



Bangladesh ace paceman Mustafizur Rahman has taken a penchant to the views of the UAE as he undergoes third day of quarantine ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL), slated to start from September 19. Mustafizur's Rajasthan Royals take on Punjab Kings in their game on September 21.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

## 'As a professional, I need to adapt to any condition'

EKUSH TAPADER



Bangladesh national team cricketers were granted a three-week leave at the conclusion of a five-match T20 series against New Zealand earlier this month. But despite the lack of scheduled practice sessions ahead of the Tigers' departure to Oman next month for the T20 World Cup, left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed had already started work on his bowling.

"I do not take much time off. I took three or four days off and started working on my bowling," Nasum said when contacted over the phone.

Usually an innocent fellow, Nasum's dedicated work ethic can be considered his biggest asset.

He scalped a total of nine wickets in the five T20s against Australia last month. In fact, it was Nasum's heroic figures of four for 19 from four overs that dismantled the visitors' and helped Bangladesh register a maiden T20I win against Australia.

He was sharp against the Kiwis too and his eight wickets in five matches saw him adjudged the joint-player-of-the-series alongside New Zealand's stand-in skipper Tom Latham.

These last two series gave him the platform to ensure a place in the T20 World Cup squad and Nasum did not hesitate to grab the spotlight. In taking those 16 wickets across 10 games, Nasum gave away just 4.96 runs per over -- an enviable feat in T20 cricket.

"The last two series went very well for me. I enjoyed it a lot. My satisfaction is that I got 16 wickets because you do not get wickets easily in T20Is. Apart from that, I conceded very few runs," Nasum said, cognizant of how important the last few outings had been.

The surfaces at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, where the Tigers' last 10 T20Is were played, have come under heavy criticism for their slow, low and turning nature. The wickets in Mirpur were undoubtedly paradise for spinners and so, questions were raised about whether the assistance those offered led to spinners getting those wickets.

Nasum seemed keen to straighten the record when that context was presented.

"We actually had to win by playing well. Even though the wicket was tough to bat on, we (bowlers) had to do our job. We just bowled and got wickets -- it was nothing like that! We had to work hard for our successes," Nasum added.

Even Nasum could concede that bowling skills would truly be tested at the T20 World

Cup in UAE and Oman, where wickets will not be as favorable to spinners as they were in Mirpur, but he said he was ready to adapt to any condition.

"I need to bowl according to the situation. Whatever conditions we might face, I need to adjust to them. That's what you need to do as a professional cricketer. I will also adapt to those wickets," a confident Nasum reiterated.

In an attempt to acclimatise himself with the varied conditions overseas, Nasum is working with the legendary Rangana Herath, the former Sri Lankan left-arm spinner who is currently serving as Bangladesh's spin-bowling consultant.

"I enjoy working with Herath. Whenever I reach out to him with a problem, he helps me find solutions. I am trying to sharpen myself further with his help."

The place for a second left-arm spinner after Shakib Al Hasan in the Tigers' limited-overs squad has still not been steadily filled



by anyone. Nasum, who appears on his way to staking that claim, is aware of the challenges he may face along the way.

"I will lose my place if I cannot perform, that's the reality. And I am playing with that in mind."

Nasum's biggest source of inspiration ahead of the T20 World Cup has been his family.

"My mother died in June 2020. Had she been here, she would have been really happy for me. My father doesn't understand cricket well. He just gets worried whenever I fall or sustain injuries."

When asked about his aims at the World Cup, Nasum expectedly put the collective ahead of personal glory.

"The team's success comes to mind more than any personal goal. I will consider myself successful if I can contribute to the team's victory even if I do not get any wickets."

## New coach for SAFF Championship?

SPORTS REPORTER



Will Bangladesh's national football team play the upcoming SAFF Championship under the guidance of new coach?

The demand to replace incumbent head coach Jamie Day is getting stronger and the Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF's) executive committee seriously discussed the issue yesterday, with a decision likely to come at the meeting of the National Teams Committee (NTC) today.

"The majority of the members present at the meeting expressed disappointment over the national team's performances and opined that Jamie Day should be replaced ahead of the SAFF Championship. The BFF president said at the meeting that he had been working with the national team and had accompanied the team during the Kyrgyzstan tour but said that the final decision about whether to replace Jamie would come within a couple of days," a BFF executive member, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star after yesterday's meeting.

Since August 2018, the 41-year-old British coach has steered the team to nine wins, five



draws and 15 defeats in 29 matches. Bangladesh were eliminated from the group stages of the 2018 SAFF Championship by virtue of goal difference despite securing six points, as many as Nepal and Pakistan.

"We discussed giving Jamie a new role of developing youth players because he has

another year left on his contract. Meanwhile, names of local coaches like Maruful Haque, Saiful Bari Titu and Shafiqul Islam Manik along with foreign coaches at the club level have been touted as possible replacements for Jamie," the executive committee member added.

It was also learned that BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had a long meeting with NTC chairman Kazi Nabil Ahmed on Wednesday to discuss whether to strip Jamie of his responsibility.

When contacted, the BFF president refused to comment, only saying that the NTC would take a decision regarding the head coach of the national team.

Salahuddin previously expressed dissatisfaction over the performances of the national team during the Tri-Nation Cup in Nepal, where they suffered a 0-2 loss to Nepal in the final and decided to engage with the national team in the middle of August. He then toured with the national team for the Three Nations Cup in Kyrgyzstan, where Bangladesh lost all three matches against Palestine, a Kyrgyzstan U-23 side and Kyrgyzstan, a heavy 4-1 defeat against whom saw Bangladesh slip another place to 189th in the FIFA Rankings.

## Kohli to quit as India T20 captain

AFP, NEW DELHI



Star batsman Virat Kohli announced Thursday that he will give up the India Twenty20 captaincy after the World Cup that starts next month.

"I feel I need to give myself space to be fully ready to lead the Indian team in Test and ODI cricket," said Kohli, whose leadership has been the subject of mounting speculation in recent months.

"I've decided to step down as the T20 captain after this T20 World Cup in Dubai in October," he added in a Twitter post.

The 32-year-old, who became limited-overs captain after M.S. Dhoni stepped aside in 2017, has faced pressure over his failure to win India either the World Cup, Champions Trophy or T20 World Cup.

But Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), had backed Kohli this week to continue.

"I have given everything to the team during my time as T20 captain and I will continue to do so for the T20 team as a batsman moving forward," said Kohli.

"Of course, arriving at the decision took a lot of time," he explained, adding that he had consulted with India coach Ravi Shastri and opening batsman Rohit Sharma.



Jordan Henderson is ecstatic after striking the decisive goal in their 3-2 victory over AC Milan. Manchester City winger Jack Grealish made his mark on his Champions League debut with an impressive solo goal as Pep Guardiola's side overwhelmed RB Leipzig 6-3. [Bottom] Real Madrid substitute Rodrygo is thrilled upon striking a late winner to snatch a 1-0 victory away to Inter Milan. Lionel Messi shakes hands with Club Brugge's Hans Vanaken whose goal meant that Messi's first start for PSG ended in disappointing draw.

PHOTO: REUTERS/TWITTER

## Man City, Liverpool win thrillers

AFP, Paris



Lionel Messi made his first Paris Saint-Germain start in a 1-1 draw at Club Brugge in the Champions League on Wednesday, while last season's runners-up Manchester City and Liverpool won high-scoring thrillers.

Real Madrid, the record 13-time European champions, left it late to beat Inter Milan at the San Siro in a section topped by Moldovan debutants Sheriff Tiraspol after the first round of group stage matches.

"We need time for them to get to know each other," PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino said of his all-star attack.

Pep Guardiola's City, beaten 1-0 by Chelsea in May's final in



Porto, overcame a hat-trick from Christopher Nkunku to beat RB Leipzig 6-3 at the Etihad Stadium.

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson hit the winner for Jurgen Klopp's side as they came from behind to defeat Milan 3-2



Jurgen Klopp told BT Sport.

In the other Group B game, Spanish champions Atletico Madrid drew 0-0 at home to Porto, who were frustrated by a decision to disallow Mehdi Taremi's late goal.

Newcomers Sheriff defeated Shakhtar Donetsk 2-0 thanks to goals from Mali international Adama Traore and Guinean forward Momo Yansane.

England midfielder Jude Bellingham scored one goal and set up Erling Haaland for Borussia Dortmund's second in a 2-1 win away to Turkish champions Besiktas.

Ajax powered to the top of Group D as Ivorian striker Sebastien Haller bagged four goals in a 5-1 demolition of Portuguese champions Sporting Lisbon.

## 3rd Div League to merge with upper one

SPORTS REPORTER

With the lower-division football leagues being held irregularly over the years, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday decided to merge the Dhaka Metropolitan 3rd Division Football League to 1st and 2nd Division Leagues from next year.

The decision was made at the executive meeting of the local game's governing body which also decided to reduce its 21-member Executive Committee (EC) to approximately 50 percent, in line with FIFA's suggestions.

"In the meeting, we decided to merge the third division to the first and second division with no teams remaining outside, so that every team will get a chance to feature," said BFF senior vice-president Abdus Salam Mursheedy.

"We also discussed the amendment of the BFF constitution in a bid to reduce the number of EC members as well as delegations in line with FIFA's suggestion," Mursheedy added.

The local game's governing body is also mulling to bring the number of delegates under 100 from 150 while some top clubs of 2nd Division League will join the 1st Division League and all teams from the Third Division will join the 2nd Division League.

