



GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

NOC NEWS

The art of smashes, drops and using the court

NILUKA talks of his afterlife in BADMINTON



One cannot define a time or day, but from time to time legends are born in various disciplines of sports.

For instance, Susanthika Jayasinghe in athletics, M.J.M. Lafir in the field of snooker, Arjuna Ranatunga in cricket, have made quantum changes in their given fields and cut indelible niches in the annals of sport.

May not be on the same podium, shuttler Niluka Karunaratne – the Chairman of the NOC SL Athletes Commission has created history in his field of activity and ended up as a role model.

Maybe if he had a Lankan opponent who could stretch him to his limits, Sri Lanka's badminton history would have been different.

Nonetheless, his feat of seventeen straight crowns may be unmatched like the Muralitharan 800 because seventeen years of dedication is sheer sustenance of mind power.

Mind you, even his last finale had a story of its own so, let us start at that point and let him explain under what circumstances he let the curtains down.

The Lankan badminton legend explained, "Since the pandemic situation occurred worldwide, and Sri Lanka

also had a lockdown which lasted almost three months and thereafter, the badminton authorities decided to recommence our training under strict health regulations.

From Page 01

“However, during that time, I had a 2–3-month training regime which benefitted me a lot. Ironically at that point I was flagged down for being positive for Covid-19.

“This occurred on the 12th January when I contacted the flu and a dry cough for 4-5 days. There the badminton authorities decided to have a blanket PCR test for all players. I did my PCR on January 22nd and there I was positive for Covid-19, so I had to undergo quarantine.

“There the authorities provided me with a private facility as a result. I was completely out of badminton for about 28 days. To add to the woes, my wife also was diagnosed positive on the 25th and things got quite complicated.

“During the first lock down, I had a thorough workout, but this second session was quite devastating.

“During the first lock down, I was working with my physical trainer and the national coach backed by the support of the badminton authorities and, to add to that, this is the Olympic qualifying period.

“Then the whole gamut began to crumble around me. I came out of quarantine on February 4th and there the authorities had publicised that the 58th Badminton Nationals were to be held from the 17th to 21st of February.

“I was under tremendous pressure. I had not touched a racket for a considerable duration and had I decided to skip this year, it would be the first time since 2001 that I had not been a part of this spectacle.

“I was talking to my brothers and a few close associates and was trying weigh the options – what ran through my mind mostly was that this was going to be my curtain call or ehrrt I could do it after these recent setbacks.

“Another option was to skip this and go for the Olympic qualification and comeback next year.

“Yet, at the back of my mind my intuition kept on telling me that I should go for it and make it for the 17th time in-a-row.

“At the same time , the same voice inside me told me that this was going to be my swan song on the local stage.

“I decided to take up the challenge. Then I decided to play the first few rounds and size-up the situation before embarking on the real challenges. Gladly all worked out fine, then I began to use my years of experience and won the 17th consecutive crown.

“In short, I had a lot of obstacles to overcome a month before that, but, through sheer dedication I conquered all my doubts. My next one year is very important to me.

