

TIMELINE LEADING UP TO SHAKIB'S LAST WORLD CUP DANCE

AUGUST 11
Shakib Al Hasan is named captain of the Bangladesh team for the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and Pakistan and the World Cup in India.

SEPTEMBER 10
During the underwhelming Asia Cup campaign, Shakib tells the media that he wants World Cup bound players to be rested in that month's home series against New Zealand.

SEPTEMBER 16
Bangladesh squad for the home series against New Zealand is announced. Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad return, Shakib is rested.

SEPTEMBER 25
At midnight, Shakib and coach Chandika Hathurusingha meet with BCB president Nazmul Hassan at his residence in the capital. Rumours start swirling that both captain and coach don't want an 'unfit' Tamim in the World Cup squad.

SEPTEMBER 26
The Bangladesh World Cup squad is announced with Shakib as captain. Tamim is left out.

SEPTEMBER 27
A pre-recorded interview of Shakib airs on a local sports channel, where he slams Tamim for not being a team player and calls him 'childish'. The all-rounder also said he was reluctant to captain the team for this World Cup.

SEPTEMBER 28
The second part of Shakib's interview airs, where he revealed his plans to quit international cricket after the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, indirectly declaring that the 2023 World Cup will be his last one.

SEPTEMBER 29
Shakib reportedly injures his foot while playing football in the warmup. The all-rounder then doesn't take part in the Bangladesh team's practice matches ahead of the tournament as a precaution.

OCTOBER 7
Shakib leads Bangladesh in their opening match of the tournament against Afghanistan, which the Tigers win by six wickets. Shakib takes three wickets with the ball and makes 14 runs with the bat.

OCTOBER 10
England thrash Bangladesh by 137 runs in Dharamshala. Shakib takes one wicket and scores just one run.

OCTOBER 13
Kiwis crush Bangladesh by eight wickets, Shakib suffers a quad injury.

OCTOBER 14
The board doesn't reveal Shakib's MRI report, says the all-rounder will remain under observation.

OCTOBER 19
Shakib arrives at the ground with the team, fully geared up, but is not named in the XI. In his place, Najmul Hossain Shanto captains the team against India, a match the Tigers lost by seven wickets.

OCTOBER 24
Shakib returns against South Africa in Mumbai as the team suffers a 149-run defeat, their fourth straight loss.

OCTOBER 25
Shakib doesn't travel with the team to Kolkata. Instead, he flies back to Dhaka to work on his batting under the supervision of coach Najmul Abedin Fahim in Mirpur.

OCTOBER 26
Shakib trains in Mirpur for the second day, and receives jeers from the fans as he leaves in his car. He joins the team in Kolkata that night.

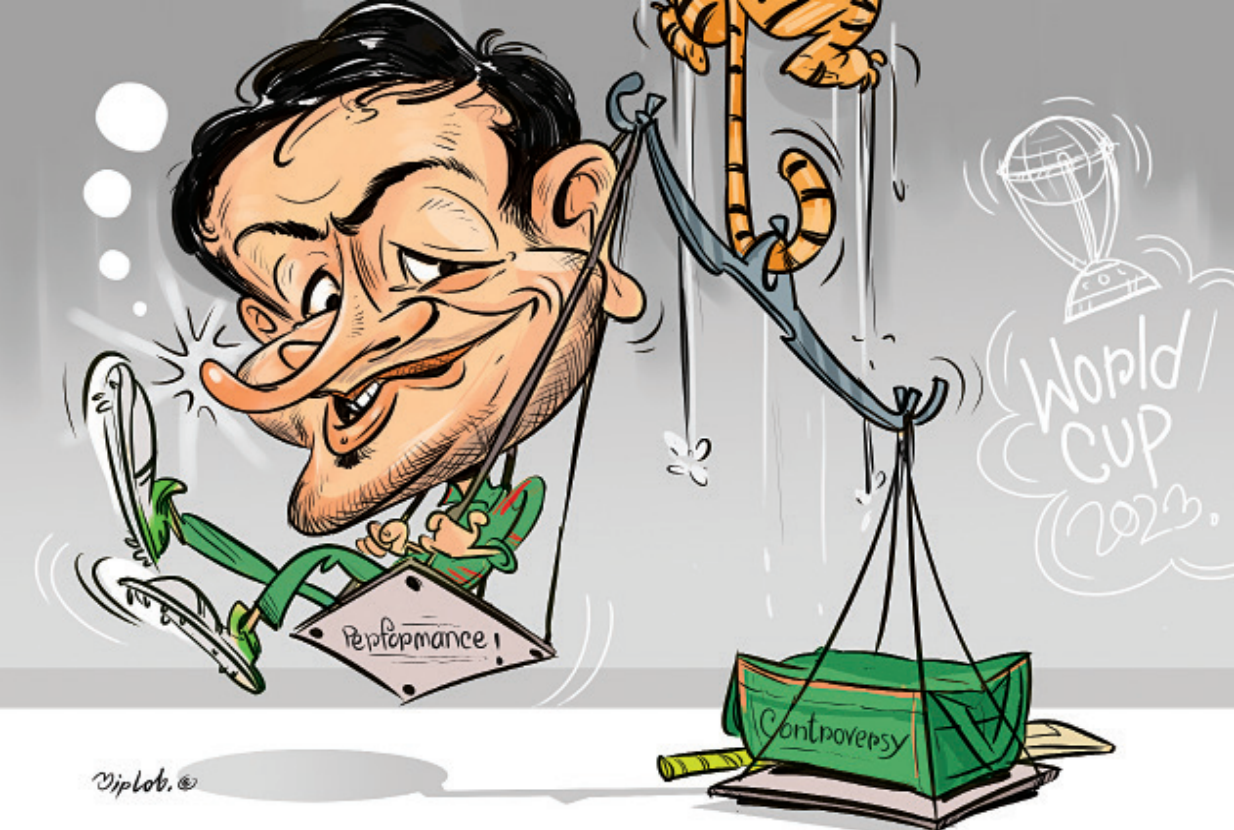
OCTOBER 28
His batting sessions didn't pay any dividends as he could make only five in Bangladesh's 87-run defeat to associates the Netherlands. Shakib faces the media in the post-match press conference for the first time in the tournament, accepting that pre-tournament shenanigans likely played a role in the poor performances.

