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'Fight corona with Test temperament'

AFP, New Delhi



Indian legend Sachin Tendulkar has offered an unusual take on the coronavirus fight by comparing it to Test cricket, urging patience and teamwork, and warning "we have to defend well".

"While the world battles the Covid-19 pandemic, this is probably the time for us to draw lessons from the grand old format of the game," Tendulkar wrote in a commentary for The Times of India newspaper.

The world record-holding batsman said the virus was "beyond our collective comprehension" but could be beaten with tactics used in cricket's five-day format.

"Test cricket rewards you for respecting what you don't understand. It makes you value the virtue of patience," he wrote.

"When you don't understand the pitch conditions or the bowler, defence becomes the best form of attack. Patience is what we require now, if we have to defend well."

India has reported only three virus deaths and 169 cases but the country is increasingly fearful of the spread of the disease that has killed nearly 9,000 people around the world.

Like many countries, it has imposed draconian travel restrictions.

Tendulkar, 46, retired in 2013 after scoring 15,921 runs from 200 Tests, and has considerable influence in Indian society.

He said all countries must work together against the virus.

"To use a cricketing metaphor; while individual brilliance can help a team in shorter formats of the game, in Test cricket it is all about partnerships and teamwork," he said.

"Test cricket is about staging comebacks. There is always a second innings, if you've missed the first one."

"Different countries are at different stages of their fight against coronavirus," he added.

"All nations should consider themselves part of one team."

"We shall take this battle session by session, and eventually emerge victorious."



The gym at the BCB Academy in Mirpur remained almost empty with most players opting to stay at home due to the coronavirus pandemic, although a handful of players like Al-Amin Hossain (L) and Forhad Reza practised individually yesterday. However, following BCB's directive of 'no cricket until further notice', the BCB headquarters may see even fewer players turning up to practice from today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

All cricket postponed indefinitely

SPORTS REPORTER



Following a meeting at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) headquarters in Mirpur yesterday, BCB president Nazmul Hassan announced that all kinds of cricketing activities had been postponed for an indefinite period to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The BCB had already postponed the second round of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) on Monday after its opening round on Monday. That decision came hours after the state minister for youth and sports Zahid Ahsan Russel said through a press release that all sporting activities should be postponed till March 31 after meeting with officials of different federations at the secretariat.

The BCB had observed the

situation since then before coming to their decision during yesterday's meeting.

"As you know, sports all over the world have come to a halt due to the coronavirus outbreak. Our cricket has been stopped too. We postponed the DPL after the first round and back then we had decided to wait for two ways to see how the situation develops. It was an instant decision [to postpone the second round of DPL]. But we sat down today [Thursday] and took the decision that we felt was right," Hassan said during a press conference yesterday.

"The situation is changing. There was a time when players and the clubs were both willing to play but some of them have a different opinion now. Having watched the situation overall, we have decided to postpone all cricket until further notice. We will monitor the



NAZMUL HASSAN

situation and if it improves and we feel like games can be played then we will announce the date of resumption."

While the BCB boss was reluctant to announce the exact date of resumption, he mentioned that it was not likely to resume before April 15.

"It is very difficult to give a

specific date because the situation is changing daily. If we could certainly say that play will resume after March 31 then we would have said that. But we don't know if the situation will get better or worse by that time. That is why we are not giving any specific dates. We have postponed it for now but I don't think that there is any possibility of the DPL resuming before April 15. It might even be longer," continued Hassan.

A handful of players practiced till yesterday, but Hassan advised players to not go outside and avoid contact with others.

"Even before the start of DPL, we instructed the players to take preventive measures. Even now I will ask them to stay safe, to avoid going outside and to avoid contact with others," said Hassan, who also did not rule out the possibility of the BCB going under lockdown.

Youth & Sports Ministry sign MoU with Brazil

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry decided in principle to sign an MoU with Brazil after an inter-ministries meeting was held at the ministry yesterday with the aim to improve Bangladesh football.

"Brazil is one of strongest nations in world football and we want to work with them in order to develop our country's football. We believe we can get good results if we use experienced and skillful Brazilian coaches to train our local coaches," state minister for youth and sports Jahid Ahsan Russel was quoted as saying at the press release yesterday. "We can also send our footballers and coaches to Brazil for advanced training and that's why we decided in principle to sign an MoU."

Last year, the ministry sent four select players from the Bangabandhu U-17 Football Championship to Brazil for a month of training and the minister said that they would try to send a full team to Brazil this time around while also expressing his desire to send a women's squad to a nation other than Brazil.

After the meeting, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said: "We placed some proposals before them. We told them the BFF will provide all-out support to the ministry. Our coaches are ready to select talented players from the Bangabandhu U-17 National Football Championship for long-term training. If Brazil sends us coaches, then we can use them at the BFF Academy as well as BKSP."

Shohag added that NSC secretary Masud Karim gave a nice proposal to the meeting.

"The NSC secretary asked whether they could import the philosophy of Brazilian football of developing footballers and if they could provide guidelines to develop Bangladesh football."

'Would love to be quarantined with delicious De Kock'

AGENCIES



When more than half the world is trying to cope with the coronavirus outbreak by staying away from public gatherings and abiding by strict hygiene routines, South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn, who is 'chilling at home', picked a teammate he would like to be quarantined with.

Steyn named current South Africa skipper Quinton de Kock and said he wouldn't mind being isolated with the wicketkeeper-batsman.

"I would love to be in quarantine with someone like Quinny de Kock," Steyn told.

Explaining the reasons behind his choice, Steyn said De Kock is a 'proper cook' and staying with him would allow him to watch all the fishing videos the left-hander watches.

"He is one of my favourite people in the world. If you walk into his (hotel) room, he's either making flies for fishing or he is watching a fishing video or he is watching a cooking video. And when you are at his house, he's doing the same stuff.

"I hate cooking, so it would be great if he was. Because then I could watch all the fishing videos that he's watching, I could help him do all the tying, and he could cook all the food. He's a proper cook," he added.

Steyn feels it's a pity that sporting events are being cancelled en masse due to the crisis as "if you take sport away, then I don't know really what we have."

Steyn, who returned from Pakistan due to the virus outbreak, said it's indescribable how the situation changed in a matter of hours. He was playing for Islamabad United in the Pakistan Super League which was suspended on the day of its semifinal clashes.



Roy, Badal ask to defer BFF polls

SPORTS REPORTER

Incumbent vice presidents of the Bangladesh Football Federation - Badal Roy and Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi - yesterday made requests to the game's local governing body to defer the upcoming BFF polls due to the coronavirus crisis.

The BFF polls are scheduled to be held on April 20.

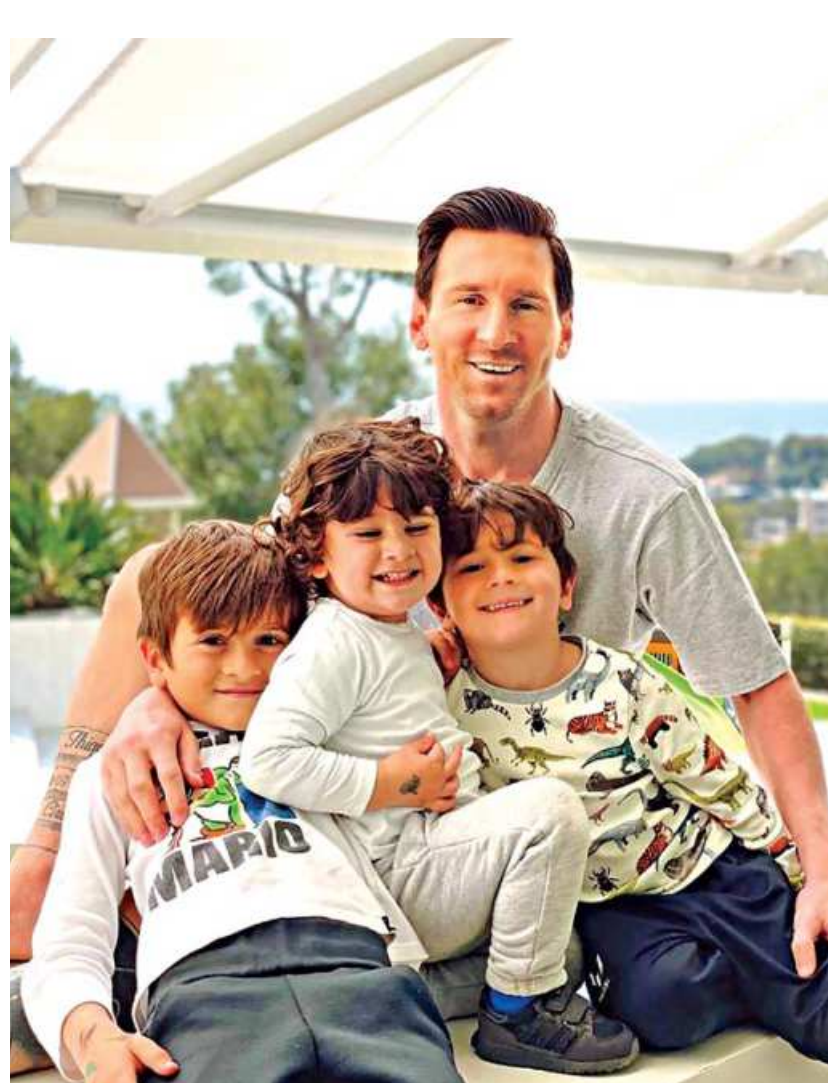
"While polls are needed to bring change to the leadership, we don't think it is wise to hold the elections in such a situation following the coronavirus outbreak. I want to request the federation to defer the polls," Badal told reporters at the BFF house after talking to the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin over the phone.

Having submitted a written request to defer polls, Mohi said that holding the elections in such situation is a threat for the councilors who will be attending polls outside the capital.

Roy had earlier announced that he will contest the polls if there are no candidates to challenge Salahuddin, who was elected three consecutive times since 2008.

The BFF election commission's first meeting is set to take place on Saturday.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said they are going forward with the polls unless FIFA or AFC ask them to defer the election.



MESSI'S QUARANTINE

Barcelona playmaker Lionel Messi's wife Antonela Rocuzzo posted a picture of the superstar with their three children on Father's Day yesterday. "Thank you for always being an example for our children, who love and admire you more and more every day," read the caption. Following the outbreak of coronavirus, sporting activities worldwide came to a halt. Messi, who had grown out a very prominent beard, was bald-faced and his quarantine appeared to be going well. Rocuzzo also wrote: "Today more than ever we celebrate together. #we are staying home".

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM