

## **BFF President's statement for March 2019**

Greetings!

### **Bengal girls get a shot at World Cup berth**

Bangladesh U16 women's national team secured a place in the finals of the AFC U16 Women's Championship 2019 to be played from September 15-28 in Thailand.

In the second round of the of the qualifying phase, held in Myanmar from February 27 to March 3, the Bengal girls thrashed Philippines 10-0 and overcame hosts Myanmar 1-0 to cement their place in the AFC finals.

The big news is that the Bangladesh U16 women's national team now have a shot at making it to the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup 2020.

The AFC U16 Women's Championship 2019 will double as Asian qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup next year.

The top three teams of AFC will play in the World Cup to be played in either France or India.

The eight teams participating in the AFC U16 Women's Championship 2019 are Thailand (hosts), North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Vietnam, China PR and Bangladesh.

The Bengal girls will have to secure at least the third position to play in the world cup next year.

The girls have been working hard in the training ground under the supervision of head coach Golam Rabbani Choton and technical and strategic director Paul Thomas Smalley and it has paid rich dividends as we see from the recent results.

It will be no doubt a tough task, but hopefully not an impossible one, to do well against the top footballing nations of Asia.

The whole nation will be looking at the U16 team to fly the Red and Green at the world stage for the first time ever at any level.

### **Valiant U23 boys complete AFC qualifiers**

Bangladesh U23 national team performed brilliantly in Group B of the AFC Championship 2020 qualifiers held from March 22-26 in Bahrain.

The boys picked up Bangladesh's first ever victory in the competition, beating Sri Lanka 2-0 in the third and final match.

The Bangladeshi players also performed exceedingly well in their first two matches against hosts Bahrain and then Palestine.

Even though we lost both the games by the smallest margin possible, their performance caught everyone's attention.

The real value of the performance comes into perspective when you consider that Palestine and Bahrain are respectively 92 and 81 steps ahead of us in FIFA rankings.

The boys' performances did not only draw praise from the Bangladeshi fans but also from the rival coaches.

Although we did not succeed in making it through to the qualifiers into the AFC finals, these performances indicate that our football is on the right track and we can hope to celebrate bigger successes in near future.

### **Bangladesh beat Cambodia 1-0 in international friendly**

Bangladesh national team beat Cambodia in their home ground by the margin of a solitary goal on March 9.

A late strike from youngster Rabiul Hasan made sure Bangladesh pick up a victory away from home after quite some time in senior men's football.

With a squad full of young players, going to Cambodia and controlling the game on their turf is really praiseworthy.

The players gave it their all and implemented what Jamie and his colleagues had planned. So, credit goes to all the players as well as the coaching staff.

I am hopeful that these results are just the beginning of a bright future of Bangladesh football.

### **Women's national team make it to SAFF semis**

Bangladesh national women's team made it to the semi-finals of the recently finished SAFF Women's Championship 2019 held in Nepal from March 12-22.

The girls were drawn in Group A with Bhutan and hosts Nepal.

The Red and Greens confirmed their semi-final berth in their very first match beating Bhutan 2-0. The girls went into the semis as Group runners-up after failing to overcome Nepal.

In the semi-final, the young national team, almost wholly made up of U16 and U18 girls, could not beat a more mature Indian side who had both age and experience on their side.

Nevertheless, the girls put up a brave fight in both their matches against Nepal and India which further highlighted that brighter days await Bangladesh women's football at the senior level just like successes of the age groups.

The players are now back at the Elite Women's Residency Camp and have begun training for the upcoming Bangamata U19 Women's International Gold Cup 2019 to be held from April 22 to May 3 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

### **DMFLC 2nd Division Football League begins**

The Second Division Football League, organized by the Dhaka Metropolitan Football League Committee (DMFLC) under the supervision of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), began on March 24 with the opening clash between Tongi Krira Chakra and Gouripur Sporting Club.

On the opening day, Tongi Krira Chakra beat Gouripur Sporting Club 2-0 at the BSSSM Mostafa Kamal Stadium thanks to goals from Uzzal and Musha.

This season, a total of 13 teams are participating in the DMFLC Second Division Football League. All these teams have already received participation money from the BFF. At the end of the season, the top two teams

will be awarded the champions and runners-up trophy. The top three teams will be promoted to the DMFLC Senior Division Football League and the bottom team will be relegated to the Third Division.

### **10-day training camp in Qatar for U23 boys**

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) arranged a 10-day training camp in Qatar for the U23 team prior to the AFC U23 Championship 2020 qualifiers in Bahrain to help them prepare for the competition.

Apart from regular training, the team played two practice matches against two top flight clubs of Qatar and picked up a victory and a draw which boosted their confidence.

23 players took part in the rigorous training camp with head coach Jamie Day and his support staff. Assistant coach Stuart Paul Watkiss, goalkeeping coach Dean Kenneth May and physiotherapist Simon James Maltby all worked with the head coach intensively prepare the boys for AFC qualifiers and all their efforts yielded rich dividends which was visible with the team's wonderful performance in Bahrain.

The camp did not only help prepare for the AFC qualifiers but also gave the boys a chance to train with state-of-the-art training facilities which would help enrich their experience and allow them to grow. The federation plans to hold more such training camps as training abroad at state of the art facilities always helps the players grow and adds valuable experience.

### **Bangamata U19 Women's Int'l Gold Cup**

The first ever Bangamata U19 Women's International Gold Cup 2019, organised by the BFF, will be held from April 22 to May 3 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

Six U19 women's teams, including Bangladesh will compete in the tournament.

The names of the teams and their respective groups were unveiled at the official draw and logo unveiling ceremony on March 12.

Mongolia, Tajikistan and Laos have been drawn into Group A whereas Bangladesh will compete against United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kyrgyzstan in Group B.

### **BFF/AFC coaching courses to start soon**

The registration process for AFC coaching courses of different levels, organised by the BFF, is now open.

Different courses will be held at different times this year starting from April 27.

The Level 1-Goalkeeping Coaching Certificate Course will be held from April 27 to May 2 followed by other courses.

Interested candidates can visit the BFF website (<http://www.bff.com.bd>) or come to the BFF House in Motijheel to know about further details of the courses and register.

The courses has been designed in line with the new concept introduced by AFC's Coaching Convention.

BFF continues to develop coaches as part of its coach education scheme, with a new brand of youth development and position specific courses planned for the future.

### **AFC, BFF to launch football training, tournament for Rohingya children**

As part of their corporate social responsibility, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will launch football training and tournaments for Rohingya refugee children in Cox's Bazar's from June 2019.

The first phase, in association with Coaches Across Continents (CAC) and UNHCR, was held in Cox's Bazar from December 5-10, 2018.

AFC official Brian Suskiewicz came to Dhaka on March 23 to scrutinise the results of the first phase and plan the second phase of the CSR programme. We look forward to the second phase in June.