

# Peregrine pipers with cure

By Al Amin

A foreign referee did the magic. Like the fabled pied piper, Ishak Ismail, a FIFA referee from Malaysia, made the booters of the country's traditional superpowers — Mohammaned Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra — play to his tune at the Dhaka Stadium on September.

So surprisingly sober was the behaviour of the booters and consequently, their admirers that for a while the outcome, the standings paled into insignificance.

It was altogether a different scenario with players gamely accepting each and every decision made by the Malaysian — a yellow card or even the dreaded red card ruling went undisputed.

For the saner section of the crowd, it was an eagerly-awaited change, and for the local referees, it must have seemed to be a hypothetical proposition.

Apart from the traditional spicy flavour it contains, the clash of the local titans has always been highlighted by undesirable but inevitable incidents — the referee being manhandled by aggrieved camp. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the referee selected to supervise one of these high-voltage encounter

the very beginning and his grip on the game never slackened. The result — hardly any disturbing incident in the whole of the 90 minutes.

The introduction of foreign referees in the Star Premier Division looked inevitable with almost each and every club rallying from the very onset against poor and biased ruling by the local men in black. Although organisers, the Dhaka Metropolis Football Association (DMFA) had a plan to arrange for foreigners to conduct the matches, their plan took a long while to realise. Late it may have been, the point to ponder here is that they did it. It's better late than never.

The DMFA scheme paid off readily, the biggels, often the ones making life miserable for the men in the middle, overnight sobered and mustered commendable self-control. The credit should go to Ismail bin Yacob and his three compatriots.

The Malaysian quartet impressed on its Star Premier debut and touched the hearts of scores of soccer fans and observers when they refused to take match money from the organisers.

The Malaysian Referees' Association (MRA), formed a few years back, has been a success story ever since its inception.

# Muktijoddha, homeward ho!

Sports Reporter

The touring Muktijoddha Sangsads Krira Chakra had their doom announced when Yemen beat India 2-0 in the last Group B match of the Qatar Independence Cup invitational football tournament at the Khalif International Stadium in Doha on Sunday.

Muktijoddha, who lost to neighbours India 2-4 in the first match before recording a solitary goal victory over Yemen, would have gone through to the final had India won or at least forced a draw.

With three teams tied on two points from as many engagements, the two semifinal slots were decided on better goal difference.

The team is likely to come back home today.

## AB Bank TT

Brothers Union, Armanitola Juniors and Wari Juniors registered straight sets wins in the AB Bank Metropolis table tennis league at the Dhanmondi wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB.

Brothers Union beat Combined Sporting, Armanitola Juniors defeated Swamibagh Boys and Wari Juniors outplayed Ajax SC in their opening matches in the afternoon.

Swamibagh TTS started their league campaign receiving a walkover against Lalmatia Club, also in the afternoon.

**Tuesday's matches:** Bangladesh Biman vs Bangladesh Bank, Armanitola JS vs Purba-Chal Parishad, Inter Sports vs Cynthia Sporting and Wari Club vs Dhaka Mariners Club.

## Bima win

Sports Reporter

Sadharan Bima KS came from behind to register a 3-1 win over promoted Muslim Institute in one of the two Star First Division football league matches billed for the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

With this crucial victory Sadharan Bima moved into the third position, collecting 14 points from 11 matches while Muslim Institute remained well inside the relegation zone with four points from 11.

In the day's first match, Muslim Institute took the lead in the very fifth minute when Rezaul Karim placed the ball past a diving Bima custodian Hima.

Bima restored parity in the 20th minute through striker Hassan who found the net with an angular drive.

Shahkawat then struck his sixth goal of the league on the stroke of the breather to double the winners' margin before Munna sealed the fate of the match ten minutes into the second half by a neat placing shot.

In the second match of the day, a missed penalty dashed Dhaka Wanderers' hopes of registering their first victory in the league as the Motijheel outfit once again settled for a draw with Farashganj.

Wanderers, whose collection now stands at seven from 11 matches, maintained their dubious status of being the only team not to have recorded any victory while it was Farashganj's seventh draw to raise their tally to 12 from eleven matches.

No matches will be held today.

