

Saddam's amazing feat

Feni SC forward scores two goals straight from corner kick

SPORTS REPORTER



Feni Soccer Club captain Saddam Hossain perhaps created a piece of history when he scored two goals straight from corner kick in their Bangladesh Championship League match against Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

The young forward curled home from the flag in the 24th minute with opposition goalkeeper Mithun Khalifa, seemingly under no pressure under the bar, helping the ball on its way into the net.

These types of efforts can be seen in international football often, but barely in professional leagues in Bangladesh. However, what was to follow 23 minutes later is probably very rare or even unique in world football. The same player, Saddam, took another corner kick from

the same end, and this time it was an even more difficult shot to keep out. The ball curled in at the near post, with the Fakirerpool goalkeeper caught off guard and seeing the ball sneak into the net.

The 28-year-old forward, who has been plying his trade in the top two tiers of the professional football league for the last eight years, said he felt a bit lucky with the first goal but exploited the opposition keeper's hesitation to score the second.

"I'm feeling good about scoring two goals from corner kick," Saddam told The Daily Star over phone last night.

"I think I was a bit lucky with the first goal as the goalkeeper failed to gather the ball. I noticed his hesitation and nervousness. So I tried to exploit that by squeezing the ball past the near post and I was successful. It was bit difficult for the keeper," said the former Rahmatganj MFS forward, adding that he does not do any extra practice in taking corners.



PHOTO: SCREENGAB FROM MYCUJOJ.TV



Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (2nd from L) and teammates run and stretch during training at the Continassa training ground in Turin yesterday on the eve of their Champions League Round of 16 first leg tie against Atletico Madrid.

Misfiring Kings drop first points

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings dropped their first points in the Bangladesh Premier League when they were held to a goalless draw by Team BJMC at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

The Independence Cup champions, who had won their first five matches on the trot, had shown signs of rustiness in their previous match when they eked out a 1-0 win against strugglers Rahmatganj MFS at home. However, there was no escape for them against Team BJMC, another struggling outfit, as they failed to score and had to end the game with ten men.

Referee Jalaluddin showed a straight red card to Bashundhara Kings defender Nasiruddin Chowdhury, who was adjudged to have brought down opposition skipper Samson Iliyasu in front of the box in the 77th minute. The early pace-setters did navigate the rest of the time without conceding while playing with 10 men, but at the final whistle they turned on the referee for his decision.

Bashundhara Kings forward Bakhtiyar Duishobekov was shown yellow card after the final whistle for remonstrating with the referee

for allowing less injury time than officially stated while coach Oscar Bruzon was restrained by one of his team officials as he tried to attack the referee for the same reason.

The team's manager BA Jubair Nipu blamed a poor playing surface and the wasted opportunities made by his players for not picking all three points.

"Firstly, this pitch is not for proper football. It's a hard and bumpy pitch, where they are used to

TEAM BJMC	0 - 0	BASHUNDHARA KINGS
RAHMATGANJ	2 - 2	MUKTIJODDHA
ZUNAPIO 52', CHOWMRIN 56'		FAMOUSA 14', 20'

playing. But our players are used to playing on better surfaces. So it was difficult for us," Nipu told The Daily Star over phone.

"Still we should have won the game, but our players missed a lot of goal scoring opportunities. We should have won the game by a big margin. However, I don't have any issues with the red card because it was a clear foul," Nipu added.

The draw moved Bashundhara Kings to 16 points from six matches, two points off leaders Abahani who have played seven matches. Team

BJMC, on the other hand, moved to 11th position with three points from seven matches.

Meanwhile, 10-men Muktiyoddha Sangsad were held to a 2-2 draw by Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Ballo Famousa, Muktiyoddha's Ivorian forward, missed a spot kick in the 10th minute, but redeemed himself with a quick brace, slotting home from the middle of the box in the 14th minute before doubling the lead with a diagonal shot six minutes later, thereby taking his tally to seven goals for the campaign. However, The Reds were reduced to 10 men four minutes later after their Japanese forward Yousuke Kato was shown marching orders for a retaliatory punch on Rahmatganj midfielder Rakibul Islam for an earlier foul.

The Old Dhaka outfit used their numerical advantage to good effect, with skipper Siyo Zunapio heading home on the 52nd minute before substitute Chowmrin Rakhaine headed in a rebound after Sohel Rana's shot had bounced off the post four minutes later.

The draw took Muktiyoddha to seven points from six matches while Rahmatganj moved to four points from same number of matches.

'It's like a final'

AFP, Madrid



Massimiliano Allegri told Juventus not to be afraid of Atletico Madrid but for one of these teams their worst fears in this season's Champions League are about to become a reality.

Crashing out in the last 16 would be unthinkable for two clubs that were among the favourites when the draw for the knockout stages was made in December.

"Those that have ambition are not afraid," Allegri said, after his side were drawn to play Atletico, with the first leg on Wednesday at the Wanda Metropolitano.

