

SPORT



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START OF THE ROT: Bangladesh goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton tries in vain to stop the first of Jordan's four goals at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Jordan punish woeful booters

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh remain bottom of Group B with a single point in their World Cup-Asian Cup qualifying campaign after a 4-0 defeat against Jordan, where the hosts were left to rue defensive lapses and some glaring errors in front of goal. The men in red, who came back from Australia with a 'respectable' 4-0 defeat, were more impressive going forward despite playing with a five-man defence, yet proved too weak against the long-ball approach of the Jordanians at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh coach Lodewijk de Kruif opted for a 5-4-1 formation, with injured goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel making way for Rasel Mahmud Liton and Atiqur Rahman Meshu coming in as a roving defender in a fortified backline.

fanned by a couple of opposition defenders. The diminutive winger -- who later spurned a gilt-edged opportunity -- managed to squeeze the ball to Zahid Hasan Emily, but the latter's attempt from a prostrated position was easily gathered by the keeper.

The Jordanians did what they are probably best at doing, getting the ball quickly to the other end, which yielded the corner that led to the second goal a minute later. With the Bangladesh defence failing to clear the danger, an unmarked Monther Abu Amara rifled the ball home from the middle of the box.

Ten minutes later, Jewel ran onto a brilliant through-ball from Emily, and after a heavy first touch, saw his attempt creep inches wide of the target as the best chance for the hosts went begging.

Right-back Nasirul Islam, who carried a niggling injury from the Australia fixture, made way for M o h a m a d Linkon four minutes into the second half and the

BANGLADESH 0 - 4 JORDAN
DEEB 14, 57; AMARA 33, BAKHEET 59

Yet it was a glaring mistake by Meshu which led which led to the first goal in the 14th minute of the match. The versatile defender panicked after a long kick from the Jordan keeper and used an arm to control the ball inside his own box, conceding a needless penalty. Jordan's centre-forward Abdallah Deeb, who bagged a brace in this match, slammed the ball powerfully to the right hand corner.

Bangladesh, however, showed attacking intent from the start and came agonisingly close to an equaliser six minutes later, with skipper Mamunul Islam's curling corner headed just wide of the target by centre-back Yeasin Ahmed.

While the Jordanians kept threatening with their old-style box-to-box attacks, it was Bangladesh who once again came closest to scoring in the 32nd minute. This time, right-winger Jewel Rana got the better of a Jordan defender and rounded off the advancing goalkeeper, only to find himself

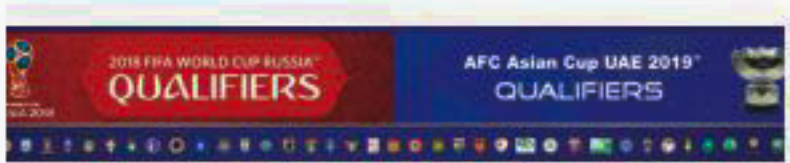
Bangladesh backline started to look increasingly pedestrian. The visitors doubled the margin in the space of two minutes, with Deeb bagging his second with a powerful drive down the middle in the 57th minute, before Yaseen Bakheet finished off an excellent move with a diagonal shot from inside the box.

De Kruif later made a surprise attacking substitution, sacrificing Meshu for winger Abdul Baten Komol, and the substitute almost proved his worth with a double attempt in the 80th minute, but both his attempts were blocked by the goalkeeper. Topu Barman had the last chance to get Bangladesh on the scoreboard, but his header from a Jamal Bhuiyan cross in the 82nd minute went wide of the target.

BANGLADESH: Liton (GK); Topu, Yeasin, Nasirul (Linkon), Yeamin (Raihan); Meshu (Komol), Mamunul, Jamal, Raju, Jewel; Emily

De Kruif rues lapses

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh coach Lodewijk de Kruif had credited his defensive organisation for keeping Australia to five goals, despite enjoying only 19 per cent of possession in that game last week. At home, the booters were expected to fare much better against Jordan, who neither had the technical skill nor the speed to match the Socceroos.

However, the booters surrendered meekly, conceding four goals, three of which could have been kept out had the defenders been able to hold their line, especially on counter-attacks. The coach was visibly dissat-

isfied with his defenders and blamed their lack of concentration and intent for the big defeat.

