

Bangladesh edges Nepal 2-1 in dramatic SAFF Women's semifinal to reach 3rd straight final

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Online Desk : The Bangladesh women's national football team secured their spot in the SAFF Women's Championship final for the third consecutive time with a thrilling 2-1 victory over Nepal. The tense semifinal clash, played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Margao, Goa, was decided by a dramatic stoppage-time winner that kept the defending champions' title hopes alive.

Nepal dominated the early stages of the match with aggressive pressing and superior ball possession. Their efforts paid off in the 23rd minute when Gita Rana capitalized on a corner kick delivered by Deepa Shahi, tapping the ball into the net to give Nepal a 1-0 lead and putting Bangladesh under immense pressure.

Forced into a defensive posture for most of the first half, Bangladesh found a lifeline just before the break. In first-half stoppage time, Ritu Porna Chakma scored a stunning "Olympic goal," curling the ball directly into the net from a corner kick to level the score at 1-1 heading into halftime.

The second half began with Nepal resuming their attacking intensity. Bangladesh narrowly escaped conceding when Nepalese forward Rekha bypassed the goalkeeper, only to see her shot strike the goalpost. Both teams created multiple scoring opportunities as the match progressed, with a 69th-minute curling effort from Nepal's Saru Limbu going just wide.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh goalkeeper Mili made several crucial saves to keep her team in the contest.

Bangladesh had a golden opportunity to take the lead in the 78th minute when Sagarika received a pass from Shamsunnahar Jr., but the Nepalese goalkeeper punched her close-range shot away. As the match seemed destined for extra time after 90 minutes of deadlocked play, the climax arrived deep into the six minutes of added time.

Capitalizing on an excellent team buildup, Sagarika found the back of the net in the dying moments to seal the 2-1 victory, eliminating Nepal and sending Bangladesh through to the championship match.