

LEBRON IMPRESSED BY DJOKOVIC'S STROKE

Novak Djokovic has charmed many over the years with his exploits on the tennis courts but the men's world number one now also has an admirer of his basketball skills in American great LeBron James. Djokovic posted a video of himself trying some basketball moves on social media. The video, addressed to James, shows the 33-year-old Djokovic taking a few dribbles before knocking down a mid-range jumpshot. "Am I ready for a 1:1 @ KingJames?" asked Djokovic. The NBA star did not take long to respond. "Ha! I'm going to say I think you are!! Beautiful follow-thru on that shot buddy!" James said in his reply on Twitter.



'I felt like a beginner'

ANISUR RAHMAN

Without a bow and arrow for three months because of the coronavirus-induced halt in sports, Bangladesh's top archer Ruman Sana had begun to feel that he had moved away from the discipline. But the Olympics-qualified archer has once again started feeling at one with the sport after receiving the bow for home practice a few days ago.

Initially, archery was the country's only discipline where athletes kept up preparations for the Tokyo Olympics, which was later deferred to July next year despite the government announcing a halt on all sports activities on March 16, following the outbreak of coronavirus. Archers, however, were also forced to stop preparations at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi on March 25 so that the venue could be used by police to help the local administration to enforce the shutdown across the country.

Since then the national archers went back homes and continued physical training but the Bangladesh Archery Federation, in line with a recommendation from German coach Martin Fredrick, sent bows to 17 archers to practise at home.

"Having been detached from the bow and arrows for three months, it seems that I had moved away from archery, but now I once more feel close to the archery after receiving the bow on Thursday," Ruman Sana told The Daily Star over phone from Khulna yesterday.

"To be honest, I felt like a beginner on the first day [Thursday] because I could hardly pull the string after assembling the bow, which is nearly 7 kilogrammes. I could not even hold the bow for



five seconds whereas I could hold it for 30 to 50 seconds before," Ruman said.

"I would not have been able to shoot the arrows if the Olympics had taken place as originally scheduled in late July," said a smiling Ruman, only the second athlete of the country to – and first archer – to earn the right to take

part in the Olympics directly.

While various other countries already starting their preparations for next year's Olympics as the outbreak has been curbed in those countries, the BAF cannot resume the national camp because of the worsening situation in Bangladesh, which is why the equipment was sent to archers.

"I am doing all types of practices related to the bow in our drawing room in Khulna. I have pulled the string of the bow several times, held the hand straight with bow and over the head, pulling back the string for few seconds, etc. as per recommendations from coach Fredrick," the 25-year-old said.

"I believe if we can continue the practice with bow regularly at home, then we may regain our performance levels within a month when we resume the national camp in Dhaka.

"In archery, the bow is more important than shooting arrows. If I have full control on the bow, then it is a matter of time to get adjusted with shooting arrows. Practising only with the bow will also strengthen us mentally. I think it would have been a big blow had we not gotten the opportunity to practise with bows during this period."

The SA Games gold-medallist also requested authorities concerned to resume preparations as soon as possible because the national players cannot concentrate on practice at home due to their daily engagement in family matters.

"The foreign archers have better facilities than us. They even have their own bow, arrows and target board to practise at home but I don't have that; instead, I am spending time with the neighbour's children on the rooftop," said Ruman. "I think it would be good if we resume practice at our venue [stadium in Tongi]. We also have accommodation facilities there, which is almost isolated, although police personnel are now staying there to maintain law and order amidst the coronavirus pandemic. If they leave, I think we can start preparations by taking the proper measures prescribed by World Archery, WHO and our government."

'BCB closely monitoring coronavirus situation'

SPORTS REPORTER

The news of former ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam testing positive for Covid-19 on Saturday came as a huge blow just as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was planning to resume cricketing activities in the country.

There were talks of individual preparation during this period and the BCB had started taking measures by preparing individual training facilities. But the news of Mashrafe, Nazmul and former cricketer Nafees Iqbal testing positive has caused concern in the cricket fraternity.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the board is closely monitoring the situation and it advised the cricketers to follow safety measures.

"We have always advised our cricketers

to stay safe until things get normal again. As per the requirements of the cricketers, we prepared facilities for their training. However, the players did get to realise the current situation and did not come to practise. Still we would like to advise our cricketers to follow safety measures properly," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star.

A few cricketing nations have started training camps by maintaining safety measures and following health guidelines provided by government authorities.

When his attention was drawn to other countries, the CEO said that they also realised the need to start training.

"We also need to look forward and find a way out to resume things at some point. The board, especially the BCB president Nazmul Hassan, myself and our medical team are in constant touch with the players," he added.



Torino FC defender Nicolas N'Koulou takes a knee, celebrating his opening goal against Parma while showing solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement on Saturday. The Cameroonian later told media, "When I scored, I immediately thought of my brother [George] Floyd."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Iraqi legend Radhi dies from Covid-19

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi football legend Ahmed Radhi died Sunday from complications linked to COVID-19, the health ministry said, just hours before he was to be flown for treatment in Jordan. Radhi, 56, scored what remains Iraq's only World Cup final goal in 1986 against Belgium.

He had been hospitalised last week in Baghdad after testing positive for coronavirus but had checked out on Thursday after his condition improved. He relapsed a few hours later and was readmitted but passed away early Sunday. In a video reportedly from his hospital bed on Saturday, Radhi could be seen struggling to breathe as medics in full protective gear try to treat him.

"Sometimes it's hard to breathe but that's normal," he could be heard telling the medical team, his voice strained. Radhi, a striker, led Iraq to victory in the Gulf Cups of 1984 and 1988, when he was voted Asian footballer of the year. In the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, he scored against Belgium but Iraq went on to lose the match 2-1 and exited the tournament in the group stage without a point.

He fled Iraq in 2006 after its Olympic Committee head was kidnapped during the height of the sectarian violence that followed the US-led invasion of 2003. Radhi moved with his family to the Jordan but returned to Iraq in 2007 for a career in politics, replacing a member of parliament.



MOST BUNDESLIGA GOALS IN 1 SEASON

1	Gerd Müller	1971/72	40
2	Gerd Müller	1969/70	38
3	Gerd Müller	1972/73	36
4	Dieter Müller	1976/77	34
5	Robert Lewandowski	2019/20	33

With two goals in a 3-1 win over Freiburg on Saturday, Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski surpassed Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's record of 31 goals to become the most prolific foreign goalscorer in Bundesliga history.

What is implied cuts deepest, says Chappell

PTI

Former Australian skipper Ian Chappell has recalled his brush with racism as he offered his views on the raging issue, talking about a time when he saw fellow players being abused and discriminated against but not without a note of protest from him.

"My first overseas tour was to South Africa in 1966-67 and it was an eye-opener. The apartheid regime was in power and we got a taste of its abhorrent nature after winning the second Test in Cape Town," he remembered in a column for ESPNcricinfo. "Why don't you pick Garry Sobers? Then you'll have a team full of blacks" was the offensive comment directed at Australian batsman Grahame Thomas by an ignorant patron in the team hotel. Thomas has Native American lineage dating back to the days of slavery," he said.

Recalling another incident the same year, Chappell narrated how a player of colour in an International Wanderers side was targeted near Port Elizabeth.

"John Shepherd, who played for West Indies and Kent, and is of the most gentle people on this earth, was part of our side. As we were leaving, a member of the crowd shouted out: 'Why don't you paint yourself white, Shepherd, and then you can be like the rest of them'," Chappell wrote. "This is the sad reality of racism. What is implied often cuts deepest."

Juve resume quest for 9th straight title

AGENCIES

Champions Juventus return to their quest for a ninth consecutive Serie A title at Bologna on Monday, days after their Italian Cup final defeat to Napoli.

Maurizio Sarri's side fell in the final to Napoli on penalties midweek, having lost the Italian Super Cup to Lazio in December.

Juventus hold a one-point lead on second-placed Lazio, while Inter Milan are third, nine points adrift of the leaders.

They will be counting on top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo to react after suffering two defeats in a final for the first time in his career, and missing a penalty in the Italian Cup semifinal.

Torino's Andrea Belotti



FATHER'S DAY RELAXATION

Celebrating both Father's Day and International Yoga Day, Indian cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar yesterday posted on his Instagram account this picture of himself practising yoga with his daughter Sara and son Arjun.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Arsenal need to learn a bit of humility'

AGENCIES, London

Brighton match-winner Neal Maupay said Arsenal's players "need to learn a bit of humility" after they lost to the relegation-threatened side 2-1 on Saturday.

Maupay's 95th-minute goal saw Arsenal throw away another set of points after losing to Manchester City on Wednesday. Tensions boiled over at the final whistle though as Arsenal players surrounded Maupay as he celebrated with teammates.

The 23-year-old had been involved in an earlier collision with Arsenal's Bernd Leno which saw the keeper stretchered off in the 40th minute.

"Some of the Arsenal players need to learn a bit of humility," Maupay said after the game. "They were talking a lot in the first half, and in the second half they got what they deserved."

The Frenchman said he went to Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta at half-time to apologise for the challenge and explain that he meant no harm to Leno.

A crabby affair

APP, Washington

Two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson had some major issues with a tiny crab in Saturday's third round of the US PGA RBC Heritage as top-ranked Rory McIlroy could only watch.

The bizarre situation came at the par-3 17th hole at Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, in the US tour's second event after ending a three-month coronavirus shutdown last week.

Watson blasted his tee shot into a greenside bunker, but when he arrived to check out the ball, he found a tiny crab had crawled under it.

McIlroy, a four-time major winner from Northern Ireland, and Watson were in a featured pairing at the event, meaning tour television cameras were

watching the entire situation as Watson pondered his options.

They included blasting the ball out with the tiny crustacean lurking in the sand beneath it and facing animal cruelty complaints.

"I don't want the world to get mad at me, know what I mean?" Watson told McIlroy as the European star stuck the top of putter near the ball to try and distract the crab.

Watson called for a rules official but as he approached, the little crab flipped out from beneath the ball, landing a few inches away and moving off and eventually crawling away.

"There was a camera and people get mad if I hit an animal," Watson told the official to explain the problem that had resolved itself.

"We don't need crab issues, know what I'm saying?"



WHAT TO WATCH

LA LIGA

Facebook

Villarreal v Sevilla
Live from 11:30pm
Leganes v Granada
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

PREMIER LEAGUE

Star Sports Select 1

Man City v Burnley
Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

SERIE A

Ten 2

Lecce v AC Milan
Live from 11:30pm
Bologna v Juventus
Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

missed a penalty as Serie A resumed Saturday after three months with his side drawing 1-1 at home with Parma as ten-man Verona held on to beat Cagliari 2-1.

But the first top-flight game in 103 days in Italy got off to a false start with a deflated ball having to be replaced after five seconds.

All matches are being played without fans.

"It's about a different kind of football," Parma coach Roberto D'Aversa said. "But we knew it would be like this, we need to finish the season, there are economic interests and we have to get used to it. I hope this situation lasts as little as possible. Football belongs to everyone...I hope that this can all be sorted out and that we can return to true football."