



(L) Bangladesh cricketers celebrate their victory against India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka on December 26, 2004. (R) The Tigers celebrate after their first-ever Test victory against Zimbabwe at the M. A. Aziz Stadium in Chattogram on January 10, 2005.

Bashar picks his best memories

BISHWAJIT ROY

It could be said that the ‘fearless’ version of the Tigers first appeared when Habibul Bashar led Bangladesh to a five-wicket win over India at the Queen’s Park Oval in Trinidad in the 2007 World Cup. Bangladesh had turned into a force to be reckoned with after that historic win, which had knocked India out in the group stage. That was followed by a victory over the mighty South Africa in the Super Eight.

So, it was no surprise that Bangladesh’s most successful ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza often put Bashar’s achievements ahead of his own. We could recall what Mashrafe said after overtaking Bashar as the most successful ODI captain for Bangladesh.

“If you look at Sumon [Bashar] bhai’s wins, those should be considered as double. Because winning was very tough for us then,” said Mashrafe.

Like Mashrafe, Bashar did not hesitate to put his predecessors’ achievements ahead of his own, especially the 1997 ICC Trophy, which the former national skipper marked ahead of every milestone in Bangladesh cricket.

But still, whenever your mind goes down memory lane, it always finds some of your own sweet memories. “No, if you consider the time we have been passing due to the fear of the coronavirus

BASHAR’S TOP 10	
ICC Trophy, 1997: Bangladesh became champions by defeating Kenya in the final. The match was affected by rain and was played over two days. The Bangladesh target was set at 166 from 25 overs by the Duckworth–Lewis method. The Tigers reached the target off the last ball of the match with two wickets in hand.	101 balls, kept the Tigers on course throughout.
Multan Test, 2003: Bangladesh came very close to their maiden Test win, only to be foiled by Inzamam-ul-Haq.	First Test Win, 2005: On home soil, Bangladesh won the two-match series against Zimbabwe 1-0 with one Test drawn. This was the first time in their history, when Bangladesh had won both a Test match and a Test series.
Harare ODI, 2004: Bangladesh won their first international fixture since achieving Test status in 2000 by a thrilling eight-run margin. With 13 runs to defend in the final over, Tareq Aziz bowled Stuart Matsikenyeri and Douglas Hondo off consecutive deliveries to prompt scenes of unfettered joy in the Bangladeshi dressing-room.	Fatullah Test, 2006: Bangladesh nearly caused a massive upset in the first Test of the series, only to be denied by Australian captain Ricky Ponting, who scored an unbeaten 118 in the second innings as the visiting team won by 3 wickets.
Dhaka ODI, 2004: Bangladesh pulled off a historic first ODI victory at home and also their first-ever win against India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.	Bulawayo ODI, 2009: Charles Coventry made an unbeaten 194 but his effort was overshadowed by Tamim Iqbal, who scored a match-winning 154.
Cardiff ODI, 2005: In Sophia Gardens, Bangladesh earned the respect of the cricketing world, beating the mighty Australia by five wickets. Mohammad Ashraful’s brilliantly paced 100, from	Asia Cup Final, 2012: Pakistan stunned Bangladesh in a last-ball thriller to win by 2 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.
	World Cup 2015: In Adelaide, England were knocked out of the tournament as Bangladesh claimed a stunning 15-run win to book a place in the quarterfinals of the World Cup for the first time in their history.

pandemic, I would not want to be bored. I never enjoy watching those matches [the 2007 World Cup wins] because both were one-sided affairs,” Bashar said.

“If you are talking about historic importance then it’s a different issue and I will make a list that will not go with what I make for this moment, as I want to memorise those matches that give me immense pleasure because of their competitiveness,” he added.

Bashar was not ready to consider the final outcome of the matches when he requested to make a top-

10 list of Bangladesh’s international matches.

“We lost the Multan Test in 2003 but I can still remember every moment and every twist of the match. It is a match you would never get bored of watching. Same for the Fatullah Test against Australia in 2006, we lost but it was a match to remember for us.

“Still, I can see the match we won in Harare in 2000, which was our first international fixture since achieving Test status, and what a thrilling finish it was. The first-ever win against India in 2004 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium was something special in my mind, especially the crowd was amazing. The 2012 Asia Cup final, the Cardiff victory against Australia, the first Test win against Zimbabwe in 2005, the win against England in Adelaide in the 2015 World Cup are the matches with the qualities that make a good cricket match. We may not often mention the ODI victory in Bulawayo in August, 2009 but I must say Tamim Iqbal was amazing in that match,” he continued.

“But the 1997 ICC Trophy is above everything. You cannot compare any match with it. Nothing could have been more pleasant than watching those historic matches. Actually, I cannot explain my emotion when I think about that time,” Bashar said.

