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- Who will be the match referee in the Bangladesh's inaugural Test against India next month?
Shepherd (Subba Row) Bucknor
- Who lifted the Princess Cup tennis title?
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- Who is the new managing director of United Cricket Board of South Africa?
Peter Pollock Gerald Duncan Majola Fletcher
- Who won the Shaheed Major Nazmul Huq International rating chess title?
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Minhaz on comeback trail

Sports Reporter

Board president seems to have a change of heart as Minhaz, in his latest letter, informed that he would be available for both forms of the game -- the one-day and Test. He changed his tactics to fulfil Board's requirement on advice of Saber a few days back, sources said.

Minhaz had not been in the discussion for quite some time since his retirement from the national team after his brilliant performances in the England World Cup. But, the experienced all-rounder logged the headlines again when he expressed his desire to return to the international cricket during his recent talk with Saber Hossain Chowdhury, president of BCB.

Although BCB is yet to reconsider his plea, but things seemed to have started rolling positively for the most charismatic cricketer of the country.

"He (Minhaz) has given a letter today. But I haven't opened it yet," told the BCB president to the reporters last night.

Minhaz has a long dream of playing in the first Test of Bangladesh. The Board had however turned down his request to consider him available only in the longer version of the game. On principle, it can not entertain any conditional plea, the Board reasoned then.

But, this time around, the

Each player must ensure the Board of his total involvement. This is very important for us to know that the player is totally committed to staying in the game for a certain period of time. Coming in to play a single Test or a series is of no use as far as country's interest is concerned," said Saber.

The recent stand of the Board president however contradicts his previous statement



MINHAZUL ABEDIN

BD cricketers return today

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh national cricket team, fondly dubbed as 'Durjoy Bahini' by the Bengali newspapers, returns home this morning after their disastrous tour of South Africa.

Bangladesh, led by Naimur Rahman Durjoy, scored only 51 and 57 runs in their last two limited-overs matches against South Africa. President's Eleven to taste ten-wicket and 202-run defeats respectively.

They also lost the other one-day by seven wickets and suffered an 82-run defeat against Griqualand West in their lone four-day fixture.

Div I Soccer

Sadharan Bina KS earned a facile 4-1 victory over PWD Sporting Club in the Metropolitan First Division football league at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Iqbal struck twice and Utpal and Aminul scored one each for the winners while Shaker netted the lone goal for the losers.

In the day's other match, Mirpur Chalanitka SC beat Shantinagar Club 3-0 at the same venue to place 6th among the 10 teams. Morshed scored two goals while Manna one for the Mirpur side.

League leaders Agrani Bank will play their nearest rival Youngmen's Club Fakirpool at 3 pm while BRTC SC will encounter Muslim Institute Club at 5 pm today.

Kramnik extends lead

LONDON, Oct 25: Russian challenger Vladimir Kramnik extended his lead over world chess number one Gary Kasparov in the World Chess Championships on Tuesday -- leaving his former teacher scrambling to catch up, reports Reuters.

Trounced in a 25-move game experts billed as "historic" Kasparov was visibly shaken before blundering into an early resignation to stand two games down.

Just six games remain in the 16-match tournament for Kasparov to address the two-point deficit -- and having drawn eight of the 10 games against 24-year-old Kramnik so far, winning opportunities are few and far between.

Boje whacks Black Caps

CENTURION, South Africa, Oct 25: Nicky Boje continued his run least for South Africa against New Zealand when he hammered his second century in three matches in the third limited-overs international at Centurion Park Wednesday, reports AFP.

Boje shared a South African second wicket record stand of 160 with Gary Kirsten (94) as South Africa piled 324 for five, their highest total against a Test nation, after being sent in on an excellent batting pitch.

It was only four short of their highest against allcomers, against Holland in the 1996 World Cup.

Boje's career-best 129 off 114 balls followed scores of 105 not out in Potchefstroom and 64 in Benoni. South Africa lead the series 1-0, with the Potchefstroom match having been rained off.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said he felt his side preferred to chase a target on a good pitch but he added the proviso that his bowlers needed to restrict South Africa to a reasonable total.

Instead, South Africa were scoring at around six runs an over virtually from the start with Kirsten and experimental opener Daryll Cullinan setting the pace.

