

27/07/2001

Pakistan crisis has Jahangir worried

K.M. Boopathy

PAKISTAN, the fallen giants of world squash, are going through a crisis. And this has got their legendary champion, Jahangir Khan, worried.

Jahangir, six-time world champion and winner of a record six straight British Open title, said the younger generation in Pakistan are not hardworking and this is the reason why there is no successor to him and the other great Khan, Jansher.

"The younger generation do not possess the discipline and seriousness to achieve major results," said the 38-year-old World Squash President (WSF) vice-president in Penang yesterday.

"The association (Pakistan SRA) did not have any development programme as they were enjoying the results brought by Jansher and me. They never really thought about the future."

"But our successes were due to family effort and help from certain individuals, not the association."

Pakistan had never failed to produce a top five player in the last five decades and the emergence of Jahangir in the early 80s and Jansher a few years later had put them at the pinnacle of the sport.

Jahangir's unbeaten run of almost five-and-a-half years, winning more than 500 matches in that period, is seen as the best sporting achievement in the professional game.

Jahangir said SRAP are coming up with a development programme and their junior squad will be handled by the well-known Rahmat Khan, Jahangir's former personal coach, in an effort to regain past glory.

"The association is starting to do something concrete and I believe Rahmat has the capabilities to make a difference.

"However, I don't know how long it is going to take before we can produce another world champion. Only time will tell."

Jahangir's only involvement in squash since retirement was his role as manager of their world junior team in Princeton, New Jersey in 1998 where they finished third.

Among the current players, he identified Mansoor Zaman and Shahis Zaman as those who have some potential, but they need to work very hard to do well in the professional circuit.

Meanwhile, former Asian Squash Federation (ASF) president and chairman of SRA of Malaysia's Project 2006, Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir's life-long goal was fulfilled yesterday when he faced Jahangir on court at the Penang International Squash Centre.

Overweight and not agile on court, the 38-year-old Jahangir still had his touches and charisma, while Mokhzani was enjoying every moment of it.

However, Jahangir did not have to produce his trademark backhand drops and drives but still won comfortably at 15-5, 15-8.

Jahangir is currently in Penang to attend the WSF's two-day management committee meeting which began yesterday.

(END)