

SPORT

DHAKA SATURDAY JANUARY 15, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Ex-WC ref guilty of drug smuggling

Former World Cup referee Byron Moreno pleaded guilty Thursday to heroin smuggling charges, the US attorney's office said. Ecuador's Moreno, who is being held without bail, admitted one count of heroin smuggling and faces more than five years in prison under federal sentencing guidelines. Moreno, 41, gained notoriety after officiating a 2002 World Cup match between Italy and hosts South Korea. Moreno was arrested last September at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport after arriving on a commercial flight from Ecuador with bags of heroin attached to his body, US



Rahmatganj's African recruits Uche Felix(L) and Idris Kasirye rejoice their victory over leaders Mohammedan Sporting club in the Bangladesh League yesterday. A strike from each on either side of the break ensured Rahmatganj a famous victory at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

Will this be the final 15?

BISHWAJIT ROY and MOHAMMAD ISAM

In their heydays, Rafiqul Alam, Akram Khan and Zaheed Razzaque Masum were batsmen who thrived in tough conditions and usually, they did so with smiles on their faces. Today the three form the national selection committee and the trio is showing a similar demeanour when faced with another tricky situation.

The selection of the 15-member World Cup team is certainly not an easy deal at all. One can't make these calls at the snap of a finger because refreshingly, there are a number of performers who are providing ample food of thought for the panel led by Rafiqul Alam.

So why has it become so difficult? The answer is that the selectors have to shape a squad that can win the matches, as opposed to the previous campaigns. They also have to consider the opponents before selecting the team. Nowadays, the Tigers are not playing for any respectable result; rather they always go for a win no matter who their opponents are.

That's why the question is all round before the final selection whether Shahriar Nafees would be in the team, or will Mohammad Ashraful get the chance only because of his experience. The focus, inexplicably, is also on Alok Kapali who is being tagged as the people's choice.

Questions are unrelenting and the next one comes from within the side that has been performing over the last two years. Rokibul Hasan and Junaed Siddiqui, reportedly the coach's favourite players, have not impressed in their recent performances and their big match ability has also come under the spotlight.

So definitely it would be a nerve-wrecking discussion when the selectors make the 15-member team from

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POINTS TO PONDER

• *Shahriar Nafees warrants a place through his weight of runs in the Premier League and fine showing against New Zealand.*

• *Mohammad Ashraful is set to be picked based on his experience alone, and not performance.*

• *Sohrawardi Shuvo has looked ordinary with the ball and has done little with the bat to guarantee a place.*

THE CHOSEN 15

Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Junaed Siddiqui, Rokibul Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Naeem Islam, Mahmudullah Riyad, Abdur Razzak, Shafiul Islam, Rubel Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Jahurul Islam, Shahriar Nafees, Mohammad Ashraful.

India's WC squad on Jan 17

PTI, Mumbai

The final 15-member Indian squad for the forthcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in the sub-continent will be picked by the national senior selection panel on January 17.

"The selection committee is to pick the World Cup squad on the 17th at Chennai," a cricket board source said on Friday.

The selection panel, with Krishnamachari Srikanth at the helm, has picked a preliminary squad of 30 members for the mega

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R'ganj stun MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS pulled off the season's second upset when they crushed Mohammedan SC 2-0 in their Bangladesh League encounter at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Ghanaian striker Idris Kasirye put the old Dhaka outfit in front on the half-hour mark before Nigerian hitman Onewkore Uche Felix sealed the match four minutes into the second half to stun the illustrious opponents after their neighbouring Farashganj SC upset holders Abahani last week.

But it was not as if the Black and Whites had fallen to Rahmatganj for the first time in the Bangladesh League. Mohammedan had suffered a single-goal defeat to the same opponents in the second edition of the league and were held to a 1-1 draw in the inaugural edition but they easily saw off Rahmatganj in both meetings last season.

Despite the first loss in four matches, Mohammedan jointly lead the table with Sheikh Russel on nine points although the latter has played a match less than Mohammedan. On the other hand Rahmatganj with their second win in four matches joined holders Abahani on seven points each.

Rahmatganj, who wore a tag of giant-killers after beating Abahani 2-1 in the opener of the second edition league and

Muktijoddha Sangsad 5-1 in the last season, came into the game with a hope of upsetting the giants through counter-attack and left the field with 100 percent satisfaction.

Mohammedan put up better performance compared to their previous three games but the failure of their marksmen cost them dearly and eventually they could not overcome last hurdle of goalkeeper Arifuzzaman Himel, who denied them several times to keep Rahmatganj in the game.

Mohammedan came close twice to an opener through combined attacks but Rahmatganj took the lead against the run of play when Idris, set by Felix, stepped into the danger zone and dodged past defender Ramjan Ali Mollah to make space on his left to drive a grounder past goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury Titu in the 33rd minute.

Mohammedan came close to equalizing the margin in the stoppage time of the first half but goalkeeper Himel denied a close-range effort from Akbar Hossain Ridon.

After the resumption, Rahmatganj silenced Mohammedan in the 49th minute when Felix availed a faulty clearance of defender Arafat Ali Rony and the Nigerian striker let loose a powerful shot from about 25-yards to find the top-right corner of the net.

After going down, the Black and Whites pressed hard on Rahmatganj's backline and split it on a few occasion but they could not break the last wall of the goalkeeper, who foiled at least four clear chances in the second half.

Siddikur loses lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman relinquished his lead in the inaugural Gujarat Kensville Challenge to India's Gaganjeet Bhullar after a dismal second round yesterday.

Siddikur followed up his superb first round effort of 67 with a two over par 74 to trail Bhullar by one shot as they headed for the third round.

Bhullar posted a two under par 70 in this round, with birdies at the third, sixth and 18th holes.

Three players -- English pair Daniel Denison and Matt Ford and India's Abhishek Jha were a shot further behind at two under par at the Kensville Golf Club in Ahmedabad, which was designed by three-time European Tour champion Jeev Milkha Singh.

Austria's Florian Praegant reached four under after three holes of his second round, birdieing the first after his three under par 69 on the first day.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'India win changed mentality'

Habibul Bashar, one of the country's most prominent cricketers, played in the 2003 and 2007 World Cups. He recalls the two events in a chat to The Daily Star Sport

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2003 World Cup?

Habibul Bashar (HB): It was a different feeling, especially since I did not get the chance to play in the previous World Cup in 1999. I was obviously very happy. It's a dream for any cricketer to play in the World Cup, because it only comes around once every four years.

DSS: How was the team atmosphere in South Africa?

HB: We started well. We played a few practice matches to get acclimatised to South African conditions. But in the first match we lost to Canada, and from there the problems started. And what usually happens is that when you are playing badly, the atmosphere in the dressing room also suffers.

Losing to Canada in the first match was a shock and a big setback for us. We could not come back from that.

DSS: How was the 2007 World Cup for you, especially as you were the captain?

HB: It was a different kind of experience for me, as I was captain in that World Cup. We



HABIBUL BASHAR

won a few matches before the World Cup. We defeated New Zealand in one of the practice matches. That lifted our tempo before the World Cup because New Zealand were quite a strong team in 2007 and were thought to be genuine title contenders. We were a good team even before that victory, but the result gave us a lot of belief.

Then we beat India in our opening game, and to qualify for the Super Eights after the victory over Bermuda it was fantastic.

DSS: What is your sweetest memory of the 2007 World Cup?

HB: The sweetest memory was obviously the victory against India in the first match. In 2007, the format was a bit different, because only two teams would qualify from the group. If we lost that match, then for us the World Cup, after a wait of four years, would have been over in a week. That win changed our mentality, and made the world see us in a different way.

DSS: What is your expectation of the 2011

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Gazi, DOHS dominate

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Tank and Old DOHS ambled to easy wins while Cricket Coaching School (CCS) had to wait till the final ball to confirm a 13-run win over Surjo Tarun in the Premier Cricket League yesterday.

Though all three games were curtailed due to heavy early morning fog, the smaller teams -- Orient Sporting Club, BKSP and Surjo Tarun -- failed to fashion an upset or even make an impression. Gazi Tank beat Orient by nine wickets while Old DOHS did one better, crushing BKSP by 10 wickets.

GAZI TANK-ORIENT

The match started at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium almost at noon and was reduced to 33 overs a side. But Orient only posed a modest total, 143-9, as their top-order didn't latch on after getting set.

Opener Mazhar Uddin and Arif Reza, playing in their first game, made 31 and 35 respectively but once the pair fell within the 22nd over (72 for three), it was hard for the Old Dhaka outfit to push for a big score.

Leg-spinner Sabbir Rahman and skipper Naeem Islam took three wickets each, and the Gazi Tank batsmen took only 25.5 overs to reach the target with nine wickets in hand.

Their opening pair of Mithun Ali and Nasir Hossain attacked from the onset and both reached half-centuries, the wicketkeeper-batsman making 58 off 57 balls and the all-rounder remaining

unbeaten on 68 off 72 balls.

BKSP-DOHS

Just like their previous round's match against Surjo Tarun, the Old DOHS openers took little time to reach a small target, this time BKSP being their victim at the Fatullah Stadium.

Nasir Jamshed, the Pakistani opener, and Javed Omar shared an undefeated 138-run stand in only 21.4 overs. The foreign recruit made 80 off 57 balls with the help of seven boundaries and five sixes while the veteran Javed stuck around for 53 runs with the help of eight boundaries.

Earlier, Taskin Ahmed and Mehrab Hossain took three wickets each to restrict the BKSP score to 133 runs in 32.2 overs.

CCS-SURJOTARUN

A fine 56 off 55 balls (with the help of five boundaries and two sixes) by Shahbaz Butt ensured CCS reached a competitive 132 all out in 28.1 overs in the 31-overs-a-side game at the BKSP.

Surjo Tarun made a slow start, reaching 21 runs in the first ten overs, losing Imtiaz Hossain and Mizanur Rahman.

Junaed Siddiqui hit 30 off 55 balls with the help of just a single boundary and if it hadn't been for Dhiman Ghosh's unbeaten 26 off 20 balls with the help of three boundaries, the Surjo Tarun total would have been much less than their eventual 119-9 in 31 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

ORIENT: 143-9 in 50 overs (Arif 35, Mazhar 31; SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia's new inclusion Aaron Finch pulls one during his match-winning knock of unbeaten half-century in the second Twenty20 match against England at the MCG yesterday.

Australia snap losing streak

AFP, Melbourne

Australia finally had something to celebrate after recording an unlikely four-run win over England in the second Twenty20 international at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday.

After Australia battled to 147-7 thanks to an unbeaten half-century by second-gamer Aaron Finch, England looked set to cruise to victory when they were 58-0 after six overs, with opener Ian Bell on song.

However, England's quest to extend their record unbeaten T20 streak to nine matches, having defeated Australia on the last ball of Wednesday's game in Adelaide, came unstuck as their middle order failed to deliver.

As was the case in Australia's lone win during the Ashes series, in the third Test at the WACA Ground, it was paceman Mitchell Johnson (3-29) who turned the match on its head.

Johnson claimed the vital wicket of Bell (39) when the right-hander dragged a ball onto his stumps in the seventh over to end an opening

stand of 60.

The left-hander then followed up by having the dangerous Kevin Pietersen caught for one three balls later.

Johnson also removed the dangerous Eoin Morgan for 14, while Shane Watson scored up his brilliant effort in Wednesday's match with a frugal 2-17 from four overs.

With 13 runs needed off the last three balls from Brett Lee, young England all-rounder Chris Woakes threatened to repeat his heroics on Wednesday when he lofted the pace-man into the stands to make it seven needed from two balls.

But Lee got the job done as Australia snapped a run of five successive losses in T20 internationals.

Man of the match Finch, in just his second international, hit 53 not out from 33 balls in a crucial performance with the bat for the home side.

Australia side got off to a quick start and were 57-1 after six overs, but lost 4-17 as Graeme Swann and Michael Yardy wreaked havoc, the two English spinners recording identical figures of 2-19 from their four overs.

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