"The players should have kicked the ball out 30 yards when they conceded the first two goals. In the second half, there was a lack of concentration. [Atiqur Rahman] Meshu was tired; [Yeamin Ahmed] Munna was not fit for the 90-minute game. Yeasin [Ahmed] and [Monaem Khan] Raju came to me and complained about their tiredness. When you say things like that, you ought to lose," said the Dutchman in his post-match press briefing, adding that the second goal was a 'Santa Claus' gift.

The 45-year-old coach, however, backed his tactic of deploying a five-man defence as he felt it was the need of the hour to keep the

Jordanians at bay.

"They [Jordan] are a really good side. Our tactical plan was to start with 5-4-1 formation because we knew their two strikers are very good inside the box and they have good strength overlapping through both flanks," explained de Kruif.

The coach felt the margin of defeat was not a fair reflection of the game, as his forwards wasted a number of chances, with winger Jewel Rana wasting two golden chances in the first half.

"We needed a little bit of luck and good organisation for a draw. Even if we had lost the match 1-0 or 2-0, it would have been all right. To create five scoring chances against such an opposition is a good thing. But if you can't take those chances, you will never win," said the coach.

BD athletes advance

SPORTS REPORTER

Sprinter Tamanna Akhter moved into the semifinals of the 200m sprint in the 5th Youth Commonwealth Games in Samoa yesterday after clocking 26:59 seconds in the heats, said a Bangladesh Olympic Association press release.

Apart from Tamanna's feat, archers Tamimul Islam and Nandini Khan Swapna became third and fourth in the qualification round of boys' and girls' recurve bow event. Both of them will play in the elimination round today.

Boxer Rakib Sheikh lost against Scotland's William Stuart in the 56kg category, while swimmer Ariful Islam finished 12th among 19 competitors in 100m breaststroke. The pair of Saiful Mia and Rakin Aziz suffered a 0-3 set defeat against a Malaysian pair in the doubles of squash.

Azad Boys elects new officials

SPORTS REPORTER

Azad Boys Club elected its new executive committee with Afzalur Rahman Sinha voted the president and Syed Tahmeed Azizul Huq the general secretary.

The committee, which will be introduced after the club's September 15 AGM, will run the show for two years till 2017.

The reputed club also elected Syed Iqbal Azim, Tanveer Muzharul Islam Tanna and Azmal Huda as vice-presidents.

'Mominul has the quality'

SPORTS REPORTER



Describing Mominul Haque as a player who has the potential to be Bangladesh's captain in the future, chief selector Faruque Ahmed was pleased to see the batsman given the responsibility of leading Bangladesh A in India.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Faruque said, "I think the board's decision to appoint Mominul as the skipper is justified. Personally I feel that he is quite capable to lead the team. I have seen him captaining sides before and he tends to keep a cool head during tensed scenarios."

Mominul was given the responsibility quite a few times this year. He captained his franchise East Zone during the Bangladesh Cricket League's one-day competition; a side that included his senior colleague Tamim Iqbal.

While Faruque widely praised Mominul, the left-hander himself remained modest. "Honestly speaking, I haven't analysed

my captaincy as much. I really don't know my strengths and weaknesses as a captain. But I know I am going to enjoy this," Mominul told The Daily Star.

"I think this is a big responsibility for me. India A will be playing many good players from their national side, in their own backyard, so it will be a difficult task. All the players in my side are from the national team, so there won't be any problems for me in terms of communicating with them," he added.

The left-hander also reckons that the India A series will help the players ahead of the two-match Test series against Australia in October. The Australia series will be an important one for Mominul in particular who is considered by the team management to be more of a Test specialist now.

"No matter where you perform, you are bound to gain confidence. So yes, if I can do well here, I am sure I can learn a lot and be more assured before the Australia series," said Mominul.

A team, or national B team?

SPORTS REPORTER



The national selectors picked a strong Bangladesh A team for their tour of India this month, which they said was an opportunity for the players, especially the pacers, to show their character ahead of the two-match Test series against Australia at home next month. The return of pacer Al-Amin Hossain had special significance, as it looked like an unofficial ban was lifted.

