

2000 has to be

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been on the forefront in highlighting the Cricket Board's achievements and failures. We have always promoted cricket's right to the Bangabandhu Stadium.

We have played many of our innings with a straight bat. In fact, so reliable is our reporting that the game's leading Web site, CricInfo, regularly lifts items verbatim from DS Sport. Not many newspapers in the world can be held guilty of similar boastfulness.

We have also driven shots that have ruffled the net behind the goalkeeper or executed strokes to leave the blameworthy stranded on centre court. We have brought you exclusive reporting from the England World Cup, ACC Trophy in Nepal, the SAF Football at Goa, the Asian Test Championship in Calcutta and the SAF Games at Kathmandu, not to speak of the many home events. We have brought you the naughty behaviour of our football officials and their ludicrous treatment of national football coach Samir Sakir.

The list of our failures begins at home. At the beginning of the year we ventured to bring you a roundup of sports and relevant facilities in the districts, one every month. Here our ego has been punctured miserably as we could only cover Rajshahi. We also failed to bring you colloquies with local sporting stars except for the parlay with TT's evergreen Zobera Rahman.

There are several other areas of failures. We should have provided you with more local photographs, interviews and news. We admit losing out to some of the Bangla dailies on the issue of athlete Lovely Begum and her alleged harassment by some Federation officials. Perhaps we could also have lived up our page with cartoons and more competitions for readers. But then we are the only ones to run a quiz for school children for the last five years. That's good track record for you.

Like any losing captain I will admit responsibility to all our failures because I could not inspire the team to flourish in some of the important areas. Sport reporting is not plain journalism; it is, I discovered, reported has to love his job, the game or the competition in this case. In the same breath I will also assure our readers that the team can only get better in the future in the sectors where we have shortcomings.

Like the snakes and ladders situation DS Sport experienced over the past year, two of our eligible team of eight entered the blissful life of conjugal and two were blessed with bubbly babies. That's fifty per cent success for you. Not a bad year after all, but 2000 has to be better. My team is trained to not only pick up my challenge, but also are capable of giving it a real good wallop. Many happy returns, my friends!

Call of century

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recruited with little or no credentials, authority not being sincere to the cause of sports and selection being manipulated through corruption and nepotism etc.

The last good batch of talented players passed out in the early 90's and since then BKSP has been represented itself as a classic case of a White Elephant. Education, which is such a vital part of the modern sportsman, is the most neglected department in today's BKSP.

On the training front, the situation is chaotic especially in cricket. There are two cricket grounds in BKSP, one of which is used by the national cricket team for half the year. Nearly a hundred students crowd the only other available ground for practice.

There are also a few properly qualified coaches in BKSP. The random recruitment of ex-players with hardly any coaching background has severely affected the already deteriorating standard of training.

BKSP has enormous potential if it is run properly.

It needs a massive overhauling in order to get back on track of its original objective in the next millennium.

GO PROFESSIONAL: Sports have to be run professionally if we are to improve our standard. The word professionalism never exists in the dictionary of our sports administrators. At present, there is no transparency or accountability in the activities of National Sports Council, the regulatory body of local sports. Like the NSC its affiliated organisations are also being run by the wills and whims of the officials, appointed mostly on political qualification and proper connection. Due to the absence of professional administrative structure in federations clubs call all the shots in sports. Clubs however have been the pioneer promoters of sports in this country. But they don't have any professional setup. The bulk of their earnings come from laundered money, donations and gambling. Quite understandably, their expenditures are also never put down on paper, in black and white. Sports persons on the other hand don't have to pay taxes as they play as amateur players. Sports arena has to go professional if we want to be world proper in this century.

PARTING THOUGHTS: The general Bangladeshi psyche is to plan big and then leave its implementation to the mercy of God. If that remains the case in this century, sports will never see any light. In order to change that glum prediction, we have to change ourselves first.

Long term planning and training have no substitute for success. Let's set a pattern for the youngsters to follow. Let's give the next generation a sense of purpose, a chance.

Success should bring success

Hasan Masood

January 28 in Sri Lanka.

As the non-participating hosts Bangladesh also fared well last year. The country earned the distinction of holding the final of first Asian Test Championship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in March. That was the first Test match played in Dhaka after 30 years.

Bangladesh however had some miserable memories in cricket also. They lost all the four first round matches against Zimbabwe and Kenya in the tri-nation MFI Cup held in March.

