

8th July 2024

To,

Presidents & Secretaries of AIFF Member Associations

And

Members of the Executive Committee

All India Football Federation

Dear Esteemed Members,

Greetings!

Hope you are doing well and in great spirits!

It has been a long time since we have interacted on matters related to Indian football. I was purposely keeping quiet all these days thinking I shouldn't share my thoughts unless you want to hear anything particular from me. However, I am convinced that you as the custodians of the beautiful game in India are proactively discussing with your fellow member association colleagues and friends on developments and issues impacting Indian football.

Nevertheless, I couldn't hold back myself anymore. The prevailing situation requires urgent actions to avoid further damage to Indian football. Thus, the compelling circumstances have forced me to share my feedback, facts, experiences, and views that are badly impacting Indian football; more importantly, a few facts on Mr. Kalyan Chaubey because you have the right to know it and take important corrective steps. After all, you are the primary decision-makers while shaping the future of Indian football.

I urge you to kindly read it carefully. These are not just a bunch of words but plain truth.

Status of my Legal Case

You must not forget that I am still legally the Secretary General of the AIFF as per the court order on 8th December 2023. The High Court has granted a stay on the AIFF termination decision dated 7th November 2023. Soon my legal case is coming up for the hearing. For your knowledge, I must tell you that I filed the case not to get reinstated back in AIFF but to fight the injustice and dictatorial leadership of the President. I am sure you are aware, that my unprofessional

termination itself is causing a huge financial burden on AIFF and you won't know how much more money it will have to waste due to the stupidity of this one man. I wonder why he was not asked to explain his unilateral decisions that are consistently causing AIFF bigger harm after each passing day.

AIFF on 8th November 2023 through its press release made a serious attempt to paint me as a villain by terming my termination is due to "Breach of Trust". Till today I don't know what that "breach of trust" allegation was. Mr Kalyan Chaubey publicly put this allegation against me to ruin my professional career and sabotage my global reputation. In my 14 months, being the head of the AIFF Secretariat and as the Secretary-General I never did anything to put the game or AIFF into disrepute. Whatever I have done and acted on with the sole intention to protect, develop and promote the beautiful game in India with 100% integrity, honesty and by keeping the best interests of the game in mind. I have been part of bigger organisations and handled bigger projects, and always given the best. But to read it in the media was the worst form of backstabbing I experienced in life.

I must admit the only time I was rude to him was on 6th November 2023 and I felt that I shouldn't have been. But he was simply testing my patience for a long. Though I am a person with tremendous tolerance power. When my level of tolerance was breached, I erupted. For a long time, I was made to stand with wrong people and specially with those who are taking the game for a ride with name dropping and a bunch of lies. I never worked to destabilise Mr Kalyan Chaubey. Yes, I criticised his attitude and actions while discussing things with a few of the executive committee members with a belief that the message would reach him and then he would choose the right path. I was proved totally wrong.

Mr. Kalyan Chaubey is totally untrustworthy as President & Person

I must tell you a few plain facts. As an esteemed member, you have the right to know them. I was in the process of resigning on 9th November 2023 during the Executive Committee Meeting. I already decided to quit because it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to work with the President for various reasons (some of which are stated here). On 6th November 2023, I did tell him on a phone call that I would work towards sharing the facts with Member Associations as his actions are contrary to the interests of Indian football and the member associations should bring a "No Confidence" motion against him. In

clear terms, I conveyed to him that he was untrustworthy and unfit to hold this prestigious position because all his actions were packed with lies and lowly politics.

Within the next 30 hours, he unilaterally terminated my contract without following any process. He dared to lie again when he forcefully met me in Doha during the finals of the AFC Asian Cup 2023. His actual statement in Doha was that he had no role in my termination and the follow-up press release accusing me of “Breach of Trust” was not his decision. I simply replied, you are a President and no one else has the power to act without your 100% involvement.

