

SPORT

Half of it for Uncle Sam

AFP, New York

Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams each took home a record 3.6 million dollars in prize money for winning US Open titles, but both champions lamented that much of their prize was going to be taken in taxes.

Both US star Williams and Nadal captured the top prize of 2.6 million dollars for winning the year's final Grand Slam title plus a 1-million-dollar bonus for having the most successful run in pre-US Open tournaments.

"The prize money is great for the sport," Nadal said.

"At the end, it's a lot of money anyway, but that's not the real prize money," he added. "You have to pay the tax, and in Spain today it is 56 [per cent], I think."

"Anyway, a lot of money. Is more than half. Is more than half less and then is Euros."

That conversion factor will shrink the euro figure for Nadal even more, which at least is not a factor for Williams, who surpassed 9 million dollars for the season, a women's prize money record, and 50 million for her career.

"Someone told me today I passed 50 [million], but half of that goes to my Uncle Sam. I love him. I'm always giving him half my money," said Serena while referring to the mythical US representation of the government for taking taxes from paychecks.

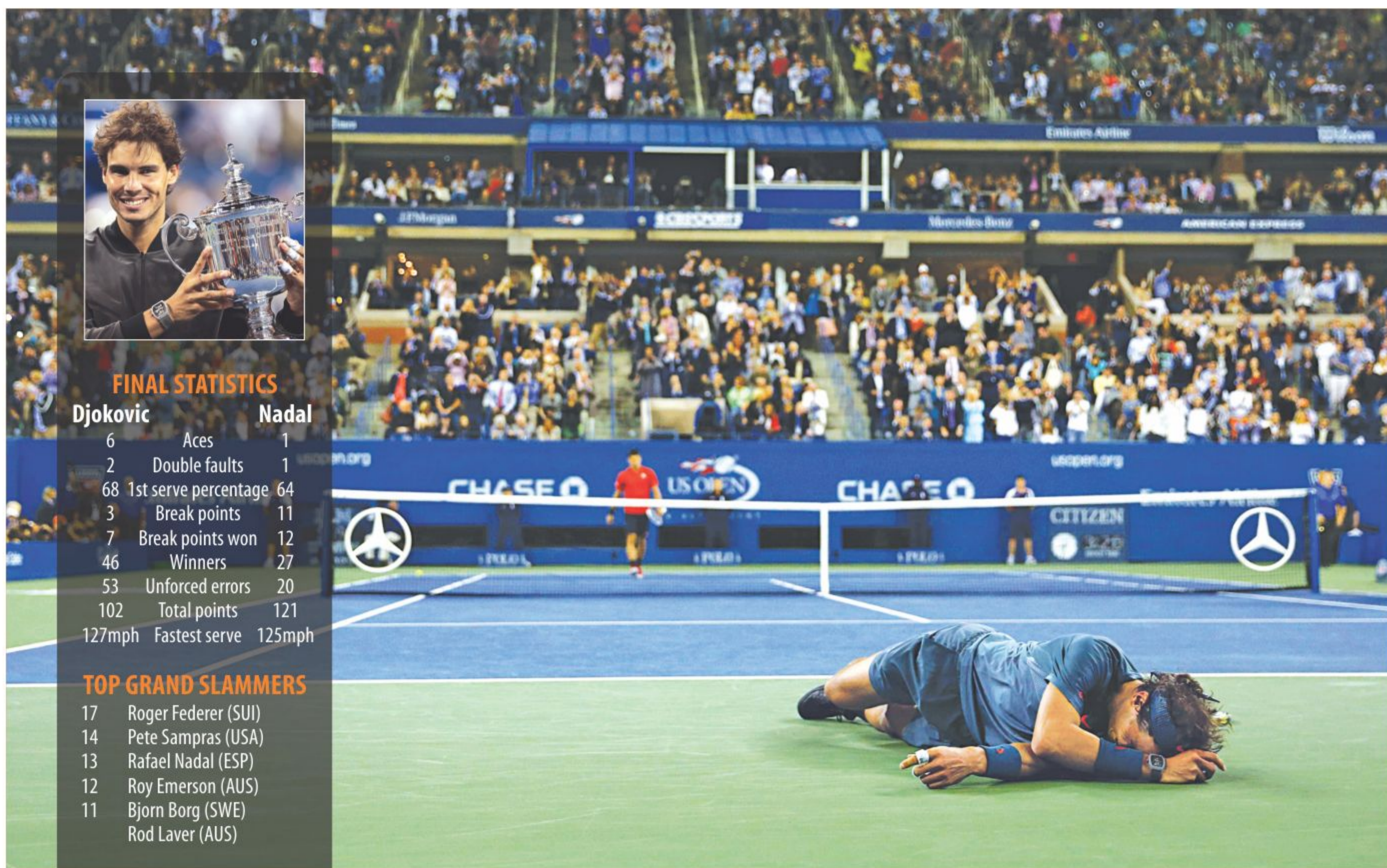
Bangladesh down 0-3

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh started their campaign in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone (Group-IV) with a straight 0-3 defeat to Turkmenistan in the opening match at the Dubai Aviation Club in UAE yesterday.

Anwar Hossain lost 2-6, 0-6 to Georgiy Pochay in the first game before Amol Roy lost 4-6, 4-6 to Aleksandr Ernepesov.

In doubles, Jamil Bhuiyan and Biplob Ram went 1-6 and 2-6 down to Eziz Dvovletov and Georgiy Pochay.



FINAL STATISTICS

Djokovic	Nadal
6 Aces	1
2 Double faults	1
68 1st serve percentage	64
3 Break points	11
7 Break points won	12
46 Winners	27
53 Unforced errors	20
102 Total points	121
127mph Fastest serve	125mph

TOP GRAND SLAMMERS

17	Roger Federer (SUI)
14	Pete Sampras (USA)
13	Rafael Nadal (ESP)
12	Roy Emerson (AUS)
11	Bjorn Borg (SWE)
	Rod Laver (AUS)

SIGH OF TRIUMPH: Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal falls to the hard court surface after overcoming world No. 1 Novak Djokovic (in the background) of Serbia over four gruelling sets in the men's singles final of the US Open in New York yesterday. INSET Nadal poses with his 13th Grand Slam trophy, which capped a scarcely believable comeback this year after a seven-month injury layoff.

PHOTOS: AFP

Nadal swishes to 13th Grand Slam

AP, New York



With the 55th and last swing on the longest of many long points in the US Open final, Rafael Nadal pushed a backhand into the net to get broken by Novak Djokovic.

