

Shabaash soft tennis

Sports Reporter

With the twelfth Asian Games a week old and Bangladesh's kitty already quite heavy with diverse failures, representatives of a hitherto scrapped discipline, soft tennis, left Dhaka yesterday for the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

Ministry of Youth and Sports had earlier dropped the novel sport cutting down Bangladesh's representation from nine to eight in Asia's paramount sporting contest bracing for a closing on October 16.

However, ministry officials could not confirm whether the all five players of the all female team who apparently persuaded the concerned authorities to revert the decision, could catch the plane.

Soft tennis made its mark more as a controversial issue than a sport of any worth only recently after the Bangladesh Olympic Association proposed its name for approval much to the surprise of country's sports lovers.

Not only soft tennis is completely Greek to the sports buffs, there is also no federation or governing body of any sort here.

A five-member interim body comprising highly placed BOA officials, has been instrumental in entering the discipline in the Asiad contingent. Their covert manipulations in tandem with the Asian Soft Tennis Association, which has reportedly forwarded funds for Bangladesh representation just to ensure the quorum in the Asiad, came into light after a section of press questioned the logic of accepting an offer unlikely to serve any purpose for the country.

The BOA officials, who have been mysteriously tight lipped over a raging debate washed their hands off in the face of press bashing, which led to the scrapping of the discipline, leaving the tourney players in the lurch.

The five players then took to the street in the literal sense doing everything from reportedly involving a Japanese NGO to pleading daily with the Minister for Sports to overturn the decision of no go.

In a country where the will for the welfare of the people is championed only on the stages of the pompous pretence of the concerned officials not to left go a team to take part in soft tennis always seemed to be revoked and the revelation from none other than the State Minister for youth and sports yesterday proved once again there are more things in the BOA NSC Sports Ministry cycle than are dreamt of in the philosophy of ordinary people.

Div II hockey

Sports Reporter

A one-all draw with Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha in the last group engagement at the Hockey Stadium yesterday earned Rakim Sangha a place in the Green Delta Second Division super league.

Rakim Sangha, whose collection stands at 10 from four matches and who top their respective group, shot into the lead in the 18th minute through a field goal from Rahmat.

Mukta Bihanga, who have seven points from three outings and are poised to join the current group leaders in the super league, evened the score 13 minutes from time through Abul Kalam Azad, who finished a well-orchestrated move from close.

The second match of the day saw Shantinagar, by virtue of a 28th minute field goal from Zilani, register their first victory in the league.

Blessing in guise for ROK

Sports Reporter

HIROSHIMA, Oct 8: South Korea's shock defeat by Kuwait means they have avoided any chance of a game they do not want against Japan in the quarter-finals of the Asian Games soccer, reports AFP.

But Japan must still secure their first win on Sunday to join their South Korean rivals in the next stage of the competition.

Sunday's final group matches will see nine teams competing for the remaining four places in the next stage.

Japan's Group D is the most open. All four teams - the hosts plus leaders United Arab Emirates, Qatar and bottom team Burma - could take the two places.

Ilkoca's side must win to stay in the contest. "We are still confident, we have been getting better with every match," said the Brazilian coach whose job has come under threat after Japan managed only two draws in their first games.

As the United Arab Emirates need only a point from their game against Qatar to get through, the best Japan could hope for would be second place in the group. If South Korea had taken top spot in Group C the bitter rivals would have to play in the quarter-finals next week.

Bank, BU split points

Sports Reporter



The traditional third force of domestic circuit, Brothers Union, fumbled again in their return leg campaign when Agrani Bank forced them to a goalless draw in the lone Star Premier Division football league encounter at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The draw dropped the Gopibagh outfit further astern from the league race and they are now trailing the league leaders Abahani Krira Chakra by three points at 19 from 14 matches. Abahani, who have 22 points from 13 engagements, will meet start-studded Muktiyoddha Sangsad in a

certainly an improvement for the men in orange, who have now gone without a win against the bankers for two years. In the day's second match under floodlights, Brothers Union came close to scoring on three occasions in an entertaining first half.

Biplob, who scored three goals in the last two matches, found his 22nd minute header bounce off the woodwork while Ranjan's scorching left-footer as brilliantly fisted away by a diving Bank custodian Shimul for a corner six minutes later.

