

England's top order crumbles

REUTERS, Southampton

West Indies dominated the second morning of the first Test against England on Thursday as Shannon Gabriel and Jason Holder took full advantage of bowler-friendly conditions to leave the hosts reeling on 106-5.

England began the day on 35 for one after only 17 overs were completed at the Ageas Bowl on Wednesday, but their top-order crumbled under murky skies as experienced paceman Gabriel struck twice in the first hour.

Gabriel had bowled Dom Sibley on Wednesday and produced a similar delivery that nipped back in to hit Joe Denly's off stump in the sixth over of the day.

In his next over Gabriel trapped opener Rory Burns (30) in front of his stumps.

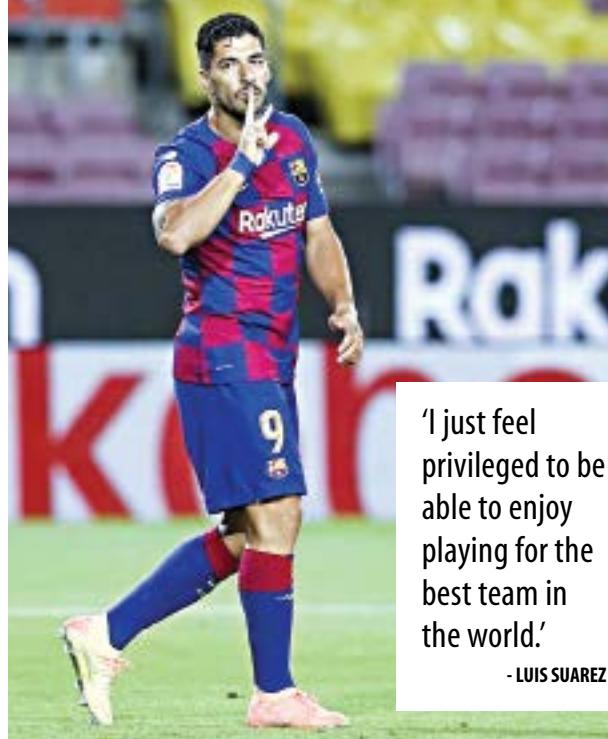
That brought Ben Stokes to the crease and he got off the mark in his first match as England captain by pulling Gabriel to the boundary.



West Indies captain Jason Holder celebrates after taking the wicket of Ollie Pope on the second day of the first Test yesterday. Holder, along with Shannon Gabriel, dismantled England top order in the first session by taking two wickets each.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'We have to win three games'



'I just feel privileged to be able to enjoy playing for the best team in the world.'

- LUIS SUAREZ

PHOTO: TWITTER

Luis Suarez struck the only goal against Espanyol in the 56th minute, lashing a loose ball into the net for his 195th goal with Barca. The goal took him past Hungarian Laszlo Kubala as the club's third top scorer of all time.

MOST GOALS FOR BARCELONA (ALL COMPETITIONS, TOP FIVE)	
Player	Goals
Lionel Messi (Argentina)	630
César (Spain)	232
Luis Suarez (Uruguay)	195
László Kubala (Hungary)	194
Josep Samitier (Spain)	184

AGENCIES

Barcelona kept their faint title hopes alive and doomed Espanyol to relegation on Wednesday as Luis Suarez's goal proved the winner in a pivotal Catalan derby at the top and bottom of La Liga.

This 1-0 victory was a far cry from the sparkling 4-1 win over Villarreal on Sunday but it moves Barca to within a point of Real Madrid, who play their game in hand at home to Alaves on Friday.

"We did not play well today," Barca coach Quique Setien said. "Their defensive shape made life very difficult for us as they were very tight and compact and we weren't precise enough to find a way around it," he added.

"We have to win our next three games," said Suarez. "What Madrid do is up to them. If they drop points, fantastic. We just have to be there if they do."

"We knew how difficult this game would be because of Espanyol's situation and we were tired from Sunday's game and we played with less intensity," Suarez said adding that: "But the important thing is that we won the game and picked up more points."

With the superior head-to-head and a kind last four fixtures, Real Madrid remain firm favourites.

"Life or death" read the front page of Mundo Deportivo on Thursday morning - for Barcelona, who had to win to stay in touch with Madrid, and for Espanyol, given they needed a victory to prolong their survival effort.

Griezmann's combination with Suarez and Messi, coming after his sumptuous chip against Villarreal, sustains the Frenchman's momentum but this was more of a gritty win against an Espanyol team that hit the post at 0-0 and had chances.

WHAT TO WATCH

SONY SIX

England v West Indies

First Test, Day 3

Live from 4:00pm

FACEBOOK LA LIGA

Real Sociedad v Granada

Live from 11:30pm
Real Madrid v Alaves
Live from 2:00am
(Saturday)

A mess locals could help fix

MAZHAR UDDIN

The coronavirus pandemic has led many sectors to realise the importance of having their own resources. In that vein, Bangladesh cricket is facing tough questions about its reliance on foreign coaching staff.

Due to the pandemic, the Bangladesh national team's foreign coaching staff -- including head coach Russell Domingo -- are yet to resume their duties. It seems unlikely that they will join the Tigers until the situation in the country improves and, more importantly, the Bangladesh Cricket Board had to wait for the international flights to resume.

It has been nearly four months since cricketing activities in Bangladesh were stopped and questions are now being asked about whether the BCB should take the initiative to start training the national team by utilising local coaches.

Then again, questions arise over the ability of local coaches to handle the national team due to the lack of exposure and faith on local coaches that has been prevalent for quite a while.

According to many, it is important to place faith on local coaches and give them exposure so that BCB can utilise them in such situations and develop a structure that gives importance to local coaches at the international level.

