

My boys played commendably: Houghton

India's chief football coach Bob Houghton Thursday lauded his boys' performance under adverse conditions that helped them move into the AFC Challenge Cup final.

'It was a very heavy and bad ground. On such grounds all your techniques go for a toss. The way my boys played on was commendable and I have no complaint because the result was in our favour,' Houghton told reporters after India defeated Myanmar 1-0 at the Gachibolwi Stadium.

Heavy seasonal rain for the last 36 hours made the ground slushy and heavy right at the start. And as the match started, a light drizzle turned into a heavy shower making it difficult for both teams.

'In the first half we defended very badly but it was a much improved performance in the second as we created lot of openings,' Houghton added.

The 60-year-old Englishman went on to say that it is a great moment for India because they will play their third final in 12 months.

'It is a crucial moment for India and it may turn out to be a great moment for us as well. The target is to win this tournament and qualify for the 2011 Asia Cup. And playing that tournament would be a great achievement for us,' he added.

Sunil Chhetri, who slotted the winner, was relieved as he scored after a long time.

Asked when was the last time he scored a goal, the forward said: 'Thanks for remembering me when was the last time I scored a goal. It was against Bhutan in the SAFF Championships. I know I have been missing lot of opportunities in recent times and it feels good to break the jinx.'

Abhishek Roy (© IANS / India eNews)