Al-Amin was nowhere to be seen since he was sent home from Australia during the World Cup after a disciplinary breach. Young pacer Taskin Ahmed was also drafted into the team, along with Rubel Hossain and Shafiqul Islam, as the selectors were looking forward to seeing the fit-again right-hander in action in the longer version of the game after the injury.

Another pacer, Robiul Islam, was supposed to make a return, but his fitness was not up to the mark. Shohag Gazi was also left out due to fitness concerns, but according to sources, the selectors were unhappy

with his behaviour. In Gazi's absence Shuvagata Hom was selected. However, the only uncapped player in the team was left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib, who impressed in the domestic circuit, and was selected as cover for Taijul Islam, who has been suffering from jaundice.

"Rubel is a very experienced player. But he hasn't played after the Pakistan series. He missed out on a number of series after that. He is an important player in our team and we want to see him return. The same goes for Taskin. We are thinking of him in the long-term. He is an option for three-day cricket. Hopefully he can do well now," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

SQUAD

Anamul Hoque, Rony Talukdar, Liton Das, Sabbir Rahman, Soumya Sarkar, Mominul Hoque (captain), Nasir Hossain (vice-captain), Saqlain Sajib, Arafat Sunny, Rubel Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Al-Amin Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Shuvagata Hom and Jubair Hossain.

The obvious question was why not young bowling sensation Mustafizur Rahman?

"Mustafizur has been playing a lot of cricket, unlike the other pacers in the side. That's the reason why Mustafizur isn't in the side. The likes of Al-Amin, for instance, need to come back. We didn't consider any disciplinary penalties for him. If you notice, all the pacers in the side have been in and out of the side. So now is their chance," explained Faruque.

"We picked this team keeping the future in mind. There are a number of youngsters in the side, and I believe it will be a big test for them as they are going to face a strong Indian side," said selector Habibul Bashar.

The second-string Bangladesh side will reach Bangalore on September 13 where they will play three limited-overs matches against their Indian counterparts on September 16, 18 and 20 and the second three-dayer from September 27 to 29 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. In between, they will play the first three-dayer against Ranji Trophy champions Karnataka in Mysore over September 22-24.

Hosts bow out with a victory

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh beat India by seven wickets at the BKSP yesterday in their last group match of the ICRC T20 Tournament for People with Physical Disabilities.

The hosts won their second match after beating England in the opening match of the tournament. They however failed to reach the finals since they lost to both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the final of the tournament will be played between England, who beat Afghanistan yesterday, and Pakistan.

After winning the toss, India made a good start. They were cruising at a comfortable 91 for 2 at one point. However, Bangladesh skipper Alam Khan came in and took two wickets in an over. He was aided by Dripam Thrithy's tight slow left-armers and India found themselves in trouble.

They suddenly were down to 95 for 6. A few hits from the lower-order batsmen helped them reach 115.

Kunal from India top-scored with 45 runs. On the other hand Alam scalped three crucial wickets.

Bangladesh's batting seemed more balanced when compared to the last two matches. While they did lose early wickets, a third wicket stand worth 65 runs between Amin Uddin and Shahriar Shamim ensured that Bangladesh didn't make the easy chase look difficult.

Amin Uddin scored 45 runs, while Shahriar remained unbeaten on 42. His patience ensured that Bangladesh finish the tournament on a high.

In the other game of the day, England beat Afghanistan by three runs in a closely-fought match. Batting first England finished on 151 for 5. Callum Flynn was the highest run-getter and scored 50 runs. In reply, Afghanistan were bundled out for 148.

Dhoni, Kohli on India A?

AGENCIES, New Delhi

According to a report on Cricket County, MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli are expected to play for India A in the one-dayers against Bangladesh A later this month.

On Saturday, the Board of Control for Cricket in India announced the schedule for the series, which includes three one-day and two three-day games.

India's ODI and Test skippers have decided to be part of this series in order to prepare for their upcoming ODI series against South Africa.

Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu too are expected to play for India A in the series.



Pacers (from R) Shafiqul Islam, Rubel Hossain and Al-Amin Hossain, who have all been selected for Bangladesh A's tour of India, will be looking to stamp their authority in the main team ahead of the Australia Tests in October while Robiul Islam (L) will be ruing the missed opportunity.

PHOTO: STAR FILE