



Saad Uddin (R) is chased by his ecstatic teammates after the forward gave Bangladesh the lead in the first half of their World Cup qualifying fixture against India at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh denied once more

ANISUR RAHMAN from Kolkata

Bangladesh 1 – 1 India
Saad Uddin 42' Adil Khan 88'

Bangladesh were once again deprived of a win by India when they surrendered a first-half lead to play out a 1-1 draw against the Blue Tigers in the 2022 World Cup qualifying encounter at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

Jamie Day's charges held their lead, provided by Saad Uddin, for 46 minutes before Adil Khan levelled for India with a powerful header in the 88th minute. It was the third time in a row that Bangladesh were denied of a first win over India in 16 years.

Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuiyan told Indian journalists on the eve of the match that they were going to break Indian spectators' hearts and it was the Bangladesh captain who initiated the goal with a brilliant curving shot which beat goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and right-winger Saad Uddin unleashed a clinical leaping header to silence India.

Bangladesh got off to a flying start in front of a near-capacity crowd when left-winger Mohammad Ibrahim darted into the box from the left flank in the first minute before Rahul Beka tackled him from behind, conceding no more than a corner as Syrian referee Masoud Tufayelieh overlooked a clear foul that would have meant a penalty kick for Bangladesh.

India then started controlling the game, keeping the Bangladesh backline on their toes and Sunil Chhetri came close to taking the lead but his side-volley from inside the box went straight to the gloves of goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana in the fourth minute.

The men in red and green kept their feet firmly on the ground and went on the counter in every transition. Yeasin Khan miscued a header off a Jamal corner in the 14th minute before India's Beka narrowly missed the target off an Anirudha Thapa corner in the next minute.

Under pressure from India, Yeasin Khan conceded a free-kick from the edge of the box in the 24th minute, but Shahal Abdul Samad failed to convert.

Bangladesh created a chance eight minutes later when Biplu Ahmed, availing a through-pass from Jamal and a fumble from Adil Khan, entered the box and hit a fierce diagonal low ball for Nabil Newaj Jibon, who failed to connect to an Indian defender cleared it for a corner.

Goalkeeper Rana then tipped over a goal-bound header from Manvir Singh before Riyad Hasan headed a long throw-in from Raihan Hasan wide of the far post in the 37th minute.

Five minutes later, Bangladesh got on the board with Saad's header.

After resumption, India pressed hard for the equaliser but the backline -- marshalled by Yeasin, Riyad, Raihan and Rahmat Mia -- held firm against the hosts, who then twice nearly conceded the second.

In the 51st minute, Biplu sent a defence-splitting through-pass to striker Jibon, who received the ball well to place the far post from the left-hand box, but onrushing goalkeeper Gurpreet saved the day by coming out of the post in the 51st minute. Four minutes later, Ibrahim danced past two Indian defenders to muster a left-footer but the woodwork denied Bangladesh, much to the relief of Gurpreet.

India came close to level the margin on the hour mark but Riyad Hasan made a goalline save off a header from Anas Edathodika.

Bangladesh once again went close to a second when Jibon, receiving a long ball from Jamal, sent the ball over Gurpreet and towards the goal but defender Adil back-volleyed the ball from goalline.

Jamie Day sent three pairs of fresh legs in place of Raihan, Jibon and Ibrahim to resist the constant attack from India, who worked hard in the attacking third but could not break the backline with Yeasin Khan leading the way.

However, Bangladesh were finally beaten with a powerful header from Adil off a corner from substitute Fernandes in the 88th minute.



'Disappointed as we did enough to win'

SPORTS REPORTER from Kolkata

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day expressed disappointment after his charges surrendered a first-half lead during a 1-1 draw against India in their 2022 World Cup qualifier at the Salt Lake Stadium yesterday.

"We played exceptionally against India. The boys executed the plan well and created a couple of good chances in the second half after taking the lead in the first half. I'm also disappointed that we conceded the equaliser in the dying moments because we did enough to get three points."

"We did not expect to win against India in front of some 70,000 spectators. The atmosphere was fantastic and I'm really proud of the performance of the boys tonight," said a gloomy Day at the post-match conference.