OCTOBER 31
Shakib makes 43 with the bat in a scrappy innings, but the team lose comprehensively by seven wickets against Pakistan in Kolkata.

NOVEMBER 6
Shakib becomes the first captain in the history of international cricket to enforce a timed-out dismissal, sending back Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews in Delhi. Shakib also returns to form with the bat, hitting a scintillating 82 off 65 balls in a player-of-the-match performance, helping the Tigers end a six-match losing streak.

NOVEMBER 7, 2023
BCB informs that Shakib fractured his index finger while batting against Sri Lanka and has been ruled out from the match against Australia, effectively ending his foray in World Cups.

Daredevil Shakib leaves grey areas in WC 'farewell'



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ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh's most decorated cricketer Shakib Al Hasan may have just played his last-ever World Cup game in cricket's most-celebrated format. Shakib's possible end to competing in cricket's biggest event and how it ended, will however portray him as both a villain and a hero, much like throughout his career where he often courted controversy. He had played through pain in his final outing this World Cup and even as it ended with a flourish, there will also be disappointment.

The Bangladesh skipper fell prey to injury while batting against Sri Lanka on Monday and has been ruled out of the game against Australia, Bangladesh's final assignment in this World Cup.

Just as the 36-year-old had competed throughout his career, the end was certainly a bit crazy. Everything was a bit silly when he came out to bat in the seventh over with retribution in Sri Lanka players' minds effected by Angelo Mathews' Timed Out dismissal. Soon, having gotten a few runs under his belt, he heard something crack in his hand. Knowing that it was a finger injury that would eventually rule him out of the next game, he decided to tell his batting partner and the physio that he would keep going. His 65-ball 82 significantly improved Bangladesh's chances of making the ICC Champions Trophy as the Tigers leapfrogged

Sri Lanka to seventh position with a better run-rate.

The fire in his belly was once more in view too as Shakib said in post-match presentation that a riled-up Matthews and Sri Lanka helped to fire him up as well. The Matthews conundrum and how it played out in essence is what Shakib brings to the wider cricketing world. A daredevil act, for no-one in 146 years of international had triggered such a dismissal.

It required brevity but Shakib is not one to dwell on repercussions. He felt there was an advantage to be taken and he took it, no questions asked. While the cricket world will be debating the Matthews dismissal for some time, Shakib will not be paying heed. An introvert who makes extravagant remarks when he feels the need to, Shakib's desperation to win was there for all to see.

Shakib was criticised when Tamim Iqbal did not want to be part of the World Cup squad; criticised when amidst high expectations back home, Bangladesh's performance remained pretty dismal with batting-order going through frequent changes. Yet, he courted further controversy by leaving the team to work on his batting with his childhood mentor, Nazmul Abeden Fahim.

Possibly well aware that it was his last ODI World Cup, Shakib had been desperate. The way he batted on Monday was mesmerising, overcoming many deficiencies he faced during the tournament.

The wider cricketing world also knows about Bangladesh somewhat through Shakib's terrific achievements. In fact, he made his career through the ODI format, scoring 7570 runs and taking 317 wickets. But, as Bangladesh's most significant cricketing talent, the end also appears not quite fitting, both individually and around team's successes.

Bangladesh had a lot of expectations ahead of the World Cup but under Shakib's leadership, those did not materialise even though results had not gone preceding the marquee event either. His frequent trips abroad to inaugurate show-rooms or attend events also bring into question his preparation for the World Cup.

Despite his struggles, Shakib is still the Tigers' third-highest run-getter and second-highest wicket-taker in this World Cup, ahead of the last game. Yet, not playing the Australia game would hurt him as will not being able to reach the stratospheric feats he achieved in 2019 edition of the World Cup. Having possibly played his last World Cup game in ODI format, Shakib's end on a personal level maybe satisfactory but for Bangladesh as a team, nothing materialised. He had suggested in an interview before the World Cup that he would not captain the side even for a day after the World Cup. He captained reluctantly, gave what he could but from Bangladesh's context, a lot more was desired.

Crestfallen England aim to 'win and win well'

AGENCIES

England's title defence has not gone as planned but the reigning champions still have plenty to play for during their final two matches of the ongoing ICC World Cup. The defending champions will take on the Netherlands in their penultimate match of the tournament at the MCA International Stadium in Pune today.

With just one win from their opening seven matches, England are already out of contention for the semi-finals but they are now fighting for a top-eight finish to qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

The Netherlands, however, do still have an outside chance of finishing in the top four and will need to win their last two and have other results go their way to have any chance of sneaking into the semi-finals.

But a spot in the ICC Champions Trophy is surely also a prime motivation for the Dutch and a win over England here will put them one step closer to achieving this.

England sit at the bottom of the table, two points behind ninth-placed Netherlands.

England fielding coach Carl Hopkinson said on Tuesday that England have not been able to execute their plans under pressure in India.

Their star-studded batting lineup, which includes the likes of captain Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes and Joe Root, has managed just a single 200 plus total in the last four outings.



- ▶ The Netherlands are yet to win an ODI against England following six matches, three of which were World Cup encounters.
- ▶ The last time the two sides faced off in the World Cup, coinciding with their solitary meet in India, was back in 2011 in Nagpur where the Dutch suffered a six-wicket loss despite scoring 292 for six in 50 overs.

"I think cricket can be a game of - It's about executing under pressure, isn't it? Everybody knows that, and I think this team has been well known for doing that really, really well," Hopkinson said.

"It's an incredibly skillful team, a very talented team, but at key moments in certain situations, we haven't executed under pressure like we normally do."



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Tendulkar-inspired Zadrán stays true to word

AGENCIES

Ibrahim Zadrán became the first Afghanistan batter to score a World Cup hundred when he reached three figures against Australia in a group match in Mumbai yesterday.

During the innings break, the 21-year-old opener informed he had promised to his coaching staff before the match that he would bat like India great Sachin Tendulkar and score a century in the next three matches.

"I had a good chat with Sachin Tendulkar. He shared his experience and I said before the match that I will bat like Sachin Tendulkar. He gave me a lot of energy and confidence," said Zadrán.

Zadrán anchored the Afghan innings with an unbeaten 129 from 143 balls after the South Asian side won the toss and elected to bat. The 21-year-old Zadrán fifth hundred in the 50-overs format was studded with eight fours and three sixes.

He got to the landmark with a dicey single off fast bowler Josh Hazlewood that turned into two after a throw at the stumps was off target.

Ahead of the match, Afghanistan team received a huge boost on Tuesday as Tendulkar, in a laudable gesture, paid a visit and gave a pep talk at their training.

"I am feeling great to score Afghanistan's maiden hundred in the World Cup. I worked really hard for this tournament. I missed a hundred against Pakistan but made it today. I was talking to my coaching staff and I told them I have a feeling I will get a hundred in the next three matches," Zadrán added.

With Zadrán's ton, seven teams so far in the 10-team tournament -- barring Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands -- saw one of their openers hit three digits.



Opener Ibrahim Zadrán celebrates after scoring maiden World Cup hundred for Afghanistan during his side's ICC World Cup match against Australia at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. Zadrán anchored the Afghan innings with an unbeaten 129 from 143 balls and Rashid Khan smashed an unbeaten 35 off 18 balls to help the South Asian side post 291 for five.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Sacked SLC temporarily restored

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal quashed the sports minister's decision to sack the country's crisis-ridden cricket board and restored the expelled officials on Tuesday, pending a full hearing.

The court accepted a petition by board president Shammi Silva challenging minister Roshan Ranasinghe's move on Monday to dismiss the Sri Lanka Cricket board and appoint an interim committee.

"The restoring of the board is for two weeks, when the court will hear the case again," a court official said.