Winger Ranjan was in the thick of action again in the 35th minute but shot wide with only the goalie to beat.

Agrani Bank, who hit the

superior opponents twice in the half.

In the very eighth minute of the proceedings, Badal shot wide from a goalmouth melee and Ripon failed to tap the ball home from a Badal minus 17 minutes later.

It was the fifth successive draw for Agrani Bank in the return leg and their tally now stands at 12 points from 14 matches.

In the first match of the day, Ujjal struck both the goals in East End's 2-0 victory over lowly Muslim Institute, who have already confirmed their relegation from the Star First Division football league.

After a barren first half, Ujjal opened the winners' account in the 47th minute shooting from close and sealed the fate of the match in the 57th minute with a first time powerful shot from outside the box.

With this win East End raised their collection to 15 points from as many matches while Muslim remained at the bottom of the table with 4 points from 15 outings.

Away at the Mirpur Stadium, Dhaka Wanderers shared points in a 1-1 draw with Shantinagar.

Chanchal shot Shantinagar into the lead in the 84th minute while Wanderers' Nepalese recruit Narendra Shrestha restored parity three minutes away from the long whistle.

TODAY'S MATCHES
Rahmatganj MFS vs Farashganj 4:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)
Abahani KC vs Muktiyoddha 6:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Eves h'ball from Oct 28

The national junior (under-19) women's handball competition will begin on October 28 at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex, reports UNB.

The four-day competition has been organised by Bangladesh Women Sports Federation in cooperation with Bangladesh Handball Federation.

Interested district sports associations, other organisations and universities have been requested to send their entry before 5 pm on October 22.

AB Bank TT

Sports Reporter

Brothers Union suffered their third successive defeat in the AB Bank metropolis table tennis league yesterday when they went down to Armanitola Jubo Sangha 1-3 at the Dhanmondi gymnasium.

Brothers, who made a flying start to this year's league winning eight matches on a trot before Wari Juniors ended their unbeaten run, were at the receiving end from the very onset with Armanitola's Sohail and Happy winning the first two matches. Badal beat Mahid to revive Brothers' hopes but Happy made sure that the encounter didn't carry over to a fifth singles.

While the Gopibagh outfit seemed to have lost the habit of winning, defending champions Bangladesh Biman and Inter Sports Club raced to their eleventh consecutive victories - 3-0 rout of Wari Juniors and Armanitola Juniors respectively.

Wari Club were the other winners of the day, posting a 3-1 victory over Swamibagh TTS.

Brothers' paddlers, unlike their male counterparts, finished the day on the winners' end of the table when they easily took care of Swamibagh Girls 3-0 in one of the three matches billed for the opening day of the women's league.

Armanitola Jubo Sangha followed the suit of their male teammates with a 3-0 triumph over Mitai Club while the day's other winners were paddlers from Dhaka Mariners who etched a 3-1 victory over Swamibagh TTS.

Eight teams are taking part in the league.

Dhaka Club snooker starts today

Sports Reporter

National number two Adrian Gonsalves of Chittagong Catholic Club will take on A Chowdhury of Officers Club in the opening match of the seven team Dhaka Club President's Cup snooker championship at the Club billiards room today.

Twenty best-of-seven frames preliminary round matches are also scheduled for the inaugural day of the meet, to be played in four daily sessions with the first beginning from 10 am.

Div I chess begins Nov 4

The metropolis First Division chess league '94, organised by the Bangladesh Chess Federation, will begin on November 4 at the chess room of National Sports Council, reports UNB.

The Federation, in a press release, has requested all the interested clubs to complete registration formalities of the players and send the entries by November 1.

Pakistan to miss star defender in Asiad hockey

HIROSHIMA, Oct 8: Pakistan's star defender Naveed Alam will miss the Asian Games men's hockey semifinals after earning two yellow cards against Malaysia here today, reports AFP.

Alam was sent off twice by Dutch umpire Floris Idenberg for dangerous play, and was automatically suspended for the next match.

Pakistan, looking for an eighth Asiad title in 10 competitions, entered the semifinals with an all-win record from Group A of the Preliminary League.

Alam is the second player in the tournament to be suspended for a match.

