

Asian soccer has improved a lot: AFC official

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) general secretary Peter Velappan Saturday said soccer in the continent has improved by leaps and bounds in the last decade and India had a grand future ahead.

'If you see the standard of the competition in the youth level you can judge the huge change. East and west Asia have emerged as the dominant football regions of the continent and four teams from east and three from west in the last eight speaks of that,' he said.

The addition of Australia who follow the European style of the game has added more variety to the game here, he said.

Cautioning the young brigade, he said: 'The number of fouls have been huge here. [Kolkata](#) has seen in an average 4.6 bookings per match, which is not healthy. I hope the remaining games will be played in a better spirit.'

He also made it clear that the lack of crowd enthusiasm will not be treated as a black mark against the All India Football Federation (AIFF), but the AFC and AIFF will have to work harder in tandem to bring back the crowd in the Indian stadia.

Talking about the Vision India programme, Velappan said: 'Asia is a football gold mine. India is a gold mine, so are all 46 countries in the region. To make Asia competitive in the world stage, we have to strengthen the management and administration of the game starting from the national level.'

'In India we are starting it with the improved AIFF secretariat where five officials specially trained by the AFC will take charge of realising India's dreams. Then we will spread the movement to the state, school and district levels in phases,' he said.

Velappan expressed his excitement about the Vision Asia project's kick-off at Manipur.

'I saw 600 boys playing from six in morning at the National Stadium in Imphal. Their passion and interest for the game touches you. We have inaugurated the 12 team Manipur league for the first time,' he said.

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