In September 2023 itself I conveyed to him that he had broken the trust because I heard things about him that were unbecoming of a President. I lost all trust in him since he began playing politics with me once I started resisting his selfish agendas from August 2023.

Why was the Core Committee formed by Mr Kalyan Chaubey?

The problem between us got aggravated since the day he formulated the Core Committee. His primary objective in forming the core committee was to get the go-ahead for all his dubious project plans through the core committee and to make the powers of the Secretary-General redundant. He thought that this would solely lead to his advantages in many ways.

For me, the formation of the core committee was not a problem. I didn't complain since I had nothing to hide and I always encouraged more dialogue and interactions. He failed in getting his agenda-driven special projects through as the committee didn't approve. With the formation of the core committee, he unknowingly reduced his own powers. He soon realised that he was no longer the driving force after the formation of the core committee. When the realisation hit him hard, he started plotting about getting rid of the committee.

The most interesting fact, you must note, is that during the formation of the core committee, I was convinced, that Mr. Chaubey was not fit to be the President. A few senior members met him with a genuine reason to complain about certain issues, which they thought were not going in the right direction. The major reason was the expense related to I-League production. Members thought that the decision was solely taken by the Secretary-General and that the high expenses on production were not justified as there was no budgetary support to go for this level of expenditure. On that day he reflected, he was not a team man

and that was the day when I realised that I could no longer work with this person. I wanted to resign but someone stopped me from doing so.

The Hidden Story behind High Production Cost

Let me put all the facts in front of you related to high production costs and how the President forced the AIFF to spend so much. From the third week of assuming charge in AIFF, the President started discussing with me how to improve the overall quality of the production in I-League and to take the production quality to the level of ISL. He started sharing production details, like camera specifications, how ISL or Durand Cup does the production with how many cameras, who should I talk to improve production quality, and who got the cameras in the market, etc.

My first reaction to all these was very positive as he had a logic and, why better production would lead to improving overall product quality of the I-League. But I always thought, where is the budget to spend that much on the I-League? In one such discussion with him, he told me specifically that we must compete with ISL, and all the matches, whether it was I-League or National Youth teams or national teams, the production quality would have to be improved with immediate effect and we should tender it accordingly. He even shared with me the tender specifications. I thought he was serious, but again the budget remained my main worry. When I discussed the budget constraint part with him, he assured me that we would broadcast on DD and other platforms. He, with his contacts/ network, will be able to generate a minimum of Rs. 10cr revenue and our production cost would be zero.

I was still reluctant to go ahead as it was a risky proposition. But when I was contemplating having a discussion with the finance committee members on this, he while on a phone call, very rudely said, “If you are not going ahead with the tender on production, then I have to start coming to the office from tomorrow to make these kinds of decisions.”

He then on a follow-up call, apologised for his behaviour and directed me to go ahead with the tender as he was convinced that with better production quality, he would get the advertisement revenue to cover the high production cost. That’s how we went ahead with higher specifications of production for I-League and other national team games but sadly, he couldn’t bring a single penny to AIFF.

Mr Kalyan Chaubey's 'Contribution' to AIFF Financial Loss

When I realised, he was not capable of generating any funds, I started to say "No" to him for production-related expenses. That was the time I realised that he was becoming impatient on production-related matters and didn't care about the financial situation of AIFF. His priorities were all wrong. It was not limited to production-related expenses but also there were projects he was actively discussing with me and the core committee members where AIFF's financial situation could have gone into a deep crisis. Thanks to the core committee members, we didn't allow his plans to go ahead.

I read in the media is that there is a reduction of budget in I-League and other competitions for the current season (2024-25). This situation is the direct result of his wrong practices and misplaced priorities. Another important fact, this should open the eyes, ears, hearts, and minds of our members, this is again related to the production of I-league. For the 2023-24 I-League season, AIFF tendered production specifications to substantially reduce production expenses without compromising the basic quality of the production. We finalised the new production specs after a prolonged discussion and deliberation within the AIFF and also took into consideration the decision of the Core Committee, to reduce the budget on production-related expenses.