## Fan jailed

**BORDEAUX, France, Sept 19:** A fan who ran on to the pitch and punched an opposition goalkeeper during a First Division match was jailed by a Bordeaux court on Monday, reports Reuter.

John Spencer put Chelsea level 10 minutes after the interval following a blunder by Blackburn's Norwegian defender Henning Berg but Sutton ensured all the points went to Blackburn.

Full-back Lee Dixon pushed Newcastle's Belgian defender Philippe Albert as they jumped

for Fox's corner right on half-time. Beardsley scored from the resultant penalty.

Chris Sutton netted Blackburn's winner at Chelsea in the 66th minute, his fifth goal for the club since his five million pounds sterling (7.8 million dollar) close-season transfer from Norwich.

Blackburn are unbeaten in the league this season but suffered an upset 1-0 home defeat against Swedish part-timers Trelleborgs in the Europa Cup first round first leg match last Tuesday.

Blackburn went in front in the 27th minute when Chelsea's Norwegian defender Erlend Johnsen deflected a cross from former Chelsea player Graeme le Saux into his own net.

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**Masya upstages Tanui**

**NEWCASTLE, England, Sept 19:** Kenyan Benson Masya recorded the fastest half marathon time in the world this year as he won the Great North Run from Newcastle to South Shields Sunday in a thrilling fashion, reports AFP.

He clocked 1 hr 2 secs to pip compatriot Moses Tanui, the world steeplechase champion, by just one second, after the pair had been well ahead of world-record pace until the last mile.

They then jockeyed for position before dashing for the tape with 25 yards to go.

Paul Tergat, whose 1 hr 13 secs was the previous fastest time in the world this year, completed a one-two-three for Kenya by coming third in 1 hr 42 secs.

He ran with Masya and Tanui for most of the race until dropping back with about two miles to go.

— Star photo

I. R. Ishak Ismail, Ishak bin Yacob, Abdur Rahman and Krishnan Doriswami — who recently came to Dhaka to conduct some of the Senior Division football league matches, as a sequel to authorities' decision to introduce neutral, foreign referees following persistent criticism against alleged incompetent supervision by the local

whistlers.

regards his assignment no more than a punishment.

However, the September 5 tie somehow seemed destined to be different. Ishak, the 52-year-old veteran, had things totally under his control from

anything from abroad and condemning the local ones to prevail, the help from the likes of Ishak will be sought after without giving country's referees a chance to prove their worth.

The association holds monthly meetings to familiarise its members with latest innovations in refereeing. The MRA members, assembled from 13 different states, have to go through fitness tests.

Beresford header to prevent Newcastle regaining the lead almost immediately and later repeated his acrobatics to keep out Andy Cole's low.

But those scores apart, it was Arsenal who called the

Blackburn win 2-1 at Chelsea to move into second place on 14 points, ahead of Nottingham Forest on goal difference and one point clear of title-holders Manchester United who beat Liverpool 2-0 on Saturday.

Arsenal's defeat by Newcastle was their third in six games but the London side played their part in a pulsating encounter, coming back bravely from Martin Keown's seventh-minute own goal to force the pace throughout.

Defender Tony Adams equalised almost immediately but Arsenal went behind to a penalty in first-half injury-time by fellow England international Peter Beardsley, who was playing his 500th league game.

Ruel Fox made it 3-1 for Newcastle 16 minutes from the end, though England striker Ian Wright briefly revived Arsenal hopes by shooting in off a post with two minutes to go.

Wright, however, missed a last-ditch chance of an equaliser when he just failed to force home the last of Arsenal's 17 corners in stoppage time.

Swiss defender Marc Hottiger paved the way for Newcastle's opener when he raced away on the right.

His cross was beaten away but it fell to Beardsley, whose 20-metre shot looked to be going wide until Keown threw himself at it and headed in a deftly past helpless Arsenal goalkeeper David Seaman.

Within two minutes Arsenal were level, skipper Adams scoring his first league goal for more than two years and Arsenal's first in five league games.

Paul Merson's free-kick should have been cleared by Scott Sellers but Sellers allowed Adams to muscle his way in for a shot which Czech goalkeeper Pavel Srnicek courageously parried away only to see the big England defender follow up with a header.

Seaman dived on a John

Action from yesterday's Star First Division match between Sadharan Bima won 3-1.

— Star photo

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