On Tuesday, Indian captain Jude Felix was shown a red card for hitting Bangladesh's Zahid Hossain on the forehead with a raised stick.



India's Dhanraj Pillay (C) lunges for the ball as China's Hui Feng Wang chases during their men's hockey match at the 12th Asian Games in Hiroshima on Oct 7. India defeated China 3-0. —AFP photo

Vintage Malik upsets Aussie applecart



RWAWALPINDI, Oct 8: An imperious, unbeaten 155 by Pakistan captain Salim Malik frustrated Australia's hopes of victory on the fourth day of the second Test on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Forced to follow on 261 runs in arrears, Malik led the assault on the Australian bowling by hitting 27 boundaries as Pakistan reached 324 for two by the close, a lead of 63.

Malik shared a 148-run partnership with in-form opener Saeed Anwar to steer Pakistan out of trouble. He

then added another 97 runs in an unbroken stand with Aamir Sohail to ensure Australia would have to bat again.

Anwar made 75 and Sohail, whose innings was interrupted when he was forced to retire hurt after being hit in the mouth by a ball from Mark Waugh, finished the day unbeaten on 72.

Waugh claimed the only two wickets to fall, having Zahid Fazal caught by wicketkeeper Ian Healy after scoring only one, and then dismissing Anwar in similar fashion with the first ball after tea.

But the day belonged to Malik. Dropped by opposing

captain Mark Taylor in the slips when he had scored 20, Malik went on to hit 76 of his first 100 runs in boundaries.

Altogether he batted 259 minutes and faced 204 balls and afterwards described it as the best century of his career. Malik went to the crease with Pakistan still deep in trouble at 79 for one and Sohail off the field having four stitches inserted in a cut lip.

"The circumstances under which I came onto the crease required me to be patient and score as well," he said. "I'm glad I succeeded."

Anwar gave him superb support, eschewing his normal aggressive game until he was tempted into a full-blooded drive to a wildish delivery from Waugh and edged a catch to Healy.

But Malik continued to bat superbly, mixing attack with sensible defence.

If we are able to play like that tomorrow, we might be in a position to give Australia a score to chase for," an optimistic Malik said. "But saving the match will be our first priority."

Pakistan lead the three-Test series 1-0.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fourth day of the second cricket Test between Australia and Pakistan today:

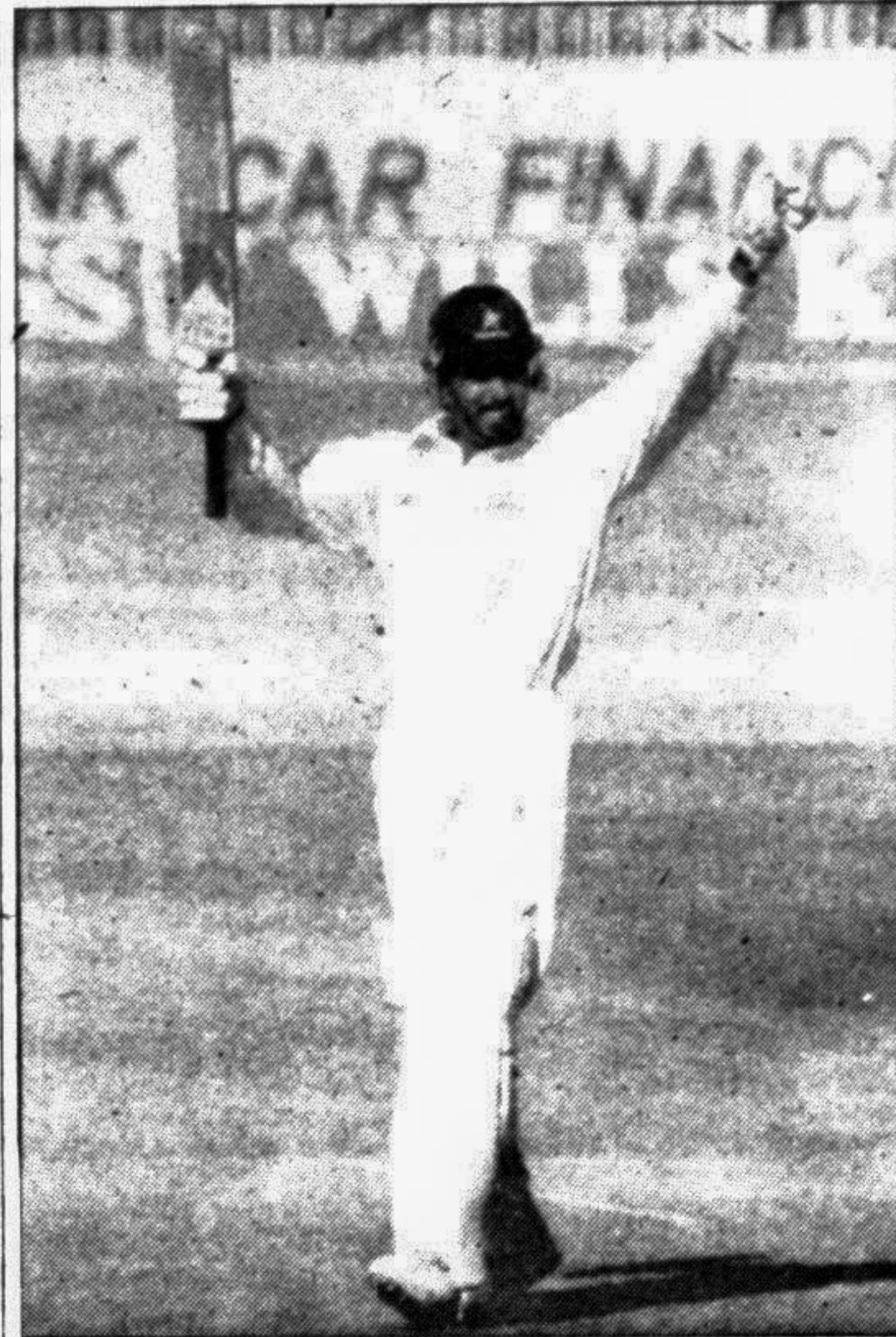
AUSTRALIA: First innings 521-9 declared (Slater 110, S.Waugh 98, Bevan 70, Taylor 69, M.Waugh 68, Healy 58; Mohsin Kamal 3-109).

PAKISTAN: First innings 260 (Aamir Sohail 80; McDermott 4-74, Fleming 4-75).

PAKISTAN: Second innings (overnight 28-0)

Saeed Anwar	c Healy	75
Aamir Sohail	not out	72
Zahid Fazal	c Healy	1
b M.Waugh		155
Salim Malik	not out	76
Extras:	(b-13, lb-5, w-1, nb-2)	21
Total:	(for two wickets)	324
Fall of wickets:	1-79; 2-227	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
McDermott	20	3	45	0
Fleming	15	2	49	0
Angel	16	0	77	0
M.Waugh	11	1	48	2
Warne	17	5	42	0
Bevan	4	0	27	0
S.Waugh	7	2	18	0



A TRULY CAPTAIN'S KNOCK. Pakistan skipper Salim Malik, who led from the front in his side's remarkable fightback in the second innings of the second Test against Australia in Rawalpindi with a brilliant unbeaten innings of 155 yesterday, the penultimate day, exults after reaching his twelfth Test ton. —AFP photo

Windies shall visit India



BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Oct 8: West Indies cricket officials said Friday the delayed tour of plague-hit India was going ahead, reports Reuter.

Steve Canacho, chief executive officer of the West Indies

Cricket Board of Control (WICBC), said in a statement "careful consideration of all subsequent and up-to-date information on the plague situation clearly indicates it is now safe for the team to proceed on the tour."

The West Indians will gather in England next

Monday and leave for India the following day.

They were due to arrive in India in the middle of this week but the WICBC delayed the tour for seven days while it monitored reports on the pneumonic plague.

West Indies had been scheduled to play their first one-day international at Baroda, about 100 miles from an affected area, but their board said the match had been scrapped.

The team, led by Courtney Walsh while Richie Richardson is taking a break from the game because of acute fatigue, have a revised itinerary including five, instead of six, one-day internationals and three Tests against India.

They will also take part in a triangular limited overs series involving India and New Zealand.

West Indies opening tour match is a limited overs warm-up at Chandigarh on October 14 - two days after they are due in India.