Meanwhile, football lovers will remember 1999 as a year of refreshing revival. FIFA, the world football's governing body, recognised Bangladesh as one of the best 27 movers across the globe. Of the five best Asian movers (others are Uzbekistan, Iraq, Indonesia and Jordan), Bangladesh scored highest 100 points.

The rise of football began when Bangladesh emerged runners-up in the SAFF Championship in Goa last April.

Placed in a group for the first round along with India and Pakistan, Bangladesh drew with favourites India (0-0) and handed Pakistan a 0-4 defeat. In the semi-final, Bangladesh edged past Nepal 2-1 before losing to India (0-2) in the final.

Being coached by Simir Shakir, Bangladesh then went on to break the long-standing SAF jinx when they clinched their first ever gold in the seven-nation Games in Kathmandu last October. The team, led by Jewell Rana, avenged their SAFF final defeat eliminating India by 1-0 in the semi-final on October 2. They then edged past Nepal by a solitary goal at the Dasharath Stadium to lift the much-sought-after gold after a dozen of abortive attempts at regional meets.

Success in football continued as Bangladesh played quite creditably in the Asian Cup qualifiers in UAE in November. Despite losing to Uzbekistan (0-6) and UAE (0-3), Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka (3-1) and managed a 2-2 draw with India.

There are some successes in the Muktijodha Sangsad Krira Chakra won the Independence Cup in Jalpaiguri, India, in February while Mohammedan Sporting Club clinched the All-Airlines Cup in West Bengal in September.

There was no high point in hockey however. They finished sixth in the ten-nation Asia Cup, held in Malaysia, last November. A pall of gloom fell upon the sports arena with the sad demise of young national defender Rabiuddin. After being in coma for 23 days, the hockey star breathed his last on September 22.

In chess, International Master and national champion Ziaur Rahman earned his first Grand Master norm at the British Championship in August.



The Agartala-bound Bangladesh Shishu Kishore Krira Unnayan Parisad cricketers.

Ganguly sings McGrath song

CALCUTTA, Feb 8: Saurav Ganguly rates Glenn McGrath as the toughest fast bowler to face in the world at the moment.

The vice-captain of India was found in a pretty relaxed mood on his return from Australia to Calcutta on Tuesday. Although he talked about a large number of subjects, Ganguly deftly avoided the matters related with Mohammad Azharuddin and the disastrous performance of the Indian team.

"Personally, I would have felt better if I had scored a century in the Test series," said Ganguly. "But then McGrath was simply superb. It is not the bounce that makes him so successful in Australia. But his ability to bowl a spell without bowling a single loose delivery."

"All these days I had been saying that Wasim Akram is the most difficult bowler that I have faced. But now I place McGrath in the same rank. He was simply great."

