

"It (the game) is struggling and a lot to do with that is the way it's run. It's very political.

Murali

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1-36 from his 10 overs.

India paceman Javagal Srinath is next in the line to make the 300 club with 297 wickets and has a bright chance to get there as his side meet New Zealand in the last of the seven-match one-day series Tuesday.

Rajshahi

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Taqirumul batting 10 Extras: (b-4, lb-5, nb-5, w-1) 15 Total: (For 4 wickets in 69 overs) 251

Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-73, 3-108, 4-210.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Al-Amin	16	3	65	1
Russell	10	1	43	0
Razzak	17	4	46	1
Rana	14	3	65	1
Jamaluddin	12	3	23	0

Ganguly

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strike bowler Shane Bond, who is suffering from an ear infection.

Paul Hitchcock is expected to join the squad as a back-up for Bond.

TEAMS

**NEW ZEALAND** (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Mathew Sinclair, Chris Harris, Chris Cairns, Scott Styris, Lou Vincent, Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, Andre Adams, Daryl Tuffey, Shane Bond, Daniel Vettori.

**INDIA** (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Zaheer Khan, Javagal Srinath, Ashish Nehra, Dinesh Mongia, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Parthiv Patel, Venkatsai Laxman, Rakesh Patel.

Muralitharan box



REUTERS, Sydney

Factbox on Muttiah Muralitharan after the Sri Lanka off-spinner took his 300th one-day wicket on Monday:

Born: April 17, 1972. The world's leading bowler in Test history according to cricket bible Wisden as well as the most controversial due to his unique action.

ODI debut: Aug 1993 v India, Colombo. ODIs: 202.

Test debut: Aug 92 v Australia, Colombo, 437 wkts at 23.52. 78 matches.

Third in the all-time Test wicket-taking list, behind Courtney Walsh and Shane Warne and fourth in the all-time one-day list, only two wickets behind India's Anil Kumble on 302.

Named by Wisden as greatest Test bowler of all time (and 7th in the one-day list). Prodigious turner of the ball, combining finger spin and wrist rotation as well as unbridled aggression.

Began playing as a medium pacer. Dad ran a sweet business in Kandy. Loves rugby.

Called for throwing (straightening arm during delivery) during tours to Australia in 1995-96 and 1998-99.

Action cleared by ICC, cricket's world governing body.

1998, took match figures of 16 for 220 against England, the 5th best in history.

Oct 2000, took his ODI best of 7-30 v India in Champions Trophy. Claimed 75 Test wickets at 19.51 in the calendar year, a record for a spin bowler.

Aug 2001, took 8-87 against India in the 3rd Test, including a ball compared with Shane Warne's 'Ball of the Century' -- pitched outside leg stump and caught the off to dismiss opener Sadagopan Ramesh.



MUTTIAH MURALITHARAN

Sept, said he would love to take 500 wickets in his career. By Nov, began talking about 600. Took 80 wkts in 12 Tests in 2001, a new record.

January 2002, took Test-best 9-51 against Zimbabwe in Kandy, 5th best innings return of all time and almost became the third man after England's Jim Laker and India's Anil Kumble to take all 10. Teammate Chaminda Vaas, trying to help him

by bowling slow and wide, accidentally got the last wicket.

Becomes youngest and quickest to take 400 Test wickets in 3rd Test v Zimbabwe, taking 30 wickets at 9.8.

Controversy over action flares again in Feb when Bishen Bedi, interviewed by Wisden, likened him to a "javelin thrower".

Complained during tour of England in June of lack of support from rest of Sri Lanka's bowlers. "There is so much pressure on me because I have to take all the wickets. I can't bowl a miracle spell every time."

Has taken 10 wickets in a match for a world record 11 times.

Nov, undergoes hernia operation, making comeback in one-day match against Australia in Jan 2003.

Dec, named by cricket bible Wisden as the best bowler in Test history.

Jan 2003, returns to Sri Lanka team for triangular one-day series tournament against England and Australia in Australia after missing the first three matches because of injury.

Takes 2-44 in his comeback match in Sydney against Australia on January 9 as the tourists win their first game of the series, by 79 runs.

In the next match, against England in Sydney four days later, Muralitharan dismisses England's Jimmy Anderson to become the fourth player to reach 300 wickets in one-day internationals.

Nat'l junior chess Parag heads G-27

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champion Mehdi Hasan Parag headed a group of 27 players on two points in the 24th National Junior Chess Championship yesterday.

