



12 MAR, 2024

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The Star, Malaysia



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By K.M. BOOPATHY

PETALING JAYA: The Saari brothers – Faizal and Fitri – are hopeful of reigniting their Olympic dreams under the guidance of their former mentor and current national head coach Sarjit Singh.

The Saari brothers, mainstays in the Terengganu side in the Malaysian Hockey League (MHL), go a long way with Sarjit as the 61-year-old former international had coached the east coast side for four seasons from 2015 to 2018.

Terengganu enjoyed success during those years as they won the league and TNB Cup double in 2015 and 2016, and secured the TNB Cup in 2017 and the league title again in 2018.

The reign had also been special for the 31-year-old Fitri, as he had captained Terengganu.

Fitri said Sarjit was someone who would stand by his players as long as they were committed in training and competitions.

“Terengganu had a very successful run under Sarjit. As a coach, he would stand by his players as long as they are committed and disciplined in training and tournaments,” said Fitri.

“Faizal and I still harbour hopes of playing at the Olympics and if Sarjit has the trust in us and gives us the chance to join the national team, we will give our everything.

“Having said that, we know that we are not young and need to work harder than the rest of the players. We also know that we won’t get favours from Sarjit just because we have trained under him before. We need to earn it through merit with him.”

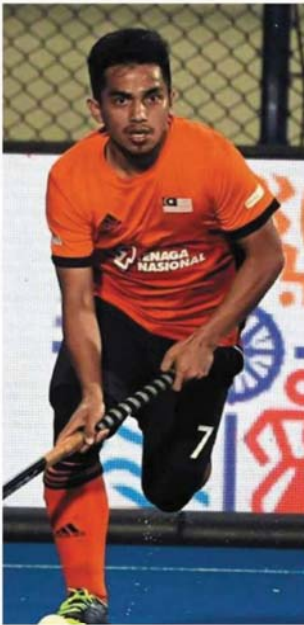
Meanwhile, Faizal said that he had contemplated retirement after the national team were disbanded when they failed to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics by finishing fifth in Oman in January.

The 33-year-old striker was also dropped from the former coach A. Arulselvaraj’s squad due to gout issues.

“There were plans of retiring but that was before the appointment of Sarjit as a coach. Now things are totally different because he is one of my favourite coaches,” said Faizal.

“I will continue playing if my services are needed for the national team.”

Sarjit was named as the head coach by the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) last week and he will be announcing about



45 players for national selection tomorrow based on their performance at the just concluded MHL.

Malaysia’s first event under Sarjit’s reign will be the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh from May 4-11.



Familiar faces: Faizal Saari and Fitri (left) go a long way with Sarjit Singh.