

# FIFA World Cup Qualifiers: Shekh Morsalin guides Bangladesh to draw with Lebanon

November 22, 2023

**Online Desk:** Promising striker Shekh Morsalin guided hosts Bangladesh to a 1-1 draw with the superior Arabian rivals Lebanon in their home match of the four-team Group I of the FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers at the housefull floodlight Bashundhara Kings Arena here Tuesday evening.

This was the first draw between 183rd-ranked Bangladesh and 104th-ranked Lebanon in their fourth meeting since 2011.

Lebanon had the upper hand in three previous meetings, beating Bangladesh twice against one defeat.

After a barren first half in the day's keenly contested match, substitute forward Majed Osman put Lebanon ahead in the 68th minute with an easy angular shot from a handshake distance, utilising blander mistakes by Bangladesh defender and substitute custodian Srabon (1-0).

Morsalin, who returned to the national squad after facing suspension, levelled the margin for Bangladesh just four minutes later (72nd minute) by a powerful shot amid huge jubilations from house-full local fans (1-1).

Bangladesh partly dominated over their superior rivals, Lebanon, except for the first ten minutes of the goalless first half, where they managed three good chances that were spoiled by Bishwanath Ghosh and Shekh Morsalin.

Bishwanath Ghosh managed the first chance in the 24th minute off a Jamal Bhuyan corner, but his poor header nicely saved the opponent goalkeeper.

Shekh Morsalin spoiled the remaining two chances in the 34th and 44th minutes as he failed to connect the ball home from close.

The match was also keenly contested in the second half, when both teams scored one goal each and left the field sharing one point each.

The Bangladesh team played the day's vital match without two key players, forward Rakib Hossain and defender Saaduddin, who missed the match against Lebanon for receiving the second yellow card in the last match against Australia.

Earlier, in the FIFA World Cup Qualification in 2011, Bangladesh conceded a 0-4 goal defeat against Lebanon in the away match, but Bangladesh returned brilliantly, beating Lebanon by 2-0 goals in their home match 12 years ago.

In the last SAFF Championship held in the Indian city of Bengaluru in June this year, Lebanon played as an invitee team and beat Bangladesh by 2-0 goals, both scored in the last ten minutes of the match. In their opening 2nd round Group I match of the going FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers, Bangladesh made a frustrating start after conceding their 2nd worst 0-7 goals defeat against much stronger Australia in Melbourne last Thursday (Nov 16), featuring a hatrick by Maclaren.

The Bangladesh National Football Team suffered their ever-biggest defeat in international football, losing to South Korea by 0-9 goals in 1979.

But, in their first appearance in the 2nd round Group I match, Lebanon played to a goalless draw with Palestine at a neutral venue in the UAE, also on November 16.

Earlier, Bangladesh earned the rights to play in the six-match Group I matches of the FIFA World Cup's Asian Qualifiers with Australia, Lebanon, and Palestine, eliminating the Maldives in round 1 last month.

Bangladesh will play their remaining four Group I matches next year.

Bangladesh will play their home match against Palestine on March 21, their away match with Palestine on March 26, their home match against Australia on June 6, and their away match with Lebanon on June 11.

Yellow card: Shakil Hossain, Sohel Rana, Shekh Morsalin (Bangladesh), and Jihad Ayoub (Lebanon)

Bangladesh team: Mitul Marma (Mehdi Hasan Srabon), Bishwanath Ghosh, Tariq Raihan Kazi, Isa Faisal, Shakil Hossain, Jamal Bhuyan (Captain), Rabiul Hasan, Md. Sohel Rana, Md. Ridoy (Mojibur Rahman Jony), Foyosal Ahmed Fahim (Rafiqul Islam), and Shekh Morsalin.