

Peregrine pipers with cure

By Al Amin



A foreign referee did the magic. Like the fabled piper, Ishak Ismail, a FIFA referee from Malaysia, made the booters of the country's traditional superpowers — Mohammedan 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 league 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 Metropolitan 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 biggies, 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 incep-

widely known as Cooper test, twice a year. Only those who qualify earn the right to conduct matches at the national level.

Relating the activities of the association and its impact on Malaysian to this reporter, Ishak, a traffic control officer by profession, said, "Three years ago, in a league match the referee was manhandled by player. The culprit, a national footballer, was suspended for three years."

What about external influence? Negative was the soft-spoken Malaysian's answer. However, he said, "For top level soccer, a match commissioner is necessary to avert untoward incident."

"To be a good referee, you must constantly be within 10 to 15 feet of the ball," said Ishak, emphasising once again on supreme physical fitness. Besides, every referee should be conversant with the latest development regarding the game's rules and regulations."

Assessing his local counterparts Ishak admitted there definitely is space for improvement but suggested they should be given enough leverage to perform their duties.

Theoretically a sound proposition but in this country's context, one may feel, almost, if not totally, impractical. As long as the typical Bengalee attitude of adoring

Muktijoddha, homeward ho!

Sports Reporter

The touring Muktijoddha Sangsad 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 Khalifa 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 Metropolitan 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 Lalmaia Club, also in the afternoon.

Tuesday's matches: Bangladesh Biman vs Bangladesh Bank, Armanitola JS vs Purbachal 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 promotees 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 played the ball past a diving Bima custodian Himu.

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

Shakhawat 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 Reuters.

Oliver Ecker, 31, who felled Lens goalkeeper Guillaume Warmuz with a punch at Bordeaux's Parc Lescure on September 10, was given a four months prison sentence, of which three-and-a-half months were suspended.

Ecker was also ordered to pay a 4,000 francs (dollar 750) in damages, half to Warmuz and the rest to the two clubs involved, and banned from attending Bordeaux matches for two years.

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 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.



VfB Stuttgart Franco Foda (R) gets away from Eintracht Frankfurt's Anthony Yeboah's tackle during their Bundesliga match on Sept 18. Stuttgart blanked Frankfurt 4-1.

— AFP photo

Gullit proves Lazio's bane



PARIS, Sept 19: Ruud Gullit was on target twice for AC Milan who bounced back from a midweek upset in Europe to beat Lazio 2-1 and move into second place in the Italian league table on Sunday, reports AFP.

The European champions remain two points behind Parma — the only side left with a 100 per cent record in the league. Parma beat Cagliari 2-1 at home.

Gullit helped shake off Milan blues following their 2-0 loss against Ajax at Amsterdam with goals in the 77th and 88th minutes. He scored the first with a header from a Dejan Savicevic centre and then produced a tremendous burst of pace through the Lazio defence to score the second.

The 32-year-old, who was farmed out by the club last season because he was considered over the hill, has made a decisive comeback.

He was also on target with his first goal of the season in last week's 1-1 draw with Cagliari.

Parma move into pole position thanks to Portuguese import Fernando Couto, signed last season from Porto, who was inspirational in midfield. Dino Baggio scored Parma's first goal after 30 minutes and Couto got the second a minute before half-time. Cagliari's Brazilian-born Belgian striker Luis Oliveira pulled one back after 55 minutes.

In other matches, Fiorentina beat Cremonese 3-1. AS Roma were 3-0 winners at home to Genoa and Sampdoria humiliated 3-2 in midweek by Norwegian part-timers Bodo Glint, were held 1-1 at home by Foggia.

LA CORUNA UNBEATEN

In Spain, Deportivo La Coruna remained the only team with a one hundred per cent record when they notched up their third straight win with a 2-1 victory at Racing Santander.

The home side went clear through Villabona in the 23rd minute but Salinas and Manjarin were then on target for the visitors.

Champions Barcelona struggled to earn a goalless draw against pacesetters Espanol in a tense, scrappy Catalan derby. But coach Johan Cruyff was satisfied enough with the night's work.

