

League goes on holiday

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League has been suspended for a week because of the Eid-ul-Azha vacation.

The 13-team elite league will resume from February 17 with two matches after the break.

Holders Victoria Sporting Club will take on Brothers Union Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while last year's runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club meet Uttara Sporting Club at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Leaders Victoria top the table with 20 points from four matches while Mohammedan and Uttara are sharing second spot along with Abahani and City Club. All four teams have 18 points.

Mohammedan, Abahani and Uttara have played four matches so far while City Club have won three out of three matches.

Newcomers Orient Sporting Club are sixth with twelve points from four matches.

Top six teams will qualify for the Super League while the six out of remaining seven except BCB Development Squad will play in the relegation league.

STANDINGS

Team	M	W	L	T	Bonus	Points
Victoria SC	4	4	0	0	1	20
City Club	3	3	0	0	0	18
Abahani KC	4	3	1	0	0	18
Uttara SC	4	3	1	0	0	18
Mohammedan	4	3	1	0	0	18
Orient SC	4	2	2	0	0	12
Brothers	4	1	3	0	0	6
Surjo Tarun	4	1	3	0	0	6
Biman	4	1	3	0	0	6
Y Pegasus	3	1	2	0	0	6
Indira Road	3	1	2	0	1	2
Kalabagan	4	0	4	0	0	0
Dev Squad	3	1	2	0	0	0

Missed opportunity

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa all rounder Lance Klusener had the perfect opportunity to exorcise his 1999 World Cup semifinal ghost on Sunday.

Instead he ended a heart-broken loser again in the opening match of the 2003 tournament.

South Africa seemed lost against West Indies when the club-wielding Klusener, woefully out of form in the run-up to the tournament, came to the crease. His innings began with mis-hits, edges and misses.

Klusener though, the man of the 1999 World Cup with an average of 140.5 but who almost did not make the South Africa squad this time, suddenly remembered how to bat at

just the right time as he warmed up with some flashing drives and pulls.

It seemed to have come too late. With 54 needed off five overs, many of the Newlands crowd were beginning to look for their coats and car keys.

The left-handed Klusener responded by opening his shoulders. A flat six off Chris Gayle's off spin was followed three deliveries later by a towering hit into the same section of the crowd.

The man known as 'Zulu' then seemed to get the huge slice luck he needed. A swing to square leg ended in Pedro Collins' hands, only for the fielder to take a few complacent steps backwards and step on the rope. Another six followed as 19 came off the over.

With nine needed off the final over, the match was in his pocket but, just as in 1999, he let it fall out. When he received the perfect

present from Vasbert Drakes, a leg-side full toss, he managed only to heave it to Carl Hooper in the deep.

To make matters worse, Klusener did not bother to run, which condemned batting rabbit Makhaya Ntini to take strike when victory might still have been possible if Klusener had crossed with the capable Nicky Boje.

Klusener trudged off, 57 to his name off 48 balls, including five sixes and a four, and South African chances of victory went with him, just as they had at Edgbaston four years ago against Australia.

In that tournament, he had won four man-of-the-match awards on the way to that fateful game against Steve Waugh's side.

Again he produced his customary fireworks to take his side to the brink of victory.

He hammered two fours to level the scores but then, with four balls left and a single needed, he set off for a sharp run. Allan Donald did not respond to the call and Australia sneaked into the final on countback.

Klusener was left with the heaviest of burdens, which he has carried for four full years.

Sunday was the perfect chance to bury the memory. Again, cruelly, he came up just short.

Fleming praises NZC

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

REUTERS, Bloemfontein

Stephen Fleming said his New Zealand players were proud of their national board for deciding not to send the team to Kenya because of security concerns -- even though it

might wreck their World Cup chances.

Fleming, the New Zealand captain, said the players were disappointed they could miss out on valuable points from a game they were expected to win but were happy with the decisive way the issue had been handled.

"What the players appreciate is that first and foremost New Zealand Cricket put our safety first," Fleming told a news conference on Sunday.

"While we're all disappointed that maybe we'll lose four points we rest easy knowing that our safety was a major issue to them.

"That does not always happen with some of the pressure from certain areas and financial areas of the game."

New Zealand have refused to travel to Nairobi for their pool B match against Kenya on February 21 but are yet to put in an official request for a venue switch. Their concerns were fuelled by a bombing in Mombasa in November which killed 16 people.

