



England players conducted a community coaching session with local children at the Rose Bowl in Southampton yesterday. Here, Adil Rashid and Jason Roy watch as an enthusiastic child gets ready to smash one to the fences. PHOTO: REUTERS

ICC defends lack of reserve days

REUTERS, Nottingham

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday defended not scheduling reserve days for group matches at the rain-marred World Cup and blamed the disruptions on "extremely unseasonable weather".

A record three matches have already been either abandoned or called off in the weather-hit tournament and the forecast is for further washouts this week.

The organisers have been criticised for not allotting reserve days in the group stage and outgoing ICC chief executive David Richardson said it was not a feasible idea.

"Factoring in a reserve day for every match ... would significantly increase the length of the tournament and practically would be extremely complex to deliver," he said in a statement.

The knockout stage of the six-week tournament includes reserve days but it would post a massive logistical challenge at the group phase and inconvenience everyone, Richardson said.

"There is also no guarantee that the reserve day would be free from rain either," he said.

Bangladesh coach Steve Rhodes criticised the organisers after his team's match against Sri Lanka was abandoned on Tuesday without a ball bowled in Bristol.

"We put men on the moon, so why can't we have a reserve day, when actually this tournament is a long tournament?" Rhodes quipped.

"I know logistically, it would have been a big headache for the tournament organisers... but we have got quite a lot of time in between games, and if we have got to travel a day later, then so be it."

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne acknowledged the logistical challenge but still felt result days suited everyone.

"It's not easy, but if they can put on a reserve day, it would be good for everyone," said Karunaratne, whose team's previous match against Pakistan was also washed out.

Richardson, however, blamed the disruptions on an "extremely unseasonable weather".

"In the last couple of days we have experienced more than twice the average monthly rainfall for June which is usually the third driest month in the UK," he said.

We're being compromised to the point of censorship: Holding

AGENCIES, London

Legendary West Indies pacer and one of the most famous voices in the commentator's box, Michael Holding, hit back at the ICC in reply to a letter that had asked him to refrain from pointing out umpiring errors on air during the World Cup, the Times of India reported yesterday.

Holding told the ICC that asking commentators to refrain from speaking about umpires is why "commentators are being more and more compromised by controlling organisations to the point of censorship".

"I do not intend to go down that road," Holding wrote to the ICC in reply to a letter that he received soon after the match between West Indies and Australia on June 6.

Huw Bevan, the production head for ICC's rights partner Sunset & Vine Asia, wrote an email to Holding on June 7, with CCs marked to his company colleagues, reminding them all "the importance of maintaining the highest standards and uphold the game's best values and spirit while covering the tournament".

Bevan's email adds that ICC TV's duty is



to reflect the values and "not to cast doubt or negative judgement on anything associated with the tournament in our coverage".

This came after Holding called the umpiring in the match between West Indies and Australia "atrocious". The email says: "Inherently in live television, there are occasions when on field decisions cause reason for discussion or debate, but as ICC TV

