

Persepolis Advance to Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16



Mohammad Abbaszadeh scored the first goal in 15th minute to give the Red the lead against the Karegar FC of Bushher.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Persepolis football team qualified for Iran's Hazfi Cup round of 16 after defeating second division Karegar of Bushehr.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Thursday, Persepolis beat Karegar 3-0 in front of less than 500 spectators.

Mohammad Abbaszadeh gave the Reds a lead in the 15th minute.

Payam Sadeghian found the back of the net from the penalty spot in the 77th minute and Omid Alishah made it 3-0 in the 88th minute.

Persepolis has been scheduled to face Rah Ahan in the next stage.

FIFA World Cup Bidding Report Cannot be Published for Legal Reasons – Judge

ZURICH (The Guardian) - The German judge overseeing FIFA's investigation into the controversial bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups has insisted that the report cannot be published in full for legal reasons, but promised an overview of the main findings by the middle of next month.

Hans-Joachim Eckert, the chair of the adjudicatory arm of FIFA's ethics committee, received the potentially explosive 360-page report and 200,000 pages of supporting documents from Michael Garcia, the former US attorney for the southern district of New York who is head of the investigatory arm, last month.

Ever since, a battle has raged over whether and when it will be published. Garcia and several members of the FIFA executive committee have called for it to be published in full, with names redacted to protect whistleblowers, in order to help restore FIFA's battered credibility.

Eckert has now moved to clarify the situation in an interview posted on FIFA's website, promising to deliver a statement by mid-November at the latest but again ruling out full publication of Garcia's report.

"The statement will contain an overview of the investigation report, a summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report, as well as a brief evaluation of the same," he said.

The German judge, appointed as part of FIFA's reform process as it tried to come to terms with the fallout from a string of corruption allegations, said that because those interviewed had been promised confidentiality it would be all but impossible to publish the report in full.

"Publishing the report in full would actually put the FIFA ethics committee and FIFA itself in a very difficult situation legally," he said. "What is more, we have to respect

the personal rights of the people



Sepp Blatter, in 2010, announces that Qatar will host the 2022 World Cup, the bidding process of which is being investigated

mentioned in the report, which in the case of full publication of the report would in all likelihood not be possible."

Garcia reiterated his call for more transparency in a speech to US lawyers in London earlier this week but Eckert insisted there was no rift between them. He said: "Michael Garcia has never said that the report should be 100% published. He merely said that the 'appropriate' publication of his report should be authorized. The deputy chairman of the adjudicatory chamber and I now have the task of drawing up this appropriate form for publication.

"Part of my current examination involves deciding what form this appropriate publication should take, whether this means issuing a statement regarding the investigation report or whether certain parts of the investigation report will be published while maintaining anonymity, or indeed a combination of these possibilities. This decision is exclusively a matter for the adjudicatory chamber – neither the investigatory chamber nor the FIFA ex-

ecutive committee can decide. The main requirement is that personal rights must not be damaged."

Eckert, who has been under pressure to clarify his position, said in September that his own judgment based on Garcia's investigation, likely to be delivered early next year, would not go down well with many at FIFA. "Many won't like what I am going to tell them," he warned.

He also attempted to deal with claims that Garcia was compromised because he was an American citizen investigating a bidding race in which the US played an integral part. The US would be in pole position to host the 2022 tournament if it was stripped from Qatar.

"It must be pointed out that the main report has been produced not by Michael Garcia alone, but also by the deputy chairman of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA ethics committee, Cornel Borbély. In fact, the report into Russia and the USA was produced solely by Cornel Borbély," said Eckert.

"This is because Michael Garcia

was unable to take part in some parts of the investigation due to the possibility of conflicts of interest, for example in the case of the American bid [as he is a US citizen]."

Controversy has surrounded the controversial and chaotic decision to award the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar ever since the vote in December 2010. Mohamed Bin Hammam, the disgraced former president of the Asian Football Confederation, has been linked to paying a string of bribes during the Qatari's failed bid to become FIFA president, with some linking his activities to the concurrent Qatar 2022 bid. The failed bidders, including the US, Australian and England, also come under scrutiny.

Eckert has said that only four people have access to Garcia's report, but other sources claim to have seen parts of it. It is said to focus on breaches of the ethics code by several individuals but Eckert and the FIFA president, Sepp Blatter, have said that only FIFA's executive committee would have the power to strip either Russia or Qatar of the World Cup. Garcia travelled to all the bidding countries, except for Russia where he is barred from entry due to the country's continuing dispute with the US over sanctions, to gather evidence over an 18-month period.

In his speech in London, Garcia called for a culture change among FIFA's leadership and called for an end to the prevailing veil of secrecy at the Zurich-based governing body. "The investigation and adjudication process operates in most parts unseen and unheard," he said. "That's a kind of system which might be appropriate for an intelligence agency but not for an ethics compliance process in an international sports institution that serves the public and is the subject of intense public scrutiny."

