

Jordan tame Syria to reach Asian Cup knockouts

'Messi Jay' stunner puts Thailand back on track

AL-AIN: Jordan won a bruising derby with Syria 2-0 to become the first team to reach the Asian Cup knockouts yesterday, while talisman Chanathip "Messi Jay" Songkrasin hauled crisis-hit Thailand back on track.

In a rowdy atmosphere at a packed Khalifa Bin Zayed Stadium, first-half goals from Mousa Mohammad Suleiman and Tareq Khattab gave Jordan a maximum six points in Group B with one game to go against Palestine.

Vital Borkelmans' team, who stunned defending champions Australia in their first game, could soon be joined in the last 16 by surprise package India, who face hosts UAE later in Group A.

In a febrile atmosphere at Al Ain's Khalifa Bin Zayed Stadium, Jordan slowly asserted dominance and could have scored when Suleiman's mazy run prised open Syria's defence, but Yousef Rawshdeh's shot sailed over.

But on 26 minutes, after a break down the left, the two combined again when Suleiman stabbed home Rawshdeh's shot from close range, triggering deafening celebrations.

Tareq Khattab doubled Jordan's lead two minutes from half-time, when he bundled past Syrian captain Omar Al-Soma to nod in a corner in at the near post.

Syria's Omar Khrbin came close twice after the break, once when his free header cleared the

bar and again when he unleashed a shot which went just wide.

Tempers flared when Jihad Al-Baour pulled back Suleiman during play and a shoving match developed on the touchline, egged on by the crowd.

Saeed Al-Murjan's lunge to get on the end of a free kick was somehow kept out by Syrian 'keeper Ibrahim Alma but the job was already done for Jordan, who celebrated joyously with their fans at the final whistle.

Earlier, bleach-blond Chanathip fired Thailand to only a second Asian Cup win in their history as they beat Bahrain 1-0 to reignite their campaign.

The Consadole Sapporo midfielder's second-half strike was enough for the Thais, who sacked their coach Milovan Rajevac after opening with a shock 4-1 loss to India.

Thailand had no shots on target as Bahrain controlled the first half, with Mohamed Jasim Marhoon and Sayed Dhiya Saeed coming closest as they forced goalkeeper Chatchai Bootprom into a sharp double save.

But Chanathip, whose fans compare him to Lionel Messi, seized victory for the War Elephants near the hour-mark with a superbly struck first-time shot that rocketed past Sayed Shubbar Alawi in the Bahrain goal. — AFP



AL AIN: Syria's midfielder Youssef Kalfa (L) attempts a shot as he is marked by Jordan's defender Feras Shilbaya (R) during the 2019 AFC Asian Cup group B football match between Jordan and Syria at the Khalifa bin Zayed stadium in al-Ain yesterday. — AFP

FA reach settlement with ex-England women's manager

LONDON: The English Football Association (FA) has reached a settlement with former women's national soccer team manager Mark Sampson. The FA sacked Sampson in September 2017 as a consequence of "inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour" in a previous position, and the 36-year-old brought a case of unfair dismissal against the governing body that was due to be heard this week.

"We can confirm that a confidential settlement has been entered into between the FA and Mark Sampson to bring the dispute around the termination of his employment to an agreed close," the FA said in a statement. "We will not be commenting further on the matter." Sampson, who took the England job in December 2013, was sacked one day after the team beat Russia 6-0 in a World Cup qualifier. At the time of his dismissal, the FA said it had been made aware of a full report of an investigation into allegations of safeguarding made against Sampson in 2014, relating to his time at top-flight side Bristol Academy.

The safeguarding assessment was that Sampson did not pose a risk working in the game, but the FA judged the full report of the investigation to have revealed "clear evidence of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour by a coach".

Before his contract was terminated, Sampson was investigated and subsequently cleared after being accused of discrimination and bullying by two England players, Eniola Aluko and Drew Spence. Former Manchester United defender Phil Neville replaced Sampson as England women's head coach in January last year. — Reuters

Jesus hits four as City crush Burton 9-0 in League Cup semi-final

MANCHESTER: Gabriel Jesus scored four as defending champions Manchester City destroyed third tier Burton Albion 9-0 in their League Cup semi-final first leg, a record margin of victory in the competition's last four.

League One Burton, managed by Nigel Clough, the son of former Nottingham Forest boss Brian, must endure another 90 minutes at their own ground on Jan. 23 before City formally book their place in the final. Hundreds of Burton fans arrived late after their buses were stuck in motorway delays and after this mauling, they might well wish they had turned around and gone home.

City, who beat Championship (second tier) side Rotherham United 7-0 on Sunday, are set to face the winners of the other semi-final between Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, which Spurs lead 1-0 from the first-leg.

Manager Pep Guardiola fielded a strong starting line-up and City quickly established their dominance with Kevin De Bruyne steering in a header from an excellent lofted ball from David Silva to open the scoring in the fifth minute. Burton should have drawn level in the 12th minute but Marcus Myers-Harness wasted a glorious chance, shooting wastefully wide when left unmarked at the back post. From then on it was a painful night of damage limitation for the team from the Midlands.

Jesus opened his account on the half hour, heading in from close range after Leroy Sane's shot had been blocked by keeper Bradley Collins, with the ball popping up invitingly for the Brazilian. Four minutes later, Jesus made it 3-0 with a low drive that



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English midfielder Phil Foden (R) prepares to score from a rebound during the League Cup first leg semi-final football match between Manchester City and Burton Albion at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, northwest England on Wednesday. — AFP

went in off the post and then Ukrainian Oleksandr Zinchenko added the fourth, lobbing Collins with a lofted shot from nearly 30 metres out. Jesus completed his hat-trick in the 57th minute with a header from a Riyad Mahrez cross before substitute Phil Foden made it 6-0 in the 62nd-slotting home after Collins had blocked a Jesus shot. The seventh-and Jesus's fourth - was a clever flick from close-range after Sane had once again burst into the area on the left flank.

Burton were completely unable to defend that part of the field and even with Sane subbed off, Mahrez broke into that area and his low cross was turned in by Kyle Walker to make it 8-0. Mahrez poked in the ninth after good work from substitute Bernardo Silva and that was all for City despite the crowd urging them to push for a 10th goal. City's record victory was a 12-0 FA Cup win over Liverpool Stanley in 1890. The Blues beat Huddersfield Town 10-1 in the old Division Two in 1987. — Reuters