It could have been the beginning of the end for many players.

Not for Nadal, who is as resilient as they come. A year after watching the Flushing Meadows title match on TV at home with a bad left knee, he is fit as can be -- and, just maybe, better than ever.

The No. 2-ranked Nadal emerged with his 13th Grand Slam title, and second here, by with-

standing No. 1 Djokovic's similar brand of hustle-to-every-ball style and pulling away Monday to a tense, taut 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 victory.

"This season is probably the most emotional one in my career. I felt that I did everything right to have my chance here," said Nadal, who dropped to the court and rolled over on his stomach, crying, after the last point. "I have to be almost perfect to win."

Hard to believe this is the same Nadal who missed seven months with a knee injury, but was able to cover every inch of the court, tracking down shot after shot from Djokovic.

Hard to believe this is the guy who used to be considered a clay-

court specialist, but is 22-0 on hard courts in 2013.

"I never thought something like this could happen," Nadal said. "I feel very lucky about what happened since I came [back]. It's true that I worked, but even like this you need luck to be where I am today."

He and Djokovic started in sunlight and finished at night, a 3-hour, 21-minute miniseries of cliffhangers and plot twists with a pair of protagonists who inspired standing ovations in the middle of games.

There was no quit in either of them, during points that lasted 15, 25, even more than 50 strokes. Those rallies went so long, rarely

over when they appeared to be, and spectators often shouted out during the course of play, prompting Nadal to complain to the chair umpire.

This was their 37th match against each other, the most between any two men in the Open era, and Nadal has won 22. It also was their third head-to-head US Open final in the last four years. Nadal beat Djokovic for the 2010 title, and Djokovic won their rematch in 2011.

Djokovic, who won the Australian Open in January, will hold onto his No. 1 ranking for the time being. But it's clear to everyone who the top player in tennis is at the moment.

Nadal is 60-3 in 2013 with 10 titles, including at the French Open, which made him the first man with at least one Grand Slam trophy in nine consecutive seasons. The 27-year-old Spaniard's total of 13 major championships ranks third in the history of men's tennis, behind only Roger Federer's 17 and Pete Sampras's 14.

Nadal has won a record eight titles at the French Open, two each at the US Open and Wimbledon, and one at the Australian Open.