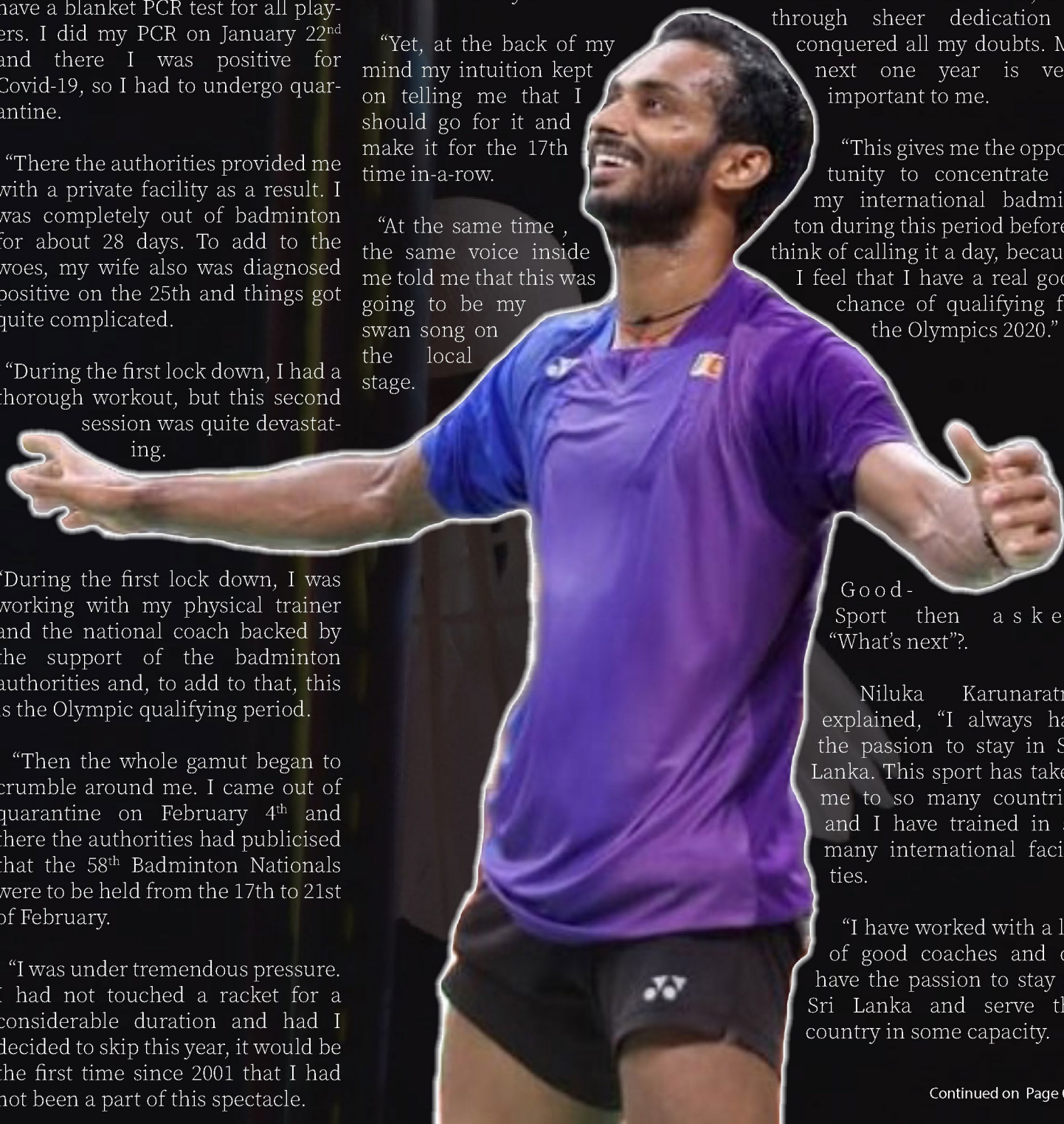
“This gives me the opportunity to concentrate in my international badminton during this period before I think of calling it a day, because I feel that I have a real good chance of qualifying for the Olympics 2020.”

Good-Sport then asked “What’s next”?.

Niluka Karunaratne explained, “I always had the passion to stay in Sri Lanka. This sport has taken me to so many countries and I have trained in so many international facilities.

“I have worked with a lot of good coaches and do have the passion to stay in Sri Lanka and serve the country in some capacity.

Continued on Page 03



From Page 02

I would love to produce a player who could reach a high international ranking may in the first 20 or the thirty.

For instance, take India; there are many players who have reached the top rankings within the first one hundred.

In the ladies segment the situation is similar. We must develop a system that we could develop players who could move to the next elevation.

There should be a path. We should start working on that and bring out a system where we could develop talented junior players in the ages of 11-13 into that the system and develop them gradually to reach the desired international levels.

We could pick a young prodigy may be a boy and a girl and put a lot of eggs in that basket and see them develop and also train them in a different concept.

You must not put them in the same system and the same crowd and focus on the age groups.”

We asked Karunaratne to elaborate on the status quo and asked beginning from India, up to Japan the game of badminton is of very high international standards and why can't we join the band wagon? His answer was “Genetically if you take these Asian countries their structure suits the game of badminton.

It is a fast sport that needs a lot of hand-eye coordination and a lot of quick decisions have to be made a flash.

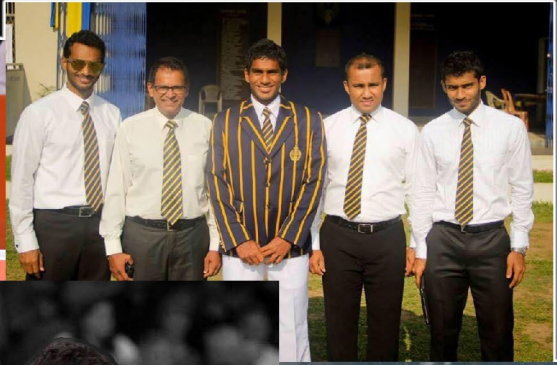
good at it.

The next reason is that they have a history of being on the top exchanges since the 60's; they have good infrastructure for the players to be professional from childhood.