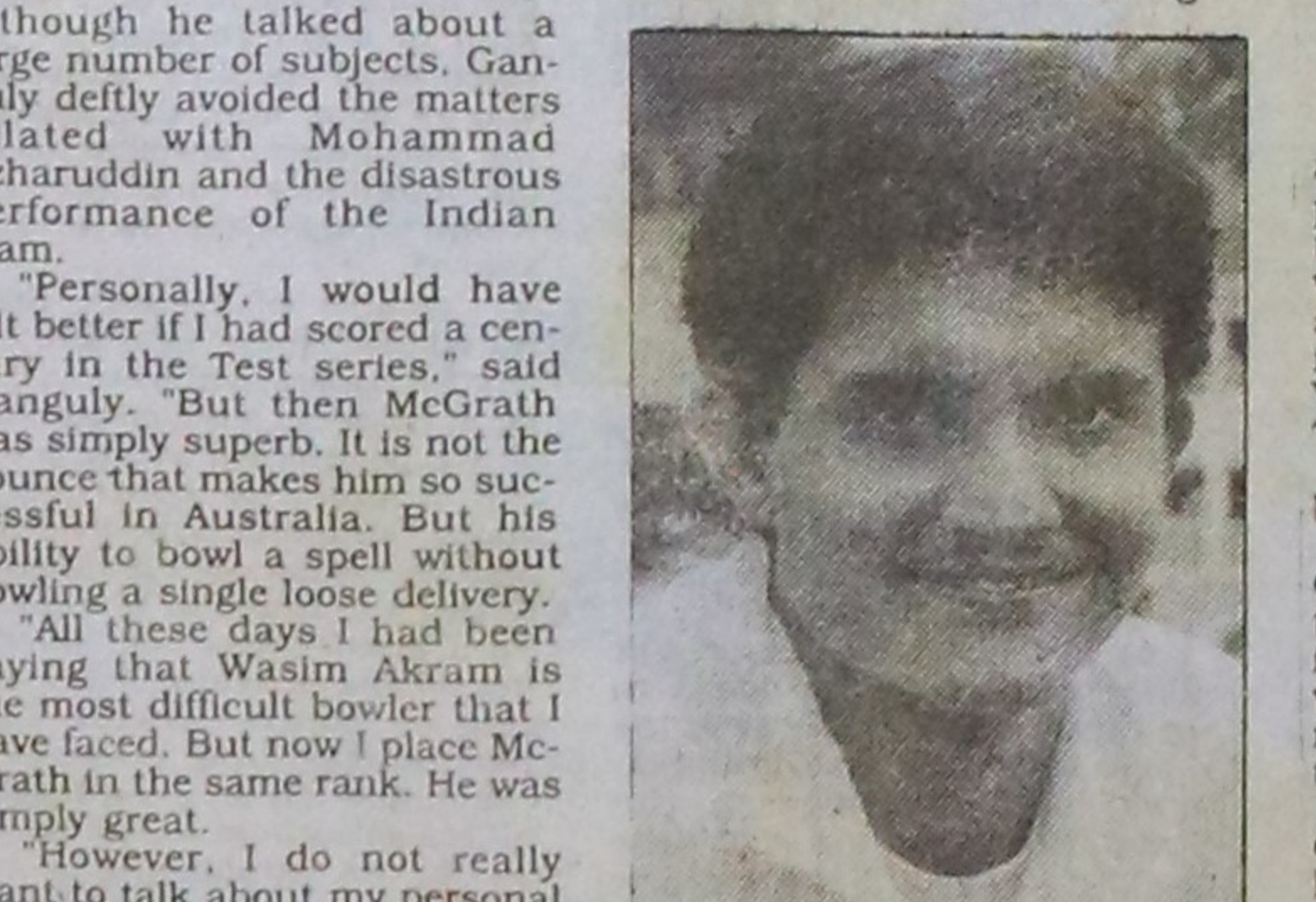
However, I do not really want to talk about my personal show when the performance of the team has been so poor. When asked as to why the performance of the team was the worse, Ganguly said, "If you look carefully you will see that we did not have a good start in any of the matches."

I am not blaming the openers. The Australian bowlers were simply superb and with Rahul going through a bad



patch our job became doubly difficult.

On Thursday, Ganguly met the doctor to decide on the arthroscopy that was needed on his right knee. However, he is not leaving for England immediately. "The doctor has advised me to take a complete rest for two weeks with a certain amount of medication. So, I will be out of the Challenger



SOURAV GANGULY

Trophy. If the knee does not respond to the treatment, then I will have to go for surgery," said the stylish left-hander.

Incidentally, he missed the last league match because of a bad right knee. "I would have definitely played, but even we certainly injection in the morning of the match did not

gust while International Woman Master Rani Hamid set a new record by winning the national women's chess championship for the 12th time.

In athletics, Bangladesh's only solace came in the 8th SAF Games. In the 200m event, sprinter Mahbub Alam finished at par with Pakistani Magsood Ahmed, clocking 21.15 seconds. But the Pakistani was declared winners after the photo finish. Mahbub won the gold in the same event in 7th SAF Games, held in Madras in 1995.

But it was for a sex scandal athletics arena hogged the headlines of all the newspaper in the town. Sprinter Lovely Begum accused Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation (BAAF) general secretary Golam Rasul Mollah of sexually harassing her. Mollah was eventually removed from his post.

Shooting touched a new low in 1999 as Bangladesh managed only one gold in the 8th SAF Games. Bangladeshi shooters earned five golds in the previous Games in Madras four years back. It was reported that the mismanagement and corruption of the federation people led to the dismal performance.

Kabadi kept on frustrating the nation like the previous year. Bangladesh, whose national game is kabadi, failed to bring any success in the 8th SAF Games. Once the silver winners, Bangladesh even failed to earn a bronze in the six-nation meet, gold of which went to unheralded Sri Lanka.

Apart from these highs and lows, two foreign coaches had to make unceremonious exit after leading their teams to remarkable successes in 1999. Former West Indies inspired Greenidge, who also inspired Bangladesh to their ICC trophy win in 1997, was sacked by the Board just before his team's historic win against Pakistan at Trent Bridge.

Apart from the successes with the national team, coach Samir twice became the headlines with the impromptu quitting of his job. First time, the volatile Iraqi World Cupper left the team following a row with the management immediately after his boys won SAF Games gold. Samir bade his final bow after the Asian Cup qualifiers in UAE in November. This time he left with a grievance that the National Sports Council did not fully implement the promised two-year contract. Whatever the case it be, Samir has already been regarded as the most successful football coach to date.

Credit for the role of the year went to NSC, the governing body of local sports. NSC made a fool of itself when 'Weirdom' dawned on it to announce national sports awards for as many as two shuttlers of school level standard. But who knows what omen the selection panel had found in badminton? Sports buffs only can say sorry to cricketers and footballers.

Mike settles it

GREENBELT, Maryland, Feb 8: Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson reached a settlement Monday with two women who alleged the boxer assaulted them at a restaurant in the nation's capital. The Washington Post reported in its Tuesday editions, reports AP.

The trial was scheduled to begin Tuesday.

The women, Sherry Cole and Chevelle Butts, both 33, filed the lawsuit in US District Court in Greenbelt. They said they were in the Au Pied de Cochon restaurant in the city's Georgetown neighbourhood on March 1, 1998, when Tyson grabbed Cole and requested a sexual relationship.

They alleged Tyson, who served time in an Indiana prison for a rape conviction, swore at Butts after learning she was a correctional officer.

In papers filed by Tyson's lawyers, six witnesses said the boxer was verbally harassed by the women and was not abusive. Cole and Butts were seeking a total of 7.5 million dollars in damages.

B'baria Cricket

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Feb 8: Moulavipara Cricket Club defeated Three Star Boys Club by 138 runs in the Bangladesh Gas Field Company Limited (BGFLC) Gold Cup cricket League at the local Niaz Muhammad Stadium today.

Sent into bat, Moulavipara piled up a huge 237 for seven in the stipulated 40 overs with Belal notching 55 and Shahadat hammering a run-a-ball 46.

In reply, Three Star Boys were bundled out for 99 in 25.2 overs.

Rafiq's bat

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between Red Eleven and Green Eleven at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Tuesday:

RED ELEVEN: First innings (overnight 214 for 7)

Parvez c Sajal b Sohail 29

Azharul b Rafique 2

Sajad c Sajal b Rafique 6

Hasanuzzaman c Parvez b Sajal 5

Naimur c Aminul b Rafique 44

Asadullah b Rafique 23

Kamran b Rafique 2

Ashrafu not out 37

Sabbir b Anis 8

A Kamal c Parvez b Anis 1

Extras: (lb-2, nb-9, w-2) 23

Total: (For 9 wickets in 98.2 overs dec) 229

Fall of wickets: 1-56; 2-60; 3-70; 4-88; 5-149; 6-149; 7-208; 8-228; 9-229.

Bowler O M R W

Anis 10.2 324 2

Azhar 6 0 16 0

Rafique 16.4 39 0

Sohail 37.8 66 5

Sajal 14.1 47 1

Aminul 2 0 6 0

Mehrab 2 0 2 0

GREEN ELEVEN: First

innings

Sajid c Bikash b Ashrafu 26

Raju c Parvez b Ashrafu 23

Rezaul b b A Kamal 21

Aminul b b A Kamal 23

Sanwar c Parvez b Naimur 31

Mushfiqur b b Naimur 21

Rafique c Parvez b A Kamal 44

Sohail not out 4

Extras (b-3, lb-5, w-1) 9

Total: (For 7 wickets in 61.4 overs dec) 201

Fall of wickets: 1-49; 2-50; 3-83; 4-116; 5-138; 6-189; 7-201.

Bowler O M R W

Ahmed Kamal 37.4 4 34 3

Bikash 17 0 28 0

Sabbir Khan 9 0 31 0

Hasnuzzaman 1 0 6 0

Naimur Rahman 5 2 46 2

Ashrafu 12 1 48 2

RED ELEVEN: Second

innings

Parvez c Rajin b Sohail 10

Azharul b Sohail 11

Sajad batting 7

Hasanuzzaman batting 9

Extras: (b-2, lb-2) 4

Total: (For 2 wickets in 7 overs) 41

Fall of wickets: 1-17; 2-24.

