



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

2nd June 2001

# **Cricket legend Murali hosts charitable international schools tournament**

Sri Lanka will host the inaugural Murali Cup in July 2011, a community-focused international schools Under 18 tournament endorsed by cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan and organised by the Foundation of Goodness in partnership with Red Dot Tours.

The Murali Cup 2011 will be played from 12 to 18 July on Sri Lanka's beautiful south coast with eight teams participating from the United Kingdom, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Dulwich College, King Edward's School Southampton, Warwick School and Bloxham School will participate from the UK. The final international spot goes to the Kuala Lumpur Cricket Academy from Malaysia. Three local schools have been invited from underprivileged rural areas in different regions of the island, including St. Patrick's College Jaffna, Hindu Matale College – beneficiaries of the Mahela Jayawardene Foundation, and the Foundation's own Seenigama Academy side.

Each match day, five 40 over matches are played at the finest south west coast venues. Both Foundation of Goodness sponsored grounds, Sri Wimala Buddhi College Surrey Oval and the Sri Sumangala College Lords MCC ground, play host, alongside the Galle International Stadium and the recently opened Surrey Village Maggona ground. Each side battles out 5 matches in 7 days to decide the winners of the Murali Cup and Plate competitions. The Cup final is held at the Galle Stadium on 18 July, when Murali will be in attendance to present the cup.

The tournament is designed to promote friendship and compassion between children with different social and ethnic backgrounds, as well as raising funds for a Learning and Empowerment Institute in the north-eastern town of Mankalem; a project managed by the Foundation of Goodness to rehabilitate communities deeply affected by the civil war. The site of the ambitious fledgling project benefitted from a recent visit from former England cricketers Sir Ian Botham and Michael Vaughn during the ICC Cricket World Cup in March. The land now under development was granted to Muralitharan by the good grace President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

"This unique tournament brings together kids from different backgrounds to share their joy of cricket while also helping others less fortunate have a brighter future," Muralitharan said.

A crucial part of the tournament will be a special community work day when players and school teachers will join together to participate in special community programs and activity schemes in Seenigama, a small village near to Galle and the headquarters of the Foundation of Goodness. Volunteer work for the international schoolboy participants on 14 July will include school maintenance, beach and local temple cleaning as well an introduction local village cuisine and a short Karate course.

In addition to community work, former MCC Secretary Roger Knight will use the tournament to promote the MCC's Spirit of Cricket ethos while international stars, including Mahela Jayawardena, Kumar Sangakkara and Murali himself, will run specialist masterclass coaching sessions on 17 July. Coral Sands Hotel in Hikkaduwa will host evening seminars on non-match days where the heroes of Sri Lankan cricket provide an interpersonal forum for participants to learn more about the game.

"We are delighted to be working together with Red Dot Tours to create a really innovative schools tournament that will be run annually every July," said Kushil Gunasekera, the founder of the Foundation of Goodness.

#### **About FOG:**

*The Foundation of Goodness aims to narrow the gap between urban and rural life in Sri Lanka by tackling poverty through productive activities. Recently recognised as the best example of post-Tsunami disaster-relief work, the Foundation of Goodness' project in Seenigama provides a holistic model that can be replicated to tackle the problems that face rural villagers throughout Sri Lanka. The Foundation of Goodness provides essential facilities and programmes that benefit 20,000 people from 25+ villages free of cost.*

#### **About Red Dot:**

*Red Dot Tours specialises in tailor-made travel to Sri Lanka, South India and the Maldives. The company, which has offices in the UK and Colombo, has cricketing roots having first been conceived as a cricket tour company back in 1999. Since then, though, Red Dot has grown from its humble cricket beginnings into one of the most respected travel companies in Sri Lanka offering a broad range of holidays. The Red Dot website, meanwhile, is the leading online travel portal for Sri Lanka providing in-depth information for the independent-minded traveller.*

#### **Media Notes:**

For all the latest news and information on the Murali Cup 2011, please visit - [www.themuralicup.com](http://www.themuralicup.com).