

# EXPECTATIONS HIGH FROM SHAKIB, MUSTAFIZUR

## MAZHAR UDDIN

Bangladesh will heavily rely on two of their world-class T20 performers -- premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and ace left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman -- for the upcoming T20 World Cup in Oman and the UAE.

With the vast experience of playing franchise cricket all around the globe, Shakib will once again play a key role -- both in batting and bowling -- for the Tigers in the mega event.

Ranked second in the ICC's T20 all-rounder's ranking, Shakib will have the added advantage of playing the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the UAE for his side Kolkata Knight Riders just before the World Cup and that ought to help the Tigers in the marquee event.

Shakib will also be eyeing a grand milestone of becoming the highest wicket-taker in the shortest format of the game. With 106 wickets in 88 matches, Shakib is just two wickets away from surpassing Sri Lankan pacer Lasith Malinga to achieve the feat.

The next two wickets will also see Shakib become the first Bangladeshi to pick 600 international wickets. Aside from all the accolades, which Shakib is almost certain to achieve at any point in the future, Shakib's prime task will be helping the Tigers fare better in a format that has always been the Achilles' heel of Bangladesh cricket.

Shakib will be leading the Tigers' spin bowling department and all eyes will be on the experienced campaigner in the Middle East where he has played many matches in franchise leagues.

It is also set to be Shakib's first ICC event since



returning from his ban after the 2019 ICC World Cup, in which he performed exceptionally both with bat and ball. Shakib will definitely try to emulate his previous World Cup performance and take Bangladesh to the knockout stages of the mega event for the very first time.

Alongside Shakib, the other crucial role for Bangladesh will be played by left-arm seamer Mustafizur, who has been in terrific form since the home series against Australia in August this year.

Mustafizur has been a revolution with the ball for his IPL side Rajasthan Royals this season and his slower and cutters have been a mystery for the batters to negotiate.

Mustafizur will lead the Tigers' pace bowling department and his four overs can prove to be the game-changing moment for Bangladesh in any match.

The 26-year-old has made a name for himself as one of the most lethal death-over bowlers around the world, containing runs and bagging wickets when his skipper needs the most.

With the condition in the Middle East expected to suit Mustafizur's bowling, Bangladesh can hope to give a tough fight to any opponent.

While the importance of contribution from other members of the side is paramount, the expertise of Shakib and Mustafizur is sure to give an extra edge to the Tigers.

Given how Shakib turned up for Bangladesh in big events alongside Mustafizur's current run of form, Bangladesh fans will definitely expect some extraordinary performances from these two outstanding cricketers.

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