

Aborigine beats McGrath for top Aussie honour

AFP, Sydney

An Australian indigenous rights activist beat cricketer to a top national honour Sunday, less than a year after an historic apology to Aborigines for injustices committed by white settlers.

Mick Dodson was named Australian of the Year by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who delivered the apology in parliament last February after his centre-left Labor Party ousted a conservative government which had refused to say sorry.

Dodson, 58, a member of the Yawuru people in Western Australia and a professor at the Australian National University, has spent his career campaigning for improvement in the lives of indigenous people.

He is a representative for the Pacific region at the United Nations indigenous peoples forum.

The other finalists for the award included revered retired fast bowler Glenn McGrath, an icon of the national sport of cricket, for his work as a campaigner against breast cancer after his wife died of the illness.

"His efforts truly show that if we work together, we can achieve real progress," Rudd said of Dodson.

Olympic gold medalist Cathy Freeman was the last Aborigine to receive the honour, in 1998.

Rudd said in his parliamentary apology to Aborigines for more than two centuries of white settlement that he wanted "to remove a great stain from the nation's soul."

The apology represented a watershed in Australia's often fraught history of race relations, with television networks airing it live and thousands of people crowding around huge screens in major cities to witness the event.

Aborigines are believed to have numbered up to a million at the time of white settlement, but only some 470,000 remain.

They are Australia's most impoverished minority, with a lifespan 17 years shorter than the national average, and disproportionately high rates of imprisonment, heart disease and infant mortality.

Rudd said the apology was a symbolic gesture to help "the healing of the nation" and would be followed by practical measures to improve Aboriginal health, education and housing.

Federer

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4 and 40-15, but she somehow clung on and hauled herself out of trouble.

"I feel so lucky that I have the chance to play in the quarter-finals," said Safina.

"This is the first time I have won when two matches were against me." There are no easy matches here, there are no easy Opens.

Argentina's del Potro became the youngest man in the last eight since Richard Krajicek in 1992 and has now reached two consecutive Grand Slam quarterfinals after last year's US Open.

"Against Roger, he will be the favourite. I'll change nothing for the game," insisted the 20-year-old.

Seventh-seeded Roddick was in ominous form as he downed Spanish 21st seed Tommy Robredo 7-5, 6-1, 6-3.

After battling out a tight first set, Roddick steamrolled his opponent in the second and third to send out a warning that he cannot be underestimated as he looks to add to his lone Grand Slam triumph at the US Open in 2003.

Kalabagan

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Boys in the last over losing just three wickets.

