

For the love of football



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSSIN AGAZ APURBO

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matches, including an astonishing 16-goals in one match. Sabina Khatun's success paved the way for two other Bangladeshi players, national midfielder Mirona and goalkeeper Sabina Akhter, who were selected by Dhivehi Sifainge Club, an outfit of the Maldives National Defense Force.

Back in 2008, when Kazi Salahuddin became the president of BFF, Bangladesh got its first women's football team, thanks to the then president's dedication, and the hard work of sports organiser and important member of BFF, Sirajul Islam Bachchu. They played their first match against Nepal in 2010. In the last few years, women's football has faced a series of highs and lows, and the Bangladesh Football Federation is determined to promote the sports further among women.

"Since its inception, the situation has changed a lot for BFF, and we are headed towards further growth, as our young talented footballers aim for higher peaks," comments Mahfuza Akhter Kiron, AFC Exco member and Deputy Chairperson, Women's wing, BFF.

"The journey was never smooth, the first problem that we faced was many parents' reluctance to see their girls play football," Kiron remembers. "Surprisingly, the privileged upper class society too had a similar mind-set. We organised Mohanogor inter-school football tournaments for different girls of different English and Bangla medium school. We had to go through hours of counselling with the parents about why they should let their girls play. Even though many of them had potential, they did not continue with the sport, as they believed football would hamper their education."

"I have always been a football buff throughout my life. When I started practicing football in Kolshundor village, we used to play in salwar kameez on the school field in the afternoon with our local coach, Mafiz sir.

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