Bowler O M R W

Anwar Hossain 3 0 11 0

Anis 3 2 5 0

Sohail 5 1 11 2

Rafique 5 1 10 0

Sajid Hasan 1 0 1 0

Cricket begins

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inates the area and so easily could be developed into a proper ground. Instead, it is left neglected and under-utilised.

It is the same story around the metropolis. The respective owners allegedly in collaboration with the city fathers, profit by sanctioning holding of various fetes, public meetings even allowing cattle to graze all year long.

The deprivation of space has recently witnessed a new craze taking off--the 'street cricket'. Youngsters will take up the whole road to play for hours on end. The pastime tends to become popular during hartal hours.

The stars of today have also come down this path. The West Indians play on the beaches and the Pakistanis will be found trying to imitate their idols Imran Khan, Wasim Akram or Javed Miandad somewhere in the dusty alleys of Karachi or Lahore.

Even in the desert they now play cricket. I refer of course to Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

Visionary Sheikh Abdul Rehman Bukhatir endeavoured to turn one of earth's harshest terrain into a gorgeous green paradise. He demonstrated that where is a will then man always seems to find a way.

From the early days when grass seeds were imported from Australia to the time the first unofficial match between the Imran XI and Gavaskar XI was played in 1981, it has brought the game closer to the expatriate community. Now it holds the distinction of hosting the most number of one-day international matches and rightly has become a permanent fixture for many teams.

In our case the ICC has prescribed a list of requirements to attain the desired standard. One of the most important being holding of more three-four day games. The recently concluded inaugural National League was part of BCB's commitment. Though it is early days yet before the pros and cons of the three-format can be properly weighed, it must however, be said the League is a small step in the right direction. Since playing the longer-version will immensely benefit our boys in getting adjusted to the rigours of Test matches.

May be the competition next season might even draw the attention of major local sponsors?

Generally, visiting teams during tours have been generous in their praise of the existing facilities.

Here the wheels of motion rotate ever so slowly. Faced by the fact, BCB has tried to accelerate the pace by firstly, introducing a pay-structure in an effort to loosen the clubs' stranglehold. And secondly, hiring a foreign physiotherapist to work with the team.

The signs are encouraging but more has to be done. It took Sri Lanka twenty years to reach the pinnacle. What we need to do now is stop making Dhaka the 'crown jewel' and start to concentrate on tapping into vast reservoir of talent hidden in those 68,000 hamlets.

"Let's take cricket to those places" should be our motto.

African Nations Cup

Nigeria ride on rookie, Tunisia see off champs

LAGOS, Feb 8: Teenager Julius Aghahowa was the two-goal hero as the favourites Nigeria overcame outsiders Senegal 2-1 after extra time Monday in the last African Nations Cup quarter-final, reports AFP.

Senegal successfully defended an early goal from Kallilou Fadiga until the Tunisia-based teenager struck from close range with six minutes left of normal time at Surulere Stadium.

Aghahowa sparked a pitch invasion from home supporters that took 12 minutes to clear when he scored again just 90 seconds into additional time after sloppy defending from the tiring visitors.

Nigeria finished with 10 men when midfielder Augustine 'Jay Jay' Okocha was sent off with two minutes of extra time left for elbowing substitute Mbaye Badji and is automatically suspended for one match.

Defending champions Egypt bowed out earlier in the day, losing 1-0 to Tunisia in the northern city of Kano, where Khaled Bae converted a first-half penalty kick to earn a crack at Cameroon in Accra Thursday.

NIGERIA-SENEGAL

Nigeria started as hot favourites to face South Africa in the other semi-final with their galaxy of stars from leading European clubs AC Milan, Ajax, Arsenal, Barcelona, Chelsea and Juventus.

African Footballer of the Year Nwankwo Kanu was the



Nigerian defender Benedict Akwuegbu (L) trying to prevent Sidy Bap of Senegal from getting to the ball during their African Nations Cup quarterfinal.

the changes with Pape Sene and Mbaye Badji coming on for Oumar Traore and Oumar Daf. The pressure from Nigeria was constant without any reward and Bonfrere cut a lonely figure on the sideline while assistant coach Stephen Keshi repeatedly checked his watch.

Diallo was injured twice in consecutive goalmouth scrambles with 15 minutes left as a team not expected to get beyond the first round maintained shape and composure under relentless fire.