Kirsten drove crisply through the covers and Cullinan hooked Shayne O'Connor for a six before playing across a straight ball from Chris Cairns after making 22.

Boje was again in sparkling form and South Africa raced to 95 for one in the first 15 overs before a period of consolidation before accelerating again in the last 20 overs.

Boje reached his fifty off 47 balls with six fours and his century off 101 deliveries with nine boundaries before cutting loose. He was caught on the straight boundary off the penultimate ball of the innings.

SCOREBOARD

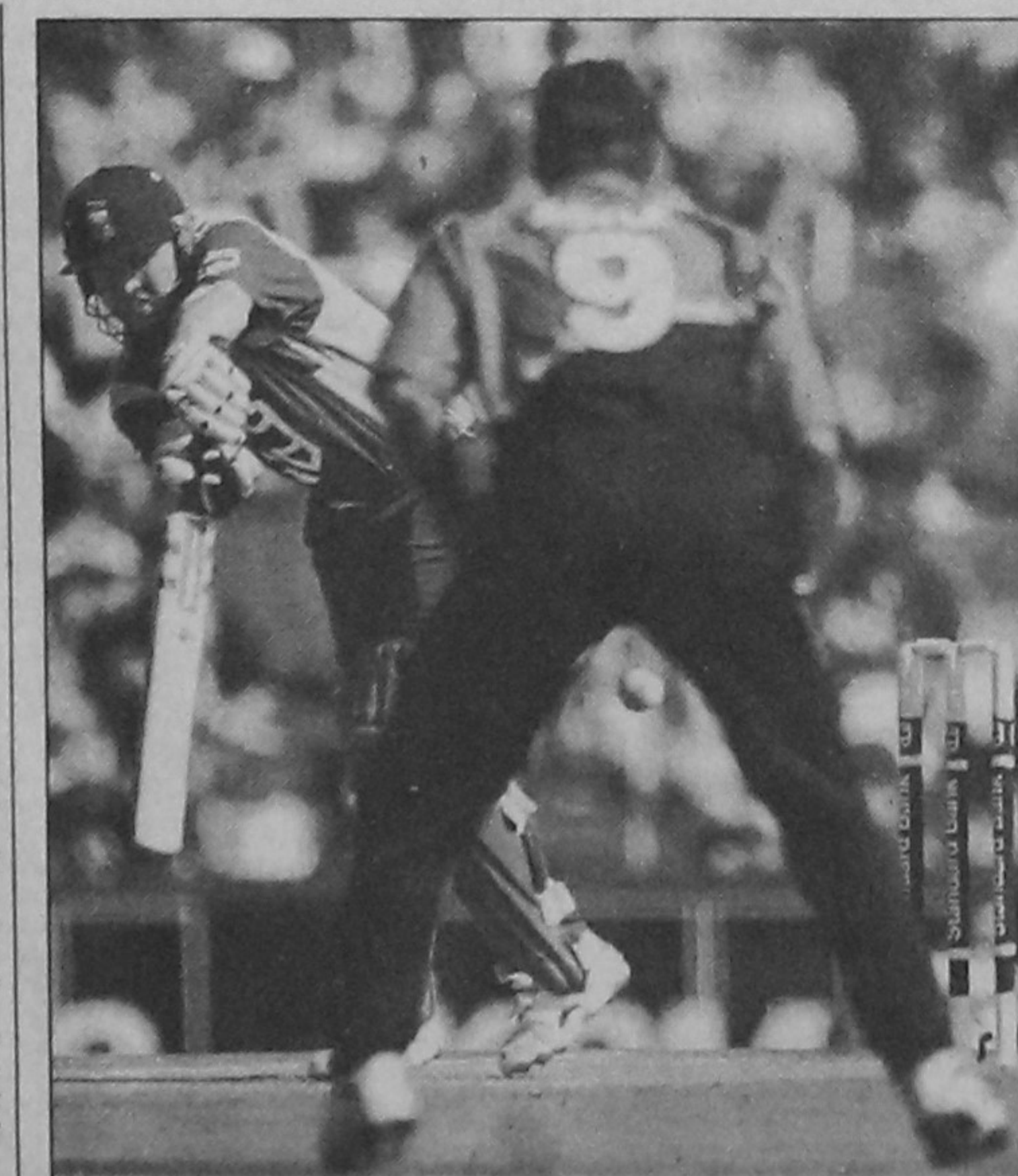
Scoreboard of the South Africa innings against New Zealand international at Centurion Park on Wednesday:

SOUTH AFRICA

Cullinan b Cairns	22
Kirsten c Parore b Cairns	94
Boje c Cairns b Allott	129
Kallis c Twose b Styris	45
Klusener not out	17
Rhodes not out	0
Extras: (lb-5, nb-8, w-4)	17
Total: (for 4 wickets in 50 overs)	324
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-204, 3-283, 4-322	

Bowler

O	M	R	W
Allott	6	0	46
0	10	0	69
Cairns	8	0	62
Styris	10	0	56
Harris	10	0	55
Asile	6	0	31



South Africa's Daryll Cullinan playing on the on-side during their third one-day international against New Zealand in Pretoria yesterday. —AFP photo

Sri Lanka 276 for 9

finished with two wickets each. Zimbabwe, who lost both matches in the first leg of the preliminary league also featuring India, need a win to stay in contention for a place in Sunday's final.

Sri Lanka, unbeaten so far, will qualify with their third consecutive win.

Kalwitharana, reverted back to his opening slot in place of Avishka Gunawardena, made 25 when he found himself at the same end as Jayasuriya after charging down the wicket for a second run.

Jayasuriya went four overs later, bowled by Friend 13 runs short of his first three-figure knock in Sharjah.

Wickets continued to tumble as Mahela Jayawardena was stumped by wicket-keeper Andy Flower, while Kumar Sangakkara was bowled by Viljoen.

Atapattu and Russel Arnold added 40 for the fifth wicket to make it 195-4 in the 38th when Arnold swept Grant Flower into the safe hands of Stuart Carlisle at square-leg.

Atapattu, who made 90 in the previous match against Zimbabwe, was run out for the

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Sri Lankan innings in the Champions Trophy triangular-series match against Zimbabwe Wednesday:

SRI LANKA

Jayasuriya b Friend	87
Kalwitharana run out (A Flower)	25
Atapattu run out (Streak)	58
Jayawardena run out (A Flower)	5
Sangakkara b Viljoen	4
Arnold c Carlisle b G Flower	18
Dilshan c Friend b G Flower	16
Vaas c Carlisle b Friend	23
Weeraratne not out	14
Zoysa b Streak	4
Muralitharan not out	1
Extras: (lb-10, w-9, nb-2)	21
Total: (For nine wickets in 50 overs)	276

Fall of wickets: 1-110, 2-132, 3-143, 4-155, 5-195, 6-228, 7-234, 8-259, 9-265.

Bowler

O	M	R	W
Streak	8	0	59
B Strang	10	0	52
Mbangwa	4	0	36
Friend	10	0	52
Viljoen	10	0	38
G Flower	8	0	29



Vladimir Kramnik (L) ponders his next move while Gary Kasparov looks on during the 10th game of the Brain Games World Chess Championship in London on October 24. —AFP photo

SPORTS TALK



Steffi Graf
(German tennis great)
"I always say to myself, 'you must do something, you can't turn your back so easily now'."

Rajshahi soccer

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 25: Chelsea Club (Green) moved into the final of the Professor Sarwar Jahjan Smriti football tournament today.

In the second semifinal, the winners defeated Islam Smriti Sanghar 1-0 at the local Tikapara Eidgah ground.

Dara scored the match-winner in the 29th minute.

Earlier, Bangabandhu Smriti Club (White) booked the final spot.

The schedule of the final will be announced later.

JU cricket

Statistics beat Geology by 10 wickets in the Jahangirnagar University inter-department cricket competition yesterday, reports UNB.

Winning the toss, Geology were bundled out for 61 with Hasan and Imran making 12 and 9.

In reply, Statistics easily reached the target in only 10 overs without losing any wicket.

Makstd scored highest 26 for the winners.

Kaif fills in for Dravid

SHARJAH, Oct 25 (Internet report): Nineteen-year-old middle-order batsman Mohammed Kaif will replace injured Indian vice-captain Rahul Dravid for the remainder of the Sharjah tri-series.

The Press Trust of India reported on Tuesday that the youngster will fly to Sharjah this week to replace Dravid, who suffered a fractured finger while fielding in the slips during India's defeat of Zimbabwe on Sunday. He is expected to be out of action for two weeks and will return home immediately.

It is expected that Dravid will not be fit in time for the one-off Test in Dhaka against Bangladesh scheduled to begin on November 10th.

The match will be Bangladesh's inaugural Test, after it was awarded, full member status earlier this year.

Kaif, captain of the India U-19 world cup finalists, made his Test debut in India's innings defeat by South Africa at Bangalore in March, making scores of 12 and 23. He has yet to appear in one-day internationals.

Mates make Nasser proud

KARACHI, Oct 25 (Internet report): England captain Nasser Hussain was lavish in his praise of his team after they became the first English side to successfully chase a total in excess of 300.

The five-wicket win over Pakistan in reaching 306-5 in Karachi was an effort that should not be underestimated, said Hussain.

"That was one of the best performances by England in one-day cricket. I'm very proud of the team.

"You cannot underestimate the performance of chasing 300," he said after scoring 73 to help England recover from a poor start.

But he refused to get carried away with the result which was the fourth highest one-day score successfully chased.

"We're keeping our feet on the ground. Pakistan are a great side and we have a lot of work to do especially on the bowling in the first 15 overs and the last 10."

Their total also eclipsed England's previous highest second innings total of 286 for four set against New Zealand at Old Trafford in 1986 and came just five days after Andrew Flintoff was ruled out of the forthcoming Test series because of his long-standing back condition.

Hussain reserved special praise for Flintoff whose innings of 84 from just 60 balls won him the man of the match award.

"He's come of age. If ever a match was set up for him to play an innings this was it and he came through in a pressure situation.

FEET ON GROUND

"He's done very well, but he's only won one one-day international and we want to keep his feet on the ground so that next time he goes out batting he can do it again.

"People forget that only a few months ago he was getting bad headlines. I'm really pleased with what he's done but let's not look too far ahead into the future."

Flintoff, who looked slightly bemused after winning a car for his effort, said he stuck to the way he knew how to play.

"I just went out there and played my own game, it was a good track."

Pakistan captain Moin Khan admitted he might have erred by deciding to bat first in the first day-night international in the stadium.

"It was a very good total to defend but unfortunately the bowlers lost their grip on the ball because of the dew.

"England played really well but we've still got two games to go and we have to come back and work really hard," said the wicketkeeper.

Flintoff's finest

"He is very exciting to watch. I'd pay to watch him in this form any day."

And England captain Nasser Hussain said: "If it was ever set up for Andy to go and play an innings like that, today was."

"To do it against this high-class bowling in a pressure situation in heat like that says volumes for the lad. He has come of age."

Lancashire fans have long known Flintoff is capable of a brilliant England career but his performances on the whole have been disappointing at national level.

But he has shown on many occasions with Lancashire his power and skill.

In July of this year, after being severely criticised for his

England performance against the West Indies, Flintoff lined up for Lancashire against Surrey in the quarterfinal of the NatWest Trophy.

He hit a stunning 135 not out, off 111 balls, including 19 fours and four sixes.

It proved Flintoff's determination as well as his talent.

England will be delighted with Flintoff's performance.

But they could soon encounter a major dilemma.

Will they let him go home early as already stated or will they reconsider their decision and let him stay on?

It is a difficult decision but if Flintoff can remain in such devastating form, then surely the England selectors will have to think again.

WI under greats' guidance

LONDON, Oct 25 (Internet report): The West Indies have brought in former West Indies greats Gordon Greenidge and Gordon Roberts and deputy Jeffrey Dujon to help them prepare their 16-man squad for their forthcoming daunting trip to Australia.

The struggling Caribbean side began a one-week training camp on Tuesday with coach Roger Harper and deputy Jeffrey Dujon saying their side were in "good shape and spirits and looking forward to the week's activities."

And manager Ricky Skerritt believes the addition of Roberts and Greenidge to the coaching staff will complete preparations for the five-Test series, starting on November 23.

"Andy Roberts and Gordon Greenidge are here as professionals to help us give a more personalised approach to our preparations," said Skerritt.