The players are Ejaz, Robin, Javed, Liza, Sagar, Mostafa, Saleheen, Obaidul (Shahin), Robi, Bari, Razzak, Belal, Zia, Masud, Iqbal, Elin, Meraj, Aman, Nazrul, Rajib, Tarif, Shahin, Arifeen, Bilash, Alam and Ali.

In the second round Parag beat Kamraj, Ejaz beat Prodip, Robin beat Jahan, Javed beat Sifat, Liza beat Mamun, Sagar beat Shahjahan, Mostafa beat Amin and Salehen beat Erfan.

Third round games start at 3 pm. Meanwhile, the selection phase for the 24th National Women's Championship begins today. Eight players will qualify for the final phase.

They will join holder Syeda Shabana Parveen Nipa, IWM Rani Hamid, Zakia Sultana and Shamima Akhtar Liza play directly in the final round.

Plan to shift Zim games shelved

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Plans to move World Cup fixtures from Zimbabwe have been shelved for the time being, tournament organisers said on Monday.

However if the International Cricket Council (ICC) were to withdraw its support of the six matches being played in the politically charged country, then they could still be moved to South Africa where the bulk of the tournament is to be staged, they added.

England and Australia, who are scheduled to play first round games in Zimbabwe, are under pressure from their governments not to play in the country on political grounds.

The prospect of teams refusing to play in Zimbabwe prompted speculation that the matches would be moved.

"The contingency had been in place for quite a while, but it was overtaken after the International Cricket Council (ICC) ruled that the matches could go ahead," World Cup communications director Rodney Hartman told Reuters.

"If the ICC decides to move the six games, then the contingency plan can be resurrected," Hartman said. "Nothing has changed to suggest those matches will be moved."

An ICC delegation visited Zimbabwe last November and decided the country was safe for players and officials.

The England and Wales Cricket Board will decide on Tuesday whether England will play their February 13 fixture against Zimbabwe in Harare.

Pakistan and India have said they have no qualms about playing in Zimbabwe, while Namibia toured there in September and October and are expected to play. The Netherlands have not made their intentions known.

Zimbabwe is scheduled to host six matches in the 54-game tournament, which starts with the opening ceremony in Cape Town on February 8.

Capriati down

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In this match but next match I'll be 150."

Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov safely booked his place in the second round with a 7-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win over Jeff Morrison.

Australian Open champion in 1999 and runner-up in 2000, Kafelnikov, 28, had considered retiring at the end of last year after helping Russia win the Davis Cup for the first time but decided to keep playing.

Just four of the 32 seeds in action fell by the wayside on Monday, with former Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez joining Capriati on the casualty list.

Martinez, the women's 31st seed, lost to Australia's Samantha Stosur 6-7, 6-3, 6-4.

South African Wayne Ferreira sent Spanish 26th seed Tommy Robredo packing with a 5-7, 6-0, 6-3, 6-4 win and Romanian 21st seed Andrei Pavel retired after aggravating a back injury in the first set of his match with Renzo Furlan.

Fifth seed Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium breezed into the second round with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Switzerland's Myriam Casanova.

Asia's two in-form player both kicked off their capaigns with victories. Thailand's Indian Open champion Paradorn Srichaphan beat Jurgen Melzer of Austria 7-5, 6-4, 1-6, 6-0 and last week's Sydney winner, South Korean Lee Hyung-taik, defeated Spain's David Ferrer 5-7, 6-2, 6-2 6-3 to set up a second round meeting with Agassi.

Women's ninth seed and former champion Lindsay Davenport beat French wildcard Camille Pin 6-2, 6-1, seventh-seeded Slovak Daniela Hantuchova beat Colombia's Fabiola Zuluaga 7-5, 6-7, 6-4.

Anxiety over



AFP, Melbourne

Anna Kournikova got a Grand Slam monkey off her back here Monday with a polished performance to avoid yet another first round exit.

The unseeded Russian glamour girl tumbled at the first hurdle in all four Grand Slams last season, living



PHOTO: INTERNET

AIR ANNA: Russian Anna Kournikova in action yesterday.

up to her reputation for being a tennis player of style rather than substance.

A first round defeat in last week's Sydney tournament had many predicting a similar fate was on the

cards at the Australian Open.