As a result, there are so many players who are willing to take up the sport seriously thus making a living out of it.

At the same time, I must confess there is also a lot of talent in store in these particular countries”

The Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian players are very



“ I decided to take up the challenge. Then I decided to play the first few rounds and size-up the situation before embarking on the real challenges.”

Thomas Bach re-elected as IOC president for second term

Former Olympic champion Thomas Bach has been re-elected for an additional four-year term as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). At the 137th IOC Session held virtually today, the 67-year-old German received 93 yes and 1 no vote from the 94 valid votes.

Thomas Bach, who won gold in with the German foil fencing team at the Olympic Games Montreal 1976, was elected as IOC President at the IOC Session in 2013 in Buenos Aires for a first eight-year term.

This term will finish on the closing day of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 on 8 August this year, as decided by the IOC Executive Board. His second term as IOC President will start immediately after, and will conclude in 2025.

“Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for this overwhelming vote of confidence and trust. For me, this is even more overwhelming considering the many reforms and the many difficult decisions we had to take, which affected all of us,” said President Bach after the election.

“You know that this touches me deeply. It also makes me humble. When you elected me for the first time as your President in 2013 in Buenos Aires, I said that I wanted to lead the IOC according -

to my campaign motto ‘Unity in diversity’ and be a President for all of you and for all our stakeholders.

This commitment is also true for my second and last term. My door, my ears and my heart remain open for each and every one of you. I hope that I can count on your continued dedication, support and friendship also during these four more years.”

As an athlete, Thomas Bach was a world-class fencer, winning the Olympic gold medal, but also two gold medals with the German foil fencing team at the World Championships in Montreal in 1976 and in Buenos Aires in 1977.

He was a founding member of the IOC Athletes’ Commission in 1981, on which he remained until 1988. In 1991, he became an IOC Member and sat on the IOC Executive Board between 1996 and 2013.

He served as IOC Vice-President from 2000 to 2004, 2006 to 2010 and from 2010 until his election as IOC President in September 2013.

During his first period in office as IOC President, he initiated the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms for the future of the IOC and the Olympic Movement that were adopted at the IOC Session in Monaco in 2014.

Just before his election today, the IOC Session approved the Closing Report of Olympic Agenda 2020 unanimously.

Olympic Agenda 2020 has profoundly changed the Olympic Games, the IOC and Olympic Movement.

The IOC Executive Board has already proposed the successor to Olympic Agenda 2020 – Olympic Agenda 2020+5 – which will be discussed by the IOC Session on Friday this week.



From Page 04

It consists of 15 recommendations inspired by five key trends, designed to pave the way to build on these solid foundations and carry Olympic Agenda forward into the future.

In his acceptance speech addressing the IOC Members, President Bach said: “In the meantime, you know me well enough that I would also like to look forward and continue to achieve ambitious goals with you also in the post-coronavirus world.

“ My door, my ears and my heart remain open for each and every one of you. ”

“We learned during this coronavirus crisis, the hard way, that we can live up to our Olympic slogan ‘faster, higher, stronger’ in sport and in life, only if we are working together in solidarity.

Therefore, I would today like to inspire a discussion – a discussion with you and everybody interested in the Olympic community – on whether we should not complement this slogan by adding, after a hyphen, the word ‘together’: ‘Faster, higher, stronger – together’.

This could be – from my point of view – a strong commitment to our core value of solidarity, and an appropriate and a humble adaptation to the challenges of this new world.”

During his presidency, Thomas Bach received the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize, in October last year – a prize which he said belonged to the entire IOC and the whole of the Olympic Movement.

“ We learned during this coronavirus crisis, the hard way, that we can live up to our Olympic slogan ‘faster, higher, stronger’ in sport and in life, only if we are working together in solidarity. ”

Without the support of so many around the globe, the achievements for peace through sport could never have been accomplished, he stressed. In 2019, he was awarded the Cem - Papandreou Peace Award in Athens.

This award is given to individuals and groups who have made “an outstanding contribution to peace”.

IOC News



WINNERS OF THE WOMEN'S DAY SPEECH COMPETITION



Kalshini Dulmitha

“Make Sports a Safe Zone”

Speech Competition Conducted by
The Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka



Ayeshan Abeywardena

“Make Sports a Safe Zone”

Speech Competition Conducted by
The Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka



Ramya Sivakumar

“Make Sports a Safe Zone”

Speech Competition Conducted by
The Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka



**Yusef Hazari
Omar Hazari**

“Make Sports a Safe Zone”

Speech Competition Conducted by
The Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka