

SPORT

Practice Test begins today

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As part of the preparations for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe the Bangladesh national cricketers will play a three-day practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, starting from today.

Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiquir Rahim will lead one team and another will be led by his deputy Tamim Iqbal.

Veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak will not be available for the practice match as he has been advised to take three weeks off due to a right hamstring injury he suffered during practice. Razzak was not in contention for the three-match Test series anyway as the team think-tank's focus will be on young leg-spinner Jubair Hossain, who might make his international debut during the series.

There is no ulterior motive behind the match as it was arranged for the sole purpose of getting the players some much needed practice in the longer-version of the game, ahead of their upcoming international Test match on October 25.

Light sentence could spark 'crisis of trust'

AFP, Pretoria

Prosecutors fought a rear-guard action to ensure Oscar Pistorius is jailed for unlawfully killing his girlfriend, warning Wednesday that justice was also on trial in the eyes of the South African public.

Amid defence calls for Pistorius to be punished with community service, state prosecutor Gerrie Nel said if the Paralympian star sprinter goes free the court risks ruining the reputation of the country's legal system.

"If the court sentence is too light, and society loses trust in the court, they will take the law into their own hands," said Nel. "That's what the court has to guard against."

Nel's comments came amid a row over courtroom revelations that Pistorius paid "blood money" to the family of his slain girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. He also hammered defence witness and probation officer Annette Vergeer on her apparent slap-dash report on the state of South Africa's prisons.

Cousin feels it's end of the world

AFP, Pretoria

Reeva Steenkamp's cousin tearfully remembered an idyllic childhood spent with the law graduate and model, painfully recalling "the end of the world" when Oscar Pistorius shot her dead.

Kim Martin told the South African judge -- now weighing Pistorius's punishment for unlawfully killing Steenkamp -- of a caring and "fun-loving child" who would become the face of a tragedy that shocked the world.

Martin recalled how Reeva was the first baby she ever held, and of a joyful childhood filled with horse-riding and caring for injured animals.

Martin said the young Steenkamp once cared for a paralysed poodle named Jade, who she carried around, serving as its "legs".



Bangladesh's Lipi Akhter (2nd from R) jumps for joy after she earned a penalty minutes after she had come off the bench during the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifier against Jordan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Sanjida Akhter (not in picture) converted the spot kick to give the hosts an unlikely victory.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh stun Jordan

SPORTS REPORTER



The reactions said it all. The contrasting emotions in the two camps, at the end of Bangladesh's stunning 1-0 victory against Jordan in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, were too palpable. As the Bangladeshi girls were running in ecstasy, the Jordanians buried their heads into their hands; some even broke down in tears.

Neither Jordan's head coach nor the team manager turned up for the post-match press briefing, they rather sent assistant coach Haya MA Qatami to do the job. Qatami kept herself confined to monosyllabic answers, terming the result as a 'surprise', labelling Bangladesh as a 'good' team while refusing to comment on her own team's performance.

It was indeed a real upset. The odds were stacked heavily in favour of the Jordanian lasses, whose senior side are ranked 60 places above Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings. The Jordanians, who are taking these

qualifiers as a launching pad ahead of hosting the U-17 Women's World Cup in 2017, came here on the back of a two months' training in Egypt and Germany where they played a number of practice matches.

On the other hand, Bangladesh had 50 days of training and played four practice matches against the women's national team and Narayanganj women's team. But the inequality in rankings or training was hardly on display as the hosts ruled the roost from the beginning.

The skill-set of Golam Rabbani Choton's charges more than compensated for their physical inferiority compared to the stocky and tall Jordanian girls.

Bangladesh enjoyed possession for most of the time, but despite getting through to the final third on a number of occasions, they kept failing to see success. However, all that changed in a moment's brilliance from substitute Lipi Akhter, who came off the bench in the 66th minute and won a penalty three minutes later as she was pulled down inside the box after having dribbled past two defenders. Striker Sanjida Akhter, who was a constant threat throughout the

match, blasted the ball at the back of the net, giving Jordanian 'keeper Naser Albustanji little chance to stop it.

"I was not nervous while taking the [spot] kick. I chose the same side [right side of the goalkeeper] as I did during practice," said the goal-scorer, who won the Bangamata Gold Cup earlier this year with the Kalshindur Primary School of Mymensingh.

The one goal was enough for the hosts to record a deserved, albeit surprising, victory that might prove to be a shot in the arm ahead of Friday's match against the United Arab Emirates, who were handed a 9-0 drubbing by favourites Iran in the opening match earlier in the day.

Iran's striking duo Fatemeh Ghasemi and Fatemeh Gheraeli scored four goals apiece in the one-way traffic. The Iranians dictated terms so much that their goalkeeper Mobina Khodadadi didn't have to touch the ball a single time during the entire 90 minutes. Mobina's opposite number Dalal Abdulla Farhan Baashir, on the other hand, was the busiest player, making a number of good saves apart from collecting the ball from the back of the net nine times.

'Tests will be better'

AFP, Sharjah

Pakistan's head coach Waqar Younis on Wednesday raised hopes his team will fare better in the upcoming Tests against Australia after suffering a 3-0 whitewash in the recent one-dayers.

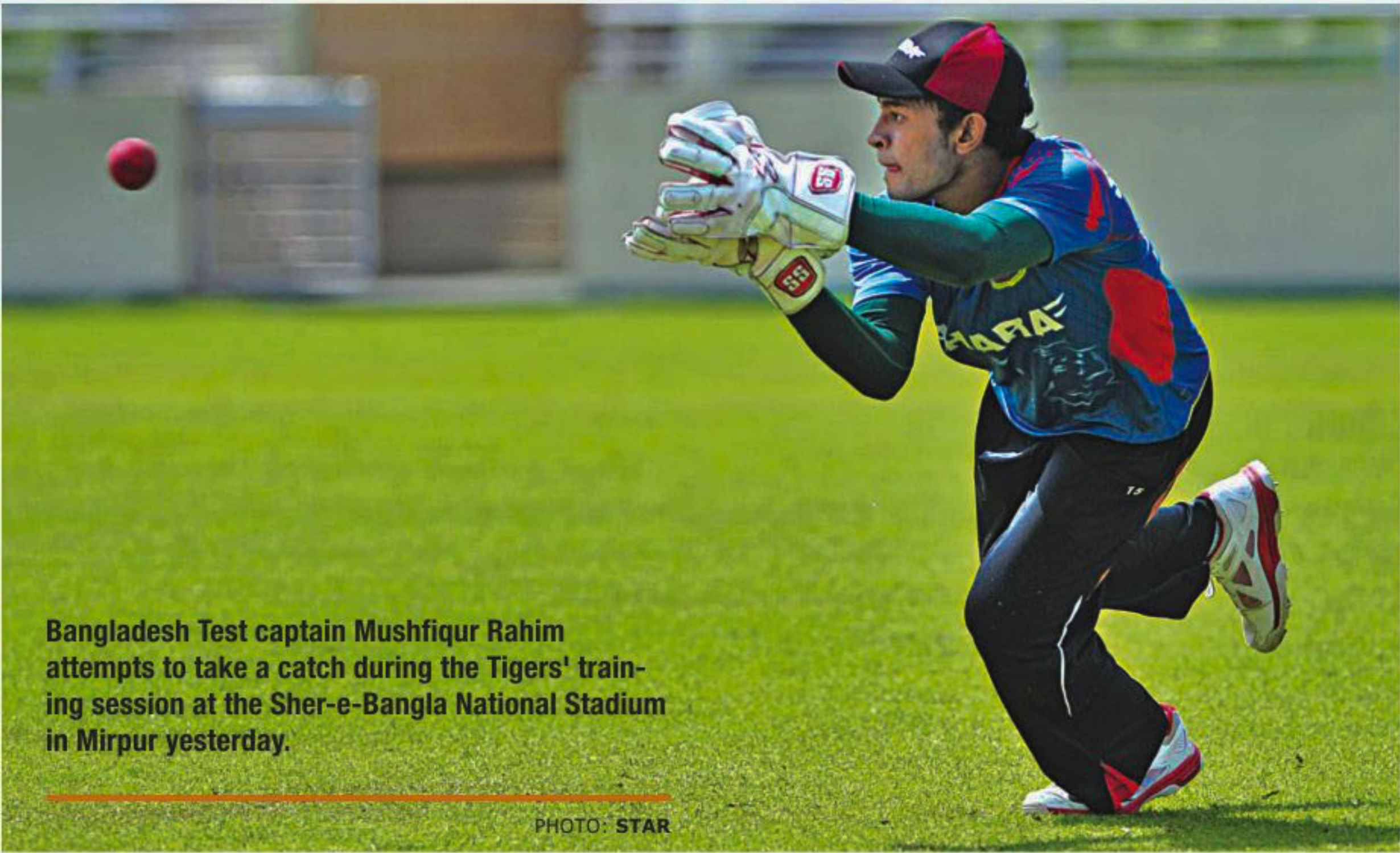
The countries are now preparing for a two-match Test series which starts with the first Test in Dubai from October 22, and the 42-year-old Waqar, appointed in May this year, said good things will come in the five-day format.