But producing what she later described as a "nearly perfect" performance, the Miami-based world number 42 was never challenged on her way to a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova.

She faces a daunting match with Belgian fifth seed Justin Henin-Hardenne in the second round on Wednesday but was content to bask in the glow of an encouraging win after defeating Nagyova.

Kournikova insisted she had not dwell on her four first round defeats in Grand Slams last year, saying it had barely crossed her mind.

"I didn't actually think 'Oh, I lost four Grand Slams in a row first round.' I didn't really think about that. Actually it didn't cross my mind before playing or since I've been here in Australia that I lost four times in a row in first round.

"That helped me. If I had been thinking about it I wouldn't have done too well."

Kournikova put her dismal performance in Grand Slams last year down to her injury-ravaged season in 2001.

"As I've said about a million times, last year I was coming off eight months of injury. I got tired and started getting injured again because my body wasn't used to it. But towards the end of last I was playing great."

Kournikova's movie-star looks and striking dress sense - she faced Nagyova in an eye-catching sky-blue ensemble - ensured a packed crowd on Melbourne Park's Margaret Court Arena.

But for all the attention, Kournikova still clearly gets irked by the popular perception of her as a WTA Tour ornament.

Asked if she planned to relax in Melbourne by swimming with the dolphins or visiting the zoo as she had done in previous years, she replied testily: "I swam with the dolphins once three years ago and went to the zoo about six years ago. I'm here to play tennis."

And her next challenge is the hard-hitting Henin-Hardenne. "I've lost to her here before and the last time we played was here," Kournikova said.

"But we've had, you know, a couple of close sets so I have nothing to lose. I'm going to go out there and just try to play my best and fight for every point and have fun out there."

"I really enjoyed being on the court today, and I'm going to try to do the same on Wednesday."

SA catching the fever



REUTERS, East London

Stepping out on to a less-than-manicured outfield to compete in a tournament that once rewarded winners with half a sheep, South Africa's rural players are flying the flag for cricket in poor areas in a country where rich whites have long dominated the sport.

The competitors in the Amacalegushe tournament in the Eastern Cape area play without the benefit of sponsorship, pampered pitches or even a match fee.

Aspiring young bowlers practise in makeshift nets ahead of the competition, hoping to emulate national side heroes Makhaya Ntini and Monde Zondeki, who have both graced the field of the Amacalegushe tournament

A young batsman swings with a rough-hewn wooden bat at a tennis ball bouncing in the dust on the sidelines of the tournament, while other young men with painted faces and wearing traditional Xhosa dress sit in the long grass and watch the games unfold.

Enthusiasm for the tournament always runs high but this year's Cricket World Cup, to be held in South Africa in February and March, has boosted rural excitement to new levels.

Poor children in the townships are also getting more involved.

"When I go around the townships, five years ago you found six, seven, eight, nine year-olds playing football," said World Cup spokesman Jos Charle.

"But today, these youngsters, they are playing cricket. No equip-

ment, no facilities or anything, just with a tennis ball and a home-made bat and home-made wickets," he added.

South Africa's history of racial oppression has left obvious marks across its sports teams and cricketing success is most often seen as the province of affluent whites.

Long-smouldering tensions came to a head recently, with South Africa's United Cricket Board (UCB) and its Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour trading sharp words over whether teams should field a quota of non-white players.

Although Zondeki was included in the national squad for the World Cup, he is only the third black player to make the South African side.

But the strength of tournaments such as the Amacalegushe competition show that cricket's future in the "Rainbow Nation" is in good hands, says Ray Mali, who played in his first tournament as a 15-year-old all-rounder in 1952.

Since then, Mali has become president of the Border Cricket Board and a member of the UCB general council. He sees these games as a vital part of the fabric of South African cricket.

"These tournaments should be supported because they are an important base of future talent -- the Ntinis and Zondekis of the future," he said.

Mfundo Gwarube, an Amacalegushe veteran who hails from Ntini's home village of Mdingi, agreed. "It has become a celebration of our culture and the cricket flair we have," he said.

Cricket's history in poor black villages is rooted in the country's colonial past, when British missionaries introduced the game in

schools around the turn of the 20th century.

Mineworkers returning home from backbreaking work in the gold fields around Johannesburg and Kimberley's diamond mines brought their own enthusiasm for the game when they returned to their home villages, leading to events such as Amacalegushe.

The rural game has grown steadily over the years and is seen as a breeding ground for the sport's future stars.