Roberts and Greenidge will join fielding and fitness specialist, Julian Fontaine and the director of coaching, former West Indies off-spinner Reggie Scarlett, in assisting Harper and Dujon in the technical side of the training camp.

"We looked at a number of situations, real life and others and basically reaffirmed our commitment to team and the concept of putting team before self," Skerritt said.

According to Harper "the idea is that the more resource personnel we have available, the more the players will have a lot more individual attention and hopefully we will be able to impact on key areas."

"Obviously we can't change everything. We want to focus on one or two areas of each individual's game on which we can make a positive impact and as a result lift that person's game," he said.

There are questions about the fitness of the left-handed Guyanese middle order batsman Shivmarie Chanderpaul, who missed most of the England tour earlier this year because of an injured right forearm.

Since then Chanderpaul missed the recent ICC limited overs tournament in Kenya and the recently-completed Red Stripe Bowl regional tournament for the same reason.

The fitness of master batsman and former captain Trinidadian Brian Lara is also a worry after he was absent from the Trinidad and Tobago team for the Red Stripe Bowl complaining of a muscle strain.

But Harper confirmed yesterday that both Chanderpaul and Lara had reported to Kingston "feeling fine."

Captain James Adams said he was pleased with the outcome of the first day of the camp. "The team looked at a number of things and assessed our priorities, key of which is working together as a unit. I am happy with how things went," Adams said.

Classic last four clashes

BEIRUT, Oct 25: The footballing 'chokers' of China take on free-scoring Japan while South Korea attempt to end nearly two decades of Saudi Arabian domination in the Asian Cup semifinals here Thursday, reports AFP.

China -- with a history of fluffing their lines on the big occasion -- are heavy underdogs against Philippe Troussier's dazzling Japanese side, who have averaged more than four goals a game en route to the last four.

They underscored their quality with a 4-1 hatchet job on outclassed Iraq in Tuesday's quarter-finals.

But Troussier, dubbed the 'white witchdoctor' during his successful spell coaching in Africa, is taking nothing for granted.

According to the 45-year-old Frenchman, China have the edge because they have a better Asian Cup pedigree.

Japan have only reached the final stages of the competition once before -- when they won the tournament on home turf in Hiroshima in 1992.

"Obviously at this stage of the competition it's 50-50. It comes down not only to the physical but the psychological aspect," Troussier said.

China has a lot more experience of this and it will be a very tough battle."

TODAY'S MATCHES SEMIFINALS

China v Japan (7.45 pm BST)
Saudi Arabia v South Korea (10.45 pm BST)

Enhua, who has a leg injury, and captain Ma Mingyu who started on the bench in Monday's 3-1 quarter-final win over Qatar.

Victory for either Japan or China on Sunday would mark the first time in the history of the Asian Cup that a team from the Far East has ever won the tournament when it has been hosted in the Middle East.

SAUDI ARABIA v SOUTH KOREA

But the Middle East's domination of the Asian Cup could be shattered before then if resurgent South Korea eliminate holders Saudi Arabia in Thursday's other semi.

The Saudis, 3-2 winners over Kuwait in Tuesday's epic quarter-final, have won three out of four of the last Asian Cups and are going for a record fourth title.

They face a Korean team who are suddenly buoyant after sending pre-tournament favourites Iran crashing out of the competition with a dramatic 2-1 golden goal victory in Tripoli on Monday.

Lion King Lee Dong-Gook was the hero then and beleaguered Korean coach Huh Jung-Moo is hoping his talismanic striker can conjure up yet another tour de force against the Saudis.

Lee has been instrumental in guiding South Korea into the last four with two virtuoso performances.

The skillful 21-year-old notched a hatrick against Indonesia to help his team scrape into the last eight and on Monday scored the 100th minute which sent Iran packing.

But Lee's inspirational form has come at a cost. The Pohang Steelers centre-forward has aggravated a long-standing knee injury which has bothered him throughout the tournament.

"We hope he can play, but it will depend on how his leg is," Huh said of Lee, the former Asian young player of the year. Huh will take a decision on Lee shortly before kick-off.

His Saudi Arabia counterpart Nasser Jaohar was giving little away ahead of the showdown.