



# ORDINARY CONGRESS 2026

THIMPHU, BHUTAN



## ACTIVITY REPORT



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## 01 | General & Administrative

### Foreword by the SAFF President



South Asian football is experiencing an era of unprecedented transformation. Our focus over the 2025–2026 cycle has centered firmly on building strong foundational pillars: expanding youth pathways, creating sustainable professional structures for women’s football, and upgrading the technical capabilities of our referees and coaches.

By standardising our regional competitions and aligning our schedules with the broader Asian football calendar, we are bridging the gap between regional potential and continental excellence. The dedication of our Member Associations, coupled with the passion of millions of fans across our region, ensures that the future of South Asian football remains brighter than ever.



## Foreword by the SAFF General Secretary



The operational landscape of the South Asian Football Federation has reached new heights of efficiency and execution. Over the past two years, SAFF has successfully delivered comprehensive youth and senior championships across multiple member nations, managing complex logistics, multi-nation travels, and high-performance environments.

Beyond our core competitions, our focus on technical infrastructure has intensified through target workshops, referee courses, and administrative congresses. This activity report outlines our structural updates and celebrates the extraordinary human capital driving our sport forward behind the scenes.



## SAFF Executive Committee & Committee Meetings



### SAFF Ordinary Congress

**Host Venue:** Kathmandu, Nepal | **Date:** 24 May 2025

Unanimously approved critical financial, structural, and statutory reforms to modernise governance and aggressively expand the regional football footprint. Key actions included aligning organisational bylaws with continental standards, expanding youth and specialised tournament pipelines, and addressing technical refereeing standards to protect the integrity of South Asian football.

### SAFF Extraordinary Congress

**Host Venue:** Bangkok, Thailand | **Date:** 26 January 2026

Ratified landmark structural changes to the SAFF Statutes and Standing Orders to achieve full compliance with FIFA and AFC governance directives, alongside the en bloc election of independent judicial bodies. Action items focused on stripping down redundant standing committees, securing balanced regional representation across newly populated disciplinary and appeal units, and approving a centralised Electoral Committee to administer future organisational ballots.





## SAFF Executive Committee Meeting 1

Host Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal | Date: 24 May 2025

Approved foundational governance frameworks, pioneering safeguarding measures, and a strategic commercial rebranding campaign. The committee also outlined an ambitious 11-tournament roadmap for 2026, highlighted by the transition of the flagship SAFF Championship to a home-and-away format tailored to maximise media rights and fan engagement.



## SAFF Executive Committee Meeting 2

Host Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh | Date: 18 November 2025

Ratified the historic new official SAFF logo and evaluated the comprehensive 2026 competitions calendar to transition toward long-term governance and commercial sustainability. Plans focused heavily on finalising upcoming tournament frameworks, formalising the USD 25,000 prize and allowance package for the inaugural Women's Club Championship, endorsing structural women's grassroots development pathways, and initiating strategic rights renegotiations with marketing partner SPORTFIVE.

## SAFF Executive Committee Meeting 3

Host Venue: Bangkok, Thailand | Date: 25 January 2026

Approved comprehensive statutory amendments to align with FIFA and AFC governance principles and finalised the framework for independent committees. Plans focused heavily on restructuring internal committees, establishing an interim Women's Football Task Force, endorsing a new three-year match ball partnership with Vector, and managing internal legal strategies ahead of the contract termination with marketing rights partner SPORTFIVE.



## **SAFF Executive Committee Meeting 4**

**Host Venue: Online via Zoom (Bangladesh Time) | Date: 10 March 2026**

Unanimously approved an amended 2026 competitions calendar and authorised a strategic litigation-and-settlement framework to address the financial crisis caused by the sudden termination of the master rights agreement by marketing partner SPORTFIVE. Plans focused heavily on scaling down operations to protect the flagship senior Men's and Women's Championships, and instituting a cost-sharing hosting model with Member Associations to offset a depleted general fund.

## **SAFF Competition Committee Meeting**

**Host Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan | Date: 30 August 2025**

Approved the strategic 2026 competitions calendar and restructured regional tournament frameworks to balance commercial expansion with player welfare. Plans focused heavily on implementing standardised player recovery protocols, authorising outer-region invitational teams, and developing format guidelines for the home-and-away SAFF Championship, the inaugural SAFF Club Championship, and debut regional Futsal systems.



## SAFF Marketing & Communication Committee Meeting

Host Venue: Colombo, Sri Lanka | Date: 26 September 2025

Approved the new official SAFF logo and engineered a unified 2026–2030 commercial and digital broadcast strategy across South Asia. Plans focused heavily on transitions toward corporate sponsorships, centralised data tracking, cloud-based digital archiving, and maximising the commercial footprint of women's, youth, and newly introduced futsal properties.





## 02 | The Action (Competitions)

### Men's & Youth Football

#### SAFF U19 Championship 2025

Host: Yupia, Arunachal Pradesh, India | Dates: 9–18 May 2025 | Venue: Golden Jubilee Stadium



#### THE NARRATIVE

The 7th edition of the SAFF U19 Championship delivered an intense display of emerging tactical discipline across the region, setting a high standard for South Asia's youth football pipelines. Six nations competed across two groups, navigating a high-scoring group phase characterised by competitive technical displays and sharp tactical growth.

Capitalising on home-ground advantage, India claimed the championship crown after a series of dominant performances to successfully defend their title on home soil. In a thrilling final re-match of regional football giants, India and Bangladesh played out a hard-fought 1–1 draw through regulation time. India ultimately demonstrated nerves of steel in the ensuing penalty shootout, winning 4–3 to seal their fourth historical U19 title. The championship concluded with individual accolades highlighting the region's rising stars, recognising the tournament's standout playmakers, clinical goalscorers, and top defensive talents.



## RESULTS & STANDINGS

### GROUP A

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | Pts |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1   | Bangladesh | 2   | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5  | 2  | +3 | 4   |
| 2   | Maldives   | 2   | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4  | 4  | 0  | 2   |
| 3   | Bhutan     | 2   | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2  | 5  | -3 | 1   |

### RESULTS

Bangladesh 2-2 Maldives

Bhutan 0-3 Bangladesh

Maldives 2-2 Bhutan

### GROUP B

| Pos | Team      | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts |
|-----|-----------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| 1   | India     | 2   | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0  | +12 | 6   |
| 2   | Nepal     | 2   | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5  | 4  | +1  | 3   |
| 3   | Sri Lanka | 2   | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0  | 13 | -13 | 0   |

### RESULTS

India 8-0 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka 0-5 Nepal

Nepal 0-4 India

### KNOCKOUT STAGE

Semi-final 1: Bangladesh 2-1 Nepal

Semi-final 2: India 3-0 Maldives

Final: India 1-1 (4-3 pens) Bangladesh

Champions: INDIA (4th title)

### TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                         |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Mohammed Arbas (India)                  |
| Top Goalscorer             | Danny Meitei Laishram (India) – 5 Goals |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Suraj Singh Aheibam (India)             |
| Fair Play Award            | India                                   |



## SAFF U17 Championship 2025

Host: Colombo, Sri Lanka | Dates: 15–27 September 2025 | Venue: Colombo Racecourse Stadium



### THE NARRATIVE

Colombo welcomed South Asia's top teenage talents for the 10th edition of the SAFF U17 Championship. Characterised by high scoring rates and open, attack-minded football, the tournament demonstrated the impressive tactical development of regional youth attacking systems. Seven nations competed fiercely across two groups, producing a dynamic group phase that set the stage for an intense knockout bracket.

India clinched the championship crown to secure their seventh historical title in this age category, navigating past a tough field to set up a grand finale against rivals Bangladesh. In a dramatic final match, both sides fought to a 2–2 draw through regulation time. India ultimately displayed clinical composure under immense pressure, winning the ensuing penalty shootout 4–1 to retain their regional dominance. Top honors were distributed post-match to award the tournament's most clinical striker, the best goalkeeper, and the player voted Most Valuable for overall technical impact.

### RESULTS & STANDINGS

#### GROUP A

| Pos | Team          | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | Pts |
|-----|---------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1   | Bangladesh    | 2   | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8  | 0  | +8 | 6   |
| 2   | Nepal         | 2   | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2  | 4  | -2 | 3   |
| 3   | Sri Lanka (H) | 2   | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0  | 6  | -6 | 0   |

**RESULTS**

Bangladesh 5-0 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka 0-2 Nepal

Nepal 0-3 Bangladesh

**GROUP B**

| Pos | Team     | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts |
|-----|----------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| 1   | India    | 3   | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2  | +8  | 9   |
| 2   | Pakistan | 3   | 2 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 5  | +6  | 6   |
| 3   | Bhutan   | 3   | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1  | 5  | -4  | 3   |
| 4   | Maldives | 3   | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2  | 12 | -10 | 0   |

**RESULTS**

India 6-0 Maldives

Bhutan 0-4 Pakistan

India 1-0 Bhutan

Maldives 2-7 Pakistan

India 3-2 Pakistan

Bhutan 1-0 Maldives

**KNOCKOUT STAGE**

Semi-final 1: Bangladesh 2-0 Pakistan

Semi-final 2: India 3-0 Nepal

Final: India 2-2 (4-1 pens) Bangladesh

Champions: INDIA (7th title)

**TOURNAMENT AWARDS**

|                                   |                                        |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Most Valuable Player (MVP)</b> | Nazmul Huda Faysal (Bangladesh)        |
| <b>Top Goalscorer</b>             | Muhammad Abdullah (Pakistan) – 6 Goals |
| <b>Best Goalkeeper</b>            | Md Alif Rahman (Bangladesh)            |
| <b>Fair Play Award</b>            | India                                  |

Competition Safeguarding Protocol was implemented throughout the entire tournament. Across its multiple stages of safeguarding training, 49 team officials and 182 players signed the SAFF code of conduct after being trained.



## SAFF U20 Championship 2026

Host: Malé, Maldives | Dates: 23 March – 3 April 2026 | Venue: National Football Stadium

### THE NARRATIVE

The island nation of Maldives set a picturesque stage for the 8th edition of the SAFF U20 Championship. Showcasing mature defensive shapes alongside explosive, rapid transitional play, the tournament reflected a massive step forward across South Asia in terms of physical and athletic preparation. Seven nations clashed in a dynamic group stage, with tactical discipline paving the way for a highly competitive knockout round.

After navigating a fiercely contested bracket, Bangladesh captured the silverware to claim their second historical U20 championship title. In an intense, evenly balanced final re-match of regional giants against defending champions India, both teams staged masterclasses in defensive organisation, battling to a goalless draw through regulation time. Bangladesh ultimately held their nerve in a dramatic penalty shootout, prevailing 4–3 to spark euphoric celebrations in Malé. Individual honors post-match recognised the best defensive walls, clinical frontlines, and midfield orchestrators who left an indelible footprint on the competition.



## RESULTS & STANDINGS

### GROUP A

| Pos | Team         | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | Pts |
|-----|--------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1   | Nepal        | 3   | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4  | 2  | +2 | 7   |
| 2   | Maldives (H) | 3   | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3  | 4  | -1 | 4   |
| 3   | Sri Lanka    | 3   | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4  | 4  | 0  | 3   |
| 4   | Bhutan       | 3   | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2  | 3  | -1 | 2   |

### RESULTS

Bhutan 1-2 Nepal  
 Maldives 2-3 Sri Lanka  
 Sri Lanka 0-1 Nepal  
 Bhutan 0-0 Maldives  
 Maldives 1-1 Nepal  
 Bhutan 1-0 Sri Lanka

### GROUP B

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | Pts |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1   | India      | 2   | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4  | 1  | +3 | 4   |
| 2   | Bangladesh | 2   | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3  | 1  | +2 | 4   |
| 3   | Pakistan   | 2   | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0  | 5  | -5 | 0   |

### RESULTS

Bangladesh 2-0 Pakistan  
 India 3-0 Pakistan  
 Bangladesh 1-1 India

### KNOCKOUT STAGE

Semi-final 1: Nepal 0-1 Bangladesh  
 Semi-final 2: India 5-0 Bhutan  
 Final: Bangladesh 0-0 (4-3 pens) India

Champions: BANGLADESH (2nd title)

### TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                                                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Omang Dodum (India)                                                |
| Top Goalscorers            | Omang Dodum (India) & Mohamed Ilan Imran (Maldives) – 3 Goals each |
| Best Goalkeeper            | MD Ismail Hossain Mahin (Bangladesh)                               |
| Fair Play Award            | Maldives                                                           |





## Women's & Youth Football

### SAFF U20 Women's Championship 2025

Host: Dhaka, Bangladesh | Dates: 11–21 July 2025 | Venues: Bashundhara Kings Arena & Bashundhara Sports Ground



#### THE NARRATIVE

The 2025 SAFF U20 Women's Championship highlighted rapid progress in technical composure, goalscoring efficiency, and athletic stamina within the region's women's youth football systems. Four South Asian nations competed in a highly entertaining double round-robin group phase, delivering an exceptional display of development and high-scoring matches.

Host nation Bangladesh utilised their home-field advantage and vocal local support to power through a flawless, completely undefeated campaign. Dominating from start to finish, the hosts secured six consecutive victories to finish comfortably at the top of the table. In the decisive final match, Bangladesh put on a technical masterclass to defeat runners-up Nepal 4–0, sealing their fifth historical U20 regional crown.

#### FINAL STANDINGS — DOUBLE ROUND-ROBIN

| Pos | Team           | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|----------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 1   | Bangladesh (H) | 6   | 6 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 4  | +24 | 18  | Champions      |
| 2   | Nepal          | 6   | 4 | 0 | 2 | 30 | 8  | +22 | 12  | Runners-up     |
| 3   | Bhutan         | 6   | 2 | 0 | 4 | 12 | 21 | -9  | 6   | Third Place    |
| 4   | Sri Lanka      | 6   | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1  | 38 | -37 | 0   | Fourth Place   |



## RESULTS

Bangladesh 9-1 Sri Lanka

Bhutan 1-6 Nepal

Bangladesh 4-1 Bhutan

Nepal 7-0 Sri Lanka

Bhutan 0-3 Bangladesh

Nepal 8-0 Bhutan

Sri Lanka 0-5 Bangladesh

Bhutan 5-0 Sri Lanka

Bangladesh 4-0 Nepal

## TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Mosammat Sagorika (Bangladesh) |
| Top Goalscorer             | Purnima Rai (Nepal) – 10 Goals |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Mile Akter (Bangladesh)        |
| Fair Play Award            | Sri Lanka                      |





SAFF U17 Women’s Championship 2025

Host: Thimphu, Bhutan | Dates: 20–31 August 2025 | Venue: Changlimithang Stadium

THE NARRATIVE

Nestled in the high altitudes of Thimphu, the 2025 SAFF U17 Women’s Championship showcased expansive attacking football, high scoring rates, and remarkable individual technical skill. Four South Asian nations competed in a double round-robin league format over 12 thrilling matches, highlighting the continuous growth of women’s youth football structures across the subcontinent.

India put on a dominant display throughout the tournament, exhibiting highly coordinated tactical movements and relentless attacking pressure to secure 5 victories out of 6 games. Despite dropping a close 4–3 battle to runners-up Bangladesh on the final matchday, India’s commanding point advantage across the double round-robin campaign successfully secured them the overall championship crown, marking their third historical title in this category.

FINAL STANDINGS — DOUBLE ROUND-ROBIN

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 1   | India      | 6   | 5 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 4  | +29 | 15  | Champions      |
| 2   | Bangladesh | 6   | 4 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 11 | +4  | 13  | Runners-up     |
| 3   | Nepal      | 6   | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5  | 19 | -14 | 4   | Third Place    |
| 4   | Bhutan (H) | 6   | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4  | 23 | -19 | 2   | Fourth Place   |



## RESULTS

India 7-0 Nepal  
 Bangladesh 2-1 Bhutan  
 India 2-0 Bangladesh  
 Nepal 1-1 Bhutan  
 Bangladesh 1-0 Nepal  
 India 8-0 Bhutan  
 India 5-1 Nepal  
 Bangladesh 5-2 Bhutan  
 India 5-1 Bangladesh  
 Nepal 2-0 Bhutan  
 Bangladesh 2-0 Nepal  
 Bangladesh 4-3 India

## TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Abhista Basnett (Nepal)          |
| Top Goalscorer             | Anushka Kumari (India) – 8 Goals |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Meghla Rani Roy (Bangladesh)     |
| Fair Play Award            | Bangladesh                       |

Competition Safeguarding Protocol was implemented throughout the entire tournament. Across its multiple stages of safeguarding training, 28 team officials and 104 players signed the SAFF code of conduct after being trained.





## SAFF U19 Women's Championship 2026

Host: Pokhara, Nepal | Dates: 31 January – 7 February 2026 | Venue: Pokhara Rangasala Stadium

### THE NARRATIVE

The picturesque city of Pokhara provided a stunning backdrop for an incredibly competitive 2026 SAFF U19 Women's Championship. The tournament was defined by highly disciplined high-pressing schemes, physical mid-block tactical stalemates, and clinical counter-attacking systems. Four South Asian youth national teams clashed in a single round-robin group phase to determine who would fight for regional supremacy.

Bangladesh initially rose above the field during the group stage, outlasting every opponent—including a notable 2–0 victory over India—to progress to the final completely undefeated and clear at the top of the table. However, India—represented by their highly disciplined U17 national squad—orchestrated a tactical masterpiece in the grand finale. Avenging their group-stage defeat, the Indian side produced a dominant 4–0 victory over Bangladesh in the final match to lift their third historical U19 regional title.

### GROUP STAGE — TOP 2 ADVANCED TO THE FINAL

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Qualification     |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| 1   | Bangladesh | 3   | 3 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0  | +18 | 9   | Advanced to Final |
| 2   | India      | 3   | 2 | 0 | 1 | 9  | 2  | +7  | 6   | Advanced to Final |
| 3   | Nepal (H)  | 3   | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2  | 6  | -4  | 3   | Eliminated        |



| Pos | Team   | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Qualification |
|-----|--------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|---------------|
| 4   | Bhutan | 3   | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1  | 22 | -21 | 0   | Eliminated    |

### RESULTS

Bangladesh 12-0 Bhutan | India 1-0 Nepal

Bangladesh 2-0 India | Nepal 2-1 Bhutan

India 8-0 Bhutan | Bangladesh 4-0 Nepal

### FINAL

Final: Bangladesh 0-4 India

Champions: INDIA (3rd title)

### TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Alpi Akter (Bangladesh)           |
| Top Goalscorer             | Alpi Akter (Bangladesh) – 7 Goals |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Munni (India)                     |
| Fair Play Award            | India                             |





## SAFF Women's Championship 2026

Host: Margao, Goa, India | Dates: 25 May – 6 June 2026 | Venue: Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Fatorda Stadium)

### THE NARRATIVE

The absolute showcase of women's senior football in South Asia kicked off in Goa, drawing massive fan interest and unprecedented media coverage. The 8th edition of the tournament demonstrated immense operational maturity alongside rapid tactical growth from all participating senior national squads. Defending champions Bangladesh entered as heavy favorites after taking the previous two titles, but a re-energised field set up a highly competitive bracket.

India claimed the senior regional crown on home soil after a clinical, completely dominant tournament run, conceding only a single goal across the entire competition. In a highly anticipated grand finale, India faced off against rivals Bangladesh. Backed by a passionate home crowd, India secured a historic 3–1 victory to reclaim their regional throne and secure their record-extending sixth SAFF title.

### RESULTS & STANDINGS

#### GROUP A

| Pos | Team      | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | Pts | Qualification       |
|-----|-----------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|---------------------|
| 1   | Nepal     | 2   | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5  | 1  | +4 | 6   | Advance to Knockout |
| 2   | Bhutan    | 2   | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3  | 4  | -1 | 3   | Advance to Knockout |
| 3   | Sri Lanka | 2   | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1  | 4  | -3 | 0   | Eliminated          |



## RESULTS

Nepal 3-1 Bhutan

Nepal 2-0 Sri Lanka

Bhutan 2-1 Sri Lanka

## GROUP B

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Qualification       |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|---------------------|
| 1   | India (H)  | 2   | 2 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0  | +14 | 6   | Advance to Knockout |
| 2   | Bangladesh | 2   | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4  | 3  | +1  | 3   | Advance to Knockout |
| 3   | Maldives   | 2   | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0  | 15 | -15 | 0   | Eliminated          |

## RESULTS

India 11-0 Maldives

Bangladesh 4-0 Maldives

India 3-0 Bangladesh

## KNOCKOUT STAGE

Semi-final 1: Bangladesh 2-1 Nepal

Semi-final 2: India 1-0 Bhutan

Final: India 3-1 Bangladesh

Champions: INDIA (6th title)

## TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Sanfida Nongrum (India)        |
| Top Goalscorer             | Aveka Singh (India) – 4 Goals  |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Panthoi Chanu Elangbam (India) |
| Fair Play Award            | Nepal                          |





## Club Football



### SAFF Women's Club Championship 2025

Host: Kathmandu, Nepal | Dates: 5–20 December 2025 | Venue: Dasharath Rangasala

(Known as the Vatsalya SAFF Women's Club Championship Nepal 2025 for sponsorship reasons)

#### THE NARRATIVE

The inaugural 2025 SAFF Women's Club Championship marked a major milestone for subcontinental women's football by testing the tactical depth of the region's champion domestic clubs. Over a highly physical two-week tournament format in Kathmandu, five champion teams displayed varied tactical shapes and deep squad reliance.

India's reigning Indian Women's League champions, East Bengal FC, completely dominated the historic tournament. Under the tactical guidance of coach Anthony Andrews, the "Moshal Girls" orchestrated a flawless campaign, marching through the entire competition without conceding a single goal. While the host side, APF FC of Nepal, managed to secure a gritty 0–0 draw against East Bengal on the final matchday of the group stage, the subsequent grand finale told a completely different story. Backed by clinical striking, East Bengal swept past APF FC 3–0 in the final match to lift the prestigious inaugural trophy.

#### GROUP STAGE — TOP 2 ADVANCED TO THE FINAL

| Pos | Club (Country)       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Qualification     |
|-----|----------------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| 1   | East Bengal FC (IND) | 4   | 3 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 0  | +13 | 10  | Advanced to Final |
| 2   | APF FC (NEP)         | 4   | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5  | 0  | +5  | 8   | Advanced to Final |



| Pos | Club (Country)             | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Qualification |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|---------------|
| 3   | Transport United (BHU)     | 4   | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1  | 5  | -4  | 3   | Eliminated    |
| 4   | Karachi City FC (PAK)      | 4   | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0  | 3  | -3  | 2   | Eliminated    |
| 5   | Nasrin Sport Academy (BAN) | 4   | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1  | 12 | -11 | 2   | Eliminated    |

## RESULTS

Karachi City FC 0-0 Transport United  
 Nasrin Sports Academy 0-4 APF FC  
 Transport United 0-4 East Bengal FC  
 Karachi City FC 0-0 Nasrin Sports Academy  
 APF FC 1-0 Karachi City FC  
 East Bengal FC 2-0 Karachi City FC  
 Transport United 1-1 Nasrin Sports Academy  
 Nasrin Sports Academy 0-7 East Bengal FC  
 APF FC 0-0 Transport United  
 East Bengal FC 0-0 APF FC

## FINAL

Final: East Bengal FC 3-0 APF FC

Champions: EAST BENGAL FC (Inaugural title)

## TOURNAMENT AWARDS

|                            |                                        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Most Valuable Player (MVP) | Fazila Ikwaput (East Bengal)           |
| Top Goalscorer             | Fazila Ikwaput (East Bengal) – 9 Goals |
| Best Goalkeeper            | Panthoi Chanu Elangbam (East Bengal)   |
| Fair Play Award            | Transport United (Bhutan)              |





## Futsal Competitions

### SAFF Futsal Championship 2026

Host: Bangkok, Thailand | Dates: 14–26 January 2026 | Venues: Nonthaburi Stadium & Hua Mak Indoor Stadium



#### THE NARRATIVE

The inaugural 2026 SAFF Futsal Championship delivered an intensive showcase of regional talent in Bangkok, highlighting rapid tactical advancements across the zone. Organised by the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) to offer greater exposure to the region's short-sided squads, the tournament featured a single comprehensive round-robin league phase among all seven participating nations.

The Maldives claimed the historic inaugural championship crown after putting on a string of resilient, highly clinical performances, finishing undefeated at the top of the table with a flawless record of 6 wins from 6 matches. This included a resounding 7–1 opening victory over Pakistan and a key 5–0 shutout against eventual runners-up India.

#### FINAL LEAGUE STANDINGS — SINGLE ROUND-ROBIN

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 1   | Maldives   | 6   | 6 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 6  | +22 | 18  | Champions      |
| 2   | India      | 6   | 3 | 2 | 1 | 26 | 17 | +9  | 11  | Runners-up     |
| 3   | Nepal      | 6   | 3 | 2 | 1 | 18 | 12 | +6  | 11  | Third Place    |
| 4   | Pakistan   | 6   | 3 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 20 | 0   | 10  | Fourth Place   |
| 5   | Bangladesh | 6   | 2 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 21 | -5  | 7   | Fifth Place    |

| Pos | Team      | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|-----------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 6   | Sri Lanka | 6   | 0 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 24 | -14 | 1   | Sixth Place    |
| 7   | Bhutan    | 6   | 0 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 29 | -18 | 1   | Seventh Place  |

SAFF Women’s Futsal Championship 2026

Host: Bangkok, Thailand | Dates: 13–25 January 2026 | Venues: Nonthaburi Stadium & Hua Mak Indoor Stadium



THE NARRATIVE

Marking a major milestone for women’s technical development in the region, the 2026 SAFF Women’s Futsal Championship offered a vital platform for female athletes. Hosted concurrently in Bangkok, the inaugural event saw exceptionally high scoring rates and sharp tactical discipline, validating targeted regional investments into the short-sided format.