There are a total of 15 High Performance coaches who are under the game development programme, including prominent coaches like Wahidul Gani, Dipu Rai Chowdhury, Abdul Karim Jewel, Mahbub Ali Jackie, Golam Faruk Chowdhury Suru, Sohel Islam and Jafrul Ehsan. There are many others who have been working within Bangladesh cricket for long time now.



There are a total of twelve divisional coaches and 63 district coaches. And there are training programmes in which the BCB now has 309 Level-1, 133 Level-2 and 20 Level-3 coaches. However, among the twenty Level-3 coaches, at least ten are now not associated with coaching for the BCB.

Anyone in Bangladesh can do the Level-1 coaching programme which is conducted by the BCB each year, but there has been no Level-2 programme in Bangladesh for the past three years due to a lack of qualified educators.

The biggest setback for local coaches has been their inability to adapt to latest coaching methods. It is a matter of fact that there are very few coaches in Bangladesh who can match such standards.

Among those very few, the likes of Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Mohammad Salabuddin and Sarwar Imran are not associated with the BCB and to some extent the board has been unable to utilise their expertise to encourage local coaches by providing them with bigger roles.

However, there are few in the BCB who are well-equipped and capable of handling national players, with the likes of Khaled Mahmud and Sohel Islam being highly-respected by cricketers.

Like local coaches, trainers, physios and umpires are also lagging behind when it comes to competing with foreign recruits. The BCB must provide enough of a platform and opportunities as well as monetary support to develop its own resources rather than relying on the foreigners.

Medical guidelines ready for national booters

ANISUR RAHMAN

The resumption of the national football team's activities is gradually becoming a reality as the medical committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday completed their health guidelines in light of FIFA guidelines to resume football activities ahead of October's World Cup Qualifiers.

The medical committee's deputy chairman, Dr Ali Emran, yesterday submitted the guidelines to ensure a safe training camp for the national booters, who are supposed to start preparations in late August for the tie against Afghanistan to be held on October 8.

"If we can control the negative impacts around us and the players and officials obey instructions such as wearing masks, rinsing hands with soap, and social distancing norms and don't loiter in crowded places, then it is possible to have a Covid-19 free environment," Dr Emran told The Daily Star yesterday.

Apart from testing all footballers, coaches, officials and support staff, the medical committee has also recommended to even test anyone from catering services and stadium and dormitory staff.

"The medical committee wants the national team to stay in a coronavirus-

any infected person surrounding the national team," Emran said, adding that they would formulate some guidelines for the training camp in line with FIFA recommendations after the first-phase of testing.

He also informed that FIFA had a series of meeting with six confederations, medical officials and the World Health Organisation before finalising its guidelines. It also clearly stated that the associations must consider the pandemic and available health-service facilities of their own countries before formulating their own guidelines.

"FIFA guidelines also recommended not to during a lockdown and there is no need to restart football if there is any possibility of spreading the coronavirus," Emran said.

He also suggested testing the players in groups instead of testing the whole team together at least 72 hours before the start of the training camp and keeping them isolated before moving to the place where the team will have their training camp.

Tests could be arranged at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and reports could be delivered within the day if the BFF wants, he added. Finally, the medical committee suggested that anyone who shows symptoms must inform authorities concerned.

Australia must tour England, says Langer

REUTERS

Australia must tour England for the "health of world cricket" and let its top players compete in this year's Indian Premier League (IPL) if it goes ahead, coach Justin Langer has said.

Australia are slated to tour England for limited overs series in September despite the logistical challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think we have to go to England. There's lots of challenges, of course, but we have to find solutions to make sure that can happen if possible," Langer said in comments published by the Daily Telegraph on Thursday.

"That's my view. I think for the health of world cricket."

"If things out of control happen and we can't end up going, at least we can say we've done everything in our power to make it happen."



Mohamed Salah remained in the hunt for a third Golden Boot in as many seasons as a Liverpool player as he slotted home Naby Keita's cross to open the scoring during a 3-1 Premier League win at Brighton on Wednesday. Salah was more clinical when he headed home Andy Robertson's corner at the near post for his 19th Premier League goal of the season to move to within three of Jamie Vardy in the race for the Golden Boot. Jurgen Klopp's side are hoping to break the 100-point record established by Manchester City in 2018 as the champions moved to 92 points with four games remaining.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI



Words have been exchanged between relevant boards, at least through the media, with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) media director saying yesterday that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's announcement of the cancellation of the Asia Cup, holds no weight.

However, it was confirmed through an Asian Cricket Council

press release yesterday that the tournament has been postponed. They added that they would try to reschedule for June 2021.

The tournament was scheduled to be held late this year with Pakistan playing hosts. India's reluctance to play in Pakistan meant the ACC were looking for a move to neutral territory. With the coronavirus pandemic dictating things, the PCB were keen for Sri Lanka to host the tournament on their behalf.

BCCI president Ganguly had

announced on Wednesday that the tournament had been called off, although he did not offer any explanation.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan is the current president of the ACC and is currently in England. But the postponement may also throw off Bangladesh's plans to return to training with the target of playing the Asia Cup.

BCB Cricket Operations Committee chairman Akram Khan

had told The Daily Star they were keen to target the Asia Cup since preparation for the shorter version is relatively easier.

With the fate of the ICC World T20 2020 in doubt, Bangladesh's only realistic chance for cricket this year are the three T20Is in New Zealand (October) and three ODIs at home against Sri Lanka (December). Given the state of the pandemic, a return to cricket and those series taking place now looks like a difficult prospect.

Asia Cup postponement to put BCB's resumption plans on hold?