

SPORT



Arshad Hossain (L) stunned South Korea by giving Bangladesh an eighth-minute lead, but the Koreans fought back to win their Asian Champions Trophy encounter 3-2 at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday. India (R) beat neighbours Pakistan 3-1 in the day's first match.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh go down fighting

India beat arch-rivals Pakistan 3-1

SPORTS REPORTER



A resolute Bangladesh surrendered an early lead to suffer a narrow 3-2 defeat to South Korea in their second match of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy at Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

It was the second defeat in as many matches in the hockey tournament for the men in red and green, who have not featured in international matches since the 2018 Asian Games. And despite being on the face of adversity, the hosts fought bravely against a strong Korean side, who came into the match following a 3-3 draw against Japan and a 2-2 draw India.

After a humiliating 9-0 thrashing at the hands of India in the first match, everyone expected a damage-control performance against South Korea, who had struck 23 goals in the last three meetings between two sides.

However, the charges of Iman Gobinathan Krishnamurthy showed great strength in character to raise the hope of snatching a point but silly mistakes had cost them dearly.

Arshad Hossain gave Bangladesh an unexpected lead in the eighth minute, tapping in a fierce hit from Fazle Rabbi, before Korea levelled the margin in the 15th minute through a penalty stroke.

In the second and third quarters, Bangladesh hardly gave Korea space to unsettle the backline with debutant goalkeeper Biplob Khujur making a couple of good saves. Then the resistance finally broke down in the 47th minute with Ji Woo Cheon scoring a goal in the same manner like Arshad did earlier.

An unmarked Park Cheoleon made it 3-1 in the 54th minute with a fierce hit inside the circle before Deen Mohammad Emon reduced the margin two minutes from time but could not find the equaliser from then on.

"We have been viewed negatively

after last match's performance, so we were determined to stick to the game plan for a better performance. The coach helped us mentally and showed how to play against Korea but we had to lose the match due to some silly mistakes," said goalkeeper Biplob, who was adjudged man-of-the-match.

"It was my first international match for the senior team, so I tried to give something to the nation. The feeling is really good to be named the man of the match in the first international match" said the Abahani goalkeeper.

In the day's first match, hot-favourites India handed an emphatic 3-1 defeat to Pakistan at the same venue and kept their recent dominance intact over archrivals.

Defending champions India have not only consolidated their top position in the five-team table but also kept their unbeaten run against rivals Pakistan to 12 matches in a row, which includes only a draw, while Pakistan with one point from two matches,

remained winless against their perennial rivals India for last five years since their 1-0 triumph in gold-deciding match of South Asian Games in 2016.

Even though the tie between India and Pakistan was deemed to be a mouth-watering battle, the high-voltage tie could hardly enthrall a few hundred spectators who rather watched the erratic passing and poor finishing upfront from both sides but India had the last laugh, thanks to penalty corner conversions.

From the onset, India had been fast to take control of the match through their all-out attack alongside an early lead while Pakistan banked on the counter but their individual efforts and erratic passing kept them at bay.

India took a 2-0 lead within 42 minutes with strikes from Harmanpreet Singh and Akashdeep Singh before Junaid Manzoor reduced the margin in the 45th minute. Harmanpreet wrapped up the victory converting another penalty in the 53rd minute.

U-19s on verge of final

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh went one step closer to a place in the final of the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship by beating India 1-0 in the crucial group stage game at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Shamsunnahar Sr. registered the only goal of the exciting counter through a spot-kick in the seventh minute.

The Maria Manda-led side will take on Sri Lanka in the last group game tomorrow where a draw will be enough for a spot in the final. For the defending champions, any result other than a victory will come as a surprise against the Lankans, who have conceded 16 goals in three games so far.

Prior to the game, India were top of the table with two successive wins while Bangladesh managed to bounce back with a 6-0 demolition of Bhutan after being held by a goalless draw against Nepal in the opening fixture. Thus, yesterday's encounter was a crucial one for the hosts.

Head coach Golam Rabbani Choton introduced three changes in the starting eleven from the previous game, including Nilufar Yasmin Nila, Shamsunnahar Jr, and Marzia, and was rewarded.

"We knew it was going to be a competitive game as India is a strong side. It was a very good game and we played better football to win the match eventually. The fitness of our

players has improved significantly and it is paying huge dividends. Obviously, this win helped us to take one step forward to reach the final although we still have a game remaining in the tournament," Choton told the media after the game yesterday.

Back to the game, the hosts took little time to break the deadlock in the sixth minute when Indian defender Kritina Devi fouled Tohura Khatun inside the box before Shamsunnahar drove the penalty shot home with composure and precision.

Bangladesh headed to the interval with a 1-0 lead but India replied strongly following resumption and created a few good chances. Goalkeeper Rupna Chakma remained busy throughout the second half and saved a couple of shots in the process.

In the 72nd minute, India came close to equalising through a counter-attack but forward Sumati Kumari was unable to utilise the opportunity and despite being one-on-one with goalkeeper, she misplaced the shot by a wide margin.

However, Bangladesh bounced back in the last ten minutes of the game, led by Tohura and skipper Maria, who pressurised the Indian defenders and eventually ensured the positive outcome.

In the other match of the day, Nepal beat Bhutan 4-0 to go to go top of the table with seven points.

They will take on India in the penultimate group game tomorrow. The top two teams of the five-team tournament from the round-robin phase will face each other in the final on December 22.



Woods 'impressive' on return

AFP, Miami

World number six Justin Thomas is excited to see his friend Tiger Woods tee it up alongside son Charlie at the PNC Championship family tournament this weekend, and Thomas's dad Mike thinks Woods fans are in for a treat.

"It's crazy how good he's hitting it and far he's hitting it for what he's been through," Mike Thomas said of 15-time major champion Woods, who suffered career-threatening leg injuries in a California car crash in February.

Woods has downplayed expectations for the event at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club in Orlando, Florida,



saying he's playing "as a dad".

But Mike Thomas -- a longtime club professional who teamed with Justin to win the event last year -- said he'd played a recent round with Woods and found it "impressive where he's at."

"He's got some speed, he's got some length. Hits a lot of really, really flush shots," the elder Thomas said after playing in a Thursday pro-am round. "I mean, I was surprised."

Woods has recently offered some tantalizing glimpses of his progress, posting videos of himself hitting balls on social media and putting in some practice sessions while hosting the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas this month.



England in deep trouble

AFP, Adelaide



England were battling to stay in the second Ashes Test on Friday after Australia removed both openers in a fiery spell under lights on day two to leave the visitors reeling.

The home team declared their first innings on a commanding 473 for nine in Adelaide, leaving England to face a trying 40 minutes against a swinging pink ball.

They didn't fare well with under-pressure Rory Burns lasting just three balls against a rampant Mitchell Starc, edging a rising delivery to Steve Smith at second slip after making just four.

Haseeb Hameed hung on slightly longer before Michael Neser, in for skipper Pat Cummins -- who pulled out of the Test at the last minute over a Covid scare -- bagged his maiden Test scalp.

Hameed, on six, chipped to Starc at mid-on with Neser mobbed by his teammates. Once again, England's fate rests with skipper Joe Root, who was

unbeaten on five alongside Dawid Malan on one as they reached stumps at 17 for two after lightning forced an early halt.

England crashed by nine wickets in the first Test at Brisbane and if they go 2-0 down in Adelaide the Ashes are as good as gone, with Root's men needing to win all three remaining Tests.

"It's been a tough two days obviously, we've spent a lot of time out in the field," said England all-rounder Ben Stokes.

"But we get to turn up tomorrow in the natural light (which) I think most people agree is the easiest and best time to be a batter out in the middle."

He added: "We don't believe we're beaten already." Earlier, Marnus Labuschagne top-scored with a magnificent 103 while David Warner (95) and Smith (93) provided vital support after Australia resumed from their overnight 221-2.

Stokes was the pick of the England attack with 3-113, while Jimmy Anderson took 2-58. Number three Labuschagne completed his epic century after

setting himself up by batting almost all day on Thursday, bringing up his sixth Test ton and first in an Ashes series off a dogged 287 balls.

But he struggled when Ollie Robinson was brought into the England attack and he was trapped lbw, adding just eight runs to his overnight 95.

"It was nice to get that hundred, obviously got a few chances there but that's how it goes sometimes, you ride your luck," Labuschagne said. "It feels like you have to grind for every run that you're out there."

Smith struck a fine 93 to help Australia reassert control after Travis Head and Cameron Green were out in quick succession after Labuschagne departed.

The stand-in captain kept his cool in sweltering Adelaide.

He was ably supported by Alex Carey, who is in the team as replacement wicketkeeper for former skipper Tim Paine.

He looked destined for a 28th Test century but was dismissed lbw to an Anderson ball that pitched up -- the English veteran's first wicket of the tour.

Maradona auction offers 'souvenirs'

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Diego Maradona's fans will have a chance to snap up memorabilia from the soccer star in an auction on Sunday, just over a year after his death, which will include his iconic cigars, a pair of BMW cars and a luxury villa that Maradona bought his parents.

The "10 auction," a reference to his jersey number with Argentina, which he led to World Cup triumph in 1986, is being held by his family to raise funds while legal questions over the distribution of the player's assets are resolved.

Maradona, widely recognised as one of the greatest football players of all time, led a colourful and contentious life, which gained him a huge following of ardent fans but also saw him battle drug and alcohol addiction, along with ill health.

"The five children (recognised children of Maradona) through their lawyers agreed and it was possible to carry out this event in order to raise money. This is only to pay expenses," Adrian Mercado, head of the auction house, told Reuters. "There are many, many things with nostalgic value."

The online auction will take place Sunday at 11 a.m. local time (0800 GMT). Maradona died on Nov. 25 last year at the age of 60 due to cardiac arrest, after suffering several health problems and having previously undergone cranial surgery.

Among the most expensive goods to be auctioned is a house from the 1980s that Maradona gave to his parents in the Villa Devoto neighbourhood of Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires. It will have a starting price of \$900,000.

There are also a number of luxury cars, including a \$225,000 BMW 750, which Maradona once drove onto a soccer pitch.

The 87 lots include lower-value items such as hats worn by Maradona, pictures of the star including one with late Cuban leader Fidel Castro, whom he befriended, soccer shoes and T-shirts, a signed guitar, gym equipment, and a box of cigars.

"Big fans of Diego, who I think will be the ones taking part, will be able to take something home as a souvenir, I have no doubt," said Mercado, who expects a high turnout. "I estimate that at least 10,000, 15,000, or even 20,000 people will see the event. Probably many more," he added. "I hope it's something out of the ordinary, like all the things that Diego showed us in his life."



Bangladesh's quarantine extended

SPORTS REPORTER

The New Zealand Ministry of Health extended the isolation period of the visiting Bangladesh team by three days, meaning the Tigers will now have to be in strict quarantine in their rooms until December 20.

Bangladesh were scheduled to check into their rooms at the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) facility yesterday. However, spin-bowling coach Rangana Herath and a few members of the team testing positive for Covid-19 forced authorities to extend the quarantine.

"As we know, New Zealand is very strict about health protocols. We have previously done a 14-day quarantine. However, ahead of the series we have managed to reduce it to seven days, including three days of room quarantine," Bangladesh team operations manager Nafis Iqbal said through a video message yesterday.

"Originally, it was a 10-day quarantine; at the MIQ for seven days and then we were supposed to check into the hotel, where we could practice. But now we have to remain in room quarantine for the next three days also. We have to stay at the MIQ for ten days," he said, adding that Herath was gradually improving and management was in constant touch with the Lankan.

Bangladesh scheduled two practice games, but with the first warm-up scheduled for December 22 and their isolation extended till December 20, it is uncertain if the Tigers can play that game. The visitors are also scheduled to play a two-day practice game against New Zealand A team on December 28 and 29 ahead of the start of the first Test on January 1.