"I am hoping for something good to happen in the Tests," Waqar told AFP. "It's a different ball game and we have experience back in the side with Younis Khan and Azhar Ali, so I am hoping that we start delivering now."

Pakistan face another tough challenge against an Australia side they have not beaten since a 1-0 win at home in 1994, when Waqar took seven wickets in the victory in Karachi.

After that, Pakistan lost 13 straight Tests against the Australians -- three in 1999 in Australia, three on neutral ground in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates in 2002, three each in Australia in 2004 and 2010 and then when they clashed at Lord's in 2010.

They did recover to win in Leeds later that summer, but Waqar admitted Australia are tough to beat.



Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiquir Rahim attempts to take a catch during the Tigers' training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bowling test secrecy 'ridiculous'

CRICINFO



The ICC's recent concerted campaign against illegal actions has brought it into a position of significant professional disagreement with the agency long involved in its tests.

Experts at the University of Western Australia (UWA), whom the ICC relied upon for the last 20 years to develop models and protocols to test illegal bowling actions, have criticised what they call the "ridiculous" secrecy surrounding the new procedures and say they have raised doubts over the reliability of the recent tests that have seen several bowlers suspended from various levels of the game.

The dispute provides a disturbing

backdrop to the sudden toughened approach towards the monitoring of potentially illegal actions by the ICC only a few months before the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

As new ICC testing centres are rolled out in Brisbane, Cardiff and Chennai, UWA biomechanists have branded the ICC's approach as "extraordinary" and have expressed concerns that the testing could be carried out by relatively inexperienced staff with limited training.

The result, they fear, is that the recent tests may be based on unreliable evidence. Jacqueline Alderson, an associate professor in biomechanics at UWA, suggests that her team is "astounded" by the limited opportunities for peer-to-peer reviews of the model used to measure elbow extensions, and

by a general lack of information provided to the home boards or the testing centres carrying out the work.

The ICC, however, insists that it now has a system in place that is more scientifically advanced than the previous methods.

UWA expressed concerns about the monitoring of Ajmal's action after it had cleared the bowler in a previous assessment in 2009. Marlon Samuels is another player whose action has been an issue. He was cleared by the ICC to bowl deliveries falling under a certain speed, a decision the UWA now presents as flawed.

One of the key areas of mistrust concerns the methodology used to place markers on the bowlers' bodies to determine whether a delivery is illegal.

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