"It's like a final, we cannot put a foot wrong," Atletico boss Diego Simeone said. Juventus and Atletico Madrid have reached 12 European Cup finals between them, with last season's game in Kiev the first in five years in which neither had featured.

Atletico went on to win the Europa League instead, proving themselves too strong for Europe's second-tier competition, while Juventus were dumped out by eventual winners Real Madrid, undone by a controversial Cristiano Ronaldo penalty in the 98th minute.

It was Ronaldo's 10th goal in seven games against Juventus, having scored twice in the first leg and twice in the final in 2017 too. Juve beat Real in the semifinals two years earlier but even then, Ronaldo managed a goal in each leg.

There was understandable relief, as well as joy, when the Portuguese switched sides last summer and now, there is belief. Ronaldo has not finished in single figures for goals in the Champions league since 2011.

As Lionel Messi said: "They already had a good team and now they have Cristiano Ronaldo."

But with anticipation comes pressure. Juventus are on course to win an eighth consecutive Scudetto but this is the one trophy they crave.

Miss out again and it will be 23 years since they last lifted Europe's premier prize, this time with its most prolific player ever among their ranks.

"We have to be wary of Atletico," Allegri said.

"And we have to find the right moment to score. It's crucial that we get a goal there, otherwise qualification will be very difficult," he added.

SHORT CORNER

Italian side kicked out of Serie C after 20-0 defeat

Italian third-tier side Pro Piacenza were on Monday excluded from Serie C after fielding a team of just seven players in a 20-0 defeat by league rivals Cuneo, governing body Lega Pro announced.

Financially troubled Pro Piacenza, a side from northern Italy, have been unable to pay their players and staff, who have been on strike for several weeks.

Before Sunday's game at Cuneo in Piedmont, northern Italy, bottom club Pro Piacenza had already forfeited three matches and a fourth would have seen them kicked out of Serie C.

Lega Pro sports judge Pasquale Marino on Monday ruled that Pro Piacenza would be excluded from Serie C, with the "farical match" assigned as a 3-0 defeat.

Pro Piacenza will also have to pay a fine of 20,000 euros (\$22,615). --AFP

Oman fold for 24

Scotland eased to a big 10-wicket win after bowling out Oman for 24 in a 50-over match. That is Oman's lowest List A score, and the fourth-lowest of all time.

It took just 17.1 overs for Scotland to bowl their opposition out at Al Amerat, Oman, on Tuesday, as

Ruaidhri Smith and Adrian Neill took four wickets each and Alasdair Evans got two.

Only one Oman batsman could get to double-digit scores: Khawar Ali made 15. Five batsmen were dismissed for ducks; there were three extras in the innings. In reply, it took Scotland 3.2 overs to chase down the target of 25. --ICC

Masakadza retains captaincy

Hamilton Masakadza has been retained as Zimbabwe's skipper across all three formats for the upcoming season which also includes the 2019 World Cup. The Board of Directors of Zimbabwe Cricket, in its latest meeting, came up with important decisions regarding the incumbency of various posts in the board with immediate effect.

The Masakadza-led side drew a Test series against Bangladesh and the Zimbabwe Cricket Board has decided to back him. It is noteworthy though that Masakadza is yet to taste victory as a skipper in the ODIs despite leading the side on 20 occasions.

Meanwhile, Peter Moor's rise as a batsman especially during the last Test series against Bangladesh has seen him being appointed as the vice-captain.

Dilip Chouhan has been appointed as the Zimbabwe men's national cricket teams manager. --AGENCIES



Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero (R) will be looking to score against Schalke in their Champions League Round of 16 first leg encounter tonight. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sarri doesn't fear the sack

AFP, London



Maurizio Sarri insists he isn't worried about being sacked as Chelsea manager despite his troubled side's lacklustre FA Cup surrender against Manchester United.

Sarri faces a fight to save his job after FA Cup holders Chelsea crashed to a 2-0 fifth round defeat at Stamford Bridge on Monday.

Ander Herrera headed United into the lead from Paul Pogba's cross in the 31st minute.

France star Pogba doubled United's advantage on the stroke of half-time when he met Marcus Rashford's cross with a diving header.

Asked if he was worried Abramovich might be ready to wield the axe, Sarri said: "It's not my problem."

"I was only worried about my position when I was in League 2 in Italy, not now."

"I am worried about the results, not about the fans."

International Mother Language Day

আমরাই পথ দেখিয়েছি বিশ্ববাসীকে

বিশ্বের ছয় হাজারেরও বেশি ভাষার মানুষ আজ নিজেদের মাতৃভাষা নিয়ে গৌরব বোধ করে। মাতৃভাষাকে মর্যাদাদানের সংগ্রামে বিশ্ববাসীকে নেতৃত্ব দিয়েছে আমাদের 'রাষ্ট্রভাষা বাংলা চাই' আন্দোলন। মাতৃভাষার মর্যাদা প্রতিষ্ঠায় বিশ্ববাসীকে পথ দেখিয়েছি আমরাই।

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