"We are 85 places [83] behind India and a draw in front of such a huge crowd is fantastic, but we are disappointed that we could not get the full three points," said the 39-year-old coach.

Bangladesh were seemingly denied a penalty in the very first minute when Mohammad Ibrahim was tackled from behind by a defender inside the box, but Syrian referee Masoud Tufayelieh overlooked the incident.

"There must have been some reason [for

not giving the penalty]. It is a hard job for the referee and I don't want to comment on it because it won't change the result of the match," opined Day.

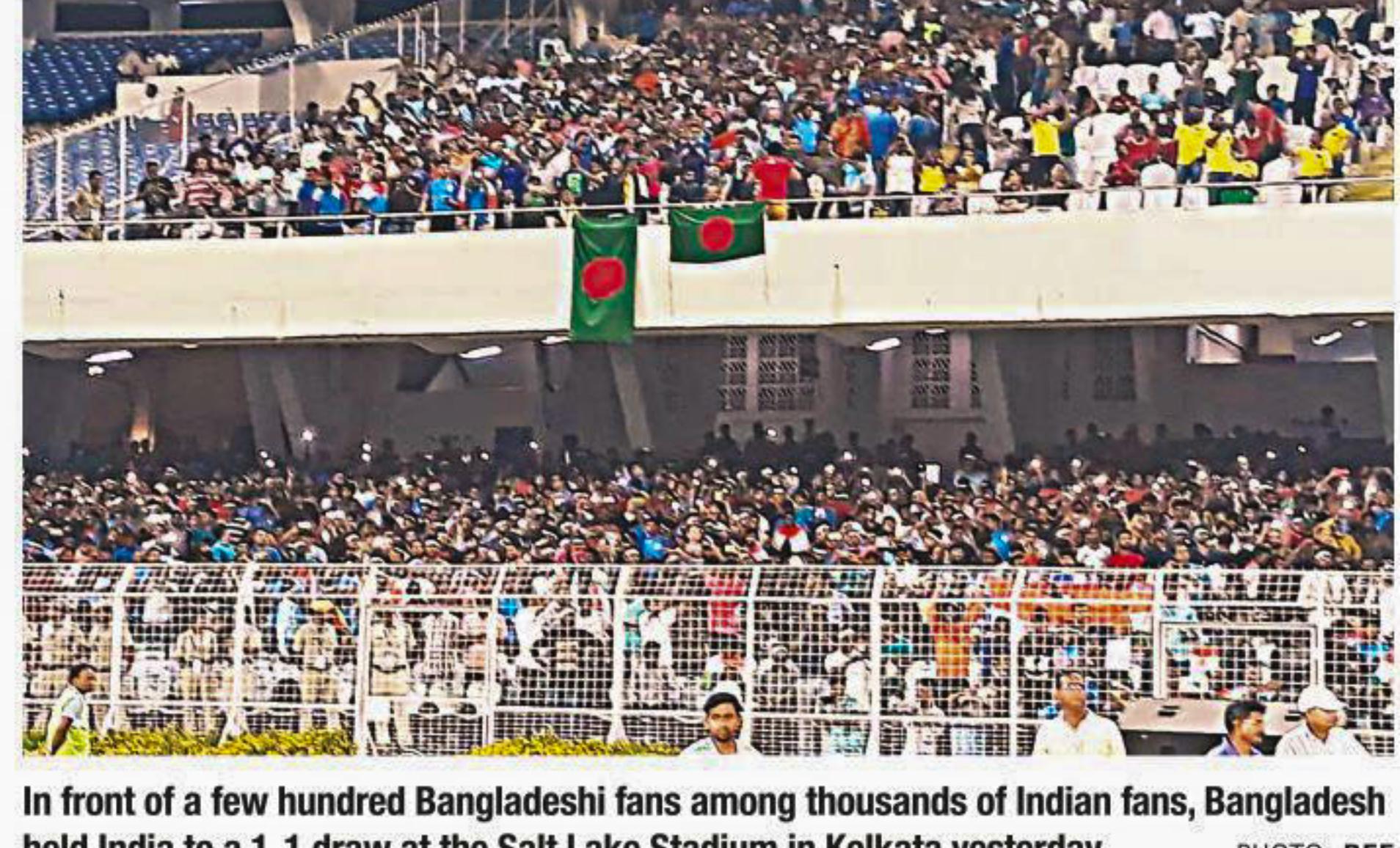
Jamie however admitted that his charges may have gotten tired in the face of the constant attacks from India in the last 10 to 15 minutes and that led them to concede the equaliser.

"I am disappointed to concede the equaliser from a set-piece and a good header with only seven minutes left. We also missed out on two goals in the second half with a goal being saved from the goalline and one striking the bar. We also made a goalline save. The result was fair enough at the end but we could have won the game had the boys gotten through the last seven minutes," said Jamie.

India were on the verge of tasting defeat to Bangladesh for the first time in 16 years before Adil Khan rescued India by heading in an equaliser in the 88th minute. India's Croatian coach Igor Stimac said that they deserved the victory over Bangladesh.

"It was an exciting match and the people who came to the stadium enjoyed the beauty of football. We deserved the victory because the boys pushed hard and got enough chances to win the match but finishing was not good enough. The lack of scoring ability is the reason we did not win the match."

Stimac however congratulated Bangladesh team for putting up a fight.



In front of a few hundred Bangladeshi fans among thousands of Indian fans, Bangladesh held India to a 1-1 draw at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

Infantino due after midnight

SPORTS REPORTER

FIFA president Gianni Infantino will arrive in Dhaka in the early hours of Thursday on a one-day goodwill visit.

The 49-year-old supremo of world football's governing body will be arriving from Mongolia at 1:50am, along with his entourage which includes four high officials.

The FIFA president will pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday morning before meeting Bangladesh Football Federation members at the federation's headquarters.

Infantino will attend a press meet at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the afternoon before leaving Dhaka for Laos at 5:00pm.



Back to basics

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal has been going through a rough patch since the start of the World Cup in England and after a self-imposed break, the left-hander returned to action in the just concluded first round of the National Cricket League (NCL). It was however not a happy outing as he failed to convert his starts in both innings (30 and 46), falling victim to the spin of Mahmudullah Riyad each time. It's no secret that when cricketers like Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim face difficulty, they invariably go to their favourite

mentors like Nazmul Abedin Fahim and Mohammad Salahuddin. Tamim, who preferred not to talk to the media, got an opportunity yesterday to spend some time in the nets with his beloved 'Salahuddin Sir'. Salahuddin however said that it was just a routine session with the star opener.

"I don't think there is anything wrong in his batting. It's a matter of time before he regains his rhythm. When you don't get the result after doing the hard work, there will be frustration. Tamim had worked really hard before the World Cup but unfortunately he didn't get the result," observed Salahuddin.

Minhajul also informed that ace pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who could not play the first round of the NCL due to a slight ankle problem, cannot bowl more than 15 overs in the second round.

Bangladesh, who were humiliated by newcomers Afghanistan during their one-off Test last month, will

face a much tougher challenge from top-ranked India. And while there are myriad areas to improve in, the fitness of the fast bowlers is making the chief selector sweat most ahead of the Tigers' next challenge.

"We have been worried about the pace bowlers for the past six months. If we make a list of 10 pacers then we might find that five are suffering from injuries or are recovering," said Minhajul, who thought that the Bangladesh bowlers still do not have the fitness to scalp all 20 wickets in a Test against the likes of India.

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Squad to be named after 2nd round

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) are not hurrying into the decision of naming the squad for the upcoming tour of India, starting from November 3.

The ongoing 21st edition of the National Cricket League (NCL) has been seen as the perfect platform for players to prove their mettle in order to earn a place for the upcoming tour. However, even though there have been a few notable performances in the first round, it seems that the board will scrutinise a few more areas before making their final decision.

Left-handed opener Imrul Kayes's double-century for Khulna Division against Rangpur Division during their one-off Test last month, will

be the major highlight of the first round, with other players like Kamrul Islam and Taijul Islam also putting in impressive performances.

However, BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin informed that the board would announce the final squad after observing the performances of players in the second round starting tomorrow.

"We will observe for another round in NCL and then we will announce the squad for the India tour. Imrul scored a double century, but just one round [of NCL] has been played. We will know better about how players are performing after another round," Minhajul told reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

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Undaunted for a century

ANISUR RAHMAN from Kolkata

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EDEN GARDENS

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