They have the option of an appeal to the World Cup technical committee but have hinted they might pursue a legal route through the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

Rating chess

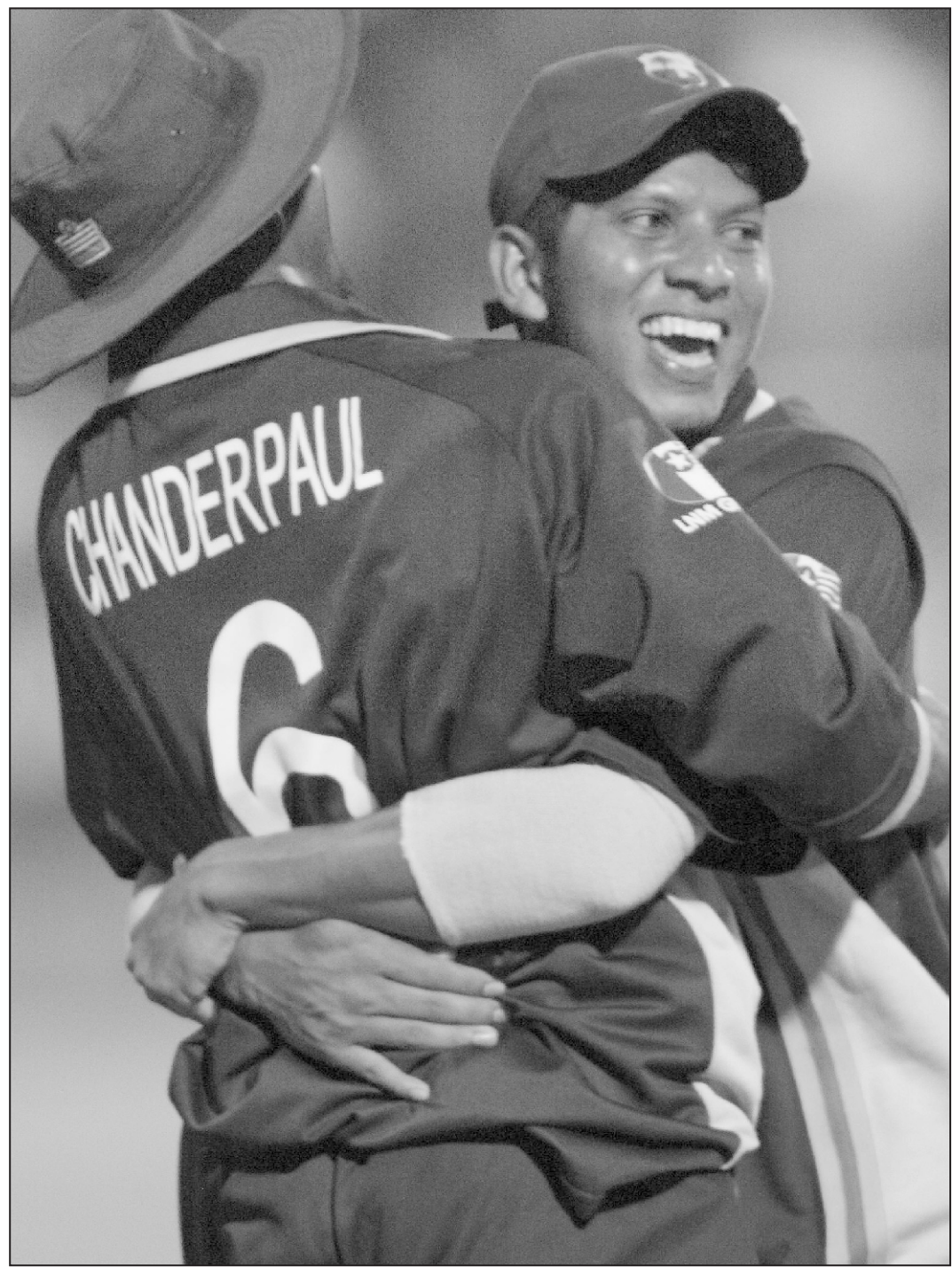
SPORTS REPORTER

IM Enamul Hossain Rajib of Biman took solo lead in the Shahjalal Bank international rating chess tournament with 5.5 points at the end of the sixth round at NSC Chess Room yesterday.

Aminul Islam of Ansars, Arman Monir of Titas, Shafiq Ahmed of Sonali Bank, Moniruzzaman Khan of Anushilan, Hafizul Islam and Ranodev Dasgupta of Leonine were sharing the second position with 4.5 points each.

In the round, Rajib beat Aminul, Arman won against Taher and Hafiz checkedmate Shibu while Shafiq drew with Monir, Lavlu shared point with Armin and Sagar drew with Ranodev.

After a four-day Eid break, the seventh round of the meet starts at the same venue at 3:30 pm on February 16.



THAT'S IT: West Indies' Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Ramnaresh Sarwan celebrate after the last South Africa wicket fell during their World Cup clash at Newlands in Cape Town on February 9.

Revenge or repeat?

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a little bit of pressure on him.

"Brad Hogg, he's been doing well, he's a competitive sort of player, but it's always interesting to see how players accommodate themselves in big tournaments like this."

Shoaib and Waqar and wicketkeeper Rashid Latif have done their best in the lead-up to ruffie Australian feathers.

Shoaib vowed to dismiss Matthew Hayden, Adam Gilchrist and Ricky Ponting, and claimed Brett Lee was no match-winner.

Waqar claimed Australia was panicking about having to play Pakistan and then Rashid said the defending champions had dropped the trophy by leaving Test skipper Steve Waugh at home.

But Australian skipper Ponting wasn't buying into a pre-match war of words.

"He can say whatever he likes," Ponting said of Waqar.

"I'm not too worried about whatever they say."

"We haven't spoken about it and we won't speak about it."

"As soon as we start worrying about what they're talking about we're taking our eye off what we have to do."

"We've been in South Africa just going about our business. We've had our fair share of success against them in the past and I hope that doesn't change."

"We've got three of the best fast bowlers in the world, the best leg spinner in the world and a bloke who has done particularly well in the last few games bowling left arm wrist spin."

"Our bowling line-up is good and we're pretty sure our batting line-up can do the job."

Ponting admitted Shoaib, timed at a world record 161kph in a one-dayer against New Zealand last year, would be a handful.

"They seem to get the ball to swing quicker than most other sides," Ponting said.

"You just have to have a smaller back lift and eliminate your big shots and try and get

through those dangerous spells."

"As we've seen in one-day cricket and Test cricket he (Shoaib) can still take three or four or five wickets in a hurry and destroy your innings so you've just got to get through those tough periods."

"We know he's a very dangerous bowler ... but most of our guys have had success against him and have got game plans worked out to combat his speed."

Wasim, 37, who has 490 one-day international wickets, is playing his fifth and last World Cup and commands respect.

"I have always enjoyed taking on challenges," he said.

"Australia has always been a very competitive team and I always enjoy playing and performing against them. I just can't wait for Tuesday's game and although it would not be a grudge match, we would certainly like to start the tournament on a winning note."

"We need to start with a bang ... we are ambitious and motivated enough to win the tourna-

ment."

Ponting said the first hour would be crucial.

"If you let them get away early they're a very good side, very good front runners."

LINE-UPS

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Damien Martyn, Jimmy Maher, Michael Bevan, Andrew Symonds, Ian Harvey, Brad Hogg, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath, Andy Bichel. Darren Lehmann is unavailable for selection due to suspension.

PAKISTAN (from): Waqar Younis (captain), Inzamamul Haq, Saeed Anwar, Salim Elahi, Shahid Afridi, Taufeeq Umar, Yousef Youhana, Younis Khan, Rashid Latif, Abdul Razzaq, Wasim Akram, Saqlain Mushtaq, Shoaib Akhtar, Moha-mmad Sami, Azhar Mahmood.

Umpires: David Shepherd (Eng) and Ashoka de Silva (Sri) TV umpire: Brent Bowden (NZ) Match referee: Cliff Lloyd (WI)

FORM GUIDE

AFP, Johannesburg

Last ten one-day matches played by Australia and Pakistan ahead of their World Cup clash at the Wanderers here on Tuesday:

AUSTRALIA (won 9 lost 1)	Melbourne
Jan 25, 2003	beat England by 5 runs
Jan 23, 2003	beat England by 10 wickets
Jan 21, 2003	beat Sri Lanka by 9 wickets
Jan 19, 2003	beat England by 4 wickets
Jan 15, 2003	beat Sri Lanka by 4 wickets
Jan 11, 2003	beat England by 7 runs
Jan 9, 2003	lost to Sri Lanka by 79 runs
Dec 22, 2002	beat Sri Lanka by 142 runs
Dec 15, 2002	beat England by 89 runs
Dec 13, 2002	beat England by 7 wickets
PAKISTAN (won 6 lost 4)	Newlands
Dec 18, 2002	lost to South Africa by 34 runs
Dec 16, 2002	lost to South Africa by 9 wickets
Dec 13, 2002	lost to South Africa by 62 runs
Dec 11, 2002	beat South Africa by 182 runs
Dec 8, 2002	lost to South Africa by 132 runs
Dec 1, 2002	beat Zimbabwe by 70 runs
Nov 30, 2002	beat Zimbabwe by 8 wickets
Nov 27, 2002	beat Zimbabwe by 48 runs
Nov 22, 2002	beat Zimbabwe by 104 runs
Nov 23, 2002	beat Zimbabwe by 7 runs

Whirlwind Wishart

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145 against India in Colombo last year, Zimbabwe's previous highest individual score.

Wishart, whose first hundred in one-dayers was 102 against India at the same venue in 1998, reached his 150 by hoisting a towering six over long on off the seam bowling of Gerrie Snyman.

Zimbabwe's innings total was their highest in a World Cup, eclipsing their 312 for four against Sri Lanka at New Plymouth in 1992.

Namibia are playing in their first World Cup after surprisingly finishing runners-up to the Netherlands in the 2001 ICC Trophy in Canada.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the World Cup Group A match between Zimbabwe and Namibia at Harare Sports Club on Monday:

ZIMBABWE	NAMIBIA
C Wishart not out 172	R Walters c Taibu b Streak 0
M Vermeulen c and b Louw 39	S Swanepoel c Streak b Whittall 23
A Flower c Karg b Louis Burger 39	A Burger c A Flower b Streak 26
G Flower not out 78	D Keulder c Ebrahim b Whittall 27
Extras: (lb-6, nb-2, w-4) 12	B Murgatroyd c Wishart b G Flower 10
Total (For two wickets in 50 overs) 340	L Burger not out 4
Fall of wickets: 1-107, 2-174	D Kotze not out 5
Bowler	Extras: (lb-1, w-8) 9
Snyman 10 0 48 0	Total: (For 5 wickets in 25.1 overs) 104
J Burger 10 1 70 0	To bat: M Karg, G Snyman, J Louw, B Kotze
B Kotze 10 1 78 0	Fall of wks: 1-0, 2-40, 3-80, 4-94, 5-98

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Streak	5	0	35	2
Honda	6	1	20	0
Olonga	3	1	8	0
Murphy	1	0	7	0
G Flower	05.1	1	13	1
Whittall	5	0	20	2

Result: Zimbabwe win by 86 runs (D/L method)
Man-of-the-match: C Wishart.
Toss: Namibia.
Umpires: DL Orchard (SA) and SJV Taufel (Aus).
TV Umpire: DB Hair (Aus).
Match Referee: Wasim Raja (Pak).

Fast talk

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Australian captain Ricky Ponting acknowledged the threat for his batsmen from Shoaib.

"He's just a very, very dangerous bowler," Ponting said of the Pakistani. "We know that we need to get through those tough spells and hopefully he does not do too much damage."

Both Shoaib and Lee may have little in common except bowling fast, but remain good friends.

"He (Shoaib) is a great mate of mine and I love watching him bowl," Lee said.

"There are people who might try and stop him but they should not," he said about speculation over Shoaib's suspect action.

Lee himself has seen his action

challenged and appeared rattled when England's Barmy Army chanted 'chucker' whenever he ran into bowl in the recent Ashes series.

Shoaib described Lee as 'sweet' and a man who loves to share a joke.

Veteran Pakistani seamer Wasim Akram, playing in his fifth World Cup, advised Lee and Shoaib not to sacrifice pace.

"When we won the 1992 World Cup the main thing our captain Imran Khan stressed was to bang it in since speed is always a fast bowler's weapon," Wasim said.

"Like the crowds, I too love to watch the two bowl fast. They should not cut down on pace since wickets come with that."

