



England opener Dom Sibley is castled by West Indies pacer Shanon Gabriel on the first day of the first Test at Ageas Bowl in Southampton yesterday. (INSET) Players observed a minute's silence in memory of all the victims of Covid-19 as international cricket returned after 117 days.

Cricket returns with rain

AFP, Southampton

Rain meant there was no play before lunch on Wednesday's opening day of the first Test between England and the West Indies at Southampton, the first international cricket match since March. The eagerly anticipated fixture marks the sport's global return from months of coronavirus-enforced lockdown. The last Test match, between New Zealand and India, concluded on March 2, six days before the final of the Women's T20 World Cup in Australia. But as the players warmed up on the outfield under grey skies, there was sufficient rain for the Ageas Bowl pitch to remain fully covered and prevent the toss taking place at 0930 GMT as scheduled.

National team camp in Savar or Gazipur?

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is struggling to choose a suitable venue where a safe residential training camp can be conducted amidst the coronavirus pandemic ahead of the World Cup Qualifiers in October.

The BFF has assessed the advantages and disadvantages of four possible places and have sent their assessments to the National Teams Committee (NTC), headed by BFF vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed, for a final decision. The BFF House, Fars Hotel, the BKSP in Savar and Sara Resorts in Gazipur are all under consideration. Previously, the training camp had been held place at Bangabandhu National Stadium with players being accommodated at Fars Hotel. "We have sent comprehensive reports to the NTC and are awaiting a final decision, which may come by Saturday," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said. "We will proceed in line with the recommendations

of the NTC. In the meantime, we are also supposed to get guidelines from the BFF medical committee, which is maintaining communications with FIFA and AFC on Covid-19 guidelines." BKSP and Sara Resorts are likely to be prioritised over the BFF house and Fars Hotel, which are both situated in crowded localities, further complicating management's already tough job of keeping all members of the national team safe.

Head coach Jamie Day sought a five to six-week camp, including an overseas camp, starting in the last week of August to bring players back in shape after a long break. However, the process is supposed to get underway in the first week of August through the testing of all persons related to the national team. Bangladesh are scheduled to host Afghanistan on October 8 but the BFF is awaiting AFC guidelines to meet the criteria to host the match in Sylhet. The team will then travel to Qatar for an away game on October 13. "We have preliminary informed Sylhet administration and Sylhet DFA

and National Sports Council about Bangladesh's home match against Afghanistan in Sylhet and requested them to take the necessary steps but we have yet to declare the venues of our last two home matches against India and Oman," said Shohag. "It is certain the October 8 tie against Afghanistan will take place in Sylhet, which had before staged the international matches of Bangabandhu Gold Cup. If the first match in Sylhet is staged successfully, the BFF will take fresh decisions on whether to hold last two home matches in Sylhet," Shohag said. Everything is still dependent on the AFC's new guidelines, which are expected to be prepared this month, he informed. "If we see it is not possible to hold the match in Sylhet in line with AFC guidelines, then we have no option but to change the venue. We believe we won't face any problems in staging the match in Sylhet," Shohag said, adding that the NTC also gave off the impression that they would prefer the two home matches to be held in Sylhet.

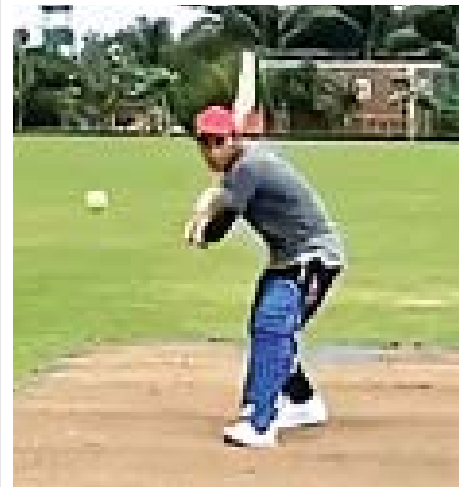
Lax Mushy causes a stir

MAZHAR UDDIN



International cricket made its return in England yesterday after a long break due to coronavirus pandemic. Many other countries like Sri Lanka, West Indies, Pakistan and South Africa had already made up their minds regarding taking the challenges in new normal. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), however, is yet to make up their minds on resumption, barring the recent disclosure that they have kept grounds and practice facilities fully prepared and functional so that they can bring cricketers back on the field sooner rather than later. Cricketers working on fitness from home has become a common sight on social media but there is an exception in the form of experienced Mushfiqur Rahim. The wicketkeeper-batsman on Tuesday posted a video on social media where he was seen knocking the ball, rolling and running at the Fortis Sports Club ground, located in the capital's Badda, that has created lot of confusion among the cricketers regarding the guidelines of BCB. Previously, Mushfiqur and another wicketkeeper-batsman, Mohammad Mithun, were denied by the Bangladesh

home of cricket in Mirpur on Monday. "We have been away from cricket for over three months and, like Mushfiqur, we also miss the game a lot. But we have some guidelines from the BCB about not going outside for training and we are trying to follow that. Now if Mushfiqur is training despite all the risks involved, it actually portrays that we, the other cricketers, are not ready to take the field, which is not true. I think we should have proper guidelines from the board on whether we can do skill training elsewhere apart from Mirpur," said a national cricketer requesting anonymity. According to the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the board normally 'discourages' such individual training keeping the current coronavirus situation in the country in mind. "Mushfiqur is one of the most experienced cricketers of the Bangladesh team and he knows how to take proper safety measures and practice. We have prepared our training facilities in Mirpur, but due to the area falling under the red zone, we urged cricketers to train from home. We even allowed them to take instruments. However, we do discourage cricketers from going outside and doing skill training, keeping their safety in mind. It is their individual responsibility to realise the situation," Nizamuddin told



Cricket Board (BCB) when the cricketers wanted to have individual training sessions at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, as the area has been marked as a Covid-19 red zone. However, Mushfiqur's recent training video raised questions among other cricketers, who are also keen on training outdoors but are uncertain about the exact guidelines from the BCB on whether they can practice individually near their neighbourhoods. Players are divided in their opinions over the resumption of cricket in this situation, but many were surprised by Mushfiqur's outdoor practices. Some did not respond to it positively. There was the feeling that there was no need to go outside, especially after the BCB recently took the initiative of allowing players to borrow gym equipment for maintaining fitness at home. Mushfiqur was the first to avail the facilities from the board and posted a photo of his visit to the

The Daily Star. "Mainly, Dhaka is very congested and risky so we discourage practice here, especially in Mirpur which is a red zone. If anyone who is outside Dhaka wants to practice, they must inform us and follow our guidelines." According to the BCB Cricket Operations Committee chairman Akram Khan, it is Mushfiqur who has to take responsibility if anything unpleasant happens and not the board. "This is not the first time he was practicing outside his house. We have seen him running in the streets. We saw him working out in an empty field. He will have to take responsibility for his actions. We are not responsible if anything untoward happens due to this," said Akram. Many cricketers are left wanting proper guidelines from the BCB rather than hearing the word 'discouraging' about whether they will also be able to train over the country at their own risk.



The clash between Milan and Juventus at San Siro started on a sombre note, with tribute paid to the late music composer Ennio Morricone. The game ended on a sombre note for the Bianconeri, who despite taking a 2-0 lead including one goal from Cristiano Ronaldo, were subject to a 4-2 defeat by the Rossoneri, orchestrated by Zlatan Ibrahimovic. PHOTO: REUTERS/AC MILAN

'I'm president, coach and player'

AFP, Milan



Zlatan Ibrahimovic ignited a late comeback against Serie A leaders Juventus and then declared that if he had been at AC Milan from the start of the season, they would be Italian champions. With Milan two goals down on Tuesday, Ibrahimovic converted a 62nd minute penalty for his sixth goal this season. Four minutes later he set up Franck Kessie for the equaliser then immediately headed for the bench where he spent the rest of the match giving advice to teammates as Milan scored twice more for a 4-2 victory. Rafael Leao hit Milan's third

goal in five minutes as Ibrahimovic reached the bench and Ante Rebic added the fourth in the 80th minute behind closed doors at the San Siro. "I'm president, coach and player but I'm only paid as a footballer," Ibrahimovic, who rejoined Milan from LA Galaxy on a six-month contract at the end of December, told broadcaster DAZN after the game. "If I had been here from the start we'd have won the Scudetto." "I'm old, it's no secret, but it's just a number," said the 38-year-old Swede. "I played more today than the last game. I feel good, to be honest, and I am trying to help the team in every way." Speculation surrounds the future of Milan coach Stefano Pioli and Ibrahimovic was coy on whether he

would be back next season. "There's still a month to go and let's see, there are things here that we're not in control. Playing without fans is a shame, a strange situation," Ibrahimovic said. "It could have been the last time you see me live at San Siro." "I like playing in this Milan team, I do what I can do intelligently, I arrive and then if I don't make a difference I don't like it. I want to help my teammates and the fans." The defeat meant Juventus wasted the chance to move 10 points clear at the top of Serie A after second-placed Lazio's shock defeat at Lecce, but Cristiano Ronaldo's side sit seven points clear with seven matches remaining and remain on track for a ninth straight title.

MUSA JUWARA'S incredible journey

GOAL.COM



Musa Juwara arrived in Italy in 2016 on a boat as an unaccompanied minor, and since then, a new family and football have changed his life. The 18-year-old Gambian striker equalised for Bologna in the 74th minute against Internazionale on Sunday, following Romelu Lukaku's opener, before his compatriot Musa Barrow netted a winner six minutes later to secure an unlikely victory over Antonio Conte's Serie A title hopefuls. It was an ill-tempered contest, with both sides having a player sent off, but that will matter little for Juwara, who has enjoyed a remarkable rise to prominence in recent years, having first set foot in Europe four years and one month ago. Born in 2001, he arrived in Italy when he was just 15, landing on the coasts of Sicily after crossing the Mediterranean on a boat. The teenager had been orphaned at a young age, and was raised by his grandfather before deciding to travel to Europe in search of a brighter future. He spent time in Ruoti, in the province of Potenza, before discovering his passion for football with Virtus Avigliano, where coach Vitantonio Summa took him under his wing and also acted as a legal guardian. Summa, along with his wife, eventually became Juwara's custodial parents. The first club to bet on Juwara's youthful promise was Chievo Verona, although he truly caught the eye with Torino at the 2019 Torneo di Viareggio, an annual youth tournament held in Tuscany. Here, he scored three goals in as many games, demonstrating the potential that had seen him named in The Guardian's Next Generation 2018 list. Last summer, Bologna took a punt on Juwara, and he initially joined their U-19

squad. He made his debut in an Italian Cup game against Udinese in December, and made his first Serie A appearance two months later against AS Roma, coming on for his fellow Gambian Barrow. The teenager caught the eye in a brief cameo against Juventus after being brought on for the final eight minutes of the 2-0 defeat on June 22, making an impression with his speed and movement. Bologna coach and former Lazio defender Sinisa Mihajlovic firmly believes in Juwara's talents, despite having used him sparingly so far this term. The Yugoslavia great gave the 18-year-old



a longer run-out against Inter, introducing him with 25 minutes to play as Bologna looked to overcome the deficit. "Sinisa told us at the interval that, with a goal, we would win the game," Juwara told journalists after the victory. And so it proved, as Juwara equalised after capitalising on Roberto Gagliardini's mis-kick, nine minutes after his introduction, before Barrow, who had earlier struck the woodwork, secured an outstanding victory and further dented Inter's faint title aspirations. Four years and one month after first arriving in the country on a boat, following a dangerous and treacherous journey, Juwara is the name on Italy's lips.

7-1 has become an expression

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Six years after Brazil suffered their most humiliating experience on a football pitch, the 7-1 World Cup thrashing on home soil at the hands of Germany has become a joke, an expression and even a meme. That infamous scoreline has taken on a meaning of its own to describe any kind of defeat or a heavy blow -- physical or figurative. "They gave us a one-seven" or "that was a one-seven" has entered into common parlance in the land more accustomed to stunning victories and brilliant achievements. It was July 8, 2014 when World Cup hosts Brazil took on Germany in the semifinal at the Mineirao stadium in Belo Horizonte with an expectant nation behind them. But the five-time champions suffered the worst defeat in their history and the biggest ever loss by a team that has won the World Cup. The scoreline is not the only thing from that game to have become a cultural reference in Brazil. Now, when describing something that happens repeatedly, Brazilians will say "and a German goal" or "was that another German goal?"