

Rahim's dubious role

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The recent happenings at the BFF (Bangladesh Football Federation) reflected that it neither has the administrative mechanism nor has any intention to uplift the dwindling standard of the game in the country.

The latest remark of its vice-president Abdur Rahim about national coach George Kottan only showed how the federation is being run of late.

Rahim went on record on Monday by declaring that he would not accompany Bangladesh under-20 football team in the Asian Youth Football Championship in Qatar if Kottan goes there as coach. The tournament starts from October 15.

Rahim, who thrives on the power of his being the chairman of Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC), is one of some BFF and club officials who are out to make Kottan a scapegoat for Bangladesh's disgraceful performance in the Asiad.

"We must assess Kottan's own performance both on and off the field in the Asian Games. We need to know first what objectionable remarks he made against Bangladesh in Busan and then decide whether he should go at all with the team," Rahim boasted to a Bengali daily.

The AFC (Asian Football Confederation) sponsored Bangladesh coach came under fire after manager Kazi Usha Mishu reported that Kottan made some offending remarks against the country following his team's 0-3 defeat to India on September 3.

But the Austro-Hungarian coach, who was understandably upset with his team's no preparation at all, on his return, said, "I've made no such remark that goes against the Bangladesh's image...I've blasted only the format of the domestic competition."

Kottan was not allowed to get a single day to prepare his team following DMFLC's decision to continue the Premier League up to September 19, a day before Bangladesh team left for the Games.

Fans and followers voiced the frustration and anger of Kottan who

criticised the BFF for failing to convince the Dhaka clubs to let their players train under him during the Premier League.

Rahim meanwhile could not be reached over his cell phone last night but it was learnt that he is going to grill Kottan in the BFF executive meeting today.

BFF has already asked a report from the manager with a condition that it has to be endorsed by Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) secretary general Jafar Imam and Chef-de-Mission Rezaul Haider. Mishu however admitted that he did not hear anything directly from Kottan.

But what surprised many is that when the BFF is investigating the matter officially how could he take up

the issue alone on Kottan.

"Rahim must act as per the BFF decision and BFF must not act as per Rahim's will," said a top BFF official. "We should go ahead with Kottan and get rid of Rahim instead."

Tonight's meeting will also take a final decision about the fate of the Federation Cup, which the BFF wants to hold between October 15 to 30.

Two leading clubs Abahani and Mohammedan Sporting Club have so far expressed their reluctance to take part in the tournament saying that they have already closed their camps after the Premier League last month.

The meeting will also okay the football calendar for 2002-03 season.

READERS' ZONE

Blame the BFF

Do you have any observation regarding sports and its management in Bangladesh? Do you feel certain issues need to be addressed before time runs out? Then, hurry up and send us your burning questions, critical views and thoughtful suggestions not in excess of 400 words. Let your thought buzz at your corner, the Readers' Zone.

--- Sports Editor

The recent performance by our football team at the Asiad saddened but not surprised me at all.

Who is to blame for their awful performance? Is it because of the players? Or because of coach George Cotta? To me, the answer is very clear-cut. It is our football federation who has to bear the full responsibility for this debacle.

I would like to thank Baddal Roy (BFF assistant general secretary) for his honesty and courage to admit that it is the BFF who should be solely held responsible. But my question is that how could the BFF officials dare to mock with the feelings of Bangladeshi people?

BFF knew a year ahead that they would be sending national team to the Asiad. Why did the BFF start the Dhaka league at the end of July then? When Singapore, Malaysia, some other Asian and European countries played their League through World Cup, why couldn't

we? Even Korea started their league day after the World Cup. Mohon Bagan and East Bengal clubs played their Kolkata league without their national player. Why our Mohammedan and Abahani could not play the league without the national players? Are not the same club people filling the BFF committee? Is club bigger than the country?

Our FIFA ranking is 154. Even Palestine and Maldives rankings are better than ours. You need to play practice matches regularly with national teams of other countries to improve ranking. I assume BFF will say we do not have the fund to organise practice match! Where is the USD 250,000 they are getting every year from FIFA under goal project? According to some local newspapers BFF is sending fabricated account summary for last year's expense. Government needs to audit the BFF account if there is

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GAMES BAG

14th Asian Games
BUSAN 2002

Shamsunnahar finishes 14th

BSS, Busan

Shamsunnahar Chumki became 14th in the semifinal of the women's 100m sprint in the 14th Asian Games at Busan Main Stadium yesterday.

She got the position clocking 12.30. Sixteen sprinters took part in the semifinal in which Sri Lankan Susanthika Jayasinghe made the best timing (11.16).

Chumki's starting was good, but she could not keep the pace after about 40m of the sprint.

WRESTLING

Mongolian Oyunbileg Purevbaatar beat Anisur Rahman of Bangladesh in the 60kg free style Wrestling at Yongsan Gymnasium yesterday.



A combo photo shows (L) Susanthika Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia's Jamal al-Saffar who clinched gold in the 100m sprint finals yesterday.

Susanthika, Jamal sprint to gold

14th Asian Games
BUSAN 2002

AFP, Busan

A stunned Jamal al-Saffar and a determined Susanthika Jayasinghe were crowned Asia's top sprinters Tuesday as the track and field competition at the Asian Games exposed a new order of athletic wealth.

At 31 and in the twilight of his career Al-Saffar stunned himself in blitzing the men's 100 metres field and wondered what next, while Jayasinghe pocketed the women's gold and immediately targeted a 200m double.

Al-Saffar's win was the third track gold here in two days of competition for Saudi Arabia which had never

won an Asian Games athletics title before Busan.

After 15 finals, India and Kazakhstan also have three golds, matching the usually dominant Chinese.

"It's a surprise for me and for everybody. Nobuharu has a personal best of 10.02sec and mine is 10.19 so he is faster, but I won," the delighted al-Saffar said after a shock victory over Japan's Nobuhara Asahara by a wafer-thin 0.05sec.

The Texas-based Japanese, who had confidently set himself to go under the magical 10.00sec mark at the Games, suffered from a slow start and while rapidly catching al-Saffar it was too late.

Jayasinghe, who failed in the 100m at the Commonwealth Games in 2001, was never in trouble against a mediocre field, bagging the title in a Games

record time of 11.15.

She then promptly switched her sights to adding the 200m crown on Thursday with the ultimate aim of jousting with US great Marion Jones over the distance at the 2004 Olympics.

"I am going to focus on the 200m in the future," she said after adding the Games gold to her Olympic bronze.

India's K.M. Beenamol opened her campaign for a Games double taking the women's 800m in 2:04.17 seconds after earlier in the day qualifying third-fastest for the 400m final where she will clash with Sri Lankan star Damayanthi Darsha.

While al-Saffar was shocked to win the men's 100m, Saudi Arabia's second gold Tuesday was no surprise when Hadi al-Somaily lived up

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Did U Know?

The Olympic medals are designed especially for each individual Olympic Games by the host city's organising committee. Each medal must be at least three millimetres thick and 60 millimetres in diameter. Also, the gold and silver Olympic medals must be made out of 92.5 percent silver, with the gold medal covered in six grams of gold.



What to WATCH

BTV
Bangladesh vs South Africa
Third ODI (D/N)
Live at 6:30 pm

DD Sports & National
India vs West Indies
First Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am

ESPN
Football Focus
Repeat at 11:30 am
Western Union World Football
Repeat at 3:00 pm
English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Chelsea
Repeat at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
Cricket Programming
Legends of Cricket
Taped Version at 9:00 pm

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Real Madrid vs Alaves
Repeat at 10:30 am
English Premier Football League
Arsenal vs Sunderland
Taped Version at 12:30 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Silvio Berlusconi
(Italian Prime Minister and AC Milan president)
"I admit that in the recent past I haven't been happy with our style of play under various coaches but that is not the case now."
On the recent Milan side.



Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Oct 11, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

1. What was Bangladesh's score against Australia in the ICC Champions Trophy?
102 82 129
2. Who won the National Bank Premier Division football title?
Muktijodha | Abahani | Mohammedan
3. Who won the Toyota Princess Cup tennis title?
Hingis | Capriati | Serena
4. Who is the fastest man in the world?
Greene | Montgomery | Edwards
5. Who are the defending champions in European Champions League?

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)

Special Test for Carl

Cricket

REUTERS, Bombay

The absence through hepatitis of Brian Lara places added responsibility on captain Carl Hooper in the three-Test series against India starting on Wednesday.

Hooper, 36, will be playing in his 100th Test at the venue where he made his debut 15 years ago in 1987-88.

The Guyanese will become only the sixth West Indian after Courtney Walsh, Clive Lloyd, Viv Richards, Desmond Haynes and Gordon Greenidge to figure in 100 Tests when he turns up for toss with Saurav Ganguly at the Wankhede Stadium.

"It's an important milestone. It's nice to reach the mark, but I'm not fond of figures. Let's hope we do well here," said the 35-year-old Hooper.

"We will naturally miss Lara. But we are confident we are capable of overcoming that loss," Hooper said. For support, Hooper will be counting mainly on fellow-Guyanese Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

Chanderpaul, 28, averaged 140.50 at home against India, batting longer than anyone else over the five Tests while scoring 562 runs with three centuries.

Left-handed openers Chris Gayle and Wavell Hinds are currently in fine



West Indies captain Carl Hooper practises in the nets at the Wankhede Stadium in Bombay yesterday ahead of today's first Test against India.

form with 62 and 147 respectively against a local side last week.

But the man the West Indians are looking to with most expectation is Ramnaresh Sarwan, who has scored 13 half-centuries in 24 Tests but who has yet to score his maiden Test hundred.

The 22-year-old from Guyana, a big fan of Bombay's popular film industry, would love to reach three figures in the city he has grown up

admiring on the silver screen.

India are firm favourites with a batting lineup including Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly and Vangipurappu Laxman.

But their main weapons will be leg-spinner Anil Kumble and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Kumble, India's most successful

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Sharjah hotter for 'em

Cricket

REUTERS, Colombo

Australia's Waugh brothers will be feeling the heat from more than just the desert sun when they face Pakistan in two Test matches in Sharjah next week.

The 37-year-old twins were dropped from the one-day team earlier this year and, after a lacklustre performance in the first Test which concluded on Monday, the pair are under increasing pressure.

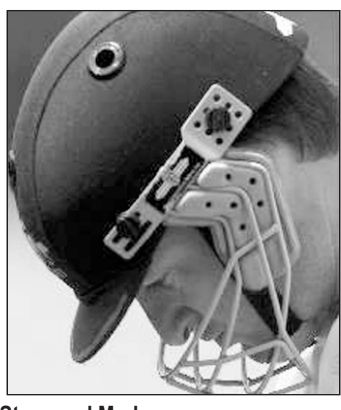
"There's always going to be pressure on Mark and myself after what happened in the one-dayers and we haven't scored a Test 100 in a while," Steve told reporters after the match, which Australia won by 41 runs.

"I'm realistic enough to know that it's going to be written up but you've got to try and not take too much notice. Neither brother is now a member

of the Australia one-day side. Steve made 31, and Mark 55 in the first innings but both were out for ducks in the second innings, back-to-back victims during a brilliant

can happen when a guy bowls that well," Steve said.

"I've just got to get back to the next Test and try and do things right that I've done for the last 10 or 15



IN THE WAUGHS: Steve and Mark

spell from Pakistan pacesman Shoaib Akhtar, who took five wickets in 15 balls.

"The second innings, I'm not overly concerned about that, that

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Iran, ROK in last four

14th Asian Games
BUSAN 2002

AFP, Busan

Iran advanced to a semifinal showdown with hosts South Korea on Tuesday as the Asian Games football tournament heated up with the start of the knockout stage.

The reigning champions shrugged off the loss of inspirational skipper Ali Daei to defeat Kuwait 1-0, while the Koreans eased past Bahrain 1-0 in front of a noisy home crowd.

In Tuesday's other last eight games in the tournament, which is restricted to under-23 teams, Thailand made sure of a semifinal

berth after squeezing past North Korea 1-0, while Japan beat China 1-0.

Iran's preparations had been thrown into turmoil on the eve of their quarterfinal clash when captain Daei left the squad following the sudden death of his father at home in Iran.

But disruption to Iran's campaign proved to be minimal, as the 1998 gold medalists recovered from a shaky start to turn in their best performance of the tournament.

The winning goal came on 71 minutes, a wonderful curling free-kick from the edge of the area struck by Eman Mobali flying in past helplessness Kuwaiti goalkeeper Shehab Al-Kankune.

Iran's players, all wearing black ribbons on their shirts as a gesture

of respect to Daei's family, reacted wildly to the goal and sprinted over to the touchline to mob substitutes and coaching staff.

In Ulsan, Korea dominated Bahrain but in the end had to settle for skipper Lee Dong-Gook to convert from the spot towards the end of the first half to keep home team on course for a repeat of their 1986 Asian Games gold medal.

"Overall I thought our concentration was good tonight. I think it was the difference between winning and losing," South Korean coach Park Hang-Soo said following the match.

"Both sides were tired (after playing so many matches), so it was our concentration that overcame our fatigue," said Park, adding that

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Scene from the Japan Cup Karatedo Tournament bout between Rubina Akhter (L) of Ansars and Anamika Mukta of VDP at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium yesterday. Rubina won the fight. The competition, organised by Embassy of Japan, was part of their month-long programme to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Bangladesh-Japan diplomatic relations. State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and Japan Ambassador Jiro Kobayashi gave away trophies among the winners.