

Star SPORT

Senegal punish Diouf

Blackburn Rovers striker El-Hadji Diouf was handed a five-year international ban by the Senegalese Football Federation (FSF) on Wednesday, following remarks he made in the media about corruption in African football. In a statement, the FSF said that it was banning Hadji Diouf "from performing any football-related activity for a period of five years with effect from the date of notification of this decision". The federation said, however, that the ban could be lifted if the former Liverpool striker turned up to face a disciplinary inquiry into the remarks he made in an interview with Radio France International. - AFP



Bangladesh striker Mithun Choudhury (R) is chased by ecstatic teammates after scoring the first goal against Lebanon in the second-half of their 2014 World Cup pre-qualifier second-leg match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Bangladesh won 2-0, but will not progress to the qualifier proper as they had to beat Lebanon 5-0 to overcome the first leg deficit.

Censure motivated Emily & Mithun

Football

ANISUR RAHMAN

At the pre-match conference on Wednesday, Bangladesh's Macedonian coach Nikola Ilievski saw little hope of winning against Lebanon but the players' fierce desire to win propelled them to a historic 2-0 win over the Western Asian nation in the second leg of the FIFA World Cup pre-qualifying round at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Despite the loss, Lebanon made it through to the 20-team qualifying round by virtue of an aggregate score of 4-2 over the two legs, adding salt to Bangladeshi wounds as the scenario could have been different had Bangladesh suffered a 2-0 defeat in the first-leg match in Beirut.

"I am happy the way the boys played and first want to congratulate my players as they played a very good match and scored well. The players gave more than maximum what I wanted from them in the training the day before the game," said coach Ilievski at the post-match briefing.

"Actually I did not criticise about the ability of the players; I wanted to get maximum from them, that's why I slammed them a bit," said a shy coach.

"What the boys put up in the Beirut match was not a real picture of Bangladesh and the scenario could have been different had they suffered a 2-0 defeat in Beirut. Maybe we were unlucky in the first leg match," said the 56-year old coach.

Meanwhile, it was Bangladesh's first win over a middle-east side. The closes they came was when they drew 1-1 against Qatar in 1997 in the Asian Cup qualifiers in Dhaka.

Stand-in captain Mohammad Sujjan, scorers Zahid Hasan Emily, Mithun Chowdhury and the real hero of the game, goalkeeper Mamun Khan echoed the coach's sentiments and said that their eagerness to prove their ability was the key

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BANGLADESH WIN WORLD CUP PRE-QUALIFIER 2ND-LEG 2-0 Too good, but too late

Football

AL-AMIN

So the World Cup dream of Bangladesh is over. But not before the boys of Nikola Ilievski put up a show that was spectacularly daring. The only thing missing was perhaps the belief that they could overturn Lebanon's impressive 4-0 home leg advantage.

In the end Bangladesh won their home match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium 2-0. And in front of a 10,000 partisan crowd they created more chances, opening up a situation for a spectacular turnaround from a hopeless start to their return-leg pre-qualifying match for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Lebanon sneaked into the Asian pre-qualifying proper with a 4-2 aggregate. But it was the spirited boys of Bangladesh who received a standing ovation for not only making a match of it but also playing the attractive brand of football.

Mithun Chowdhury scored the opening goal seven minutes into the second-half while his striking partner Zahid Hasan Emily headed home the second in the 87th minute.

Before the match a disgruntled Bangladesh coach said that he expected little from his charges, who were awfully out of sorts when they played in Beirut on June 23.

It however could not be known whether it was a ploy from the Macedonian to inspire his boys, it worked like magic in 90 minutes where his boys hardly put a pass wrong. The technology that provides stats about ball possession, pass completed and shots on target was not available. But the one, who watched the match was convinced that Bangladesh enjoyed more possession, completed more passes than their opponents and shot the ball at target four times more than they scored.

The shortest Lebanese player was taller than Bangladesh's tallest player -- don't consider towering goalkeeper Mamun Khan -- on the field. But Bangladesh's players won more balls in the air than their opponents.

Playing with short pass, Bangladesh looked threatening from the start of the match. They came tantalisingly close to scoring in the eighth minute when Emily supplied a low cross from the right, but a sliding Mithun could only find outside the side netting.

Then in the 45th minute Bangladesh did almost a Barcelona -- a dream move containing

five decisive passes starting from a darting run by Mishu down the left flank to a little one-two between Mamun-Emily followed by a defence-slicing through to Raju, who fired the ball over the bar. It could have been a dream finish had Raju not tried to drive the ball hard.

Bangladesh took a deserved lead in the 52nd minute when Mithun found enough space to fire the ball but only to be partially parried by Lebanese goalkeeper Elias Freige. But a fleet-footed Mithun made no mistake to pounce the rebound into an empty net.

Bangladesh might have looked running out of gas with the progress of the game, but still they looked menacing whenever they got the ball. The second goal came quite late. Still it was a reward of collective effort. Nasir released a nice through for Komol, who initially had it wrong-footed but was quick to take a turn before releasing a perfect cross deep into the box where a lurking Emily did the simple task of heading the ball from point blank range.

Lebanon also had their share of chances in the match. But Bangladesh custodian Mamun showed why he was considered ahead of a proven Biplob under the bar, making three superb saves denying Mahmoud El Ali on all the occasions.

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Zaheer blow to India

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

India fast bowler Zaheer Khan has been ruled out of the second Test against England at Trent Bridge with a hamstring injury, captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said Thursday.

Left-arm quick Zaheer broke down in the first Test at Lord's, which India lost by 196 runs, after taking two wickets for 18 runs in 13.3 first innings overs and didn't bowl again in the match.

The 32-year-old was instrumental in India's seven-wicket win in the corresponding Trent Bridge Test against England four years ago, taking nine wickets for 134 runs in the match.

Now his place is set to go to either fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth or seamer Munaf Patel.

"I think he is ruled out of this game," Dhoni speaking to reporters at Trent Bridge on Thursday, the day before the second Test starts, said of Zaheer.

"It's always good to have him in the side because he is our most experienced bowler, especially when it comes to England, he has played a lot of cricket over here for counties and the last time India were here [in 2007] he bowled really well."

"It's a bit disappointing not to have him for selection in the first XI but it is something that is beyond our control and it gives a chance to the other bowlers to prove their mettle when it comes to international cricket."

Dhoni added: "Overall it's a win-win situation for the Indian team because we can't really sit and say Zaheer is not there. We have to look at the positive, which is some of the other bowlers will get to have a look at international cricket."

Wicketkeeper-batsman Dhoni, who refused to divulge the identity of Zaheer's replacement at Trent Bridge, said he hoped India's spearhead would be fit in time for the third Test of this four-match series, starting at Edgbaston on August 10.

"We are expecting that. He started light training yesterday [Wednesday] but again it is something we can't be 100 per cent sure about but most likely it seems he will."

India also have a doubt over opening batsman Gautam Gambhir, who suffered an elbow injury when hit fielding at short leg at Lord's.

"We'll give him some time, and see how he goes through the net sessions today [Thursday]," Dhoni said of Gambhir.

"He's the only person who can judge the right amount of pain he can go through and still be able to perform."

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Zurkhaneh underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The 3rd Asian Zurkhaneh Sports and Koshti Pehlevani Championship began yesterday at the newly-built Wooden Floor Stadium with ten team event matches being decided on the opening day.

A total of 12 countries -- Iran, Iraq, India, Afghanistan, Chinese Taipei, South Korea, Tajikistan, Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and hosts Bangladesh -- are taking part in the tournament.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, also the chief adviser of the meet's organising committee, inaugurated the three-day meet. Shipping minister and chairman of the organising committee Shajahan Khan was also present at the one and a half hour long colourful opening ceremony.

Bangladesh Amateur Wrestling Federation has organized the heavyweight meet, the first of its kind in the country, in association with International Zurkhaneh Sports Federation (IZSF), Asian Zurkhaneh Confederation and Iranian Cultural Centre in Dhaka.

Representatives of other 13 countries -- Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Uganda, Tanzania, Russia, Kenya, Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Belarus and Nigeria -- will attend the World Congress of IZSF to be held on Saturday in Dhaka along with the 12 participating nations.

The 11-member Bangladesh team, which earlier took part in both the first Asian meet in Iran in 2006 and the 2nd meet in Nepal in 2008, but failed to earn any medal, is taking part in the tourney with a hope of clinching at least one medal.



Participants demonstrate Zurkhaneh sports during opening day of the 3rd Asian Zurkhaneh Sports and Koshti Pehlevani Championship at the Wooden Floor Stadium yesterday.

SK KAMAL INT'L B'BALL

Bangladesh continue winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh maintained their unbeaten run in the Sheikh Kamal International Basketball Tournament when they beat the Maldives in their third game at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday afternoon.

Hosts Bangladesh, who started their campaign with a 77-44 win over Bhutan on the opening day and then beat the Malaysia Under-18 team 66-47 in the second match, led the first half 32-29.

Mithun continued his impressive showing as he netted highest 23 points for Bangladesh while Rashed scored 16 to help Bangladesh win their third consecutive match.

Zakaria and Jabir caged 17 points each for the Maldives.

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