Understand this situation. Why was the President of the organisation taking undue interest in production matters? Mr. Kalyan Chaubey, in the presence of the AIFF Treasurer, confronted me about why we notified the tender on production (2023-24 I-League) without his approval. I told him that it was done as per the decision of the core committee and considering our budgetary situation. He then surprisingly behaved as he was not the President but the vendor who would produce the I-League for the AIFF. You shouldn't be surprised by his statement. He stated that the vendor had rightly gone to court against this tender, and they would win the case that would put AIFF in a bad light. I vehemently argued with him that AIFF was absolutely right in its decision to float the tender rather than going ahead with the same vendor. I clearly told him that the vendor who went to court had no chance to get any relief. At that moment I realised again, this man had some compulsion to take the side of the vendor. An investigation should be launched into what made the President take the vendor's side. And was there any conflict-of-interest situation that resulted in the President batting for this vendor's continuation to produce the I-League for AIFF?

Mr Kalyan Chaubey's undue haste in releasing Payments to a Vendor

There must be an investigation into why Mr Kalyan Chaubey as President of the AIFF took extraordinary interest in releasing payment of the production vendor. In some cases, he specially visited the office to sign the cheques of this vendor.

What was the hurry? Why was he taking undue interest in the production matters?

I remember Mr Kalyan Chaubey speaking to me and share impressive things about this vendor, and specifically asking me to visit their office in Kolkata. In one such visit to Kolkata, he took me to their office to show studio facilities, etc. On that visit, I was interviewed in their studio for a halftime show in an I-League match.

Mr Kalyan Chaubey was on an Appointment Spree in AIFF

This was the second issue brought to the attention of the AIFF President in May 2023 by some members. Why did AIFF appoint certain staff? Again, all the blaming fingers were pointed at the Secretary-General, but the fact remains that Mr Kalyan Chaubey appointed 7 people of his choice in AIFF during my time and 4 out of these 7 staff were based in Kolkata. He simply forced these four appointments on AIFF. However, he never clarified these appointments to members.

Crisis during Asian Games: A Sole Creation of Mr Kalyan Chaubey

Mr. Kalyan Chaubey is fully responsible for all the negative press and criticism AIFF and Indian football were subjected to, before and during the Asian Games 2022. Let me put the facts before you. Mr. Kalyan Chaubey was fully aware by June 2023 that the football team wouldn't be part of the Asian Games due to the eligibility conditions specified by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Indian teams (M&W) were not within the top 8 rankings in Asia and thus, we were not fulfilling the standard set by the Govt. But he didn't convey the same to anyone within the AIFF or hold any meeting to appraise the same.

But when the media carried a story (15th July 2023) on football missing the Asian Games with my following quote, *"This is a decision taken by the government. So, we have to abide by it. However, we will make an appeal to the*

government to reconsider the decision as far as football is concerned,” AIFF Secretary General Shaji Prabhakaran told PTI,” Unquote.

After this news was out, fans and the head coach appealed to the Hon’ble Prime Minister and MYAS for the inclusion of Indian men’s & women’s teams in Asian Games, then Mr. Kalyan Chaubey came under tremendous stress and questioned my statement to the media as I had done something mischievously wrong. Thanks to the government, football was included after a series of meetings and deliberations. However, Mr. Kalyan Chaubey did the biggest damage to Indian football with his unnecessary comments in the media regarding players’ selection and he unilaterally decided to add three senior players thus upsetting the entire plan the Head Coach prepared in consultation with the Head Coaches of ISL.

Further, Mr. Chaubey made a media statement that he didn’t know how the team was selected for the Asian Games (TOI report). His media statement reflected he was not a team man and had no knowledge about FIFA rules and regulations related to the release of players for national duty and the obligations towards professional clubs. He simply put his foot in the mouth as the President of the AIFF when he said he would ask the ISL to postpone the league for the Asian Games. Within 24 hours of his statement, ISL announced the match schedules with telecast details. He once again displayed total immaturity by making decisions without consulting anyone in the structure. The AIFF was painted as an unprofessional organisation due to his foolish and childish statements.

During the Asian Games, he not only lowered the status of the President’s position but also dented the credibility of the AIFF in the eyes of stakeholders, the government and the public. His overall conduct brought disrepute to the game and AIFF. As I anticipated problems, pleaded with him that for the overall good of the game, we should withdraw the men’s team from the Asian Games. But his lack of maturity and foresight in dealing with any such situation.

A Contract Clause that Mr Kalyan Chaubey Approved first and denied later

On the head coach’s contract, Mr. Chaubey, contrary to his claims, was updated at each step, and the contract was signed only when he approved the same. It has become a perpetual habit for him to blame all others except pointing fingers at himself.

The fact is that the termination clause was revised in September 2022 itself when the extension was granted. A copy of the agreement is with him, but he always fails to read it before issuing a public statement.

The first extension was granted to the head coach based on the decisions of the Technical Committee and Executive Committee and accordingly, the extension contract was drafted with revised clauses.

About doctor's appointment in AIFF

Mr. Chaubey stated that I appointed a doctor wrongly in the AIFF. The doctor, was appointed by the AIFF after following the due HR process, including the go-ahead from the interview panel appointed by the Executive Committee. It wasn't the first time that Dr Sandeep Kumar was appointed by the AIFF. He has been a part of AIFF since 2009 and a part of the Senior National Team for a few years as a Team Doctor. He was also appointed by the AIFF for several assignments, including as a Team Doctor, for the India U17 Team during the whole phase of preparations and competition of the FIFA U17 World Cup 2017.

Further, he was the Team Doctor for ISL teams and almost all the senior players of the National Team mostly consulted him. He is also in the AFC panel of Team Physician and Dope Control Medical Officer. His stature and competency as a sports physician and a professional sports medical professional shouldn't have been of any doubt, but someone played politics and, in this case, the current Acting SG is the one who raked this issue to score a point.

The fact is that I never had any issue with the Deputy SG Mr. M Satyanarayan. But after 7th November 2023, when I exited the AIFF, I came to know several things about how he conspired against me to see me out. I was taken aback when I heard how he was conspiring against me since June 2023 to see my end in the AIFF. I don't want to highlight those specifics, on each of his actions, or the conspiracy he hatched against me, because the man responsible for the downfall of AIFF and Indian football is none other than Mr. Kalyan Chaubey.

The fact is that I treated Satyanarayan like my elder brother and involved him in everything I possibly could. I genuinely wanted him to gain experience and exposure to discharge his duties and responsibilities. But I never knew he had joined AIFF with a specific target in mind. I already forgave him because I believe in good karma. May be if ever I plan to write a book on my time with AIFF and

Indian football I would be adding a chapter on key conspirators. Believe me, it is going to be a conspiracy thriller!

Supporting Mr. Kalyan Chaubey was the biggest mistake of my professional life

I must admit with responsibility and sense, that I made the biggest mistake of my professional life in supporting Mr. Chaubey's election in the AIFF and then assuming the position of the Secretary-General. I thought since he is a former player, who played club football for more than a decade, he would always stand for the game and at least passionately engage himself to bring change in Indian football. But sadly, my assessment was cent percent wrong. The only person who cautioned me before the election was Bhaichung Bhutia. On the eve of the AIFF elections, he told me, "Shaji be careful, he is using you and you will be the first casualty after a few months of elections." He proved right, and I was completely wrong in trusting Mr Chaubey for football reasons.

I don't have to remind you as you are fully aware, how hard we worked, amongst most of the State Associations, to prepare ourselves for the elections and our plans to transform football in India if we would have got opportunities to govern the game in India. However, all such plans got derailed with the entry of this man as he was not in our scheme of things. When I look back, it is something like a movie, where one of the characters forced himself on us with his fancy stories and game plan to get elected in the prime position where he can rule with no responsibility and accountability resulting in the production of streaming platform series on AIFF, reflecting chaos and daily examples of mediocrity and not anything positive on the pitch for Indian football.

