



Malaysia's Shahril Saabah (centre) vies for the ball with an India player in an Asia Cup round robin match in Dhaka, Bangladesh yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF ASIA HOCKEY FEDERATION

HOCKEY

GREAT FIGHTBACK

Malaysia slay Pakistan despite trailing twice

JUGJET SINGH
jugjet@nst.com.my

MALAYSIA came from behind twice, to beat Pakistan 3-2 in the round robin of the Asia Cup in Dhaka, Bangladesh yesterday.

Even though Malaysia were dealt two early blows, the national team still went on to beat Pakistan on sheer grit.

Malaysia's next match is against World No 6 India today, and a win will almost assure them a place in the final.

Umar Bhutta scored a first minute goal, and just as Malaysia started to claw back into the game, Faizal Shaari took a nasty knock on his mouth and with blood oozing, left the pitch for medical treatment and was out for a good 10 minutes.

But Malaysia found the much needed equaliser off their first penalty corner in the 10th minute.

This time, Razie Rahim made sure with a low flick for his first goal of the tournament.

But Pakistan re-took the lead, off another soft goal when Muhammad Yaqoob tapped in from close range in the 19th minute.

Shahril Saabah put Malaysia back into the fight, with a sly tap in from close range in the 25th minute.

And Fitri Shaari made it 3-2 when he scored from a penalty stroke in the 34th minute. The stroke was awarded when Pakistan goalkeeper Mazhar Abbas slammed his pads into Haziq Samsul's stomach.

Haziq was stretched out, but Malaysia held on to win and keep their hopes of playing in the final alive.

AT A GLANCE

ASIA CUP ROUND ROBIN RESULTS						
MALAYSIA	3	2	PAKISTAN			
INDIA	1	1	S. KOREA			
STANDINGS						
	P	W	D	L	F	A
MALAYSIA	1	1	0	0	3	2
INDIA	1	0	1	0	1	1
S. KOREA	1	0	1	0	1	1
PAKISTAN	1	0	0	1	2	3
FIXTURES						
TODAY						
SOUTH KOREA	v					PAKISTAN
				(5pm)		
MALAYSIA	v					INDIA
				(7.30pm)		
SATURDAY						
MALAYSIA	v					SOUTH KOREA
				(5pm)		
INDIA	v					PAKISTAN
				(7.30pm)		
* Malaysian time						