



Bangladesh players celebrate after their last-gasp 1-0 victory against Qatar in their last Group B match yesterday saw them advance to the knockout stages of the Asian Games men's football event for the first time in history.

'These boys will go down in history'

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta



Bangladesh coach Jamie Day said his charges will go down in history for securing a second-round berth in the men's football event of the Asian Games for the first time following their 1-0 win over Qatar at the Patriot Chandrabhaga Stadium in Jakarta last night.

The English coach, who has been in charge for around eight weeks, applauded his charges for never giving up and playing with a real desire and discipline.

"Before we came, we wanted to enjoy the experience," the 38-year-old said at the post-match press conference. "These boys will go down in history, that's a massive achievement."

"They keep working; they keep running. They can't be faulted for their effort so far. Fitness and organisation is not easy to show in a short period of time," Day added.

The coach seemed visibly and audibly frustrated as Bangladesh failed to find the goal that they needed as there were holes in midfield and the attacking third. But one aspect of the game that stood out was the defensive organisation and a nerveless attitude. The coach did not forget to credit his defenders.

"They dug in and put their bodies on the line. They are hard to beat, hard to break down. They keep working, they keep running. Can't fault their effort so far," he said.

Skipper Jamal Bhuiyan, who scored the all-important goal that took the team to the knockout rounds for the first time, said they had heart.

"Qatar can have all the money in the world, but we had heart," the 26-year-old midfielder said. "It was a good goal. It was not my goal, it was the team's goal and it was a very important one."

The press conference was interrupted briefly as a few of the players came from the dressing room and started to chant 'Bangladesh, Bangladesh'.

When asked about the celebration and the mood in the dressing room, Jamal summed it up nicely. "I haven't seen this in the Bangladesh dressing room before. Beating Qatar is not something you do every day."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Stoppage time ecstasy for booters

ATTIQUE ANAM from Jakarta



The celebrations did not seem to end after the Bangladesh under-23 football team defeated Qatar 1-0 in their final group stage encounter of the Asian Games at the Patriot Chandrabhaga Stadium in Jakarta yesterday.

For a full 15 minutes or more, the Bangladesh dressing room turned into a chorus of 'Bangladesh! Bangladesh!' chants, shortly after a bout of celebrations had taken place on the pitch 10 minutes earlier.

This group of men -- the Bangladesh U-23 football team -- achieved what their predecessors have failed to do for 40 years, secure a knockout round berth in the Asian Games for the very first time. In addition, they did so by beating a team that will definitely lend a few players to their World Cup squad in four years' time.

There were moments of fear and moments of

great frustration thus far in this campaign, and many of those moments went right down to the wire. Yesterday was no exception as the moment that mattered most to Bangladesh came right at the death when skipper Jamal Bhuiyan buried a right-footed strike into the net in the 93rd minute of their last Group B fixture.

Unlike their previous game, a 1-1 draw against Thailand that revived their hopes of a place in the knockout stage, Jamie Day's

BANGLADESH 1 - 0 QATAR
JAMAL BHUIYAN 93'

charges did not put up a dominant performance. Rather, Bangladesh were on the back foot throughout most of the game. However, what was evident throughout the 90 minutes was the discipline in Bangladesh's defensive organisation and also their fighting spirit, a quality the booters had been missing for a

long time.

The 1-0 victory against Qatar ensured Bangladesh's qualification to the second round as the second team from the group with four points, behind group toppers Uzbekistan who won all three of their matches.

Bangladesh started strong with Mahbubur Rahman Sufi threatening the opposition goal in the eighth minute. The 20-year-old then let a gilt-edged chance to score in the 17th minute slip by taking a heavy first touch on a defensive blunder that saw him clear but he failed to shoot past the opposition goalkeeper from a one-on-one position.

That miss could have proved to be costly had the post not denied Qatar skipper Al Saadi Ahmed's free-kick in the 20th minute. While the Qataris were on the ascendancy, Bangladesh eked out one or two chances of their own, notably Jamal's corner in the 37th minute which found Topu Barman free inside the box but the latter's header went straight at

the keeper.

After Qatar dominated the last quarter of an hour of the first half, an increasingly frustrated Bangladesh coach made two changes after the hour mark, bringing on Mohammad Abdullah and Matin Mia in place of Sufil and Saad Uddin.

In the 65th minute, a few slick passes found Bangladesh's Biplo Ahmed on the right and the youngster sidestepped two defenders before having a go at goal but only for the Qatari goalkeeper to complete an excellent save

As the clock ticked down, and with the result in the day's other match between Uzbekistan and Thailand not quite going in favour of Bangladesh, the frustrations grew. However, Jamal emerged from the midfield and sidestepped a defender before calmly picking a spot to the right side of the opposition keeper with an accurate right-footed shot. And that strike sealed history. Bangladesh will face either Saudi Arabia or Iran in the next round on August 24.

Four months later, players still unpaid

SPORTS REPORTER



The player-by-choice system, introduced in the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League in 2013 in an attempt to resolve the non-payment issue of the clubs, has not really changed the scenario till date.

According to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) instructions, the clubs have to pay the players 25 per cent of their fees before the start of the league, 25 per cent at the end of the league's first phase, and the remaining 50 per cent within six weeks of the end of the Super League.

However, Brothers Union cricketers -- former Bangladesh all-rounder Alok Kapali and opener Junaid Siddique -- met with BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday and informed that they are yet to get the remaining 25 percent of their payments from the league which ended over four months ago in April.

"We had communicated with the officials of Brothers Union and they said that we will receive the remaining payment before Eid-ul-Fitr. But despite asking for a specific date we did not receive our payment before Eid. When we contacted them again they said that they will clear our payments before Eid-ul-Adha but still there are no signs of our payment till today

[Sunday]. So we have decided to talk to the CEO and he assured us that we will get our outstanding payments by September," Kapali told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Previously, Kalabagan Krira Chakra cricketers also complained to the CEO about non-payment in May this year.

Kapali said that the board should look after the payment problems surrounding the player-by-choice system, which the cricketers have been opposing from the very beginning.

"I would request the board to ensure the players' payment properly under the player-by-choice system which will be helpful for us as we have agreed whatever they said. Previously when we used to play in the contract system we never missed our payments most times, apart from one or two clubs," he said.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin said that the board is hopeful that the clubs will clear the remaining payments and if not, the board will take its own course of action.

"It's unfortunate that the hundred per cent payment has not been cleared, which is a breach of the clubs' terms with the BCB. But we still hope that the clubs who are yet to clear the players' payments do so soon, and if they are still unable to clear it, the board will take its own course," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.



Brothers Union cricketers Alok Kapali (C) and opener Junaid Siddique (L) are engaged in a discussion after meeting with BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Pandya fifer puts India in control

AFF, Nottingham

Hardik Pandya took five wickets and debutant wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant claimed five catches before India's batsmen piled on the agony for England in the third Test at Trent Bridge.

India were 124 for two in their second innings at stumps on Sunday's second day, an already commanding lead of 292 runs in a game where victory would see them keep the series alive at 2-1 down in a five-match contest.

Cheteshwar Pujara was 33 not out and India captain Virat Kohli, whose 97 was key to his side's first-innings 329, eight not out with three days left in the game.

Earlier, England collapsed to 161 all out in a first innings that lasted a mere 38.2 overs.

All-rounder Pandya took five wickets for 28 runs in six overs, including four for eight in 11 balls, as he revelled in the swing-friendly conditions.

This was the second time this year that England had lost all 10 wickets inside a session of Test cricket following an embarrassing 58 all out against New Zealand in Auckland in March.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 329 all out (Kohli 97, Rahane 81, Dhawan 35; Anderson 3-64, Broad 3-72, Woakes 3-75) ENGLAND: 161 all out (Buttler 39, Cook 29; Pandya 5-28, Sharma 2-32, Bumrah 2-37)

INDIA: Second innings 124 for 2 (Dhawan 44, Rahul 36, Pujara 33 all out; Rashid 1-23, Stokes 1-30)



Four Bangladesh A cricketers who were integral to a largely successful tour of Ireland -- (from L-R) Al-Amin Jr, Mohammad Mithun, Khaled Ahmed and Mizanur Rahman -- arrive at the BCB Academy in Mirpur yesterday.

Soumya realigned in Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh A team returned home yesterday following their successful tour of Ireland, where the visitors tied the five match one-day series 2-2 before winning the three-match T20 series 2-1, with skipper Soumya Sarkar leading from the front with the bat.

It was a crucial tour for the left-hander who joined the team in Ireland after once again failing to score for the national team in their three-match T20I series against West Indies in the Caribbean.

The 25-year-old, who opened the innings in the first T20I, went on to bat at the number four and three positions in the next two games against West Indies but he failed to be of any significance with his scores reading at 0, 14 and 5.

However, Soumya did finally return among the runs when he smashed a fifty in the first T20 against the Ireland A team and followed up by playing another crucial 47-run knock in the series deciding encounter.

The stylish left-hander informed yesterday that he rectified the mistakes

he made against West Indies -- he was dismissed in the last two matches while trying to clear the ropes straight over the bowlers head on both occasions.

"I tried to play with my own style as I play attacking cricket and I worked on my batting since reaching Ireland. If you noticed, I was dismissed in a pretty similar fashion in the last two T20Is in West Indies, when I tried to

expecting a fast delivery, but it was a slower delivery and so my timing was not proper enough to clear the ropes in West Indies. It is one of my main run scoring shots, both against pacers and spinners, and I got results previously. I scored a lot of runs through that shot in Ireland," Soumya told The Daily Star after reaching Bangladesh.

Soumya does not seem worried about his place in the national team for the upcoming Asia Cup though as the confident southpaw also informed that he is only focused on improving his batting while the rest is up to the selectors.

Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Mithun also had success in Ireland as the right-hander struck three fifties on the tour. His blistering 39-ball 80-run knock helped the visitors chase down the challenging 184-run target in the final T20 of the series with six wickets to spare.

"I think it's important for a batsman to understand the situation and bat accordingly. You have to attack when the situation demands. I have different roles when I play in the Dhaka Premier League and it was different in Ireland but I try to play keeping the demands of the situation in mind," Mithun told reporters yesterday.

I realised that there was a technical problem, my body weight tends to shift back while playing that shot and I worked on it.

SOUMYA SARKAR

play over the bowlers head in the straight region and was caught at either long on or long off. I was even dismissed in the same manner in one game in Ireland.

"I realised that there was a technical problem, my body weight tends to shift back while playing that shot and I worked on it. I tried to play hard,