Blatter Is Not Serving Football Anymore, Says Platini



FIFA President Sepp Blatter speaks with UEFA President Michel Platini (L) before the 2014 World Cup Group G soccer match between Germany and Portugal at the Fonte Nova arena in Salvador June 16, 2014.

PARIS (Reuters) - UEFA president Michel Platini hit out at FIFA chief Sepp Blatter on Friday, saying the Swiss has stopped serving the cause of football.

"Sepp is not the president of FIFA anymore. He is FIFA," Frenchman Platini, whose book "Let's Talk About Football" was released this week, told sports daily L'Equipe.

"Platini, Pele, Blatter, (former FIFA president Joao) Havelange must

yield to the interests of football.

"One must not use football, but serve football."

Platini, 59, has no regrets for not running against Blatter who is likely to secure a fifth term at next year's elections. "It was not the time. I do not regret anything. One day maybe. We will see," he said.

The former France great, who led Les Bleus to their Euro 1984 title, was re-elected as UEFA president in 2011.

Do Liverpool Really Have a Fanbase That's Twice the Size of the American Population?



Here's a picture of the plans to expand Anfield to a capacity of 54,000:

LONDON (Telegraph) - Big numbers are difficult. Difficult to comprehend, difficult to parse and difficult to add. Not difficult to chuck around with gleeful, careless abandon, though.

In a time when a company like Apple sells \$171bn of things in a year, a band like One Direction have 20.9 million Twitter followers, and a TV show like Mrs Brown's Boys reaches 3 (three) series, it's unsurprising that football wants to bring its own many-zeroed numbers to the big table of boasting.

Often this happens in the metaphorical urination contest of rising transfer fees and wages, when some players are bought as an exercise in proving that clubs are loaded:

But there's another sort of numerical showing-off open to football clubs, and that's in ever-rising and increasingly incredible claims about the size of their fanbase.

Billy Hogan, chief commercial officer of Liverpool said this earlier in the week. Our research tells us we've got 580 million fans globally.

Five. Hundred. And. Eighty. Million.

That means, that if Liverpool supporters declared independence and became a country, it would be the third most populous nation in the world.

In fact, five hundred and eighty million is almost two Americas, if the second states of Texas and New York decided to support someone else.

Liverpool are by no means the only club stretching the limits of credibility and truth-telling by claiming outlandishly large support numbers.

In 2012 Manchester United claimed to have 659 million fans. That would make just over nine per cent of the world United fans. In the same year

Barcelona claimed 349 million. How many Catalonias is that?

There's more. Real Madrid have an estimated registered fan base of 750m (more people than live in Europe), Bayern Munich say 292 million, Inter Milan 260 million (more than double the population of Japan and 120m more than AC Milan), and Juventus 170 million.

Elsewhere at home, Tottenham say they've got 179 million, (60m more than Arsenal...), Newcastle United reckon 6 million and Man City are saying a modest 18 million, but in fairness they've only been good for five years.

Only adding the totals of the clubs already mentioned, how many football supporters is that over the world?

That, remember, is just the claimed number of fans of the 12 clubs we mentioned: Liverpool, Manchester United, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Inter Milan, AC Milan Juventus, Tottenham, Arsenal, Newcastle and Manchester City combined.

It does not include the millions of people that support all of the other football teams like Wrexham, the Portland Timbers and Boca Juniors.

And yet, here's how many people around the world actually have an interest in football, according to a study by Repucon.

Americans that stated they would have "no interest at all" in watching the 2014 World Cup. Two thirds of the third most populous country in the world doesn't care about football.

Worldwide viewing figures for the 2014 World Cup final. How many football fans don't watch the World Cup final? More than two billion who support that list of 12 clubs, apparently.

Leandro Damiao Faces Six-Game Ban

BRASILIA (Daily Mail) - Brazilian striker Leandro Damiao is facing a six-game suspension for pulling his own jersey inside the penalty area.

Brazil's sports tribunal said it had charged Damiao for attempting to dupe the referee into awarding his team a penalty kick.

Television images showed the 25-year-old holding his jersey backward while he made a run inside the area in Santos' 3-0 loss at Criciuma in the Brazilian league.

When asked about the incident, Damiao denied he was looking

for a penalty, saying his jersey got stuck to his skin and he was trying to get it loose.

Damiao was once involved in a long running transfer saga involving a potential move to Tottenham earlier in his career.

Spurs were interested in landing the 2012 London Olympics top scorer as late as last summer, when he was at Internacional.

But the north London outfit balked at the Brazilian side's £18million valuation before swooping for Roberto Soldado.



Damiao attempted to con the referee into thinking a defender was pulling the shirt in an attempt to win a foul