“I believe our young stars will benefit by watching the matches I mentioned here during this unwanted break,” Bashar, who is also a national selector, suggested.

Son starts 3-week military training

AFP, Seoul

Tottenham Hotspur’s South Korean striker Son Heung-min began his three-week military training at a marines boot camp on Monday, a report said, with the Premier League on hold over the coronavirus pandemic.

All able-bodied South Korean men are obliged to serve in the military for nearly two years, making up the bulk of Seoul’s 600,000-strong forces.

But Son was among the South Korean footballers who earned an exemption by winning gold at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

The 27-year-old’s Premier League season ended even before the coronavirus outbreak spread to Europe when he broke his arm against Aston Villa on February 16, and Spurs said he returned to South Korea for “personal reasons”.

Son reported to a marines camp on the southern island of Jeju for his three-week basic training. Yonhap news agency reported.

A Yonhap photo showed Son walking past a military truck and



South Korean striker Son Heung-min (2nd R, black cap) arrives at a marines boot camp on the southern island of Jeju on Monday for his three-week military basic training.

PHOTO: AFP

soldiers, wearing a green sweatshirt, a black cap and a face mask.

“South Korean football star Son Heung-min enters the training facility of the 91st Battalion of the 9th Brigade of the Marine Corps,” the caption read.

Son’s agency had earlier urged fans to refrain from attending the venue over virus concerns.

“Son Heung-min is up for basic military training in April,” his agency said on his official Facebook account this month.

Roma players to forego four months’ salary

REUTERS, Rome

The players and coaching staff at Serie A side AS Roma have agreed to go without four months’ salary to help the club through the crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Serie A has been suspended since March 9 and it is not known if or when the season will be able to re-start. Roma said in a statement on Sunday that the players would forego the wages they were due to receive between March and the scheduled end of the season in June.

Roma said the players would also top up the wages of other club employees who were placed on the Italian government’s social safety net scheme to ensure they received their regular monthly income.

The club management will also give up a percentage of their earnings.

“We always talk about unity at Roma and in volunteering to cut their salaries for the rest of the season, the players, the coach, and his staff, have all proved that we really are in this together,” said chief executive Guido Fienga.

“(Club captain) Edin Dzeko, all the players and (coach) Paulo Fonseca have demonstrated they understand what this club stands for and we also thank them all for their superb gesture towards the employees at this club.”

Players at Juventus, Parma and Cagliari have also agreed to wage reductions.

‘Chinese Super League to start by July’



Guangzhou R&F’s head coach Giovanni van Bronckhorst (C) attends a training session in Guangdong province on Monday. The club’s chairman Huang Shenghua said that he expects the Chinese Super League season to start in late June or early July.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Shanghai

The coronavirus-delayed Chinese Super League (CSL) season is scheduled to begin in late June or early July, a club chairman says.

Suspended leagues across the world, including in Europe, will be watching the CSL with interest as an indicator of the challenges they face in relaunching their own competitions.

The campaign was supposed to start on February 22 but was indefinitely postponed by the pandemic, which emerged in China in December before spreading worldwide.

“Based on the assessment of the current situation, the new season will start at the end of June or beginning of July,” said Guangzhou R&F chairman Huang Shenghua, according to state media.

Huang said that the season will be able to take place in full with each team playing the allotted 30 matches.

The media reports did not indicate whether a formal announcement was expected from the Chinese Football Association.

‘Leagues ready to play behind closed doors’

AFP, Milan

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said Monday that leagues across Europe were ready to return to action behind closed doors in a bid to limit the damage caused by coronavirus.

Football leagues have been suspended since mid-March due to the pandemic which has claimed more than 100,000 lives throughout the continent. But the head of European football believes that playing would be an important step towards a return to normal life and avoid heavy financial losses for leagues.

“I believe there are options that can allow us to restart cup championships and to complete them,” Ceferin said in an interview with Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

“We may have to resume without spectators, but the most important thing, I think, is playing games. It is early to say that we cannot complete the season. The impact would be terrible for clubs and leagues. Better to play behind closed doors than not at all.

“In such hard times it would bring happiness to people and a certain sense of normality even if the games can only be seen on TV. All activities are being organised to start again, everyone needs to find their lives. If safety measures are respected and if the authorities give the green light, the training could resume like the rest. Further consent will be needed for matches.”



With so much time to concentrate on things in life other than sports, New Zealand cricket team’s captain Kane Williamson was pictured attending to his dogs while Real Madrid and Spain star Sergio Ramos was busy relocating stuff at home, pausing to take a picture in front of one of his favourite paintings.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM