



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR KICK-OFF

Football boot camp to promote Bangamata U-19 Women's Gold Cup

KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

The latest sports buzz around town is all about the new football tournament. For the first time, a one-of-a-kind footballing event will take off with Bangamata U-19 Women's Gold Cup on April 22, 2019.

Commemorating the ideals and contributions of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, the organisers—Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and K-Sports—have invited Mongolia, Tajikistan, Laos, Kyrgyzstan, and the United Arab Emirates in the six-team competition. In the build-up to the event, a boot camp titled "Women's Football Day" was organised on April 12, 2019 to spread the word about the tournament and inspire young girls about the sport.

Fifty-three national team and 37 Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) women footballers were joined by students from six schools at the Fortis Sports Club in Be raid, Dhaka. The venue was set up to welcome the young football players for a day-long programme consisting of training sessions and exhibition matches.

The day began with the presentation of the official music video for the Bangamata U-19 Women's Gold Cup, which was received with much adulation. The special guests included Paul Smalley, Technical Director, BFF; Fahad Karim, President & CEO, K-Sports; and Jaya Ahsan, prominent actress and brand ambassador of the tournament.

"I consider it a personal achievement to be part of this great initiative. I have seen our young female footballers play on both national and international levels and I take inspiration from what they do," expressed Jaya Ahsan,



who starred in the music video alongside the female singers.

"We are delighted to be associated with Bangamata U-19 Women's Gold Cup. This tournament is dedicated to women's football in Bangladesh. We want to motivate you and follow our theme 'Egiye jawar nei mana'—we want to tell the world our girls have shown that there is no barrier to move forward," said Fahad Karim in his speech.

Another highlight of the camp was the involvement of Colombian women's national team footballers Jessica Hurtado and Katerin Munoz, who came to Bangladesh on a three-day visit to inspire and train with the young girls.

The programme was divided into two halves. On the first half, all participants including students from The Aga Khan School, Scholastica, International Hope School, Sunbeams, South Breeze School and Viqarunnisa Noon School & College were divided into six units; each unit took part in specialised 15-minute training camps in dif-

ferent corners of the field. The entire operation was led by Paul Smalley and his team of volunteers.

Later in the day, the girls were sorted into six teams, each named after a river of Bangladesh. Eight exhibition matches took place under the keen eye of the international guests and organisers, as well as Golam Rabbani Choton, head coach of the national side. The matches were met with much hype and enthusiasm as members of the under-19 team put their skills on display; the media was present to capture the moments and speak to the players as well, allowing for a much-needed exposure for our young footballers.

The concluding session of the event was graced by Kazi M Salahuddin, President, BFF. At the session, 11 outstanding players of the day were awarded with "Best Promising Player" medals and certificates by the guests. The female footballers from schools received certificates of participation too.

"This tournament is special because the name of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib is associated with it. Today, I am pleased to see the interest and passion from these young players. I hope that in the future, this event will have created awareness among parents that their children can play sports as well," said Kazi M Salahuddin.

As the time to raise the curtain on this international tournament draws near, BFF and the organisers are reaching out to the mass, calling for us to show heartfelt support for the women footballers as they march on to bring glory through sport.

Kazi Akib Bin Asad is Sub-editor of SHOUT. See where his travels take him to on www.instagram.com/akibasad