

# Sports

Former UCI president Hein Verbruggen dead



France edge thrilling friendly against England



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## KOHLI URGES INDIA ON IN BANGLADESH SEMI

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DOHA: Qatar's Mohammed Kasoala (C) attempts a shot on goal during the World Cup 2018 Asia qualifying football match between Qatar and South Korea at the Jassim Bin Hamad stadium in Doha on Tuesday. — AFP

## LATE BLOWS JOLT CHINA, QATAR SHOCK S KOREA

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Ahmad Al Salih's late strike dealt a body blow to China's faltering quest to reach a second World Cup on Tuesday, as blockaded Qatar kept their slimmest of hopes alive with a shock 3-2 victory over South Korea.

Marcello Lippi's China were within reach of only their second win in Group A when Al Salih curled home a free-kick in injury time to leave the scores at 2-2 in their Group A match.

With only two games left, China face the unlikely prospect of making up six points and four goals in goal-difference to snatch third place and a play-off spot in Group A.

Japan were also stunned by a late equaliser from Iraq as they drew 1-1 and failed to establish a cushion from their rivals Saudi Arabia and Australia at the top of Group B.

It was Qatar, however, who were in the spotlight on Tuesday as they took on World Cup regulars South Korea in Doha in the wake of the Arabian Gulf's most serious political crisis in years.

The Qataris, however, appeared calm with Hassan Al Haydos's double powering them to only their second win in eight matches that took their tally to seven points giving them an outside chance of finishing third in their group.

Only the top two teams from each of Group A and B qualify automatically for next year's

World Cup in Russia, while the third-placed sides go into a play-off series.

Al Haydos put Qatar ahead with a brilliant free-kick in the 25th minute and then helped the 2022 hosts consolidate with a fine pass that saw Akram Afif find the net in the 52nd with a right-footed shot from the right side of the box.

The Koreans, who enjoyed a whopping 63 percent of the possession, stormed back into the game with goals from Ki Sung-yeung and Hwang Hee-chang in the 62nd and 70th minutes but Qatar had the last laugh when Al Haydos recorded his second goal off an assist from Rodrigo Tabata just four minutes later.

Earlier in the day, Japan seemed to be cruising to victory in neutral Tehran after Yuya Osako's first-half goal, before the 164cm (5ft 4in) Mahdi Kamil poached the equaliser for Iraq on 73 minutes. Japan lie just one point ahead of both Saudi Arabia and Australia, their final two opponents in what is shaping up to be a blockbuster finish to Group B.

### UAE REPRIEVE

In a night of late equalisers, the United Arab Emirates were the beneficiaries of a stoppage-time strike which at least postponed their elimination.

The UAE were seconds from dropping out of

the running for Russia 2018 when Ali Mabkhout scored from close range in the third minute of added time.

It means UAE are mathematically capable of securing third place in Group B, but like China they need big wins in their last two games and for other results to go their way.

China have only ever reached one World Cup, in 2002, but their national and domestic set-up has been energised by official proclamations about hosting and winning the tournament.

Led by Lippi, who coached Italy to victory in the 2006 World Cup, China recovered from Mahmoud Al Mawas's first-half penalty through Gao Lin's spot-kick and Wu Xi's volley.

But Salih, who had complained bitterly that China's penalty was soft, stepped up in injury time to place his free kick past goalkeeper Zeng Cheng and earn a point for Syria.

Japan remain well placed in Group A but they will be kicking themselves after letting victory slip through their fingers against Iraq.

Japan were looking comfortable with 17 minutes left but after Alaa Abdul Zahra's slalom run into the box the ball bounced to Kamil, who gratefully slammed it home. So far, Iran are the only Asian side to confirm their place in Russia. — AFP

## QATAR COACH IN SHOCK 'RESIGNATION' AFTER WIN

**DOHA:** Qatar national coach Jorge Fossati stunned his own federation by apparently resigning moments after his team beat South Korea to keep the Gulf nation's slim World Cup hopes alive.

As a press conference ended early yesterday morning after the 3-2 win, Fossati thanked the Qatari people and journalists in what sounded like a goodbye speech. Asked by stunned journalists if the game in Doha was his last as national coach, he replied: "Most probably."

Following the press conference and cornered outside the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium, where his team had just won to retain the slimmest of hopes of qualifying for Russia, Fossati told reporters it was time for a change. "If the federation agrees, I don't

want to stand in anybody's way. "I don't like to leave the national team but sometimes you must do what you think is right, not what is best for you," he said. "You cannot put yourself ahead of everybody." He added that Qatari football officials needed to put a long-term plan in place for its development as a football nation.