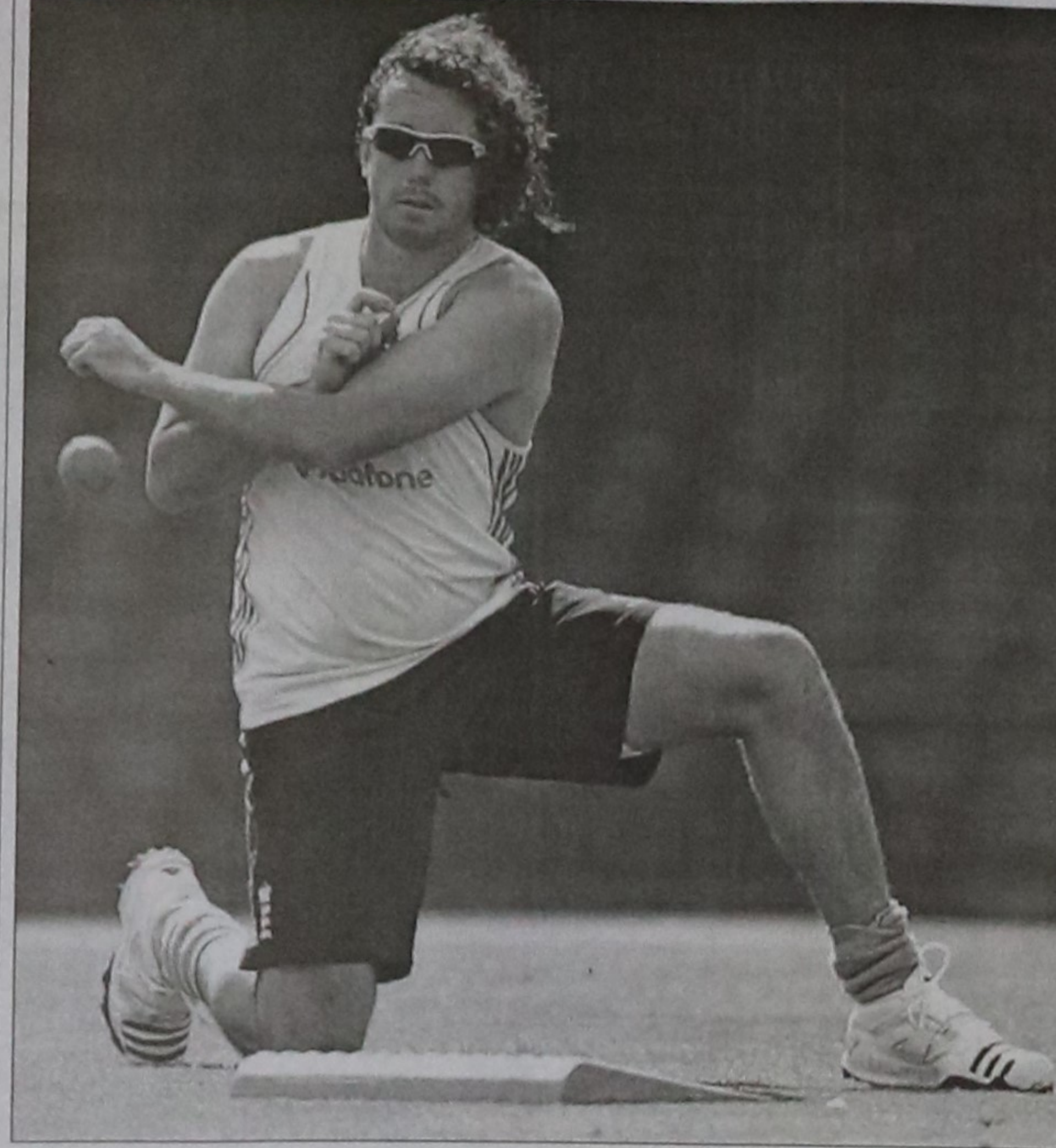
Boys' Protik Saha remained not out on 53 to knock their opponents who have now lost both their games in the tournament.

In the other match at this ground, Jatrabari KC beat Badda Ekota SKS by eight wickets.

Badda scored 125 after winning the toss and lost swiftly in the 16th over as Jatrabari's Himel slammed a fiery 75 not out to seal his team's victory.

Badda Ekota have now lost both their games and stand last in the Group D points table along with Uttara.

At the City Club ground, Prime Dolshahar (101-7) beat Motijheel T&T Club (88-9) in the shortened game of 13-overs-a-side, Indira Road (124) lost to Sadharan Bima (127-5) by five wickets.



England pacer Ryan Sidebottom is having a fielding session at St Kitts on Saturday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Shah's time to prove

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Owais Shah can stake a claim for an England Test place against the West Indies after he was named in the team to face St Kitts & Nevis on Sunday.

Shah has played just two Tests in three years, but was picked for his one-day pedigree and form for Middlesex.

"He has pretty much done everything he could do," said England captain Andrew Strauss of Shah's persistence.

After the three-day England play West Indies A on Thursday before the first Test in Jamaica starts on February 4.

Shah will line up alongside Ian Bell, the man he is pushing for a Test place, while Stuart Broad is omitted and Yorkshire's Adil Rashid is included as a second spinner to Monty Panesar for the match at Warner Park.

Shah's one-day international performances since the start of last summer are excellent, scoring an average 46.72 including five half-centuries, and Strauss believes he has the temperament to succeed in Test cricket.

"He hasn't had much opportunity in Test cricket but judging by the number of runs he has scored in county cricket it would be fair to deduce he would be able to replicate it in Tests as well," he said.

"One thing we have done over the last few years quite consistently is give people a run when they have got in the team, certainly batsmen.

"I suppose to a certain extent he has not been given that because he came into the side due to injuries or withdrawals rather than taking someone's place."

Cook Strauss's deputy in WI

BBC ONLINE, undated

England opener Alastair Cook will be Andrew Strauss's vice-captain in the four-Test series against West Indies, which starts on February 4.

Strauss was appointed captain earlier this month following the resignation of Kevin Pietersen, and Cook has long been viewed as a future England skipper.

"It's a very unofficial position but it is a chance to gain some valuable leadership experience," said Cook, 24.

"Strauss will need support not just from me but from other senior players."

Andrew Flintoff or Paul Collingwood might have been expected to fill the role of Strauss' right-hand man, given their previous captaincy experience.

All-rounder Flintoff has led England in 11 Tests, most notably on the disastrous tour of Australia in 2006-2007.

And Collingwood captained England in 24 one-day internationals before giving up the job last year.

However BBC cricket correspondent Jonathan Agnew said the unofficial appointment showed England have "one eye on the future."

Mills ready for Australia

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Kyle Mills, the New Zealand fast bowler, will test his knee during Auckland's State Shield game against Central Districts on January 25 before leaving for Australia two days later for the five-match Chappell-Hadlee Series.

Mills decided to skip domestic games in the past two weeks to rest his right knee, but believes the niggly will not prevent him from leading the attack against Australia.

"The knee's pretty good. It's just something that's been hanging around now for the last year or so," Mills told Sunday News. He had missed the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies after undergoing surgery on a tendon on his left knee, and is facing a similar problem with his right knee at present.

"It's not a major or any-

thing like that but we decided I should have a few days off because we've got a pretty intense schedule once the one-dayers against Australia start. I've had a rest now and will be playing again on Sunday against Central Districts. I'm feeling very comfortable with where I'm at right now."

He said he was pleased with the way he bowled against West Indies on their recent visit, and was ready to take charge in Australia. "Dan Vettori and I need to lead the bowling attack," Mills said.

"We are the most experienced bowlers within the side, so it's no surprise the responsibility to take wickets falls on us." New Zealand's 14-man squad includes two uncapped players in 19-year-old fast bowler Trent Boult and allrounder Brendon Diamondi, while the likes of Tim Southee and Iain O'Brien do not have a lot of ODI experience.

Mills has also been called

up in the past to take on leadership roles off the field, among them being mentoring Jesse Ryder during the Test tour of Australia last year after Jacob Oram had been ruled out of the series. "I was just giving Jesse a helping hand throughout the tour and just keeping the lines of communication open with his support group back in New Zealand," he said. "I was a link between the two really. That was all my role was."

"I've been around this side for a number of years now and as one of the leaders I need to help take responsibility for my teammates. Jacob Oram is the main guy who has been helping Jesse through everything and the fact that Jacob didn't tour Australia due to injury meant I put my hand up to fill that role in his absence.

"It was only a temporary situation because Jacob knew Jesse through Central Districts. I stood in his shoes while we were over there. It wasn't a major thing or anything like that."

Ryder has fallen into trouble since the tour; the batsman was fined for missing a team meeting and a training session after a late night of drinking, and was omitted for the fourth ODI against West Indies in Wellington. Mills, though, is unsure if there will be a mentor on the upcoming tour as well, with Oram out due to injury.

"Nothing like that has been set in stone for this upcoming trip," he said. "All of us support each other when we are out."

"We all know Jesse has been going through a pretty tough time and hopefully he's coming out the back-end of it. As teammates of his, we all support him. I'm not the only one. There are quite a few guys in this side who are helping him through his issues."

Niaz held

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Niaz Murshed shared points with the highest rated player GM Alexander Areshchenko of Ukraine in the fifth round of the First Gurgaon Open international chess tournament in Haryana yesterday.

Niaz improved his tally to 4.5 points to share the lead along with seven other players.

Bangladesh's FIDE Master Mohammad Javed secured four points while Mohammad Ali and Debaraj Chatterjee earned 3.5 points each.

In the other fifth round games, Javed beat Djuraev Sokhib of Tajikistan, Debaraj beat Prince Bajaj of India, Ali drew with IM Boris Arkhangelsky and Monir lost to Debashis Das of India.

