



‘SUPERB FESTIVAL’ beckons in unique T20 World Cup

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The world will take notice as the 2024 T20 World Cup, set to be played in USA and the West Indies, gets to the red carpet in what would be the very first cricket World Cup in the USA.

The USA will be playing their first World Cup in any format, and even though the tournament will only be in the USA for a short time with the majority of the action taking place in the West Indies, the challenges will be numerous for the newest co-hosts. However, there will also be opportunities for associates to showcase what they possess.

associate nations are coming up fast in this fast-paced format. Cricket analyst Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, a mentor to many of Bangladesh national team stars along with Bashar, feels that the tournament's associate sides have something unique to offer.

“What's great about this World Cup is that it's a 20-team tournament, and the fact it is logical has been proven by the associate nations since they are not lagging behind,” Fahim said, highlighting that “Ireland, Netherlands and Canada are coming at us fast”.

The competitiveness is something greatly triggered by the format

performance is critical.

“It's a superb festival and people from all around the world would come to watch. It would have an influence on world peace and harmony,” Fahim added.

Both Bashar and Fahim pointed out that USA's performance have a crucial part to play in cricket's exposure in the country.

“If their [USA's] performance is above average even if they do not make the second round, it will keep cricket alive. If they make second round, that kind of performance would be very required for getting funding, popularising the sport.



USA's historic T20I series victory over Bangladesh just ahead of the tournament would help get the sparks flying.

As with any World Cup, there will be something unique to look forward to, and experts from Bangladesh believe that this event will have something to offer in terms of greater cultural diversity, team competitiveness, host teams' performance, and cricket's exposure to the USA market.

Modern T20 is a game of batters and runs. Speaking to former national selector Habibul Bashar, now head of operation of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) women's cricket, he focused on wickets having a great impact.

“This world cup is a bit unique since it's being hosted by a non-Test playing country and a Test-playing country. It's being played in conditions in USA that are unknown to everyone. How the tournament will go will depend on the conditions and the wickets,” Bashar said.

The game of T20 has found exposure in different parts of the world and the

itself. The Netherlands, for instance, delivered a blow in a warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka.

Bashar believed that T20 cricket has availed opportunities to players from associate nations to upskill and challenge more established counterparts, adding Bangladesh's challenge too would be great in the Group D they were placed in.

“Our group is very open. Netherlands beat South Africa and Bangladesh in the ODI World Cup last year and their players regularly perform well in county cricket. They are experienced than many in the World Cup. They are always playing, same in the case with Ireland players who are not bad in T20s as they play in Vitality Blast and been playing power cricket,” Bashar highlighted.

With teams like South Africa and Sri Lanka in Group D, alongside Bangladesh, Nepal and Netherlands, it could make for the most exciting group phase in the entire World Cup.

Cricket's flavour finding a place in USA would help expose the game to a wider audience and the new co-hosts'

“There is a lot of depth in sports that have major foothold in USA. It will be a really difficult thing for cricket to make a space of their own. Cricket is a comparatively complicated game. There is no local interest as such. It will be difficult,” Fahim adds.

For Bangladesh too, it would be a unique opportunity to find themselves in a format where the associates challenge for further identity in cricket's latest World Cup that is certainly to add new flavours to the palette.

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MILESTONES IN SIGHT

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and India captain Rohit Sharma are set to make their ninth appearance in the ICC T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies, becoming the only cricketers to take part in every edition of the tournament. After Shakib and Rohit, West Indies' Chris Gayle and Dwayne Bravo, and Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah have taken part in the greatest number of T20 World Cups, as quartet appeared in the first seven editions of the tournament.



India captain Rohit Sharma holds the record of playing the most number of matches in the ICC T20 World Cup, having appeared in 39 games in eight editions. Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan is hot on Rohit's heels, as the all-rounder has played 36 matches in eight T20 World Cup appearances. Australia's David Warner is third in the list amongst active cricketers, having played 34 games in the tournament.

India superstar Virat Kohli tops the list for the most runs in T20 World Cups, accounting for 1141 runs in five editions. He was the highest run-getter in the 319 runs in six matches – the highest by any batter in World Cup. Another active player on this elite list is Kohli's teammate and India captain, Rohit. The opening batter is not very far behind Kohli, sitting in fourth spot with 963 runs. A series of explosive innings from him could propel him to a higher rank on this list.

Among the top five wicket-takers, which mainly consists of four spin-bowling experts, Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Shakib holds a substantial lead. He is the sole active player within this elite group and three more scalps will take his tally to a remarkable 50 T20 World Cup wickets.

RECORDS ON THE BRINK OF BREAKING

Virat Kohli has scored 103 fours in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and is just behind Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardena's 111 fours.

With 47- and 50-ball centuries, Chis Gayle currently holds the top two spots for the fastest century in the Men's T20 World Cup. With the expanded teams in this edition and the high strike-rates witnessed already this year, expect this record to be broken in this edition.

AB de Villiers currently sits at the top of the table for most catches as a fielder in the Men's T20 World Cup with 23 catches to his name. David Warner is next on the list with 21 catches.

Pat Cummins led Australia to history last year when they won the ICC Test Championship and ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2023. In the Caribbean this year they have the opportunity to become the first team in history to hold the ICC Trophies in all three formats of the game at the same time if they manage to win the 2024 T20 World Cup.

TOURNAMENT'S KEY INFO

The ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup will feature a record number of teams, with 20 different sides represented in a tournament. The 20 teams are separated into four groups of five for the first stage of the event, with each team playing a minimum of four matches against their other group members during that initial group stage.



The top two sides from each group then progress to the Super 8s stage of the event, with the bottom three teams from each group eliminated.

The remaining 8 teams are then split into another two groups during the Super 8s phase, with a total of four teams progressing to semis. The semi-finals will be played out between the top two teams from each Super 8s group, with the winners then progressing to the one-off final in Barbados on June 29.

41 matches will be played in the Caribbean across six different nations, with semi-finals in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, before the title decider scheduled to be played in Barbados on June 29. Any match that finishes in a tie will see a Super Over be played and if the Super Over is a tie, subsequent Super Overs will be played until there is a winner. There is also additional time available to ensure the completion of the semi-final and final.