

La Liga

AFP, Madrid

Sunday.

resumes

on June 11

The Spanish top-flight football season will restart on June 11 with the derby between Sevilla and Real Betis, La Liga confirmed on

The first round of games following the coronavirus shutdown will be played over four days, with leaders Barcelona at Mallorca on June 13 and Real Madrid at home to Eibar the next day. The following matchday will run from Monday, June 15 to Thursday, June 18. Barcelona will host Leganes on June 16 while Madrid take on Valencia in

the capital two days later.

statement Friday saying that the Spanish Football

Federation (RFEF) and La Liga had agreed the format

for the 11 remaining rounds in the top two Spanish

La Liga said the season

"We want next season to

"We have designed the

should be completed by

start September 12," La Liga

president Javier Tebas told

schedule to give each team

at least 72 hours of rest

between matches... We

will update the schedule

two matchdays at a time

to take into account the

weather conditions, which

are known two weeks in

Spanish Sports released

The

Council

divisions.

July 19.

Movistar.

advance.'





With Spanish Football Federation releasing a schedule of remaining matches of La Liga, restarting on June 11, leaders Barcelona and nearest-rivals Real Madrid were back to serious, group training at their respective training grounds yesterday.

'Gasperini put people at risk'

REUTERS, Valencia

Valencia have criticised Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini for taking charge of his side's Champions League match against the Spanish side in March despite suffering from symptoms of the novel coronavirus.

Gasperini told Italian newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport on Sunday that he felt ill on the day before the last-16 second leg match in Valencia on March 10, which was played without spectators as northern Italy was then the epicentre of the virus in Sancho joins Floyd killing protest



England winger Jadon Sancho scored a hattrick and revealed a "Justice for George Floyd" protest message

Borussia Dortmund's

BUNDESLIGA 6-1 rout of bottom side Paderborn on Sunday that trimmed Bayern Munich's lead at the top of the Bundesliga to seven points.

The outstanding Sancho, who now has 17 goals and 17 assists in the Bundesliga this season, joined a host of protests in the German top-flight over the weekend at the death of an unarmed black man in the

Morocco international Achraf Hakimi lifted his jersey to deliver the same message as Sancho after scoring Dortmund's fourth goal at Paderborn.



George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis during an arrest by a police officer who pinned him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck, sparking protests across the US.

Sunday, Borussia Moenchengladbach's French forward Marcus Thuram took a knee to protest Floyd's death. Schalke's American midfielder Weston McKennie wore a "Justice for George" armband on Saturday.

At Paderborn, second-placed Dortmund kept their remote title hopes intact as Sancho stole the limelight with teenage striker Erling Braut Haaland sidelined by a leg injury. "We're going to give everything to win

every game," said Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Buerki. Bayern are firmly on course for an eighth successive title with just six matches left to

Barcelona led Real Madrid by two points at the top of the table when the season was halted in March.

He also confirmed he has since tested positive from an antibodies test.

Valencia later issued a statement saying they were surprised at Gasperini's admission he had symptoms with the coronavirus before the match and did not take preventative measures.

"Such actions, if this was the case, would have put at risk numerous people during the trip to - and stay in - Valencia," added the statement.

"It should be remembered tat this game was held behind closed doors amidst strict safety measures... precisely due to the presence of persons from an area already publicly classified as 'at

A week after the match, 35% of their squad and staff had tested positive.

Bumrah seeks alternative' to saliva



Indian paceman Bumrah said Jasprit cricket should seek an "alternative" for shining the ball if the game's governing body ban the use of saliva

during the coronavirus pandemic. The International Cricket Council (ICC)

is likely to implement a ban for the game's return when they meet next week after receiving medical advice that spit poses a COVID-19 transmission risk.

Handshakes, celebratory high-fives and hugs are also likely to be off-limits when international cricket resumes with safety protocols in place.

"I was not much of a hugger anyway, and not a high-five person as well, so that doesn't trouble me a lot," Bumrah said in an ICC video chat with the former West Indies pace bowler Ian Bishop and the excaptain of South Africa, Shaun Pollock.

"The only thing that interests me is the saliva bit," added the 26-year-old Bumrah.

"I don't know what guidelines that we have to follow when we come back, but I feel there should be an alternative.

"If the ball is not well maintained, it's

difficult for the bowlers. The grounds are becoming flatter and flatter. So we need something."

Pace bowlers usually try to make the ball swing through the air by shining one side on their clothing aided by using sweat or saliva and leaving the other half to become

Anil Kumble, chairman of the ICC cricket committee that recommended banning saliva, insisted the move was only an "interim measure".

Australian cricket ball manufacturer Kookaburra is developing a wax applicator but its use would need a change in the laws of cricket which forbid the use of any artificial substance to alter the ball.

Test players have in the past been accused of using lozenges, petroleum jelly and resin to keep the shine on the ball, and also scuffing it with bottle tops, trouser zippers, grit or fingernails.

The most notorious recent incident was in 2018, when Australian players attempted to alter the ball with sandpaper during a Test against South Africa in Cape Town, resulting in lengthy bans for the three involved -- Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

Tales of triumphs off the field



battling it out on succeed over their opponents

applying technique and intelligence. Tales of the national age-group women's football teams' triumphson the international stage have become common in the country's sports

The girls in red and green aced a different kind of challenge as a majority successfully passed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations despite spending most of the year training and honing their football skills.

Swapna [3.93], Akhi Khatun [3.83], Rehana Khatun [3.75], Rituparna SarabanTahura, Shamsunnar Jr, Rozia Akter and Mahmuda Akter failed.

The girls train intensely round the year to hone their skills and prepare international tournaments, and thus hardly have the stamina to concentrate on studies in the national camp, but they win the daily battle with fatigue to study regularly at the dormitory in search of a secured future after calling time on their football careers.

"It was really tough to study on days we had running sessions because we could not even sit properly because of weariness, but we kept

round and my father allowed me, but Chakma [3.50], Shamsunnar Sr it really hurt not to be able to sit for [3.10], Sajeda Khatun [2.53] and the examination," said Akhi. "This Anai Mogini [2.50] overcoming the hurdles successfully while players like year I sat for the examinations under huge pressure because the matches of the Women's Football League were going on and I even played the match the next day after sitting for

Winger Shamsunnar's result surprised everybody. "Many girls in our locality could not pass the examination and everyone, including myself, thought that I would not pass because I spent so much time behind football. But I passed and I am surprised," said Shamsunnar, who was however sad for those of her teammates who were unable to pass because she thought it is hard to study and play football concurrently.





women's football with great dedication and efficiency, they have also done the hard yards in securing good grades in SSC exams.

РНОТО:

While the likes of Akhi Khatun (L) and Shamsunnahar (R) have represented Bangladesh in There has even been an instance studying because for a better future. We know we can't play football for

of a couple of women footballers opting not to sit for the SSC or JSC examinations because they travelled abroad to represent Bangladesh in the crucial qualifying round of the AFC age-group tournament. Conversely there is also the example of Krishna Rani Sarker and Nargis Akhtar sat for their Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exam in the day before representing Bangladesh in the Bangamata U-19 Women's Football tournament later the same night.

A dozen girls who have been representing the red and green flag at different age levels as well as in the national team, sat for the SCC examinations with eight players --Mahfuza Khatun [4.43], Ishrat Jahan

life and we have to do something the in future and there is no alternative to studying," Mahfuza told The Daily Star over phone from Tangail.

"Truth be told, I could not study much. I think I could achieve GPA 5 had I studied well. I could not do well in English and mathematics," said Mahfuza, who secured the highest GPA of 4.43, in science, among teammates.

Defender Akhi Khatun could not sit for the SSC examinationslast year due to the U-16 national team's

engagement in Myanmar. "Our sir [coach Golam Rabbani Choton] requested my father to allow me to go with the U-16 national team

National women's coach Golam Rabbani Choton said BFF had played an important role behind the education of the women's players, who studied under English and mathematics tutors three days a week at the BFF dormitory and many other players had also gone to coaching centres for other subjects. The BFF had also played a role in shifting the girls' HSC and JSC centres to Dhaka when there was a clash between exams and international meets.

"We always got reports on players" studies from tutors and took steps accordingly. I even left the dormitory late many times after ensuring their studies, who were also eager to study and play football together," said

Smith 'in best shape'



Australia star Steve Smith admitted Monday he has barely picked up a bat since cricket shut down, but said he was in his best physical shape in years. The 30-year-old, the world's number

one Test batsman, has been out of action since March, when Australia's one-day series against New Zealand was abandoned due to the coronavirus pandemic. He returned to training with his New

South Wales teammates Monday as they await the green light for competitive cricket to start again, targeting a home one-day series against Zimbabwe in August.

"I feel like I've had a pre-season the last couple of months. Got myself into probably the best shape I've been in years. Lots of running, lots of gym stuff," Smith "It's been a couple of months of good

hard work and now back with the boys, which is great."

But with no net practice, he has barely picked up his bat. "I haven't touched a bat, really. A couple

of little drills at home but that's about it,"

said Smith, who has plundered more than 7,000 Test runs.

"I've just tried to switch off from it a bit, which I don't do very often. I was just focusing on getting myself fit and strong and refreshing mentally.

"It's been a bit different but I'm sure in the long run it will probably be a good thing to freshen up after what was a pretty long year-and-a-half since the World Cup and Ashes and summer here.

"I'm refreshed and ready to go," he If the virus had not struck, Smith would have been in the plane to Bangladesh this

month for a two-Test series.

Waqar wants end to spat

AFP, New Delhi

Former Pakistan star Waqar Younis has called on Shahid Afridi and Gautam Gambhir to end their social media war, and for India and Pakistan to resume playing cricket.

After being fierce onfield rivals, Pakistan's Afridi and former Indian opener Gambhir have become involved in heated social media exchanges over the troubled Kashmir region, which is claimed by both countries.

Gambhir is now a lawmaker in the Indian parliament, while Afridi has his own foundation and is a vocal activist. Wagar advised the pair

to "calm down" in an online chat show. "I think they both got to be smart, sensible, and calm down,' said Waqar.