

SA unwilling to host this Zim

REUTERS, Johannesburg

South Africa would be unwilling to play against a weakened Zimbabwe team next year, according to United Cricket Board (UCB) president Ray Mali.

Mali said Friday's decision to postpone the two-Test series between Australia and Zimbabwe, scheduled to begin on Saturday, was "very much in line with our thinking".

He said the UCB would be making every effort to ensure the home series against their neighbours, set for February 2005, would be competitive.

"We would not like to play against a very inferior Zimbabwe team and so we will be doing everything possible to assist them in the development of a top-class side," Mali told this news agency.

The Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) and Mali said the UCB would continue with their behind-the-scenes work in trying to help the ZCU resolve the issue.

"I have spent the last two weeks talking to the Zimbabwe Cricket Union as the representative of our board and things have turned out the way we wanted."

"But no cricket board can be held to ransom and the issue with the rebel players must be resolved quickly," Mali said.

Bhola upend

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minutes.

Favourites Dhaka University will take on Naogaon in today's first match while Dhaka face Chuadanga in the other.

Rebels turn

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and complexity of this dispute, I would think that it would be several months before this process would be finalised," Mani added.

The news of the players' latest sackings broke simultaneously with the announcement of a decision taken by the ZCU and Cricket Australia to call off the two Tests their teams were scheduled to play until a later date.

Venturas said: "We have been told that they are not wanted for the one-day series against Australia."

A hero on debut!

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the bat. But in the 90s, I did feel really nervous," said Strauss, one of three left-handers in England's top three.

"When I was on 98, I tried to drive one which was almost a bouncer, which wasn't good judgement."

Strauss was only called into England's squad on Monday when Vaughan twisted his knee while batting in the Lord's nets.

"It's been a crazy week really," said Strauss, who shared partnerships of 190 with England stand-in captain Marcus Trescothick (86 before adding 49 with Butcher (22 not out), another left-hander.

"I thought I was in with a slight chance when the team was announced and then I wasn't and then I was."

"But I had nothing to lose. I was on my home ground, in a Test match, and determined to enjoy it."

Strauss said his knowledge of the conditions gained from playing for Lord's-based county Middlesex for the past six years had been an asset.

"I think it helped quite a lot actually," explained Strauss, who made his England one-day international debut during the recent winter tour of Sri Lanka.

"I know the wicket well, know the slope really well, I've played here often enough to know that."

"There are enough new things in a Test match. You don't need the ground and conditions to be new as well."

Long live CCL

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right-hander, who led Ispahani to finish runners-up in the Plate competition, scored 397 runs including four fifties from ten matches.

Another veteran Enamul Haque of Bashundhara bagged the bowling honours with 19 wickets.

Sandeep walked away with the best batsman award with an amazing average over 118. In four matches, he amassed 356 runs with one century and three half centuries (105 not out, 60, 99 and 92).

Naimur Rahman won the best all-rounder prize. The former national

captain, who was supposed to be in the Caribbean with the rest of the Tigers, scored 238 runs and took 15 wickets in the meet.

But Naimur, arguably the best off-spinner in the country and a clean hitter down the order, which is desperately missing in the national team at the moment, has only himself to blame for missing the tour of West Indies.

A buttoned up Naimur missed a chance to make a comeback when he refused to show up for the national camp before the home series against England.

CCL STARS

Following are the ten top batsmen and bowlers in the just-concluded GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League:

Batsman (team)	Mts	runs	NO	50s	100s	Avg
Minhazul (Ispahani)	10	397	-	4	-	39.70
Anisul (GP)	9	383	1	3	-	47.87
Sandeep (Bashundhara)	4	356	1	3	1	118.67
Sumon (Gazi Tanks)	10	348	1	1	1	38.66
Rashedul (Biman)	8	341	1	3	-	48.71
Niaz (Gazi Tanks)	10	340	0	2	1	34.00
Kamru (BCB Dev)	6	321	0	1	1	53.50
Moniruzzaman (CityCell)	7	318	0	2	-	53.00
Fahad (ARAF)	4	292	1	2	1	97.33
Sajid (Beximco)	7	292	0	3	-	41.71
Bowler (team)	Mts	Overs	Runs	Wkts	Avg	Best
Enamul (Bashundhara)	9	75	292	19	15.36	4-12
Musharraf (Biman)	7	58	206	18	11.40	6-31
Safullah (Bashundhara)	9	77	263	16	16.43	4-26
Tamim (GP)	7	60	225	15	15.00	5-11
Naimur (Bashundhara)	10	71	296	15	19.73	5-42
Humayun (Biman)	7	50	180	14	12.85	4-22
Sakiat (Aktel)	7	69	218	14	15.57	4-41
Nadif (Beximco)	5	48	227	13	17.48	4-35
Monjurul (GP)	9	75	249	12	20.75	3-47
Ahsanullah (Acme)	7	63	263	12	21.91	4-29

England into the lead

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their first innings on 246 for two.

Mark Butcher added just four runs to his overnight 22 when he played at Vettori with his bat at 45 degrees to the pitch. The ball brushed the bottom edge and wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum completed the catch.

Nightwatchman Matthew Hoggard extended his stubborn resistance to 87 minutes, despite being repeatedly beaten outside the off-stump by Oram and Tuffey with the second new ball, before he sparred at Oram and was caught by McCullum for 15.

Chris Cairns, who hit a whirlwind 82 from 47 balls on Friday, took over from Tuffey at the Nursery End and was immediately successful, bowling Graham Thorpe leg stump with his third ball for three. Cairns dismissed Thorpe twice five years ago when New Zealand won their first Test at Lord's.

Nasser Hussain, fighting to keep his Test place and complete his goal of 100 England caps, battled through most of the morning session, taking boundaries off Vettori with a cover drive and sweep as well as driving Oram crisply through mid-off for four.

After taking his total to 34 with six boundaries after 88 minutes hard labour, the former England skipper was comprehensively beaten by Chris Martin, replacing Oram in the attack, with a delivery which jagged back off the pitch and took his mid-off stump.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 386 (Richardson 93, Cairns 82, Oram 67, Aste 64; Harmison 4-126)

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 246-2)

Trescothick c McCullum b Oram 86

Strauss c Richardson b Vettori 112

Butcher c McCullum b Vettori 26

Hoggard c McCullum b Oram 15

Hussain c Martin 34

Thorp b Cairns 3

Flintoff c Richardson b Martin 63

Giles c Oram b Styris 46

Giles c Oram b Styris 11

Sahara

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report and will send it to them soon. An amount of Tk 1.5 to 2 crore would be enough for us to revitalise the game in the country," the BHF official added.

Sahara is sponsoring the India Hockey Federation which is worth Tk 20 crore for five years and is also set to make a deal with the Asian Hockey Federation.

"We came to know that the Sahara boss has his origin in Bangladesh. So, we are hopeful that we will get help from them," hoped Bari, whose federation has been in fund crisis for long.

HUMANE KAPIL

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"I request the cricketers who don't need this pension to give it to those who are in need," the legendary all-rounder said at a ceremony organised by the Delhi and District Cricket Association to give away the first cheque of the new pension scheme to former Tests cricketers and umpires.

The scheme was instituted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India as a gesture to honour and recognise former players on the eve of its 75th anniversary.

As per the scheme, every retired cricketer and umpire who has represented the country in the Test arena would get 5,000 rupees per month for life.

CYPTOQUIP
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