Bangladesh emerged as the historic, first-ever champions. Navigating the 7-team single round-robin group stage completely undefeated, Bangladesh delivered an elite display of defensive concentration and clinical goal scoring, including an authoritative 9–1 victory over Pakistan and an explosive 14–2 victory against the Maldives. India put up an exceptional chase to finish as runners-up, while Bhutan secured a historic third-place finish on the podium.

FINAL LEAGUE STANDINGS — SINGLE ROUND-ROBIN

| Pos | Team       | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 1   | Bangladesh | 6   | 5 | 1 | 0 | 38 | 10 | +28 | 16  | Champions      |
| 2   | India      | 6   | 4 | 0 | 2 | 31 | 12 | +19 | 12  | Runners-up     |



| Pos | Team      | Pld | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD  | Pts | Final Position |
|-----|-----------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 3   | Bhutan    | 6   | 3 | 2 | 1 | 18 | 13 | +5  | 11  | Third Place    |
| 4   | Nepal     | 6   | 3 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 17 | +1  | 10  | Fourth Place   |
| 5   | Pakistan  | 6   | 2 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 23 | -11 | 7   | Fifth Place    |
| 6   | Sri Lanka | 6   | 1 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 27 | -10 | 4   | Sixth Place    |
| 7   | Maldives  | 6   | 0 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 44 | -32 | 0   | Seventh Place  |





## 03 | Education & Development



### Match Officials & Refereeing

#### SAFF Match Commissioners Conference 2025

Host Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal | Dates: 1–2 July 2025

Convened 22 regional officials—including 9 current AFC Match Commissioners, aspiring regional candidates, and AFC instructors—to advance match management standards across South Asia. The curriculum combined classroom theoretical frameworks with stadium-based practical simulations, focusing on competitive tournament reporting, critical match-day incident processing, and preparation for upcoming AFC Match Commissioner certification examinations.

#### SAFF Referee Assessors Course 2026

Host Venue: Colombo, Sri Lanka | Dates: 5–9 January 2026

This program focused on modernising performance tracking for elite referee assessors. The course integrated modernised performance analytics, enabling assessors to provide more precise and constructive feedback to match officials, thereby ensuring consistent officiating standards across regional competitions.



## SAFF Futsal Referees Course 2026

**Host Venue:** Bangkok, Thailand | **Dates:** 11–14 January 2026

Conducted immediately preceding the inaugural SAFF Futsal Championships, this course addressed the significant regional shortage of specialised futsal officials. The training emphasised international law updates, real-time positional changes, and rapid foul analysis essential for high-intensity indoor futsal.

## SAFF Match Commissioners Conference 2026

**Host Venue:** Goa, India | **Dates:** 23–24 May 2026

This two-day conference convened 19 officials—including 15 Match Commissioners and AFC facilitators—to enhance operational capabilities across South Asia. The curriculum utilised AFC-led case studies and interactive presentations to address critical topics such as tournament reporting, match incident management, and complex decision-making in competitive environments.

## Technical & Coaching

### SAFF AFC Futsal Coaching Course Level 1 2026

**Host Venue:** Bangkok, Thailand | **Dates:** 10–15 January 2026

Aligned with the launch of the region’s first futsal championships, this certification program provided South Asian coaches with advanced tactical blueprints, session architecture, and player progression pathways. The course was a key component of SAFF’s commitment to strengthening the foundation of futsal in the region.



## Social Responsibility

### SAFF Social Responsibility Seminar 2025

Host Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh | Dates: 30 November – 1 December 2025

Supported by the AFC Social Responsibility Department, this seminar saw active participation from all seven member associations to leverage football as a force for social good. Participants received guidance on project implementation, safeguarding, and funding applications from AFC experts. The seminar concluded with all associations pledging to integrate social responsibility as a core strategic mission rather than a peripheral task.

### SAFF Kick Off 2025

The SAFF Kick Off Project, supported by the AFC Dream Asia Foundation, aimed to promote safeguarding awareness in football across South Asia through engaging digital content. Under the project, a five-episode animated series on key safeguarding themes was developed and localized into the 13 languages of all seven SAFF Member Associations through translation and voice dubbing.

The episodes were distributed through SAFF and Member Association platforms to reach young players, parents, coaches, and other football stakeholders. The project contributed to strengthening safeguarding awareness and providing accessible educational resources for football communities across the region.





## 04 | Brand Refresh & Media Engagement

### Brand Identity: The New SAFF Logo

On November 18, 2025, the South Asian Football Federation reached a significant milestone in modernising its brand identity by officially unveiling its brand-new logo during the Executive Committee Meeting held at the federation's headquarters in Dhaka. Unveiled by SAFF President Kazi Md. Salahuddin, the redesigned emblem represents a major step forward in aligning SAFF's visual market presence with contemporary global football branding.

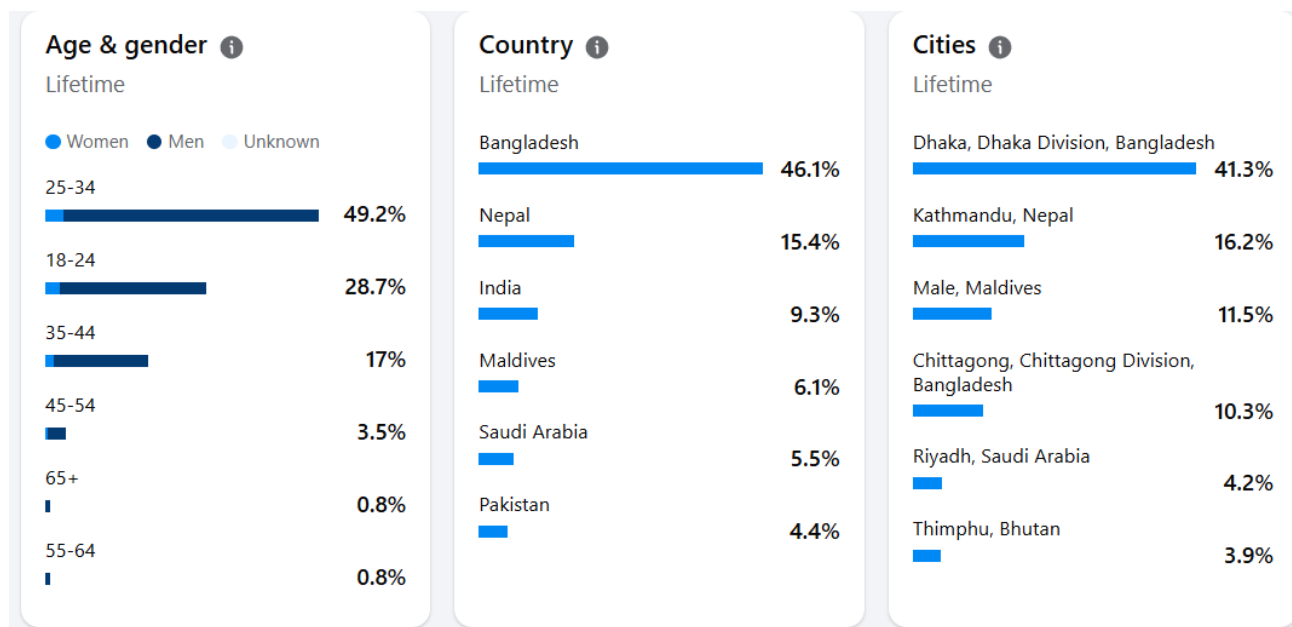
#### THE DESIGN CONCEPT

The project was initiated as a collaborative regional effort, with SAFF inviting creative concepts from graphic designers across all seven member associations. The winning design was crafted by Supun D. Rajapaksa from the Football Federation of Sri Lanka. His concept was unanimously selected by the Marketing and Communications Committee and fully endorsed by the Executive Committee.

#### SYMBOLISM & MOTTO

Moving away from its legacy crest, the new logo features a bold, streamlined abbreviation of the South Asian Football Federation. It is designed to capture the intense footballing passion of a region that houses nearly 25 percent of the world's population. Visually, it embodies the federation's core operating motto: "Strength in Unity".





## Social Media, Viewerships & Engagement Data

The calendar years of 2025 and 2026 marked an unprecedented boom in consumer data across SAFF's media wing. By adapting its distribution strategy heavily toward mobile-first and digital-native demographics, SAFF significantly elevated the visibility of its youth, senior, and newly introduced futsal championships.

### Broadcast & Digital Streaming Metrics

Rather than relying solely on traditional television rights, SAFF expanded its digital broadcasting footprint across online networks and regional OTT applications.

#### LIVE MULTI-PLATFORM STREAMING

Senior tournaments—such as the SAFF Women's Championship 2026 in Goa—and youth brackets saw matches broadcast live concurrently via YouTube, Facebook Live, and dedicated sports streaming portals.

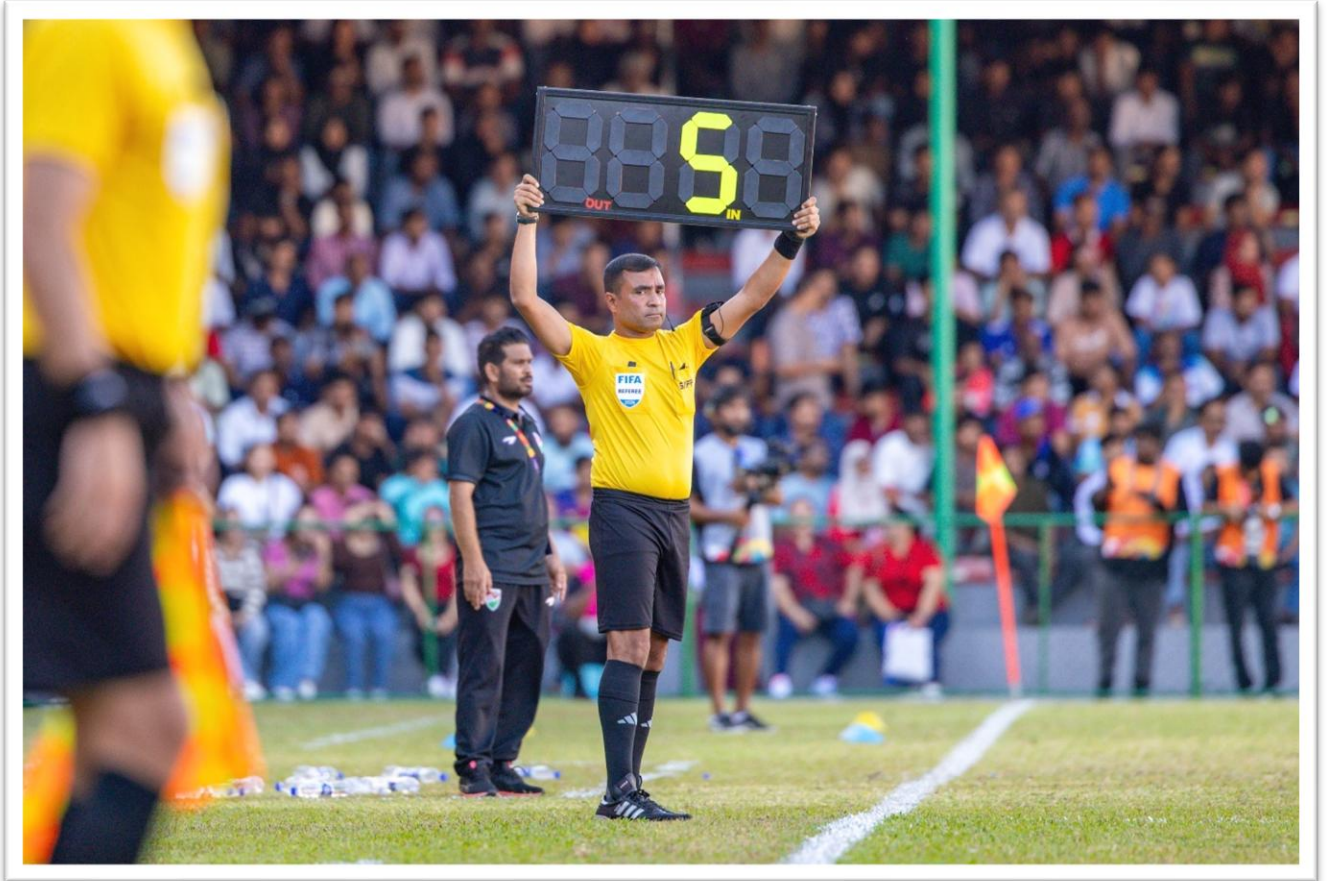
#### LOCALISED ACCESS

Partnerships with domestic digital broadcasters (such as SportzWorkz, T Sports in Bangladesh, and Doordarshan/FanCode in India) ensured that over 70% of viewers consumed matches through mobile applications, driving up total concurrent streaming peaks during rivalry fixtures like India vs. Bangladesh.



## Stadium Attendance Trends

In-person spectatorship showcased a distinct division between localised neutral venues and high-stakes host-nation matches:



### THE HOST EFFECT

Matchdays involving host nations saw severe stadium utilisation. For example, during the SAFF Women's Championship 2026 at the Fatorda Stadium in Goa, India's high-stakes knockout games drew massive, vocal crowds that reached near-capacity seating. Similarly, the SAFF Women's Club Championship in Kathmandu generated deep local community turnouts at the Dasharath Rangasala.

### NEUTRAL VENUE RESILIENCE

The dual Men's and Women's Futsal Championships hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, leveraged centralised indoor facilities (Nonthaburi and Hua Mak Indoor Stadiums). While early group stages saw modest baseline numbers, the final matchdays drew significant numbers of expatriate South Asian workers residing in Thailand, alongside digital spectators tracking the action remotely via real-time streams.



## Social Media & Fan Engagement

SAFF's digital properties experienced exponential growth in traction, driven by immediate video content delivery.

### INSTANT HIGHLIGHT CLIPS

The integration of real-time match clip distributions on Instagram Reels and Facebook Reels emerged as the primary driver for fan interactions. Short-form video clips of high-scoring results—such as the historic 14–2 goal rush in the Women's Futsal Championship—routinely went viral across regional sports handles.

### INTERACTIVE FAN ARCHITECTURE

Post-match "Player of the Match" graphics, custom squad lineup announcements increased cross-platform fan engagement. This digital push effectively established a younger, highly vocal football community that bridged fanbases from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Maldives.



## Strategic Brand & Equipment Partnerships



### Vector X Match Ball Sponsorship

Formally established a landmark three-year partnership naming the leading Indian sports brand, Vector X, as the official match ball sponsor for all SAFF competitions from 2026 through 2028. The collaboration officially kicked off during the SAFF U19 Women's Championship 2026, introducing high-performance, FIFA Pro quality footballs engineered with advanced micro-textured technology.

### Hummel Match Officials Kit Partnership

SAFF has signed a partnership with Hummel India, appointing the renowned Danish sportswear brand as the Match Officials' Kit Partner for the SAFF competitions. Under the agreement, Hummel India will exclusively provide on-field referee jerseys, training apparel, players' bibs, and off-field clothing, ensuring a professional and consistent appearance for match officials across the region during the SAFF Competitions.





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