

# ST Run: Emcees Sarpani and Latimer practise what they preach



Kelly Latimer and Ross Sarpani both initially disliked running but caught the bug after they hosted many races. ST PHOTO: MARCUS TAN

Nicholas De Silva

After a year's absence, Ross Sarpani and Kelly Latimer will return to help participants get into their stride at The Straits Times Run in the City on Sunday.

The affable duo, who emceed the 2014 and 2015 editions of the race, expressed their delight to be back.

"It has always been one of the iconic events that we host in the year," said Sarpani, with Latimer nodding in agreement.

Runners are in good hands as the duo have been on both sides of the fence. They take part in races whenever their work schedule permits.

However, this was not always the case. They initially disliked running but after hosting multiple races, the line between work and play blurred.

Sarpani, 47, was inspired by the friends he made at races where he

was the emcee. These friends were runners themselves and that made him realise he should pay more attention to his fitness.

For Latimer, it was her stage partner that got her into running regularly at a charity run he was hosting.

"I was there just to run for charity but at the end of it, Ross took my then boyfriend (now husband) and I up on stage and asked if we were coming back the following year. He's so shy and he blanked out and said, 'Yes.' We committed to it after that every year," recalled the 30-year-old, who now runs other races as well.

On race day, they intend to dispense important information while keeping energy levels up by blasting inspirational music and interacting with the crowd.

Safety is a primary concern for Sarpani. He advises runners to "listen to their body". He speaks from experience, as doing so in a previ-

ous incident helped him avoid possible death. He declined to elaborate.

Latimer acknowledged the importance of safety but encouraged runners to endure the pain and smile during the race. "You would want a pretty picture and a happy memento of your run," she added.

She also emphasised how smiling creates a positive mindset which releases good endorphins that will help runners power through to the finish line.

"You'd better smile because you might be on the front page of the national newspaper," quipped Sarpani.

All race categories flag off from Esplanade Drive this year, which the emcees describe as their personal favourite running spot.

"It's really beautiful in the morning at sunrise with the skyline in the background," noted Sarpani.

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# AT HOME AND ON SONG, THE LIONS BECKON

Despite tough start, South Korean becomes key player for club, could even be naturalised

John Pravin

When he first arrived to play for Home United's Prime League side as an 18-year-old in December 2011, South Korean Song Ui Young's poor grasp of English made it a struggle to communicate with his team-mates and hampered his progress on the pitch.

But he refused to be deterred, taking online English lessons and the midfielder is now comfortable as the S-League team's on-field leader, directing the side's chase for the league title.

Home are second in the table with 29 points, two behind defending champions Albirex Niigata.

The change in Song's confidence has been noticeable, said Home's veteran defender Juma'at Jantan.

The 33-year-old recalled: "I would speak to him but only receive a nod or okay in response, nothing more. He has no problems (speaking) now and is a commanding presence for us."

Juma'at is not Song's only fan. National coach V. Sundram Moorthy is another and has earmarked the Incheon native for the Football Association of Singapore's Foreign Talent Scheme (FTS) to boost the Lions. The other two candidates are Canadian Jordan Webb (Warriors FC) and Frenchman Sirina Camara (Home).

The thought of donning the Singapore jersey excites Song, who won the 2013 Singapore Cup with Home.

He said: "I know it is not easy to get this honour but I know that I am capable of helping the national team."

The 23-year-old has impressed with his versatility, his ability to

play in defence and midfield, and his range of passing. He scored six goals and made five assists last season. This campaign, he has already scored five times and has played a key role in Home's run into the AFC Cup ASEAN Zone final.

The Protectors' coach Aidil Sharin believes Song, who has also been named captain on several occasions, has plenty to offer.

He said: "Song is a complete player - both in attack and defensively. He is even getting better now; a lot more wise when making decisions on the pitch."

"He's young and he knows the system as well as the national players, so he can gel easily with them if he becomes a national player."

The chance to play on the international stage seemed like a distant dream when Song arrived at Bishan Stadium six years ago.

The Yeouido High School student had caught the eye of his compatriot and then Home coach Lee Lim Saeng and was persuaded to move to a new country to chase his dream of becoming a professional footballer.

But an ankle injury in pre-season meant he was out for a few months and made his debut for Home only in July 2012.

"I thought of going back to Korea many times," he said.

A two-room apartment in Yio Chu Kang is now home to Song, who counts Juma'at and team manager Badri Ghent among his closest friends.

