

Don't make it a cadet college

A recent advertisement by the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan, that appeared in the local newspapers last week, inviting applications from students for admission to the Protisthan, belied all our hopes for which this sports-cum-educational institute was set up. This unique institute, first of its kind in the country, was established with the exclusive and specific idea of giving the talented youth advance training and coaching both in the fields of sports and education.

But the advertisement in the shape of "student admission notice" gives us an idea that this institute is like one of so many cadet colleges that we have already in the country. This, as far as we could gather, was not the idea of the institution when it was first started.

The government has already placed sufficient funds at the disposal of different educational institutions and sports organisations, both in private and public sectors, for the development of sports and games in the country. These, we believe, have been done to discover the

By Anis-ul-Moula

talented youth and give them proper training.

The emphasis on sports warrants maximisation of promotional efforts, in terms of funds, coaching and training facilities. As we have said earlier in these columns that the most significant of promotional activities that deserve consideration, is the inclusion of sports activities in the curriculum of schools, colleges and universi-

ties. It should allocate specific marks and should form as significant a part of syllabus as any. But this protisthan (sports cum-educational institute) should be of a different nature as in other advanced countries

What, in fact, has been happening to our youngsters now, is even worse than their former state of neglect. The youngsters after a few selection-trial matches are put in a camp for a week, or so. But after the tournaments are over, or the joy of foreign-trips end, these young talents find themselves at a loose end.

They go back home, in some cases to very poor parents who can neither provide them the food supplied at the training-camp, nor the expert guidance the youngsters had been receiving in the camp. Soon, all the good accrued at the camp is undone and the talents are back in the pavilion ill-fed and uncared for with no hope of either improving their sporting talent or educational pursuit.

Realising that this was a largely futile exercise, the present government has embarked on an ambitious and most correct project and established the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan (Bangladesh Institute of sports-cum-education) at Savar near Dhaka to take care of the talented youngsters and also some coaches in selected disciplines. This was a laudable move, considering the wilderness that the country's sports was in. The idea was also to run this unique institute in the lines of such institutes in other countries and not to make it another cadet college as the recent advertisement for admission tends to suggest.

Please don't make it a cadet college, as we have already some very good such cadet colleges all over the country. Why not follow the pattern set up at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports at Patiala, India. Instead of inviting applications from the students, let there be a country-wide hunt for talented youngsters through various competitions in sports and examinations of merit in educational fields. Coaches should also be selected in similar manners. Please don't make this unique institution a hotch-potch.

To begin with, select only a few disciplines, say football, hockey and cricket. Prepare first-class, really first-class grounds for practice in these events. Experienced foreign coaches must be engaged in the institution in different disciplines, alongside a few scholars from English public schools. Select only 20 best students and ten coaches in football, hockey and cricket, to start with in the first year.

The starting class should be Class V instead of Class VII. By the time these youngsters mature, they will surely be called to various training sessions before going for any international competition. Physical fitness programmes in other countries start very early in the lives of sportspersons, though there are different age-levels for different disciplines. Thus Class VII will be a late start.

Stamina building begins at the early age of ten or twelve. It will serve no purpose giving the students in this institute stamina-building physical training at this stage in Class VII. They will not be able to turn out as full-blooded work-horses that are absolutely necessary in today's tough competitive world.

The physical-fitness of each student in the institute should be of prime importance. And this is not possible with local coaches, who themselves are not physically fit to take up this challenging job. All through the years, they have been training youngsters and even mature athletes, imparting sporting skills and explaining the intricacies of individual games. But they have consistently failed to make a strong player capable of withstanding the physical pressure of international competition.

In Bangladesh, the coaches take charge of both training procedures and physical exercises. This is not correct. Physical exercise and training in techniques and intricacies in different sporting events, are two different things which should be taken care of by two different experts on the subjects as in advanced countries.

I would like here to conclude with a request to the Education Minister: Please don't make this Protisthan one of the many cadet colleges that we have already in the country.