

## SPORT

## ‘Save Bangladesh; let’s fight together’

STAR SPORT DESK



The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation, an initiative of Bangladesh's ace all-rounder, united with Mission Save Bangladesh -- a joint initiative of The Daily Star, Sheba.xyz, and Samakal and now Shakib's foundation -- on Saturday to aid in the fight against coronavirus.

Mission Save Bangladesh is the first initiative with which The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation has joined forces.

The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation is dedicated to improving the livelihood of Bangladeshis and make their lives better and safer.

So far, Mission Save Bangladesh has received donations amounting to Tk 38,64,679 from different private organisations and NGOs, with which the initiative will be supporting more than 2,500 underprivileged families.

Shakib announced his decision in a post on his official Facebook page on Saturday afternoon. The post read: "The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation has taken steps to raise funds from individuals and organizations around the country and around the world to



Mission Save Bangladesh

Shakib Al Hasan

*"Let's all fight together, live together because human beings are there for each other."*

help the underprivileged people affected by Coronavirus.

"This is going to be the first initiative in which The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation will provide support.

"Mission Save Bangladesh is an initiative of The Daily Star, Sheba.xyz and Samakal. The purpose of this project is to provide support to low-income and underprivileged people affected by Coronavirus. So far this project has helped over 2000 underprivileged families and efforts are underway to increase this number.

"Keep an eye on the Facebook page of

'Mission Save Bangladesh' to be updated with the activities - <https://www.facebook.com/missionsavebangladesh/>

"Let's all fight together, live together because human beings are there for each other."

Besides providing the families with groceries, Mission Save Bangladesh has also been carrying out community-based activities like disinfecting public places.

The partner brands and the initiators of Mission Save Bangladesh are looking forward to receiving support from The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation.

## No opportunity before May: Hassan

SPORTS REPORTER



Sport worldwide has grinded to a halt following the outbreak of the coronavirus, with events postponed in order to stop the spread of the virus.

In Bangladesh, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel on March 16 informed that all sporting activities would be postponed till March 31.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan took it a step further, telling The Daily Star yesterday that there was no opportunity to consider starting sports before May.

Caution was on the BCB president's mind after several footballers already contracted the disease.

"We are going to maintain the highest level of caution. We don't know where, when or how it will end. I think after April there may be a chance to talk but before that I don't think that there is an opportunity to talk about sports," he said.

The Dhaka Premier League's (DPL) second round was postponed on March 16 and the BCB was mulling the completion of the tournament when normal services resumed.

"After April, if it appears that the situation is in our favour, we can think about the DPL and whether we can finish it. The reason we need time is because, when sports would begin again after such a crisis, we need some preparation. What will happen to the international calendar and the series which were not played is not clear yet. I have been in talks with other ICC members and no one can grasp when the calamity might end. So we don't know the fate of the international schedules yet. We would like to start with the DPL in April to be give ourselves some time to get prepared," Hassan said.

He said that they would be "focusing on what the other teams in the subcontinent are doing and how they will plan going

forward" and reiterated that their highest priority will be to "remain cautious and not to rush".

The DPL is the prime source of income for many cricketers and without any matches a lot of cricketers not under the BCB's first-class contract list are fearing financial hardships. The BCB had on March 28 announced that players who were not under its central contract list would receive a one-time incentive.

"It is our duty to help out the cricketers," Hassan said, before informing that BCB had contacted concerned authorities to make a donation to a government fund to fight the virus.



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**NAZMUL HASSAN**  
BCB PRESIDENT

## Smith's leadership ban ends

AFP, Sydney



A two-year leadership ban slapped on Steve Smith after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa ended Sunday, leaving the master batsman free to skipper Australia again.

The 30-year-old captained the team until he was suspended for 12 months over a brazen attempt to alter the ball with sandpaper under his watch during a Test in Cape Town in 2018.

Part of his punishment included a further year-long exile from any leadership role, which has now expired.

Co-conspirator and former vice-captain David Warner was banned from any leadership role for life, although both have successfully resumed their international careers.

There have been calls for Smith to take back the Test captaincy from Tim Paine, but it remains unclear whether he wants to, with the 35-year-old seemingly intent on playing on.

Coach Justin Langer last year praised Paine's leadership as "brilliant" and said Smith may not want the "burden" of captaincy on top of batting pressures.

Aaron Finch is skipper of the Twenty20 and one-day teams.

Smith told Channel Nine television on Sunday he was focused only on trying to stay physically and mentally fit during the coronavirus shutdown of Australian cricket.

He was supposed to be preparing for a big-money payday at the Indian Premier League, but the tournament has already been delayed until April 15 in response to the pandemic.

With India in a three-week lockdown in a bid to contain a spread of the virus, Smith admitted the IPL appeared unlikely to go ahead.

"I think the country's basically shut its borders until the 15th of April," he said.