Afterward, his newest silver trophy at arm's reach, Nadal was asked about catching the only two men who've won more.

Nadal smiled and replied: "Let me enjoy today."

Rubel's six in Gazi win

Big Nafis ton goes in vain

SPORTS REPORTER



The first day of the Dhaka Premier League belonged to pacer Rubel Hossain (6 for 18) and former national opener Nafis Iqbal (150), both of whom put in career-best performances in List A cricket. Rubel's bowling effort helped Gazi Tank Cricketers restrict Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity to 133 at Shaheed Chandu Stadium (SCS) at Bogra. Gazi Tank chased down the total within 25 overs with eight wickets in hand.

Nafis's 150 was however for a lost cause as his team Brothers Union lost to Prime Bank Cricket Club by 79 runs at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium (SKS) in Rajshahi. Prime Bank rode on a century from Sri Lankan recruit Bandara Rajapaksa (107) to post 334. In reply, Brothers were restricted to 255 for 9.

The third match, scheduled to take place at the BKSP-2 between Victoria Sporting Club and Kalabagan Cricket Acadamy, was postponed due to inclement weather. The match will be played today.

GAZI TANK v KHELAGHAR SKS
Khelaghar's top order struggled against Rubel as the pacer reduced the team to 17 for 4 after just nine overs. Had it not been for Shuvagata Hom's 53, Khelaghar would have been dismissed below 100. Young spinner Nur Hossain chipped in with two wickets along with Rubel's 6 for 18.

"There was a bit of moisture on the wicket early on and Rubel utilised that to perfection. He bowled in good



RUBEL ... 6 for 18



NAFIS ... 150

"The media often says that I lost myself following my international start. But that's not true. I have worked very hard in the last two years. And the 150 means a lot. I am only 28, if I work hard maybe I can still make a national return."

areas, with some good pace and that was really encouraging to see," said national selector Habibul Bashar. Gazi Tank's chase was powered by Aftab Ahmed, who hit three sixes and seven fours in his 64-ball 59. New Zealand's Scott Styris, who featured for Gazi Tank, scored a 30-ball 32.

"It was good to see Aftab bat well. Although he is not in contention for the national team. I hope this innings encourages him to play better," said Bashar.

BROTHERS v PRIME BANK
After a jolt in the first over which saw Brothers lose Saykat Ali, the team rode on Ziaur Rahman (89) and their foreign recruit Bandara

"I was frustrated at the clubs' traditional tendency to over-depend on spinners. Rubel [Hossain] was Gazi Tank's best bowler and yet they depended mostly on spin. This will not help in the growth of fast bowlers."

Rajapaksa. The 165-run partnership in 22.3 overs for the second wicket created a good foundation for Brothers. Quick knocks from Mahmudul Hasan (54) and Sri Lanka's Saman de Zoysa (29) helped them cross the 30 mark.

Apart from Nafis's 150, the rest of the Brothers line-up disappointed with the bat. Captain Tamim Iqbal was caught off Taposh Baisya after scoring 31. Prime Bank's captain Enamul Haque Jr (3 for 36) was the pick of the bowlers. Nafees retired hurt in the 46th over.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KHELAGHAR SKS: 133 all out in 39.4 overs (Shuvagata 53; Rubel 6-18).

GAZI TANK: 137 for 2 in 24.2 overs (Aftab 59; Ariful Haque 1-22). **Result:** Gazi Tank won by 8 wickets. **Player-of-the-match:** Rubel Hossain.

PRIME BANK: 334 for 9 in 50 overs. (Bandara 107, Ziaur 89; Sanjamul 3-52).

BROTHERS UNION: 255 for 9 in 45.2 overs. (Nafis 150 ret'd; Enamul 3-36). **Result:** Prime Bank won by 79 runs. **Player-of-the-match:** Nafees Iqbal

Risky players warned

SPORTS REPORTER



While the Dhaka Premier League is the only opportunity for national players to get some valuable game time before the New Zealand series, some injury-prone players have received cautionary guidelines from the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) medical team in order to prevent any further damage before October.

Victoria Sporting Club's pacer Robiul Islam for instance suffered from a strain on his right thigh last week while playing football with his teammates. "He is suffering from a grade-1 strain and it normally takes a week to recover. We are monitoring the process everyday, but as per the current scenario he can't play the league for a week at least," said BCB's sports physician Debashish Choudhury.