While the process to become a naturalised citizen under the FTS will take some time, Song's excitement is apparent. He said: "There are good and young players in the national team like Adam Swandi and Irfan (Fandi). I would love to help them out as I am young and I'll definitely get better."

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Song Ui Young celebrating with then team-mate Ken Ilso during Home's 3-0 S-League win over Warriors last August. Coach Aidil Sharin says the 23-year-old "is a complete player - both in attack and defensively". TNP FILE PHOTO

DREAM AMBITION

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SONG UI YOUNG, Home United midfielder, on his ambition to play for the Singapore national team.

# Ikhsan's penalty helps Cubs turn the tables on India's U-23s

A 51st-minute penalty by Ikhsan Fandi helped the Singapore Under-23 football team beat India's U-23 side 1-0 in a friendly match played at Choa Chu Kang Stadium last night. The result meant Richard Tardy's side avenged Sunday's 0-1 loss to the same opponents.

Yesterday's victory was a timely confidence boost for the Cubs, as they gear up for the opening match of their Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Under-23 Championship qualifying campaign against hosts Myanmar next Wednesday. The Republic will also meet Australia next Friday and Brunei next Sunday in Group F.

Tardy said: "They fought until the end and we can be proud of their performance."



Forward Ikhsan Fandi converting a spot kick in the 51st minute to give Singapore's U-23 side a 1-0 win over their Indian counterparts at Choa Chu Kang Stadium. PHOTO: THE NEW PAPER

LOTTERY	
<b>TOTO</b>	Thu, 13 Jul 2017 Draw No. 3283/2017
Group 1 Prize	<b>\$1,000,000</b> est.
Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994	
No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.	
LW: Livewire (MBS) & Livewire (RWS) (21 years and above)	
LW: Livewire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during 'Live' telecast)	
SB: SportsBuzz@Kranji (18 years and above)	
Singapore Pools Account Service. Call 6788 6688 for more details.	
<b>PLAY RESPONSIBLY</b>	
Step Legal National Problem Gambling Helpline: 1800-6-666-666	RCB Reg No: 1968002023

# Leicester's owners accused of corruption in Thailand

LONDON • The company that owns Leicester City and funded the club's rise to become Premier League champions last year has been accused of multi-million-pound corruption in the operation of its business in Thailand.

King Power, owned and run by the Leicester chairman, Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, and his son Aiyawatt, is alleged to have corruptly short-changed the Thai government of its agreed share from the company's lucrative duty-free franchise at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi airport.

King Power International is accused of criminally failing to pay the Thai state 14 billion baht (\$568.34 million) from the operation of the airport franchise, whose original grant in 2006 required 15 per cent of the income to be paid to the government.

The lawsuit - a copy of which was seen by The Guardian - was filed by Charnchai Issaraseanarak, the deputy chairman of a government anti-corruption subcommittee. He alleges that King Power colluded with airport employees to pay the government only a 3 per cent slice of the duty-free takings.

Explaining the legal action to reporters in Thailand, Charnchai said: "We ask the court to accept this lawsuit as a criminal lawsuit, and use the law to punish those who commit wrongdoings. We also ask the court to consider seizing all the 14.29 billion baht from them to the state."

"Nobody should ever gain from this said amount. This case causes substantial damages to the state and is a very severe case."

Two other King Power group companies owned and run by the Srivaddhanaprabha family have also been accused of corruption in the legal action, along with a senior King Power executive. Fourteen officials working for Airports of Thailand have also been named in the action. The lawsuit alleges corrupt misconduct and a failure to act with honesty and integrity.

Charnchai added that he is preparing a further four cases against King Power, which he expects to file in two months. A court decision on whether to accept the first case is expected on July 25, according to reports.

Aiyawatt, Leicester vice-chairman and chief executive of the King Power group, was reported in the Bangkok Post to have denied that the company had breached any laws over the 11 years since it was granted the franchise at the airport.

The Airports of Thailand president, Nitinai Sirisamatthakarn, was also reported to have denied the allegations, saying that King Power had adhered to its contract and paid the correct government fees according to the space occupied at the airport.

It is not clear what impact the case could have on Leicester if it proceeds and succeeds.

Premier League rules prohibit people from owning more than 30 per cent or being a director of a club if they have been convicted of a criminal offence of dishonesty. THE GUARDIAN