"I think it was a fair result,"

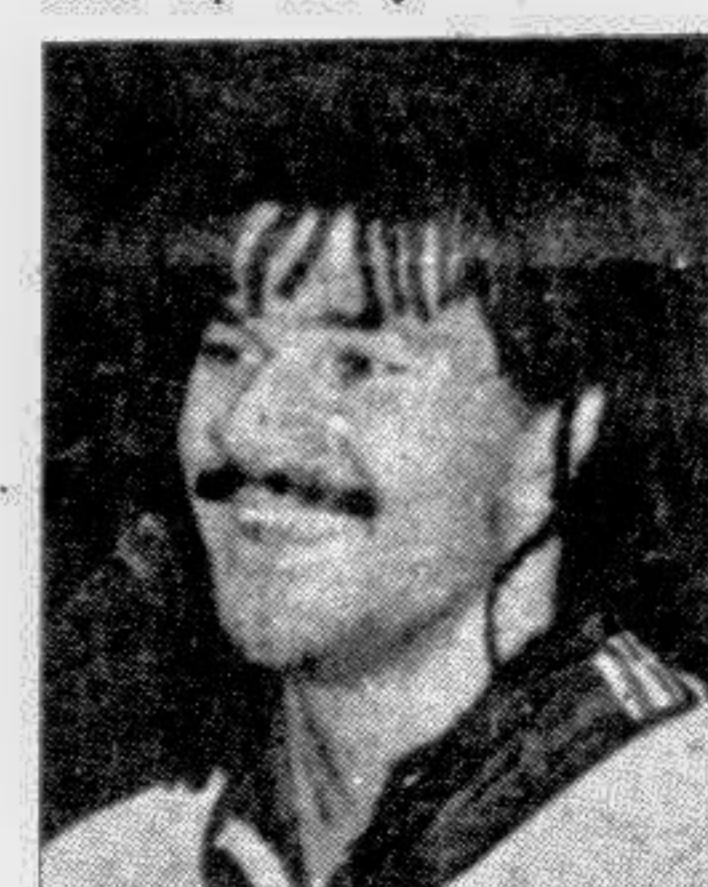
he said, adding: "But from a footballing point of view, it was not a brilliant match."

He also played down the absence of his world-class finishers, Bulgaria's Hristo Stoichkov and Brazil's Romario.

Stoichkov was serving the last game of a three-game ban and Romario is nursing a thigh injury.

"Perhaps we missed them at certain moments and in certain situations. But Romario and Hristo play only a small part in our game. It's the others who create the chances for them."

Real Madrid looked to have sewn up victory at Albacete



RUUD GULLIT

when Sanchis scored seven minutes from time, but Oscar ensured the home side a share of the points three minutes later.

Albacete and Racing Santander are among six clubs still searching for a first victory. The others are Celta, Oviedo, Logrones and Valladolid.

NANTES STILL ATOP

Nantes continued to set the

Utrecht back on top

AMSTERDAM, Sept 19: Utrecht beat Groningen 2-1 on Sunday to make it four wins in four games and recapture the lead in the Dutch First Division from PSV Eindhoven, reports Reuters.

PSV topped the table overnight after beating Dordrecht '90 4-0 at home on Saturday for their third victory in three games.

Utrecht went ahead with a bizarre goal after 12 minutes when Jean-Paul de Jong's shot rebounded off an upright and spun back into the net. Striker Foeke Booy added the second 14 minutes later.

pace at the top of the French First Division when they scored a 3-0 home victory over St Etienne.

With goals few and far between and nine clubs failing to score at all, Nantes were two up after just four minutes.

First the league's leading scorer Patrice Loko was on target with his seventh of the season then Nicolas Ouedec was on hand to stab into the net after Japhet N'Doram's header had been pushed away by Robin Huc.

With the St Etienne defence still reeling and Laurent Blanc having a miserable time trying to contain the home side's raids, Nantes scored again in the 17th minute when their young midfielder Oulaide Makelele of Zaire linked up with Loko before rifling home to make Nantes the only unbeaten team in the division.

Lyon stayed in second place with a 2-0 home win over champions Paris St Germain — James Debbah outshining his fellow-Liberian and opposite number George Weah. Debbah scored Lyon's first and made the second for Stephane Paille.

Bordeaux were another team in the goals. They came away 4-0 winners from Sochaux after being helped on their way by a hat-trick by their Brazilian striker Valdeir.

But pre-season title favourites Monaco, who sacked their manager Arsene Wenger in midweek after their dreadful start to the season which has brought only two wins against five defeats, were held to a 0-0 draw at home by Rennes.

Demoted Marseille tore apart one of the best defences in the Second Division when they hammered visiting Dunkerque 5-1 — Tony Cascarino scoring a hat-trick. The Irish international has now scored 12 goals for the former European champions.

Bernd Hobsch's 27th minute goal gave Werder Bremen a narrow win over Borussia Moenchengladbach to extend their lead at the top of the German league. Borussia Dortmund, Karlsruhe, Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern were all two points adrift.

Lothar Matthaus stole a point for Bayern Munich with a goal six minutes from time to deny SV Hamburg who had led from the 16th minute through Andre Breitenreiter.

Dortmund drew 2-2 at Bayer Leverkusen who twice fought back to get onto level terms.

S Africa to bid for 2006 WC

ZURICH, Switzerland, Sept 19: South Africa intends to make a bid to host the Soccer World Cup finals in 2006, the world soccer body said Monday, reports AP.

The South African Football Association announced its intention in a letter to the FIFA headquarters in Zurich.

It is the second country to show an interest in organising the World Cup in 12 years. The German Football Association formally announced its interest in June last year, FIFA said.

"South Africa is a very interesting candidate," said FIFA spokesman Guido Tognoni. "It is good to see that many people are already thinking 12 years ahead."

South Africa was readmitted to FIFA in 1992 after years of sporting isolation due to its apartheid policies.

Invitations for bids for the 2002 World Cup finals are currently being prepared. So far Japan and South Korea have put forward tenders. FIFA will make its decision in 1996.

France has already been chosen to host the next Soccer World Cup in 1998.

Rothenberg once again turns to Milutinovic

NEW YORK, Sept 19: United States soccer federation president Alan Rothenberg says he expects World Cup coach Bora Milutinovic to sign a new contract within the next few weeks to guide the American national squad to the 1998 World Cup, reports AFP.

"He has expressed his intent to stay with US and I think we have agreed on what he wants to do," Rothenberg said Sunday.

"We've got to start talking terms," Rothenberg said. "Up until now we've talked desires and intentions, but we haven't talked dollars."

Rothenberg said he was surprised at reports that French first division strugglers Monaco were interested in signing Milutinovic and said they had not sought permission to speak with the coach.

Monaco sacked their manager Arsene Wenger earlier this week.

The United States have won 30 and drawn 27 of their 91 games under Milutinovic since he took charge in 1991. They reached the second round of this year's World Cup before losing to eventual champion Brazil.

Davin downs Ivanisevic

BUCHAREST, Sept 19: Unseeded Argentine Franco Davin unceremoniously swept aside top seed Goran Ivanisevic to win the final of the Romanian Open 6-2, 6-4 on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Ivanisevic's normal power play failed him as he sent down nine double faults and repeatedly volleyed into the net when going forward.

Davin, ranked 93rd in the world but first round winner over second seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain, showed surprising maturity as he played a patient game, waiting for the Croat to make the mistakes.

And an unsettled Ivanisevic did that plenty.

"I had one of my worst days this year. I couldn't get my service right at all," Ivanisevic said.

Newcastle's lead widens



LONDON, Sept 19: Newcastle stretched four points clear at the top of the English Premier league on Sunday with a 3-2 away victory over Arsenal which made it six wins in six games for the leaders, reports Reuters.

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 adroitly 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 Srnec courageously parried away only to see the big England defender follow up with a header. Seaman dived on a John

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

But, those scares apart, it was Arsenal who called the

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

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

— Star photo

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The four Malaysian referees — I. R. Ishak Ismail, Ishak bin Yacob, Abdur Rahman and Krishnan Dorishwami — 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.

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Action from yesterday's Star First Division match between Sadharan Bima and Muslim Institute at the Dhaka Stadium. Bima won 3-1.

— Star photo



EMPTY CANVAS — a pool on the pavement, meant to be a boxing ring at the Mohammed Ali Boxing Stadium succinctly sums up the condition of sport in the country. With the officials only concerned about self promotion, it looks like Moazzem will seek asylum while the ring will ring hollow.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman