

# Nat'l school football in November

MoU signed between MoE and BFF

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation and Education Ministry will jointly hold the National School Football Championship across the country in November in a bid to create a grass-root footballing atmosphere across the country.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two parties was signed in this connection at the education ministry office yesterday.

This will be one of the biggest school football tournaments in the country as some 4800 schools are expected to take part in the championship which is a huge stepup from its previous edition held in 2006 when only 130 schools took part. The tournament in 2006 is the first and only nation-wide school football to this date, where only district champions and runners-up took part. However, there has been a school football tournament held this year, which was only limited to Dhaka Metropolis.

Speakers at the singing ceremony informed that 10 schools from each of 480 upazilas would take part at the upazila level and the winners would compete at district and zonal levels before locking horns for the national level.

"To build a healthy and talented nation, sport is a very important tool

along with education and football has good popularity and rich tradition in our country. I believe the introduction of school football championship across the country will play an important role in reviving football," said education minister Nurul Islam Nahid at the ceremony.

The education ministry had intro-

*"The introduction of school football championship across the country will play an important role in reviving football"*

duced the Bangabandhu Primary School football tournament last year and this year they are organising the Bangamata Primary (girls) school tournament across the country which are being run by the ministry. However, this high school tournament will be completely run by BFF where the ministry will only provide administrative support.

"Of an estimated budget of Tk five

crore, sponsors will provide Tk two crore for the right of title sponsorship while the rest will be collected by staging music concerts," said Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of the BFF school committee.

According to the MoU, the BFF and education ministry will jointly form an organising committee. BFF will manage funds, form bylaws, coordinate local administration, local clubs and organisations, ensure publicity and publication and provide logistic support, sports gears and dresses for the players.

The responsibilities of the education ministry are: to make the tournament success as well as ensure participation of all the schools. The ministry will issue a circular, to prepare necessary infrastructure of schools to host matches, to provide logistic support at local stage, take initiatives for the best players to get admission and provide scholarships and finally provide a token money for the tournament.

"I think it is the best time to roll football onto the ground from the grass-root level after the Argentina-Nigeria match. This tournament will surely create a footballing atmosphere across the country," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

## MSC election on Sept 21

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC limited announced a fresh schedule for its much-awaited poll which was postponed three times following a lawsuits filed by its members.

According to the new schedule, the election and annual general meeting will take place on September 21 at the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel while the sale of nomination papers will start from Thursday. Submission date of nomination papers has been fixed on September 17, while hearing will take place on September 18, and final list of candidates will be published on September 19.

To successfully complete the AGM and election, the ad-hoc committee sat yesterday and most of the directors emphasised on the need of election for running the club smoothly.

"We would love to see an elected committee to take responsibility of the club as soon as possible and we are positive about completing the election this time. However, if there is a failure to hold the election this time, we would lose complete control as government may an administrator," said Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan, one of the 16 directors.

It has been learnt that a consensus committee, led by present chairman Kutubuddin Ahmed, is likely to be elected in the AGM.

## Barca the team

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("The Champions League) left a bad taste in our mouths," Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas said. "We hope to take a step forward in our quality of play and arrive to the same point as last season."

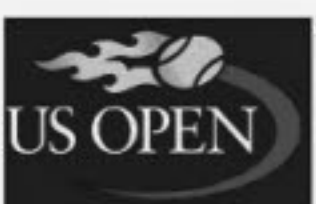
Elsewhere, United, which is top of the English Premier League, visits Benfica on Wednesday in Group C, which also includes Basel and Otelul Galati. The other matches that night are in Group B, where 2010 champion Inter Milan hosts Trabzonspor and Lille is at home to CSKA Moscow.

On Tuesday, Arsenal travels to Borussia Dortmund and Olympiakos hosts Marseille in Group F, while Chelsea is at home against Bayer Leverkusen and Valencia visits Genk in Group E.

In Group G, Europa League champion Porto hosts Shakhtar Donetsk, a Champions League quarterfinalist last year, and Apoel Nicosia is at home to Zenit St. Petersburg.

## Stosur's belief pays off

REUTERS, New York



When Sam Stosur stepped on to the Arthur Ashe Stadium court to play Serena Williams in the US Open final on Sunday few people gave her any chance of beating the 13-time grand slam champion.

The Australian was up against the greatest player of her generation on her home court and on the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The center court stands were packed and the home supporters were baying for an American winner and Williams, who returned to the game in June after a brush with death, was widely considered a sure-fire winner.

Stosur had never won a major singles title and at her only previous grand slam final, last year's French Open, she crumbled under the pressure.

The 27-year-old was better known as a doubles player and had been lucky just to get to the final, clawing and scratching her way through the early rounds. Nobody gave her any hope.

When Stosur walked into that bearpit of a stadium, she knew the odds were stacked against her, but did not give up hope.

"I felt like I was definitely the underdog going into it, so maybe that kind of made me a little more relaxed going into this match, especially after my last grand slam final," Stosur said.

"I had to believe I had a chance to win and obviously having two victories over her in the past definitely helped me feel that it was possible."

Stosur had endured a wild ride to the final. Three of her last four matches had gone three sets and she been involved in the longest women's match played at the US Open and the longest tiebreak at a grand slam.

But those matches only hardened her resolve and made her realise the sacrifices she had made through a career that had been riddled with setbacks and self-doubt.

"My story is probably no different to many others, but when I was younger, my family gave up a lot," she said. "They saw that I had this dream and drive and determination to be a tennis player."

## 'Twinkle toes' stuns angry

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French Open while Williams was in her 17th.

"I felt like I was definitely the underdog," Stosur said.

For all of her edges in experience, Williams was the one who started a bit shakily. She was back in action less than 18 hours after winning her semifinal over No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki on Saturday night, and Williams' game was sleepy.

"It was a little bit of a tough turnaround, but I don't think it would have made a difference today," said Williams, who said she didn't fall asleep until after 4 a.m. "I just probably should have been lighter on my toes and move in a little faster."

Her serve usually one of her top shots was problematic, slower and less accurate than usual: Only three of her initial 14 first serves landed in, and they hovered around 100 mph. Told she'd put 35 percent of her first serves in play during the first set, Williams replied: "Wow. That's not so good."

Williams pushed a backhand long to get broken and fall behind 2-1. She flubbed another backhand to lose

serve and make it 5-2. When Stosur smacked a forehand winner moments later, she had taken 12 points in a row and owned the first set.

That was the first set Williams had lost in seven matches during this US Open, a run that included four victories over women ranked in the top 20. She said her poor play Sunday is what made her so excited when she hit the forehand that led to all the commotion.

"It was beautiful. I hit it, like, right in the sweet spot," Williams said. "It was a good shot, and it was the only good shot I think I hit. I was like, 'Woo-hoo!'"

That moment of joy didn't last long.

Entering the final, Williams was 18-0 on hard courts this season, a full-throttle comeback after missing nearly a year because of health scares, including cuts on her feet from glass at a restaurant, two foot operations, clots in her lungs and a gathering of blood beneath the skin of her stomach.

She was ranked 175th after a fourth-round exit at Wimbledon, but hadn't lost

## JFA Cup U-15 from Sunday

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The finals of the JFA Cup U-15 Football Tournament will get underway from Sunday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Eight teams, split into two groups, will play in round-robin league and top two teams will advance to the semifinals which is scheduled for September 25. The final will take place on September 27.

Participating teams are: Group A BKSP, Tangail, Kushtia and Khulna. Group B Narayanganj, Chittagong, Chapainawabganj and Metropolis School Eleven.

## Law's chance

FROM PAGE 16

games and a Twenty20 ahead of the series against West Indies.

"We have got things in place to try and get some more games after this tournament, which was put on mainly because we wanted to go overseas and play cricket. Other teams were quite busy, they couldn't come here. But this is great practice for us," said Law.

Today, the Academy side take on Bangladesh A while on Thursday, the Tigers face the second stringside.

since then until Sunday and was seeded 28th at the U.S. Open.

Stosur dealt with her own health issues that could have sidetracked her career, and she became the oldest US Open champion since Martina Navratilova was 30 in 1987.

Once a doubles specialist she's won Grand Slam titles in women's and mixed Stosur only once got past the third round in singles at a major tournament before reaching the 2009 semifinals at the French Open.

Her game has improved dramatically since she returned to the tour in April 2008 after about nine months away while recovering from Lyme disease, a tick-borne illness that can affect a person's joints and nervous system. She was ranked 149th two years ago; on Monday, she'll rise to No. 7.

"It kind of made me open my eyes more that you don't necessarily always get a second chance," Stosur said. "I wanted to take every opportunity I had, and I have now been able to fulfill that."



PHOTO: STAR

**FASHIONABLY LATE:** The BCB Cup is inaugurated in Mirpur yesterday by vice-president Mahbubul Anam (L) alongside the two captains Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudul Hasan. The ceremony was hastily held an hour after the match began, during the first drinks' break, with Mushfiqur being called up from the field to pose for the photograph.

## SL stymie Australia

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Resolute Sri Lankan batting and bad weather frustrated Australia's bid for a series-clinching win as the second Test ended in a draw in Pallekele on Monday.

Just 35.3 overs were bowled on the final day, in which Sri Lanka moved from their overnight score of 223-2 to 317-6 in the second innings, an overall lead of 80 with four wickets in hand.

Three half-centuries led a determined batting display by the hosts, who had faced defeat after being shot out for 174 in their first knock.

Seamer Ryan Harris finished with 3-54 as the tourists chipped away at the Sri Lankan middle order, but rain did not leave enough time for Michael Clarke's men to force the result that would have given them the series.

Angelo Mathews was unbeaten on 11 and Suraj Randiv was on four when play was halted midway through the post-lunch session. The match was finally called off two

hours before the scheduled close.

Australia lead the three-match series 1-0 after their 125-run win in the first Test in Galle, with the final Test starting at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in Colombo on Friday.

Sri Lankan captain Tillakaratne Dilshan said he was delighted at his team's batting in the second knock.

Sri Lanka, who trailed by 14 runs at the start of the day, lost both their overnight batsmen, Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, within the first hour.

Australia removed the two star batsmen with the second new ball, which was taken as soon as it was due after one over from Trent Copeland with the old ball.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 174

AUSTRALIA: First innings 411-7 declared

SRI LANKA: Second innings 317 for 6 (Paranavitana 55, Dilshan 36, Sangakkara 69, Jayawardene 51, Samaraweera 43, Jayawardene 21; Harris 3-54)

Result: Match drawn.

Man-of-the-match: Mike Hussey.

## Serena rant may prove

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"Give me a code violation because I expressed my emotion? We're in America last time I checked. Really, don't even look at me, don't look my way."

Williams showed no contrition for her behaviour after the match, although she was gracious in defeat and chatted amiably with her opponent before the presentations.

The authorities would appear to be perfectly within their rights to punish the 13-times grand champion.

At the same time, however, they know that Serena's return in June from a career-threatening foot injury and subsequent life-threatening blood clots, has been an enormous boost for a women's game struggling for a figure-

head.

World number one Caroline Wozniacki is yet to win a grand slam title while the likes of Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova and any number of eastern European baseliners fail to capture the imagination of the wider public.

Li Na's French Open triumph was a major breakthrough for the game's appeal in Asia, but despite losing to an inspired Stosur, a 100 percent fit Williams is still the yardstick for the women's game.

Her near 12-month absence from the sport left a huge void and any ban, just when she looks to be back to something approaching her best, could be bad for business

especially with the American in the hunt to qualify for the end-of-year championships being staged in Istanbul for the first time.

A decision is expected later on Monday but while her outburst has attracted scorn around the world and slightly detracted from Stosur's magnificent achievement, there is no doubt that Williams puts women's tennis in the spotlight.

It also demonstrates that the fire still burns fiercely in one of the greatest women players to wield a racket and, as Stosur herself acknowledged, that can only be good for the sport.

"Serena, you are a fantastic player, great champion and have done wonders for our sport," the Australian said.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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