Mohammedan's Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is

also under the scanner. According to Debasish the bowler had complained of back pain following the three-day practice match in Khulna last week. Mashrafe however, is reportedly in a better state and is likely to play his side's first match on Thursday at Bogra.

"He feels a lot better than before. The muscles on his right back are a little stiff. He will go do some gym work on Wednesday and then accordingly decide if he wants to leave for Bogra at night," said Debasish.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, named captain of Kalabagan KC, had hurt his left thumb in the West Indies and is supposed to be on rest at least until September 18.

"The situation is slightly difficult because on the one hand clubs want their players to play and on the other we have to take care of them so that they remain fit for the New Zealand series. At the end of the day it depends on the player. Hopefully they follow our guidelines," said Debasish.

Smith back for Proteas

AFP, Johannesburg



South Africa captain Graeme Smith was named Tuesday for a two-Test October series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates after recovering from foot surgery.

Smith has not played since he was diagnosed with a stress fracture which ruled him out of the ICC Champions Trophy in England and Wales last June.

Smith was also named in South Africa's one-day international squad for five ODIs which will follow the Tests -- but selection convener Andrew Hudson indicated that there were still doubts about his full fitness.

"We should have a definite picture on the status of Graeme's recovery from surgery within the next two weeks," said Hudson. "We will obviously be monitoring Graeme's condition very carefully and do

not want to overload him too much during the early stages of his return."

Leg-spinner Imran Tahir, dropped after taking some heavy punishment in a Test series in Australia last year, was brought back, joining Robin Peterson as a front-line spinner for what are likely to be spin-friendly conditions.

SQUADS

TESTS: Graeme Smith (captain), Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Dean Elgar, Imran Tahir, Jacques Kallis, Rory Kleinveldt, Morne Morkel, Alviro Petersen, Robin Peterson, Vernon Philander, Dale Steyn, Thami Tsolekile.

ODI: AB de Villiers (captain), Hashim Amla, Quinton de Kock, JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, Ryan McLaren, David Miller, Morne Morkel, Wayne Parnell, Robin Peterson, Vernon Philander, Graeme Smith, Dale Steyn, Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

54-shot poetry

AGENCIES, New York

In the city that never sleeps, it was the point that threatened never to end as Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic fought out an exhausting 54-shot exchange in Monday's US Open final.

With Djokovic leading 3-2 in the second set, after Nadal had clinched the opener, the world's two best players matched each other forehead against forehead and backhand to backhand before the Serb came out on top.

And when Djokovic ended the best and longest rally of the tournament with a forehand drilled at his opponent's ankles, there can't have been many among the crowd of 22,000-plus who did not stand to applaud.

"I felt really tired after that point, but I said, 'I have the wind in my favour now.' So after this point the opponent will be tired, too, so I'm going to have the chance to break back," said Nadal.

Djokovic said he was always prepared to match Nadal toe-to-toe.

"I played against Rafa on different surfaces and different occasions and there are points like this where you just feel that there is the last drop of energy that you need to use in order to win the point," he said.

"Sometimes I was winning those points; sometimes him. It's what we do when we play against each other, always pushing each other to the limit. That's the beauty of our matches and our rivalry."

Lions vow revenge

ATIQUA ANAM from Kathmandu

Revenge will be on the minds of the Afghans when they take on two-time defending champions India in the final of the SAFF Championship which kicks off at the Dasarath Rangasala Stadium in Kathmandu today.

Afghanistan, the highest-ranked (139) side in South Asia, lost against the six-time champions 4-0 in the final two years ago in controversial circumstances as they conceded all the four goals after their goalie was sent off. The Lions of Khorasan are still hurting from that defeat and want to exact revenge on the field.

"We wanted to have India in the final because we want revenge, which is only a sporting revenge," said Afghanistan's assistant coach Ali Jawar at the pre-match press conference yesterday. "We are technically and physically a better side than India but we will have to keep our eyes open."

India coach Wim Koevoets believes Afghans' attitude of underestimating India will bode well for his team in the final. "We don't underestimate any team. Maldives underestimated us, and they paid the price. If Afghanistan do the same, that's good for us," said the Dutchman, whose charges have beaten Afghanistan in three out of four meetings in the SAFF Championship, with the other match ending in a draw.

Afghanistan are likely to miss the services of defender Ferzad Atae, who suffered a mild cardiac arrest during the semifinal against Nepal but has been discharged from hospital. India, on the other hand, will be bolstered by the return of skipper Sunil Chhetri, who missed the semifinal against Maldives due to suspension.