HOW THEY ARE

AFP, Johannesburg

International one-day career averages for Shoaib Akhtar and Brett Lee ahead of Pakistan's World Cup clash against Australia at the Wanderers here on Tuesday (matches, overs, runs, wickets, best bowling, average, economy, strike rate, five wickets in an innings):

SHOAIB AKHTAR	BRETT LEE
Overall 75 568.5 2562 122 6/16 21.00 4.50 27.9 3	Overall 55 477.2 2248 100 5/27 22.48 4.70 28.6 2
v Australia 16 114.4 642 23 5/25 27.91 5.59 29.9 1	v Pakistan 11 101.2 453 22 4/32 20.59 4.47 27.6 0
In Pakistan 8 62 321 10 6/16 32.10 5.17 37.2 1	In Australia 30 270.1 1247 53 5/27 23.52 4.61 30.5 2
In Australia 12 94 427 23 5/25 18.56 4.54 24.5 1	In World Cup 10 80.5 391 16 3/11 24.43 4.83 30.3 0
In World Cup 10 80.5 391 16 3/11 24.43 4.83 30.3 0	Note: Lee has yet to play in a World Cup match and has not toured Pakistan

Top class

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because it has got a lot of talent, a lot of good young players."

The motivation clearly did Lara good. The left-hander was unstoppable in the middle overs of the Windies' innings and single-handedly turned the course of the match. The significance of the knock was not lost on his captain.

"Brian is a world-class player and it is only a matter of time before he gets it right," said Hooper.

"The two warm-up games that we played against Free State and Griquas he was hitting the ball well and you knew it was just a matter of time before he hit something really big."

"I have been questioned before about his form and I said before that come the big day he would turn it on. As we saw today (Sunday), in a very tricky situation he set the game up for us."

After a few conflicts with the West Indies authorities in the past, it was noticeable how much the 33-year-old committed himself to the World Cup effort.

"I just want to get out there and play cricket. I want to play with Carl and make sure that the team has the best possible chance of winning this tournament," Lara concluded.

England boycotting?

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Board (ECB) which it had passed on to Andre Pruis, South's Africa's National Deputy Commissioner of Police, the country's second highest ranking police officer.

They subsequently added they would be holding a 3pm (1300GMT) press conference at the Holiday Inn hotel in Cape Town where Pruis would publicise his findings.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued at the team's Cape Town hotel, the ECB said: "The ECB wishes to make clear that it was the ICC's own World Cup security directorate which was the source of the 'new information' provided by ECB to the ICC yesterday (Sunday) evening with regard to the safety and security of England players and officials in Zimbabwe."

"The information contained advice received from the Crime Intelligence Head Office of the South African Police Services, based on reports that had emanated from the South African Security Services and Interpol."

On Sunday, the ECB revealed the existence of a "hoax" death threat it had received on January 20 which said players and their families would be killed if the team went ahead with Thursday's match in Harare.

But the ECB have now exhausted all official attempts at getting the match moved to main

tournament hosts South Africa.

As Zimbabwe are opposed to relocating the fixture, England must either play the match in Harare or risk losing four World Cup points as well as incurring a fine for failing to honour their contractual obligations.

It appears now they are pinning their hopes on World Cup chiefs calling off the game and awarding both sides two points. But that would represent a huge U-turn on the part of the game's rulers.

Last month the players issued a statement voicing concerns about spectator safety as well as their own.

But adding to England's concerns on Monday was a British newspaper report saying South Africa were considering a boycott of their England tour, which follows on from Zimbabwe's scheduled visit, if Nasser Hussain's men refused to play in Harare.

A South African boycott could do massive financial damage to the ECB, 80 per cent of whose income comes from international match proceeds.

The ECB have repeatedly warned, in advance of the UCBSA threat, that withdrawal from Harare could cost them as much as 10 million pounds (16.4 million dollars).

The figure includes both a fine for missing the match itself and the cost of any subsequent cancellation of Zimbabwe's two Test tour of

England in the early part of the northern summer.

But, following that series, South Africa arrive for an even more lucrative five Test campaign with the two campaigns split by a money-making triangular one-day event involving all three sides.

Warne

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his injured shoulder will not prove a barrier to his performance here.

"The big tournaments bring out the best in me and the team. In tough situations, I love having the ball in my hand because I feel I can turn the game," he said.

The Australians, meanwhile, say they are determined to take the relaxed route to a potential World Cup title repeat.

"In 1996, we wanted it so much that it was all we ever talked about. We trained hard and for long periods that it had a little bit of a detrimental effect."

"When we got to the final we were on edge too much," said Warne as he looked back on that defeat to Sri Lanka in Lahore.

"What we have started to do is relax a lot more and go out and play. If we play our best, I am sure we can win the World Cup."