Hope you have not forgotten the sacrifices we all made for Indian football. I must remind you of the sacrifice I had to make from all positions, including withdrawing my candidature from the AIFF elections. More importantly, I resigned from Football Delhi where all the good work I was trying to do with Football in Delhi ended abruptly.

Further, you need to know, that it was Kalyan Chaubey who clearly told me that I would have to manage international affairs for Indian football and thus, I will be nominated in AFC and FIFA. I didn't ask for any of those roles but he offered me first and then began lying to members after 7th November 2023 that he didn't know how I got elected in AFC and SAFF, and how I became part of different

standing committees within AFC and SAFF. He conveniently forgot that I followed the process of elections in AFC and SAFF with his approval. His lies have only exposed himself and his sense of insecurity and ill designs.

Kalyan Chaubey's election to Indian Olympics Association

Mr Chaubey has forgotten how he got elected to the Indian Olympic Association as a Joint Secretary within the first month of getting elected as the AIFF President. What process did he follow in AIFF to nominate himself for the Joint Secretary position in the IOA? Did he take the AIFF Executive Committee into confidence before becoming part of the IOA? He was also the acting CEO of the IOA and becoming CEO is like full-time employment. Was it not his moral responsibility to bring his full-time IOA responsibility to the AIFF Executive Committee? I don't want to dwell into how useful he was for Indian football due to his IOA position.

Mr Kalyan Chaubey's wholehearted support to Wrongdoers

I must also bring to your kind notice that two of the executive committee members were continuously abusing their positions. One from a particular State Association, and troubling the clubs, stakeholders and players with the worst practice of governance. I initiated some strong actions to curb bad practices and then reported it to the President. Rather than supporting my actions, he turned both officials against me and then they launched a campaign against me with the blessings of Mr. Chaubey. When I came to know about it, I realised our football was in the wrong hands. This is one of the reasons I confronted him and spoke my mind on 6th November 2023.

Mr. Chaubey's Failed Election Promises

If you remember, Mr. Chaubey promised to bring an additional 100 crore of Rupees to AIFF in the first year and in addition to this, one of the promises our of several was to secure land and headquarters space for each State Association. Have you gone through the AIFF budget for 2024-25? He already spent 22 months as President, but there is no sign of additional funds coming to AIFF. I don't think he even remembers his promises. What I understand dealing with him, I repeat, he is the most untrustworthy person.

I am sure, you must have come across a recent letter from I-League clubs. The clubs have made some serious demands, and one part is about increasing subsidies. I think it is a genuine demand. The fact is that I-League clubs are only losing money season after season because we have failed to create a product that can grow towards sustainability and make clubs attract some sponsorship and commercial revenues. I trusted him once when he bluffed his usual storytelling way to spend higher expenses on production, but he failed to bring any of his promised added cash or added value to AIFF.

Successful in Creating a rift between FSDL and me

He was supposed to manage the FSDL relationship at the top level and create harmony between the two organisations. But he was playing a double game there too. He was telling me one thing and doing the exact opposite with FSDL. He was clearly working with one agenda, to get closer to the top management of the FSDL and paint me as the bad guy. He somewhat succeeded in creating a perception with FSDL that I was against FSDL.

I had transparent and professional dealings with FSDL and was in regular communication with FSDL CEO on all aspects. There were no issues till Mr. Martin was there. I was fully aware of the AIFF obligations towards FSDL based on the MRA and the realities of Indian football commercial landscape. No doubt that Indian football is a bigger challenge and there are many challenging situations between AIFF and FSDL. I dealt with those situations in harmony and with great professionalism. However, I failed to catch up with the politics and cheap tactics of Mr. Kalyan Chaubey in time.