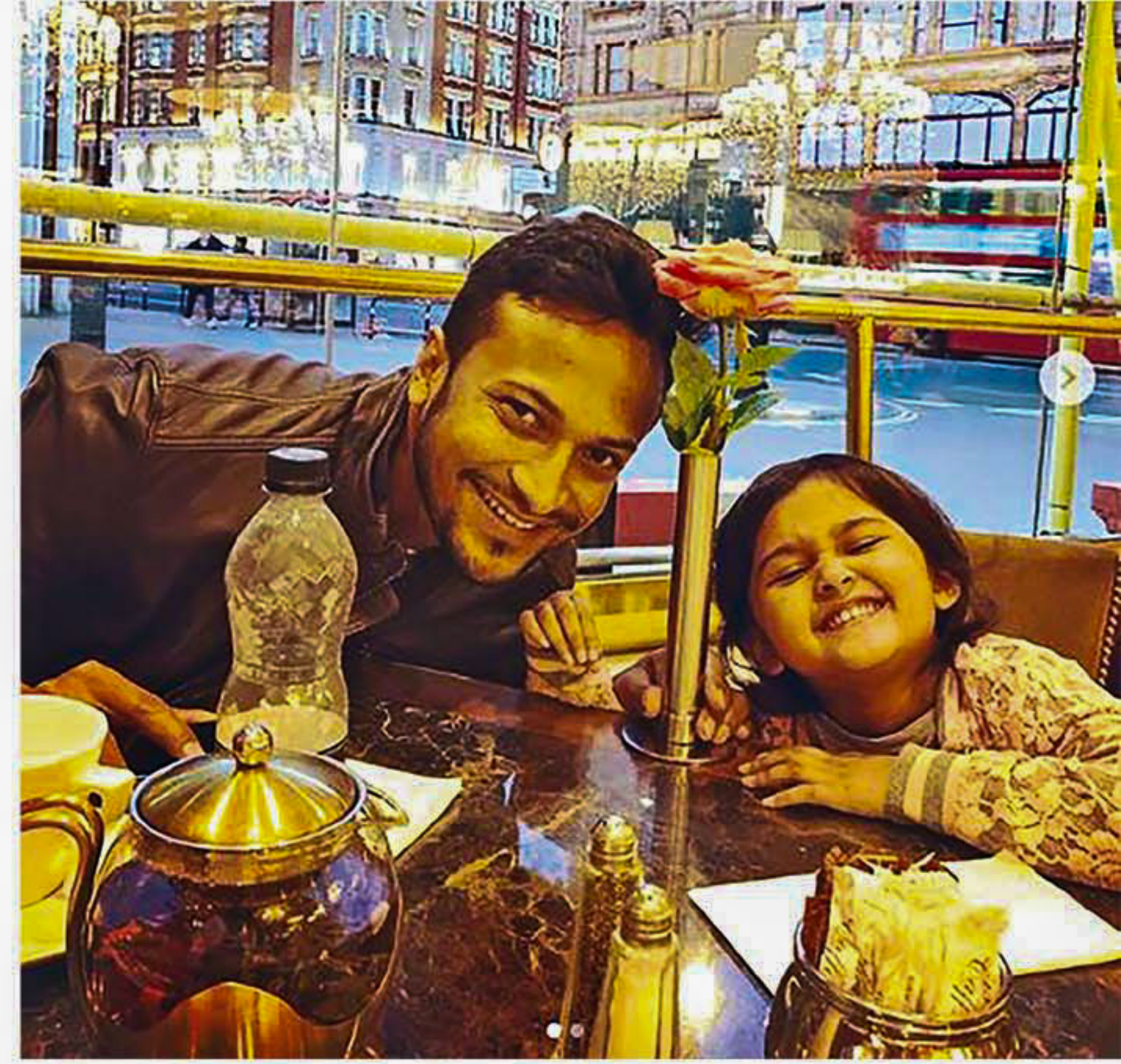
host broadcasters, our (Sunset & Vine) duty is not to judge or highlight mistakes".

Holding did not take the directions lightly. "If those umpires yesterday were FIFA officials, they would have been told to pack their bags and head home. They would not have been given another World Cup game to officiate. As a former cricketer, I think cricket should be held to a higher standard. Is the objective to protect the umpires even when they do a bad job?" Holding wrote back.

He added: "I am sorry, but I am not going to be part of that. Please let me know if I should be heading back to my home in Newmarket instead of heading to Cardiff because I don't agree with what is being suggested here and happy not being part of it."

"As I look through the list of recipients of this email, it would seem that I am the only commentator that has received the same," begins Holding's reply to Bevan. "I was certainly very critical of umpiring which was pathetic to say the least," Holding adds.

After being contacted, Holding and ICC sources both told the Times of India that they consider "the matter closed".



With some downtime on his hands, Shakib Al Hasan enjoyed lunch with his daughter and wife in the United Kingdom. PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

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Australian opener David Warner had a terrific showing after coming into yesterday's match following some below-par performances since completing his one-year ban following the sandpaper controversy. The left-handed opener silenced his critics in grand style during the game against Pakistan in the World Cup. Batting on 97, he edged a Shaheen Shah Afridi delivery between the keeper and the slip fielder to complete his 15th ODI hundred. Warner's trademark celebration -- jumping into the air and kissing his helmet before looking to the heavens -- was arguably the happiest moment of the day. His hug with Shaun Marsh told the tale, having endured a year of frustration, regret, even torment, following his role in the sandpaper scandal in South Africa. Warner's heroics drew praise from all corners, with Michael Vaughan tweeting: "Today we have seen the best of David Warner.. Ominous signs for the rest of the tournament me thinks..."