Junior Chess from Jan 28

SPORTS REPORTER

The 30th National Junior Chess Championship will start on January 28 at the federation hall-room.

It's an open event for boys and girls who were born after January 01, 1989 and they can enroll their name without any entry fee on or before January 27.

The event will be held on Swiss-League system.

Ten Sports bags Lanka TV rights

CRICINFO, undated

Ten Sports has successfully secured the broadcasting rights for cricket in Sri Lanka for the next four years from 2009 to 2013.

The minister of sports made the move on behalf of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) following a Supreme Court order to renegotiate the deal with Ten Sports. The estimated figure, it is reliably learnt, is somewhere in the region of 65 million dollars which is nearly 13 million more than the second addendum signed by the Jayantha Dharmadasa interim committee and Ten Sports, one that was cancelled by the sports minister on the grounds of certain irregularities.

Following the cancellation Ten Sports went into arbitration against SLC and the minister then decided to renegotiate with the Dubai-based TV company. But a fundamental rights case was brought up by former Sri Lanka captain Hashan Tillakaratne to stop the renegotiation on the grounds that SLC had lost a lot of money on the second addendum because it was done without calling for tenders. The Supreme Court, however, ordered the Minister of Sports to renegotiate the deal with Ten Sports at a higher price.

The new deal consists of more tours to Sri Lanka, about 13, including two proposed tours by India during the period. Ten Sports hold the cricket television rights for West Indies, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

However, Singapore-based Nimbus Sport International will be broadcasting the five one-day internationals and one Twenty20 match between Sri Lanka and India. The contest begins on Wednesday with the first ODI in Dambulla.

11 move

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6-1, 7-5, Hanif Munna beat Niloy Ahmed 6-2, 6-1, Robin beat Monir Hossain 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, Sajib Passi beat Ranjit Passi 7-5, 4-6, 7-6. Selim beat Sazzad Hossain 6-3, 6-4 and Bashir Gazi beat Labib 6-0, 6-4 to proceed to the main draw.

Farashganj

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increased their tally to 27 points from 16 matches while Chittagong Abahani remained at 17 points from same number of outings.

Chittagong Mohammedan took a 2-0 lead in the first half when Noor Hossain Daulat found the net in the very first minute and Dhiman Barua doubled the margin in the 28th minute.

Sakhatat Hossain Ronny pulled back one in the 84th minute.

Second-placed Sheikh Russel, who are four points shy from leaders Abahani who have 38 points after a brilliant came-from-behind 2-1 victory over archrivals Mohammedan, take on Brothers Union, who have 27 points in 15 matches, in today's match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Mahela awaits India

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene said his team were progressing well and he was looking forward to facing India after thumping Pakistan Saturday to win the one-day series 2-1.

Jayawardene's team beat the home side by a whopping 234 runs in the third and final day-night international -- the heaviest one-day defeat suffered by Pakistan.

Sri Lanka piled up a mammoth 309-5 in their 50 overs thanks to a career-best 137 from opener Tillakaratne Dilshan and Kumar Sangakkara's 50.

Pacemen Nuwan Kulasekara (3-17) and Thilan Thushara (3-33) then dismissed Pakistan for a mere 75 in 22.5 overs -- the lowest total at home by Shoab Malik's team in all one-day cricket.

Jayawardene was delighted that his side had staged a comeback after losing the first match by eight wickets in Karachi on Tuesday. Sri Lanka won the second game by 129 runs -- also played in Karachi.

"This is our sixth win in seven one-day series and the only one which hurt badly was our defeat against India at home (last year) and hopefully we turn things around this time," Jayawardene said.

Sri Lanka take on India in the first of five one-day matches in Colombo on January 28. They will also play a one-off Twenty20 international in the Sri Lankan capital on February 10.

Jayawardene warned that India would pose

a tough challenge.

"India is shaping well in both forms of the game. We beat them in Tests but lost the one-day matches, so it would be a good series and we would try to keep the continuity," said Jayawardene.

Sri Lanka hammered Zimbabwe 5-0 late last year before winning a tri-series in Bangladesh on their way to Pakistan.