Money raised during the 2003 World Cup will go towards providing more turf pitches for rural grounds. Most of them today have dry, mud ruts or concrete strips covered with artificial turf -- neither surface conducive to nurturing young cricketers, particularly batsmen.

"It's good that some of the World Cup legacy money will be spent there and I predict that in the next five years we will see a significant return in terms of players coming through," Mali said.

"The people there are our most ardent supporters. They love the game passionately and we need them," he added.

When the World Cup officially kicks off on February 8, Mali expects most cricket-crazed rural communities to grind to a halt for the duration of the tournament, which ends on March 23.

"Now that a lot of the villages are electrified, a more of people are tuned into the cricket on television," he said.

"I walked into a friend's house in December and he almost didn't notice me because he was so engrossed in watching the Durban Test against Pakistan."

Aussies include Brad, Nathan

AFP, Sydney

Pacemen Brad Williams and Nathan Bracken were drafted into the Australian one-day cricket squad after hard-working Andrew Bichel was ruled out and Glenn McGrath placed in doubt for the tri-nation series clash with Sri Lanka in Brisbane Wednesday.

Selectors made the move after Bichel Monday succumbed to an injured right shoulder.

They said McGrath's fitness for Wednesday was still to be determined. He has lower back joint irritation.

Bichel received his injury during Saturday's seven-run win against England in Hobart following a heavy dive in the field.

Australian team physiotherapist Errol Alcott said: "Andy has suffered acute damage to some tendons in his right shoulder.

He said Bichel would have diagnostic scans in Brisbane Tuesday.

"After that we will have a better understanding of the injury and the likely time it will take before he resumes bowling."

Bichel was upset by the injury which denied him a chance to perform in front of his home crowd.

SL sail on Sanath

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the same player.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the England-Sri Lanka day-night match in the tri-nation one-day series at Sydney Cricket Ground on Monday:

SRI LANKA

Atapattu c Knight b Caddick	0
Jayasuriya c Knight b Blackwell106	
T'ratne c Trescottick b C'wood	44
De Silva c Stewart b Caddick	51
Sangakkara c and b Anderson	10
J'wardene c C'wood b Anderson33	
Arnold run out	0
Vaas not out	6
Muralitharan not out	3
Extras: (b-1, lb-10, w-16, nb-4)	31
Total: (For 7 wkts in 50 overs)	284

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-144, 3-199, 4-224, 5-264, 6-269, 7-277

Did not bat: Charitha Buddhika, Dilhara Fernando

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Caddick	10	3	29	2
Anderson	9	0	58	2
Harmison	9	0	59	0
Irani	9	0	53	0
Blackwell	10	0	54	1
C'wood	3	0	20	1

ENGLAND

Trescottick run out	85
Knight c Sangakkara b Fernando42	
Hussain c S'kara b Fernando	13
Shah c J'wardene b De Silva	39
Collingwood b Jayasuriya	2
Stewart run out	16
Blackwell c ATPattu b De Silva	16

Irani c and b De Silva	2
Caddick not out	14
Anderson b Muralitharan	1
Harmison c Arnold b De Silva	7
Extras: (b-1, lb-13, w-7, nb-5)	26
Total: (All out in 49.2 overs)	253

Fall of wickets: 1-115, 2-146, 3-161, 4-167, 5-179, 6-217, 7-227, 8-227, 9-234

**Bowler** O M R W  
Vaas 9 1 54 0  
Buddhika 7 0 36 0  
De Silva 6.2 1 30 4  
Fernando 7 0 38 2  
M'tharan 10 1 36 1  
Jayasuriya 10 0 45 1

**Result: Sri Lanka won by 31 runs. Man-of-the-match: Sanath Jayasuriya.**

**Next match: Australia-Sri Lanka, Jan 15.**

Sirajganj cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bonowari Lal Government High School became inter-school cricket champions, beating Sabuj Kanon Preparatory High School by 21 runs in the final at the Shaheed Shamsuddin Stadium in Sirajganj on Sunday.

Winning the toss, Bonowari Lal batted first and made 144 runs for seven wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Sabuj Kanon collected 123 runs for nine wickets in 25 overs.



PHOTO: AFP

GRUNT OF FRUSTRATION: Reigning Australian Open champion Jennifer Capriati screams after dropping a crucial point during her first round defeat against Germany's Marlene Weingartner yesterday.