Buttler ruled fit for Windies clash

REUTERS, London

England head coach Trevor Bayliss is optimistic that Jos Buttler will be fit to play in Friday's World Cup match against the West Indies in Southampton.

Buttler hurt his right hip while batting in England's win against Bangladesh, hobbling for the remainder of his knock and passing on wicketkeeping duties to Jonny Bairstow.

He was scheduled to join the team during a net session on Wednesday and Bayliss said: "Yes, he's fine. He'll be taking part in today's practice fully."

"It was a little bit precautionary the other day. He said he could have kept, but he wasn't really sure if he would be able to run after a high catch."

Asked if Buttler might play as a specialist batsman to lighten his workload in the field, Bayliss kept his options open.

"I haven't really thought about it. We'll make that decision in the next day or so," the Australian said. "We'll see how he pulls up and how he performs at practice. I'm expecting him to play a full part."

Buttler has been in fine form at the World Cup, with scores of 18, 103 and 64.

Should Buttler fail to prove his fitness, Hampshire's James Vince would be the likeliest pick in his role as spare batsman.

All-rounder Moeen Ali is also eyeing a return to the team after sitting out the victory over Bangladesh. He will rejoin the squad for final preparations on the eve of the game and is available to take on the West Indies.



They may have been opposing captains in the World Cup, but Australia's Michael Clarke and New Zealand's Brendon McCullum remain good friends four years down the line. PHOTO: TWITTER

We can handle anything, says Bayliss

ICC

Trevor Bayliss insists England have the capacity to thrive -- not just survive -- against West Indies' rapid fast bowlers when the two lock horns on Friday.

Pace is the talk of the town ahead of the meeting at the Hampshire Bowl, with the Caribbean side boasting four players who can top 90mph. Oshane Thomas and Sheldon Cottrell are in particularly good form, the former terrorising Pakistan in their opening World Cup game, and the latter bamboozling South Africa in the washed-out contest on Monday.

England have a pair of in-form quicks of their own in Jofra Archer and Mark Wood and the sides split their recent ODI series -- drawing 2-2 in the Caribbean.

"We can handle anything that is thrown at us," he said. "I have not seen too many with express pace here just yet but we have a couple of good ones too so I expect it to be tit for tat. "We will have to play at our best to come away with a win. In the Caribbean, we were a little bit up and down. They bowled fast but then Mark Wood made a few of their guys jump up and down."

"The wicket here is reasonably flat and it has been in the past. There have been a few more wickets in the World Cup then there has been in the last few years so I expect the fast bowlers are rubbing their hands together."

All-rounder Moeen Ali is pushing for a recall and Bayliss has often deployed two spinners at the Hampshire Bowl in the past, increasing the prospect that the off-spinner will come in and join Adil Rashid.

Spin has accounted for just six of the 28 wickets England have taken so far, with Moeen left out against Bangladesh and Rashid suffering a shoulder injury in the build-up to the tournament, but Bayliss is not yet concerned.

"Early in the tournament, or prior to it, he [Rashid] had a niggles in the shoulder but he has got over that and in the last couple of weeks he has not had a problem," he added.

"What he needs is more bowling, whether that is in the nets or in the games. I don't think the wickets have necessarily been an advantage for the spinners yet."

"As we go through the tournament, when it might be drier and drier wickets I expect he will come into his own."

BEST QUOTE

ইপলু গ্রেট টেস্ট-এ মজল সংযোজন মিশ্টি স্বাদে ভরবেই মন!

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They showed us that they're probably a lot more patient in a way. I think taking wickets up front is the key to beating India but, if not, creating pressure and building dots. They're world-class players, you're not going to blow them out of the water, but if you can build up enough pressure and create a half-chance, that could be the wicket and you can then build from there.

Lockie Ferguson, New Zealand pacer