Unilateral public statement on co-hosting FIFA World Cup 2034

Mr Kalyan Chaubey once again displayed his utter ignorance and lack of knowledge of well-established protocol on FIFA and international matters related to the hosting of FIFA World Cups, when he announced publicly that India will try to co-host FIFA World Cup 2034 in partnership with Saudi Arabia and will host some of the matches in India. His statement was not only sans homework but also stunningly foolish. It hit India's reputation globally. He not only breached Govt of India protocol but also the FIFA protocol. People who know him enough weren't surprised by his actions. Because he always put his self-interest above

anything and in this case, he intended to get the media attention for himself. He never cares about Institutions, his colleagues, or anything else.

Facts on Government's support to Football

In my 14-month tenure with the AIFF, the government of India, particularly the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and SAI, was always keen to support Indian football. The success of FIFA U17 Women's World Cup 2022 was entirely due to the great and proactive support of the Government and different State Governments.

SAI & MYAS extended all the support whenever we went with a request. The only condition was that there should be a clear-cut plan to justify the Government's investment. The Government was ready to spend funds for activities and exposure trips if AIFF had been included in the annual plan that was approved by MYAS & SAI.

What I felt was that if the leadership was focussed and remained engage with the government in the right way, then we could have received unprecedented support.

Historic miss – our failure to qualify for the third round of the FIFA World Cup 2026 (Mr Chaubey has put his self-interest above India's interest)

This is an issue we shouldn't allow it to be swept under the carpet.

Just after the draw, I had a long discussion with the head coach on our qualification possibilities to the third round for the first time in Indian football history. It was evident that we had a strong chance of making it, because: 1) we had a favourable draw; 2) the team was on a high after three back-to-back titles on home turf; 3) despite all challenges and limitations I was trying to prioritise the national team with a heightened participation in the national team matters.

I would like to add that I was personally functioning almost as a part of the national team with a focussed approach. Due to this teamwork, the results were visible and it propelled India to 99th place in the FIFA rankings.

We must ask ourselves one important question. Why was our national team doing well till November 2023? What were the reasons? Why suddenly the national team suffered a massive dip in performance post-November 2023?

We had a dream start to the FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification campaign in November 2023. A win over Kuwait, that, too, in an away match. Then why did we have such a slump after November 2023, which includes an embarrassing home match defeat against Afghanistan?

Suddenly, with the same set of players and the same coach, we started to look like a different team. When I analysed the situation, I was convinced that only one man was responsible for the entire mess; Mr. Kalyan Chaubey. He failed on multiple fronts.

Mr. Chaubey is expected to provide leadership to Indian football. Instead, he was almost not on talking terms with the head coach. Ever since August 2023, till the time I was in office (i.e. November 7, 2023), Mr. Chaubey never had any conversation with the head coach.

Mr. Chaubey and the head coach attended the AFC Asian Cup draw in Qatar. You will be surprised to know that the AIFF President never held a discussion with the head coach in the 24 hours they were together in Qatar. Not even after the draw was held.

Will someone serious about his position and role as the AIFF President of the AIFF ever miss an opportunity to speak to the head coach immediately after the Asian Cup draw? It prompted the media to report that Mr Kalyan Chaubey was not on talking terms with the Head Coach after the SAFF Championship finals.

Has a President of any National Association ever displayed such a lacklustre attitude and sheer unprofessionalism with the National Team? It was clear that he deliberately avoided the national team matters and stopped talking to the head coach because he wanted to see him out. A man with an inflated ego, Mr. Chaubey caused serious damage to Indian football and the national interest in general to satisfy his myopic self-interest.

We failed to get the desired results and lost a historic opportunity to qualify for the third round.

It cost us dear.

- 1) Had we qualified, it would have been our biggest achievement on the pitch in the last three decades.
- 2) The Indian senior team would have got to play 10 high-quality games with higher-ranked sides and give our players and the national team big exposure and experiences to shape our national team to a higher level.

- 3) It would have enhanced the status of Indian football globally.
- 4) Economically, it would have opened many doors where our clubs, member associations and other stakeholders would have benefitted through commercial partnerships.
- 5) Strategically, with the historic on pitch achievements, had we made it to the third round of FIFA WC 2026 qualification competition then AIFF would have been in a better bargaining and leadership position to command a far improved commercial deals for AIFF as and when AIFF would have opened the renegotiation discussion or gone to market for extending or signing a new MRA or commercial or strategic marketing partnerships.
- 6) Finally, this achievement would have boosted grassroots participation, and the interest of the government would have multiplied towards football in India.

It was left to the President to do the thinking and grab the opportunity with both hands. Instead, he did exactly the opposite.

I agree that the head coach is responsible for the results and performances of the team. But why should he alone be blamed when circumstances clearly lead to a conclusion that the President did nothing to make the best out of the situation; instead, he was busy undercutting with the sole motivation of scuttling the chances of the national team.

How foolish a man can be? The team qualifying for the third round would have elevated his status and received massive media attention. He dug the grave of Indian football with his own hands.

I hope you can understand why no such situation didn't arise during my time, except the Asian Games. The fact is that I was keeping things in control, certain times I have spoken straight to prevent crises of this nature. M. Chaubey reluctantly agreed with me on some occasions. But the important part is that if I was protecting him, it was to protect the institution and the game within my capacity and reach.

Unilateral Termination of the Head Coach by Mr Kalyan Chaubey

By now you must have realised the unwanted crisis Mr. Chaubey has gifted to Indian football through his unprofessional and unethical conduct in sacking the National Team Head Coach. He displayed a similar callous attitude, downright

unprofessionalism, untutored irresponsibility, devious unethical practice and abusive dictatorial mindset in terminating my contract.

The same was repeated while removing the head coach. Does the AIFF Constitution grant power to the President to make unilateral decisions?

There is no problem with sacking a person, but this is not the way a professional organisation conducts itself. I thought he learned his lesson from my termination experiences and would follow the right process this time. It is no rocket science. There are well laid policies and there are legal and HR professionals to guide him. AIFF is not a proprietor firm owned by the President, but it is an Institution established in 1937 by honest and passionate people to take Indian football forward. Why is he not accountable for these kinds of unprofessional conduct?

What I was given to understand is that the so-called special committee agreed to grant a one-month time to the head coach to resign as there were no pressing reasons for a unilateral termination. The request from the coach was precise and clear. Further, I am given to understand that after the two meetings of the special committee when the decision was shared with the President, he immediately wanted to terminate the contract without even looking into the contract and engaging a legal professional.

He is fully accountable for this one decision where he brought international shame to India and Indian football. His behaviour is typical of a dictator, and I would urge you to press for an investigation into why the official press release and the actual deliberations of the special committee differ. And why Mr. Kalyan Chaubey unilaterally decided to terminate the contract? This one act of his could result in considerable financial loss to the AIFF. His irresponsible action has already caused huge reputational damage to AIFF and its functionaries.

AIFF should have adopted the correct process to terminate the contract. That way the institution would have safeguarded itself from any adverse impact. When the Head Coach made it clear that he would step down within one month and will not ask for compensation, then what was the hurry to terminate his contract? The rumour making rounds is that since the head coach demanded the resignation of the leadership if AIFF wanted him to step down due to the failure of the national team, Mr. Kalyan Chaubey got rattled, and he stopped thinking rationally, acted irresponsibly and behaved like a dictator, ignoring the interests of the AIFF.

Many questions come to mind. Why was the head coach not called for a meeting with the AIFF Technical Committee and Executive Committee members? We should not forget that AIFF has invested millions of dollars in the national team and head coach. Why was he not called for a meeting with the Technical Committee to have a proper exit discussion where he would have given the committee members a complete report on every aspect of the Indian national team and Indian football that would become one of the key resources for future decision making?

But Mr. Chaubey considered the head coach an enemy. So, he ignored his basic responsibility as the President and threw all parameters and regulations applicable within India and the FIFA jurisdiction out of the window.

Mr Kalyan Chaubey is not a leadership material

If a weak and incompetent leader like Mr. Chaubey assumes charge of something important like the football federation, then we don't have to dive deep to study his contributions. It is all written on the wall that he will lead to AIFF's doomsday.

He has taken Indian football backward by a minimum of 20 years. If the stakeholders of the game, and you as an important stakeholder, are not raising your voice, then it is only a matter of time before the current tsunami of football downfall in India will soon consume the state associations and clubs. It is time to wake up and speak loudly.

Who is responsible for taking football in India to absolute negativity, where AIFF and leadership are losing the trust and confidence of the fans and other stakeholders at an alarming rate. I don't understand what the obligation towards this man is. Did he add any value to the game or in any aspects of the game except bringing the bad name and disappointments?

He is such a selfish person that he forgets everything and everyone the moment he gets what he wants. Football is the last priority for him, and my experience of working with him for 14 months reflects that he is the most unqualified individual ever to be elected to the Executive Committee as a simple member, forget the President's position. When the history of Indian football is written in 2037 AIFF's centenary year, Mr. Chaubey will come out as the worst president of AIFF in its history.

Conclusion and appeal to Mr. Kalyan Chaubey

While working with him, I realised one thing (the hard way). Never trust a man who has no ability and capability of his own. People like him will use everyone for selfish reasons and backstab them without the slightest hint of remorse. To him, football is not a priority. It had never been.

Indian football is suffering and crying for help at this stage, but the majority of us are ignoring the call. No one else but one man who single-handedly have destroyed all the good work of millions in India for his selfish reasons. The faster he moves out of the system, the better would be for Indian football.

I have many more things and insights to share, from credit card stories to other experiences but it has already taken the shape of a handbook. Maybe I will cover those revelations in part-II if I decide to write ever.

Please don't ignore any of the above revelations, facts, or experiences I have shared here. I have shared these facts with one hope and objective that you as a responsible Member Association and Executive Committee member will urgently act to rest the serious derailment of Indian football under Mr. Kalyan Chaubey.

Not to forget there are millions of hearts and minds, who as players, fans, coaches, referees, club owners, officials, functionaries of State FAs, investors, promoters, sponsors, partners, etc. are seriously invested in the game with the hope that Indian football will reach a higher standard.

There is a great expectation from fans, government, FIFA, AFC and other stakeholders that AIFF will deliver the basics right with responsibility and accountability.

The position as President of AIFF means serious things, to add value to the game and take the game forward with a sense of purpose, urgency and seriousness.

It pains to see the kind of downward spiral Indian football has hit in the last few months. I have someone who has devoted life to the game, and I have always given 100% to the game. Please understand, that I was not working FOR Mr. Kalyan Chaubey. And in that case, none of you are. All of us are working for the beautiful game. We have reached this far in life with sheer hard work, dedication, commitment and 100% integrity towards the game.

It is your responsibility to clean the system and elect a leader, who can lead by example and work 24x7 for the game without any selfish interest. Our game requires good people, good leaders and inspiring stories. But to get inspiring stories we can't promote mediocrity in the system. I hope that you will take my letter seriously, and will act on it with urgency and sincerity.

I, therefore, strongly urge Mr. Kalyan Chaubey to immediately step down as the AIFF President. It would be prudent, considering the situation if authorities can intervene to put a good governance practice in place and clean the system on priority.

Many might ask, why I remained silent all these days and months. My answer is if I had put up all these immediately after 7th November 2023, many would have thought I was trying to blame the person. But by now majority of the stakeholders and you are aware of many facts. My revelations will automatically authenticate that the many allegations against Mr. Chaubey were not just smoking guns but true.

Football is my life, I will fight till my last breath and believe me, I have not written this letter for myself in any way but simply to share the facts. If you don't act now then history will paint all of us as the ones who sabotaged Indian football's progress.

God bless you and Indian football.

Long live Indian football!

Best regards,

Dr Shaji Prabhakaran