WINDIES' REVISED ITINERARY

- Oct 14: One-day warm-up match, Chandigarh.
- 17: 1st one-day international, Faridabad.
- 20: 2nd one-day international, Bombay.
- Nov 7: 3rd one-day international, Vishakhapatnam.
- 9: 4th one-day international, Cuttack.
- 11: 5th one-day international, Jaipur.
- 13-15: Board President's XI, Bangalore.
- 18-22: First Test, Bombay.
- 25-27: Bombay (Ranji Trophy champions), Calicut.
- Dec 1-5: Second Test, Nagpur.
- 10-14: Third Test, Chandigarh.

TRIANGULAR ONE-DAY SERIES

- Oct 23: India v West Indies, Madras.
- 26: West Indies v New Zealand, Goa.
- 28: India v New Zealand, Baroda.
- 30: India v West Indies, Kanpur.
- Nov 1: West Indies v New Zealand, Guwahati.
- 3: India v New Zealand, Delhi.
- 5: Day/night final, Calcutta.

HOLDERS march into semis



HIROSHIMA, Oct 8: Defending champions Pakistan continued their impressive march towards an eighth Asian Games men's hockey title by topping Group A of the preliminary league with an all-win record, reports AFP.

The hot favourites brushed aside Malaysia 4-1 in their last league match here today to finish with eight points from four matches.

Pakistan now await the results of the last round of league matches on Monday to know whether they play South Korea or arch-rivals India in Wednesday's semifinals.

South Korea and India, who have already qualified for the semifinals from Group B, play each other on Monday. The winner tops the group and avoids meeting the in-form Pakistanis for a place in the final.

Pakistan's brilliant forwards went unchallenged in the league, pumping in 19 goals, while their veteran goalkeeper Mansoor Ahmed let in just two.

Ace striker Kamran Ashraf slammed a hat-trick against the Malaysians to become the tournament's leading scorer with a tally of six, one ahead of teammate Tahir Zaman.

Tahir completed today's rout with a goal in the final

minute. Malaysian captain Nor Saiful Zaini scored his team's lone goal off a penalty corner.

It was Malaysia's second defeat in three matches, but still kept the Beijing Asiad bronze medalists in the semifinal race.

A victory over hosts Japan on Monday will give them four points and force a three-way tie in the group. Japan are currently on four points and Kazakhstan, the third contender, have two with a game against lowly Oman in hand.

Goal-difference will be taken into account in case of a tie to determine which team goes through to the semifinals.

TEAMS

PAKISTAN: Mansoor Ahmed, Naveed Alam, Muhammad Usman, Asif Bajwa, Danish Kaleem, Shahab Ahmed, Tahir Zaman, Kamran Ashraf, Muhammad Shahbaz, Khwaja Junaid, Muhammad Shafiq.

MALAYSIA: Nashin Nubli, Maninderjit Singh, Abu Hassan, Charles David, Ramu Shankar, Brian Siva, Chajip Anuar, Nor Saiful Zaini, IV Iknwaran, Mirnawan Nawawi, Calvin Fernandez.

HOSTS BEAT KAZAKS 3-2

Hosts Japan upset the form book with a thrilling 3-2 win over Kazakhstan.

Cheered on by 2,000 fans, the biggest turn-out in the

tournament so far, the Japanese played fast, attacking hockey to catch the highly-rated Kazaks unaware.

In the best match of the tournament so far, Japan took the lead in the 21st minute when captain Manabu Yamanaka slammed in the second penalty corner.

Damir Baltabaev equalised for Kazakhstan in the next minute when his push from the top of the circle caught Japanese goalkeeper Iwao Uetmitsu wrong footed.

Japan responded by scoring two field goals in 55 seconds through Kenichi Yamada and Hideo Numada to build up a commanding 3-1 lead at half-time.

Baltabaev narrowed the deficit for Kazakhstan in the fifth minute of the second session by scoring his second goal with a hard drive, but his team failed to get the equaliser despite pressing hard in the closing stages of the match.

The surprise win gave Japan four points from three matches and hotted up the race for the second semifinal spot from Group A behind defending champions Pakistan, who have already qualified.

Kazakhstan have two points from three matches, but an easier match in hand against lowly Oman. Japan take on Malaysia in their final game.