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DHAKA, Feb 20: Bangladesh's dreams to reach the AFC Challenge Cup semifinals died on Saturday when they crashed 3-0 to hosts Sri Lanka in the final group match at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Bangladesh begun the tournament in style when they beat former champions and last year's runners-up Tajikistan 2-1 but a 2-1 loss to Myanmar and the upset to Sri Lanka saw Saiful Bari Titu's side finish fourth in the group.

Tajikistan, who hammered Myanmar 3-0 at the same time in the Lankan capital, finished level on six points with Myanmar as both teams qualified for the last four. Tajikistan, though, ended group winners with a better goal difference.

Had Bangladesh won 2-0 against Sri Lanka, who recorded their best ever victory against the regional rivals, they would have made the last four at the expenses of Myanmar but having conceded the lead through Mohamed Kaiz after seven minutes, Bangladesh's miseries were extended when captain and goalkeeper Aminul Haque was sent off in the 36th minute.

Bangladesh replaced striker Enamul to make way for goalkeeper Biplab but Chathura doubled the margin for the home side in the 43rd minute and Sanjeev dealt the final blow in the 79th.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh ended with three points each with the hosts bettering their goal difference in the final match for the third spot in the group.

Bangladesh's Challenge Cup dreams shattered

Sunday, 21 February 2010 03:42 - Last Updated Monday, 19 April 2010 11:31

BANGLADESH team: Aminul, Nasir, Mintu, Nasiruddin, Waly Faisal, Mishu, Shakil (Komol), Mamun, Zahid (Sabuz), Enamul (Biplab) and Emily.