

# Tata Tea Soccer Stars event

Special Correspondent

---

**MUMBAI:** Baichung Bhuita and Steven Dias, India's star football players, said Tata Tea's 'Jaago Re (awaken) Soccer Stars' initiative and its association with Arsenal for under-15 would benefit Indian football in the long run.

"I am the president of the Football Players Association (FPA) and Dias and I are here to associate with the Tata Tea sponsored tournament for schools in India.

## Promoting game

"The objective of the FPA is to promote football and look after the welfare of the players. Tata's initiative provides a great opportunity for the young football players in India to show their talent," said Bhutia at the inauguration the second Soccer Stars competition that will start with a two-day tournament (Nov. 26 and 27) at Kozhikode. About 64 schools in and around Kozhikode have registered for the tournament.

At the conclusion of the talent-hunting process, 16 players will earn a trip to the United Kingdom to take part in the Arsenal International Soccer Festival in July 2009.

Last August, the Tata Tea Arsenal Soccer Stars beat Marks Park, South Africa, to win the Plate Cup of the AISF at the Royal Holloway College, Surrey.

After Kozhikode, tournaments will be held at Bangalore (Nov. 30 and Dec. 1), Goa (Dec. 11-12), Mumbai (Dec. 16-17), New Delhi (Jan. 17-18), Chandigarh (Jan. 24-25), Lucknow (Jan. 30-31), Kolkata (Feb. 7-8), Bhubaneswar (Feb. 21-22) and Shillong (March 7-8). The all-India finals will be played from April 11 to 18, 2009.

Paul Shipright and Martin Davis of the Arsenal International Soccer School will train 30 players at a camp in Kolkata from May 18 and thereafter 16 players will be selected for the UK tour.

Jamshed Nassiri is the head-scout of the programme and he is being assisted by regional coaches in running the schools' tournament and identifying players for the 'Arsenal Way' training camp.