## CA defers contract list by one month

AGENCIES, Melbourne

Cricket Australia's contract list announcement will be pushed back at least a month as the game prepares to grapple with the coronavirus pandemic.

Officials had planned to bring forward the announcement of contracts from May to April this year, in a bid to provide more certainty to the states given the flow-on effect. Contracts run on a financial year basis until the end of June, however, announcing the women's list on Wednesday and men's on Thursday would have assisted all parties. But that plan has been put on hold for now until the end of April, given the economic uncertainty due to the pandemic.

The Australian Cricketers' Association agreed to the move. Australia are due to tour Bangladesh in June and England in July, with both those series now in serious drought. CA have been largely unaffected by the crisis for the 2019-20 financial year.

## Reminiscence: My first match

*In these times of social distancing, we must be safe while remembering that we do not get too used to the world being at a standstill. We were meant to go watch matches together, agree with a few of our neighbours and disagree with the rest. So, we are taking turns at The Daily Star Sport talking about what our first live experience at a cricket venue was.*

*Sakeb Subhan from London, 1996*



The cricket bug (intended) bit me hard around the winter of 1995, when Sri Lanka, West Indies and Australia were locked in battle in the tri-series down under and I was holed up at my grandparents' with fever, glued to the television.

The 1996 World Cup soon followed and I was hooked. That summer, we were lucky enough to go to England on my father's furlough, and at the back of my mind, I knew that I would be in the same country where the likes of Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Saeed Anwar and Inzamamul Haque would be engaged in a Test series.

In my early teen mind, I was just cherishing the opportunity to watch it on television in the same country. But my father, who viewed my cricket mania with a kind of amused annoyance, had the best surprise in store for me.

On July 29, he told me that he had bought tickets for the fifth day of the first Test. I cannot adequately describe my glee -- just picture



**Pakistan pacer Waqar Younis is exultant after his signature yorker castles England's Graeme Hick on the fifth day of the first Test at Lord's on July 29, 1996.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED

scenes of children running around the dinner table and shouting at the top of their voices.

Lord's did not have the futuristic looking media centre then, and was steeped in tradition. Reverence

is the only word to describe the feeling when entering the ground. I do not quite remember the name of the stand we sat in, but the view was that of square leg or deep cover. England, who had reached 152

for one at lunch, certainly seemed to be responding well to the target of 408 set by Akram. Skipper Michael Atherton had been leading the way with 64. Alec Stewart hit 89. The pitch, Cricinfo tells me, was slow. The sound of ball hitting bat was clear as the tradition-obsessed crowd quietened down as the bowler ran up.

England had reached tea with three wickets down, and it seemed a draw was looming. But after the break, came Waqar, who had earlier dismissed opener Nick Knight. Running in furiously, and bowling lightning fast, he made short work of England's batsmen. Graeme Hick was first to go, and Jack Russell -- the only one not to be bowled under Waqar's three victims after tea -- and Dominic Cork followed. England lost their last nine wickets for 76 runs, with leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed also taking five.

But in my mind's eye, it was the sight of Waqar putting the fear of God into Englishmen that still lingers, and probably a big part of why I am in this job.



**After spending the past week in self-isolation, Cristiano Ronaldo finally stepped out of his home in Funchal, taking two of his children around his neighbourhood in strollers, with partner Georgina Rodriguez.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Fans turn to Belarus to fill void

REUTERS, Minsk



With football at a virtual standstill around the globe, fans in need of their weekly fix are turning to the Belarusian Premier League to fill the void as it carries on with matches despite the coronavirus outbreak.

The league, one of Europe's least glamorous competitions, is drawing foreign fans' attention the decision to carry on and allow fans into stadiums has helped the Belarus Football Federation get broadcasting deals with sports networks in 10 countries, including Russia, Israel and India, where fans have been left with nothing to watch.

It has said it has no intention of postponing matches or cancelling the

season it began earlier this month.

While most of its teams, perhaps with the exception of BATE Borisov and Dinamo Minsk, are unknown to the majority of soccer fans, the league is making the most of stoppages to the world's top competitions.

Belarus has so far reported 94 coronavirus cases but has taken few measures to curb the outbreak. President Alexander Lukashenko, who has held power since 1994, has downplayed the need for social distancing and bragged that he continues to play ice hockey and embrace fellow players.

Yuri, a Dinamo Minsk supporter hopes fans will still flip the channel to the Belarusian league when European leagues resume.

"They will not only watch English or Italian leagues, but also the Belarusian one from time to time," he said.

## MSC's polls postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The elections and annual general meeting of Mohammedan Sporting Club Limited, scheduled for April 18, have been postponed indefinitely in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The announcement was sent to media through an e-mail, with a letter signed by AM Amin Uddin, independent chairman of the club.

"Like everywhere else in the world, Bangladesh is also infected by the coronavirus pandemic. In these circumstances, all activities regarding the pre-announced April 18 AGM and elections of the club will be halted until further decision," said the letter.