Bonfrere played his final card with 11 minutes left before an increasingly restless crowd when Sunday Oliseh, who has been battling to shake off malaria, replaced Okunowo.

Camara fired straight at Shorunmu in a rare attack and it proved a costly miss as Nigeria were level within 60 seconds when Aghahowa chased a long ball and slammed the ball past Diallo from close range.

Extra time was less than two minutes old when Nigeria went ahead through another goal from Aghahowa, who wrong-footed Diallo after a cross be-

fore tapping the ball into the net.

The goal sparked an invasion of the pitch by fans mistakenly believing the game would be decided by a 'golden goal' and it took moments some time to restore order.

TUNISIA-EGYPT

Tunisia eliminated Egypt at the Sani Abacha Stadium with in a bruising quarter-final showdown.

Defender Khaled Badra converted a 21st-minute penalty kick to take his country through to the semi-finals, where they will face former champions Cameroon in Accra on Thursday.

French referee Alain Sars cautioned nine players in a match that never reached great heights with Tunisia content to defend their lead against opponents who could not recapture the form that produced three group wins.

The first clash of the North African football giants in the 43 years of the tournament saw Egypt press for an early advantage and forced three corners within 10 minutes.

But it was Tunisia who proved more threatening in a rare attack with Nader al-Sayed bravely punching away a free kick under severe pressure in a crowded goalmouth.

Sars was busier than most of the footballers, cautioning Tunisians Raouf Bouzayane and Tarek Thabet and Egyptians Hady Khassaba and Tarek Said in a opening half regularly disrupted by fouls and injuries.

Thabet went into the black book for an Oscar-winning performance when fairly tackled and Hossam Hassan tried to rival him by collapsing after colliding with Badra.

Tunisia edged in front slightly against the run of play midway through the half when Ibrahim Said fouled Thabet inside the area and Badra sent Al-Sayed the wrong way from the spot.

The goal galvanised the Tunisians, who scraped into the knockout stages because they scored more goals than Morocco after finishing level on points and goal difference in the Group of Death.

Egypt came close to levelling two minutes before half-time when Hassan just failed to connect with an Ahmed Sah Hosni header and veteran goalkeeper Chokri al-Ouaer was injured in the incident.

Ibrahim Hassan, the twin brother of Hossam, made way for Abdel Satar Sabry during the interval and Hassan Gabisi was introduced by Tunisian coach Francesco Scoglio.

The Pharaohs saw a lot of the ball in the second half only to find the Tunisian defence unyielding, especially in the air where Radhi Jaidi was outstanding.

Al-Ouaer pushed away a free kick from the unusually subdued Hassan and Badra made a last-gasp clearance to foil Hosni as the holders saw the cup slipping from their grasp.

Michel quits Morocco job

RABAT, Feb 8: Henri Michel, the coach of the Moroccan national team, has resigned his post, Moroccan news agency MAP reported Monday, reports AFP.

Michel, formerly coach of France, stepped down after his team's disappointing showing in the African Nations Cup.

"I am obliged to cease my activities at the heart of the Moroccan national team," Michel explained before thanking his players and other personnel.

Michel has been vilified by the Moroccan media for the disappointing showing of the Atlas Lions, who were eliminated in the group stages.

And he made his displeasure known at his ordinal by saying he had taken his decision because of an 'orchestrated media lynch mob, even an organised one, throughout the African Nations Cup'.

Michel's policy of keeping faith with older players at the expense of up-and-coming stars had earned him criticism in the media.

They narrowly beat lowly Congo 1-0, drew 0-0 with Tunisia before being eliminated after a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Nigeria.

It did not take long for the media to make their views known after the Nigeria defeat. Seconds after the final whistle the commentator on 2M TV channel said: 'Henri Michel must go.'

In 1998 Michel, who took the job in 1996, coached Morocco to the verge of the second phase with a 3-0 win over Scotland only to learn that his side had been eliminated after Norway's against-the-odds victory over Brazil.

Tunisian coach's warning

KANO, Nigeria, Feb 8: Tunisian coach Francesco Scoglio has played down his team's 1-0 African Nations Championship quarter-final victory over defending champions Egypt on Monday night, reports AFP.

"After our qualification from the group matches, I knew we would be difficult to stop," said Scoglio. "I have a very youthful and purposeful team that can lay claim to the title."

Ramzi Hani (L) of Egypt and Tunisia's Jaidi Radhi battle for possession during their African Nations Cup quarter-final.