

India grouped with tough opponents in Asia Cup qualifiers

India have been grouped with top continental sides United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Uzbekistan in Group C for the final qualifying round of the 2011 Asia Cup football tournament.

Uzbekistan, at 55, is the highest FIFA ranked team in the group followed by UAE (106), India (153) and Malaysia (166).

The draw was made here Thursday at the Aspire Dome.

With UAE and Uzbekistan, who are on the home stretch of qualifying race for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, in the group, India's chances of making the final round are tough.

But, India can still qualify for the Asia Cup, if they manage to win the AFC Challenge Cup they are hosting in the last week of this month or the one in 2010.

In the draw for the Asia Cup qualifiers, 20 teams were divided into five groups of four with the top two teams from each group qualifying for the tournament proper along with defending champions Iraq, runners-up Saudi Arabia, third-placed Korea, hosts Qatar and the champions of Challenge Cup 2008 and 2010.

Groupings for Asia Cup qualifier:

Group A: Japan, Bahrain, Hong Kong, Yemen

Group B: Australia, Indonesia, Oman, Kuwait

Group C: Uzbekistan, UAE, Malaysia, India

Group D: Vietnam, China, Syria, Lebanon

Group E: Iran, Thailand, Jordan, Singapore

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