His announcement seemed to surprise even his own federation. It was announced on Twitter that Qatar Football Association boss Hamad Bin Khalifa Bin Ahmed Al-Thani was "surprised" by Fossati's remarks and would only make a final decision after speaking to the Uruguayan. To muddy the waters a little further, Fossati said he would be willing to help the national team in any capacity if asked. "I love Qatar, I want the best for Qatar." — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**CARDIFF, Wales:** Scoreboard yesterday in the Champions Trophy semifinal between England and Pakistan at Sophia Gardens.

England	3, Mohammad Hafeez 8-0-33-0.
Jonny Bairstow c Hafeez b Hasan	43
Alex Hales c Azam b Raees	13
Joe Root c Ahmed b Shadab	46
Eoin Morgan c Ahmed b Hasan	33
Ben Stokes c Hafeez b Hasan	34
Jos Buttler c Ahmed b Junaid	4
Moeen Ali c Zaman b Junaid	11
Adil Rashid run out (sub Shezhad)	7
Liam Plunkett c Azhar Ali b Raees	9
Mark Wood run out (Ahmed)	3
Jake Ball not out	2
Extras: (11b, 3w, 2nb)	6
TOTAL: (all out)	211
Overs: 49.5 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-80, 3-128, 4-141, 5-148, 6-162, 7-181, 8-201, 9-206, 10-211.	
Bowling: Junaid Khan 8.5-0-42-2, Rumman Raees 9-0-44-2, Imad Wasim 5-0-16-0, Shadab Khan 9-0-40-1, Hasan Ali 10-0-35-	
	Result: Pakistan won by eight wickets

## PAKISTAN THRASH ENGLAND IN CHAMPIONS TROPHY SEMI-FINAL

**CARDIFF:** Pakistan booked their place in the Champions Trophy final with a crushing eight-wicket win over England in Cardiff yesterday.

Set just 212 to win, Pakistan finished on 215 for two.

Pakistan will now face title-holders India in Sunday's final at the Oval if their arch-rivals beat Bangladesh in today's second semi-final at Edgbaston. Azhar Ali (76) and Fakhar Zaman (57) all but ended previously unbeaten tournament hosts England's slim hopes of victory with an opening stand of 118.

But the real damage was done when England collapsed to 211 all out after Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed sent them in to bat on a used pitch.

Paceman Hasan Ali led a disciplined attack with a superb return of three for 35 from his maximum 10 overs. Pakistan's openers then compounded England's misery to the delight of their supporters at a sun-drenched Cardiff. Left-hander Fakhar hit a six-something England didn't manage in their entire innings-when a top-edge off fast bowler Mark Wood flew safe. The dashing Fakhar completed a 49-ball fifty to follow his 50 against Sri Lanka. Azhar, who pulled all-rounder Ben Stokes for six, followed him to the landmark in 68 balls. On a Cardiff ground where they chased more than 300 to beat England in a one-day international last year, Pakistan completed Wednesday's pursuit with a mammoth 77 balls to spare when Mohammad Hafeez pulled Ben Stokes for four. England did avoid a 10-wicket defeat when Jos Buttler stumped Fakhar

off leg-spinner Adil Rashid and Azhar too fell before the finish, pulling Jake Ball into his stumps.

But Pakistan had the game all but won at 173 for two. India thrashed Pakistan by 124 runs in the teams' Champions Trophy tournament opener at Edgbaston on June 4. But three days later Pakistan returned to the Birmingham ground to make a mockery of the rankings by beating South Africa in a bottom versus top clash.

Pakistan then held their nerve in a three-wicket win over Sri Lanka in Cardiff on Monday-a virtual quarter-final for both sides.

England didn't manage a single individual fifty in their innings. Joe Root top-scored with 46 and Yorkshire team-mate Jonny Bairstow, recalled in place of dropped opener Jason Roy, managed 43.

Rumman Raees, in for injured fellow left-arm quick Mohammad Amir, took two for 44 on his ODI debut. England, who were 128 for two, lost their last eight wickets for just 83 runs.

Pakistan had collapsed to 162 for seven chasing 237 against Sri Lanka but, two days on, there was no repeat of that batting slump.

Bairstow replaced Roy after the Surrey opener had managed just 51 runs in eight ODI innings this season. Yet Bairstow, opening for the first time in ODI cricket, had a narrow lbw escape second ball and was dropped on 27 and 42. Raees, denied the wicket of Alex Hales on an lbw review, got his man for 13 when the opener sliced a drive to extra-cover. — AP