Jayawardene praised batsman Dilshan, who deservedly won the man-of-the-match award on Saturday and was also named man of the series.

"He (Dilshan) is a versatile cricketer who bats well, fields well, can turn his arm over and can also keep wickets. I call such players dirty players who are ready to do all the dirty type of work for the team and are not recognised."

And the skipper praised his pace attack.

"I don't mind the focus being on (Mutiah) Muralidaran and Ajantha (Mendis). They have quite a few good fast bowlers around them and the pacemen are good at exploiting conditions well, which is good for the team," said Jayawardene.

Pakistan captain Shoab Malik blamed a lack of consistency for his team's defeat.

"We lack consistency," said Malik. "We won the first match but could not keep the tempo, which was bad. It was a batting collapse which let us down and disappointment is there even when you lose by two runs," said Malik.

Malik hoped his team would raise its morale in the coming days.

"We have Tests against Sri Lanka next month and then a tour of Bangladesh so we must move on."

Setback for Afghanistan

Cricket

AFP, Buenos Aires

Afghanistan's hopes of reaching the 2011 World Cup suffered an early setback on Saturday with a 13-run defeat at the hands of Uganda in the World Cricket League Division Three.

But Hong Kong got off to a flyer with a handsome seven-wicket win over hosts Argentina while Papua New Guinea defeated the Cayman Islands by six wickets.

The top two teams in the six-nation event will reach the 2011 World Cup qualifier in South Africa in April from where four countries will go on to the game's showpiece one-day event.

Uganda made 216-8 off their 50 overs before Afghanistan endured a nightmare start to their reply where they slumped to 23-5 and then

53-6 before a 121-run start for the seventh wicket between Rais Ahmadzai (74) and Samiullah Shenwari (53) brought them in touching distance.

"I would have been very disappointed if we had lost the game and been all out for less than 100 runs, but a great effort was put in by Rais and Samiullah," said Afghanistan coach Kabir Khan, a former Pakistan Test player.

"It shows how much strength we have in our batting."

Kabir is confident that his side can get back on track with victory over Hong Kong on Sunday, a repeat of the Division Four final last year which Afghanistan won by 57 runs.

Hong Kong coach Aftab Habib praised his side after they dismissed Argentina for 107 and then reached their target with 22.4 overs to spare.

"I was really pleased as the

first match is always an important match," said former England player Habib.

"We lost twice to Afghanistan in Tanzania (in Division Four). They are a good team, we know we are a good team, and it is all down to who performs the best on the day."

Papua New Guinea skipper Rarua Djikana took 5-14 as his side enjoyed a comprehensive six-wicket victory against Cayman Islands.

PNG reached their target of 122 with 29.1 overs to spare after the Caymans were bowled out for just 121. Man-of-the-match Vani Morea hit 64 off just 51 balls to guide his team to victory.

Veeru not afraid of Mendis

PTI, NEW DELHI

On the eve of the Indian cricket team's departure for Sri Lanka for a one-day series, dashing opener Virender Sehwag has sought to put the rivals on the backfoot, saying he had done his homework against mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis and would not hesitate to attack him.

Sehwag said his knowledge of the nuances of the game made it easy for him to deal with mystery bowlers like Mendis.

"I am exceptionally aware of the nuances of the game. I know what's happening, who is where and how to take advantage of him in the field. I studied him (Mendis) during the Asia Cup in Pakistan. Even at non-striker's end, I kept following his methods. His style when he is bowling off-spin, googly, or pushing it through middle finger."

"So I have no problem in attacking him. A bowler is demoralised if he knows that a batsman has read him completely," Sehwag told PTI in an interview.

He said a bowler like Mendis preferred to keep three or four fielders close to bat. "It means there are open spaces in the field. Even a mis-hit can give you boundaries," he explained.



Australian cricket legend Shane Warne (C) enjoys the Australian Open match between American Andy Roddick and Spaniard Tommy Robredo in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptquip: FAMOUS MOVIE ABOUT A PERSON WHO ALWAYS LEAPS EXCITEDLY INTO CABS HEADFIRST: "TAXI DIVER."
Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals N