

SONY SIX

England v West Indies
First Test, Day 5
Live from 4:00pm

FACEBOOK LA LIGA

Espanyol v Elbar
Live from 6:00pm
Levante v Athletic Club
Live from 9:00pm
Leganes v Valencia

Live from 11:30pm
Sevilla v Mallorca
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

PREMIER LEAGUE
Wolves v Everton
Live from 5:00pm
Aston Villa v Crystal Palace
Live from 7:15pm
Tottenham v Arsenal

Live from 9:30pm
Bournemouth v Leicester City
Live from 12:00am (Monday)

TEN 2 SERIE A

Genoa v Spal
Live from 9:15pm
Fiorentina v Verona
Live from 11:30pm
Napoli v AC Milan
Live from 1:45am (Monday)



Real Madrid's Marco Asensio celebrates, after scoring the second goal with a simple tap in, with provider Karim Benzema, who netted the first one from a spot-kick to take his tally to 18 in this season during 2-0 win against Alaves on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

'We have three finals still to go'

AGENCIES



Real Madrid took another step towards their first La Liga title in three years by beating free-falling Alaves 2-0 at home on Friday, overcoming a number of high-profile absences to secure their eighth consecutive victory.

Real were missing three of their first-choice defenders as captain Sergio Ramos and Dani Carvajal were suspended and Marcelo was injured, but they again showed defensive solidity and recorded a fifth consecutive clean sheet.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Once considered the heir to the Bernabeu throne, Gareth Bale has been alienated by Zinedine Zidane, who has made it clear he does not have a place in the team. During Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Alaves on Friday, the Welsh forward -- relegated to the bench as usual -- put his mask over his eyes, lounged back and apparently took a short nap.

Thibaut Courtois had to make two smart saves but Madrid were cruising by the end.

Courtois is the first Real goalkeeper to keep 18 clean sheets in a season since 1987-88 and the Belgian became the first Real goalkeeper to manage five clean sheets in a row in La Liga since Iker Casillas in 2007-08. He needs two more clean sheets for Los

Blancos to break the record held by Francisco Buyo, who kept 19 clean sheets in 1986-88.

After restoring their four-point advantage at the top of the table, the pressure is back on Barcelona. If Barca fail to win away at Real Valladolid on Saturday, Madrid will clinch the title with two games to spare by beating Granada on Monday at Los Carmenes.

Yet even if Madrid have to wait, it seems inevitable they will hoist the trophy given they also have a superior head-to-head against Barcelona with three games left.

"We still don't know what is going to happen," said Zinedine Zidane. "La Liga is very hard and we have three finals still to go."

"The noise about VAR does not bother us, we can only control the attitude we show on the pitch," said defender Raphael Varane. "We are focused on our objective and we have three finals left. It was vital to win and it was important to keep another clean sheet and that gives us a lot of confidence."

Zinedine Zidane's side got off to a comfortable start as Karim Benzema converted from the spot in the 11th minute after Ferland Mendy was judged to have been fouled by Ximo Navarro just as he entered the area.

It was the third game in a row in which Real had broken the deadlock thanks to a penalty and they sealed the win when Benzema turned provider and allowed Marco Asensio to tap into an empty net early in the second half.

BCB yet to meet and discuss resumption scenarios

SPORTS REPORTER



The options for the Bangladesh Cricket Board to return to international cricket have been closing one after another, with the postponement of the Asia Cup the latest setback.

Following the postponement of five bilateral series this year, the BCB were eyeing the Asia Cup, scheduled for September, as the foundation for their return to the international circuit. Cricketing activities have been stopped in Bangladesh since mid-March due to the pandemic.

Bangladesh's next international series according to the Future Tours Programme is scheduled for October, when the Tigers are supposed to tour New Zealand for a three-match T20I series. That is followed by a home series against Sri Lanka in December, but both series are uncertain.

With no international series in the near future, the BCB have to shift their focus to the domestic circuit to restart proceedings. The Dhaka Premier League (DPL) was stopped after the first round due to the coronavirus outbreak in March.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) chairman Kazi Inam Ahmed stated that they were considering Cox's Bazar or BKSP as alternative venues for the DPL and also arranging accommodation to maintain isolation so they could start on short notice when the situation is conducive to resumption.

However, there were no meetings, not even virtual ones, among the board members

yet to discuss and chalk out further steps. According to BCB director and chairman of the media and communications committee, Jalal Yunus, they are waiting for board president Nazmul Hassan, who underwent surgery in London on Thursday, to return to the country.

"The BCB president is currently in London as he just underwent a surgery on Thursday and he is doing fine at the moment. No virtual meetings have taken place yet. We had plans for a meeting but since our president took ill, we couldn't do that. There will be a meeting once the president returns but so far there is nothing scheduled," Yunus told The Daily Star.

Pressure is mounting to tackle the difficult situation and find ways to resume cricketing activities but with the situation in Bangladesh worsening, the board is being forced to play the waiting game.

"Needless to say, if players miss out on even a single season, it will be difficult for them to make a comeback. This is a pandemic and all other aspects of everyday life are being affected. Let us not forget that all the other crises arising are due to the fallout from the health crisis," said BCB director Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby.

"So, we have to fix the root cause first. And those taking decisions on re-opening should be asking themselves if it is prudent to decide on behalf of someone else's child when they would not be inclined to do the same in their child's case. I wish there was an easy answer to this situation but one should take steps considering all the facts and variables."



Opener Dom Sibley plays one through the on-side during a gritty knock as England fought back in their second innings on the fourth day of the first Test against West Indies at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Booters' camp from early Aug

SPORTS REPORTER



Football is likely to become the first team sport to be back in some sort of activity as Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday declared its plan of starting national team's training camp in isolation after Eid-ul-Azha.

Football, like most other sport, has been halted since mid-March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, despite the growing number of cases, some sporting authorities are planning to resume training and football is at the forefront. While cricket's return to training is still uncertain with the postponement of Asia Cup, football will lead the race in resumption with an eye on Bangladesh's remaining World Cup Qualifiers which will be played in October and November.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and other high-ups of the federation held a meeting with 27 footballers of the national team at its headquarters yesterday where resumption of the training camp and the payment issues of the players with their respective clubs were discussed.

Tabith Awal, vice-president of BFF and a member of national teams committee, informed media that they plan to start the training camp in early August.

"We dearly want to start an isolation camp (for the national team) right after the Eid ul Azha, maybe by August 2 or 3. We have two private resorts just outside of Dhaka in our strong consideration for the camp. We want this isolation camp to run until before the first match of World Cup qualifiers, which is on October 8 (against Afghanistan)," Tabith told reporters after the meeting.

While thanking the footballers for maintaining their fitness during the break, Tabith promised they would arrange at least two international friendlies ahead of the qualifiers once international flights resume fully.

"We have renewed two-year contracts with head coach Jamie Day and assistant coach Stuart Watkiss while the contracts with the fitness coach and goalkeeping coach are of short term," Tabith said addressing the footballers.

It has been learnt that the foreign coaching staff are not likely to arrive in Dhaka before the third week of August.

However, the BFF did not arrive on any decision regarding the players' contracts with their respective clubs.

Salahuddin said that footballers should focus on preparations for the crucial World Cup qualifiers while the BFF continues to work to resolve issues regarding their contracts, wages, transfers and resumption of next season.

Wimbledon to disburse prize money

REUTERS

The prize money set aside for the Wimbledon Championships will be distributed to 620 players who were set to take part at this year's cancelled tournament, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) said on Friday.

Wimbledon, which was initially scheduled for June 29-July 12, was cancelled for the first time since World War Two due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has killed more than 44,000 people in the United Kingdom.

"We are now in a position to allocate prize money to the 620 players whose world ranking would have enabled them to gain entry into The Championships by direct acceptance into the main draw or qualifying event," AELTC said in a statement.

AELTC said 224 singles players will receive 12,500 pounds each while the 256 players in the main draw will receive 25,000 pounds each. Doubles players will receive 6,250 pounds each while wheelchair and quad wheelchair players are set to get 6,000 and 5,000 pounds each respectively.

AELTC also announced that the men's singles seeding from the 2021 tournament will be based "solely on ranking".

VAR must not show 'wrong idea of solidarity', says Collina

REUTERS



Video Assistant Referees (VAR) must not show the "wrong idea of solidarity" by appearing to protect officials who make mistakes on the pitch, the head of FIFA's Referees' Committee has said.

Speaking at the World Football Summit, Italian Pierluigi Collina also stressed the importance of on-field referees using pitchside monitors during games to review decisions.

"Another thing to be considered (is) a sort of wrong idea of solidarity," Collina said. "If you belong to a team,

you always try to protect your team mates. If your team mate made a mistake you try to find everything to say 'no, no, no, he was correct'."

"It's a sort of friendship I'd say. Referees must understand the solidarity and friendship that they want to show is to tell their colleague 'be careful, you might have made a mistake'."

"It's better that you have another chance watching the incident on a monitor, you have assessed probably wrongly, so that finally you can avoid a mistake."

Former World Cup referee Collina, 60, said wrong decisions taken in

important games can "really kill a referee's career."

"VAR is a very important safety net," he added.

VAR was involved in controversy during the last round of Premier League matches, prompting Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho to say that officials should be obliged to explain their decisions.

Mourinho was left baffled after Harry Kane was denied what looked a clear penalty early in the 0-0 draw at Bournemouth on Thursday, even though it was referred to the VAR officials.



IS SOCIAL DISTANCING THAT HARD DURING CELEBRATIONS?: (Clockwise from L) Manchester City's David Silva celebrates a goal engulfed by teammates during a Premier League match against Newcastle while England fast bowler James Anderson celebrates Roston Chase's wicket by hugging teammates during Day 3 of the first Test against the West Indies. These players may have momentarily forgotten social distancing guidelines, but Jofra Archer certainly remembered, as evidenced by his elbow bump celebration. The Premier League has contacted all 20 clubs regarding their players' failure to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



Jack Charlton dies at 85

REUTERS

Jack Charlton, a World Cup winner with England who became the darling of Ireland after leading their national team to unprecedented success as manager, has died aged 85.

A family statement said that the former Leeds United defender, who helped England beat West Germany to become world champions in 1966, died peacefully on Friday at his home following a long-term illness.

Charlton, the elder brother of Manchester United great Bobby, was a tough tackling centre back who graduated from the Leeds academy and spent his entire playing career at the club. He helped them win the second division in 1963-64 and then the top-flight title in 1968-69.

He helped Alf Ramsey's side lift the World Cup on home soil in 1966, playing every match.

He led Ireland to their first major soccer finals at the 1988 European Championship and guided them to the World Cup quarterfinals in 1990.