

Welcome to the monthly briefing. Let us begin.

Women up 11 places in FIFA rankings

The Bangladesh National Women's Team has leapt ahead 11 places in the latest FIFA rankings. The Bengal girls are now ranked 103rd among 177 nations with 1003 points up from their previous 114th with 987 points. This puts us ahead of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan and Afghanistan. India, at 56th, is at the top of the SAARC countries.

Pioneer football league

Bangladesh Football Federation held an open trial for U16 players to fill the quota for the Pioneer Football League 2017. The league committee hosted the trial at the BFF turf in Motijheel. There was much positive response from youths across the city.

U18 National Championship

The preliminary rounds of U18 National Football Championship 2017 began on March 9 in 8 regions of Bangladesh. In total, 64 teams took part in the preliminary round of the nationwide tournament in eight venues across the country generating considerable interest in the matches.

There will be 63 teams from 63 districts and the 64th will be Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratishthan (BKSP) as they beat Jessore Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board in a pre-tournament play-off and qualified for the main competition.

Bangabandhu and Bangamata Gold Cup

The finals of Bangabandhu Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournament and Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournament were held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present as chief guest and gave away the prizes adding significantly to the image of the tournament.

Sheikh Kamal Club Cup

The Sheikh Kamal Int'l Club Cup was held in Chittagong with five foreign clubs taking part from South Korea, Nepal, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

Although holders Chittagong Abahani could not make it to the finals and TC Sports Club of Maldives took the cup away, this year's edition was entertaining and show much potential for becoming a highlight in the regions' football calendar in future.

The champions received a prize of \$30,000 while the runners-up received \$20,000.

Coaches C License Course

Bangladesh Football Federation has started the BFF-AFC "C" Certificate Coaching Course with maximum number of participants in the first phase of the programme.

The second "C" certificate course will start on April 3rd.

The Bangladesh Football Federation has already held a one day refresher course for A, B and C level coaches to revalidate and reaccredit their coaching credentials and profile.

There will also be Part 1 of the B and A level certificate courses and a Coach Educators Course, which will develop trainers to conduct 'C' level certificate course outside Dhaka in divisions and districts of Bangladesh.

Mini artificial turfs in 3 districts

The federation will set up 3 mini artificial turfs in three districts. The Asian sports body took up the project in response to an appeal by BFF under which Feni, Madaripur and Nilphamari will see this new facility built there.

BPL Club Licensing Administration System demo

As per the directive of FIFA and AFC, the BFF has introduced club licensing of 'Bangladesh Premier League' and 'Bangladesh Championship League' for the upcoming 2016-17 season.

Under the club licensing programme, the clubs will have to submit the necessary documents/papers via a web-based 'Club Licensing Administration System (CLAS)'.

The Professional Football League Committee of BFF decided to conduct a practical demonstration of the uploading process with the participation of the personnel of concerned clubs.

BPL champions Abahani in AFC tournament

BPL champions Dhaka Abahani and the Dhivehi Premier League champions Maziya SRC of the Maldives played in the first group E match of AFC Cup at Bangabandhu National Stadium where the local outfit lost 2-0 despite a spirited performance.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) organises this tournament every year with the latest league winners of every Asian nation. This latest edition of the tournament will see 36 clubs take part divided into 9 groups, each with four clubs.

The teams have been divided into 5 zones — West, Central, South, East and ASEAN. Among the 9 groups, 6 are from West and ASEAN and the other three zones have one group each. Abahani has been included in E Group of South Asia Zone.

The other teams in this group are JSW Bengaluru FC (India), Mohun Bagan AC (India) and Maziya Sports and Recreation Club (Maldives). In the group phase, each team will play every other team on a home-and-away basis league format. Group champions will then compete in the inter-zonal semi-final.

Abahani has already played one match and is set to play five more matches by end of May.