

## PRESS RELEASE

Date: Nov 10, 2012

# BAI unveils the richest prize-money tournament in the world – the \$1-million Indian Badminton League

- ‘Historic moment for Indian badminton,’ says Olympic bronze medalist Saina Nehwal
- ‘Great boost to Indian badminton,’ says former All-England champion P Gopichand
- IBL will reach millions of viewers in more than 150 countries: BAI President Akhilesh Das Gupta

**MUMBAI, NOV. 10, 2012:** In an avante-garde initiative, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) and its Commercial Partner, Sporty Solutionz Pvt Ltd (SSPL), launched the \$1-million (Rs 5.5 crores) prize money Indian Badminton League (IBL) at a star-studded function here on Saturday. The IBL, which is the richest prize-money badminton tournament in the world, was unveiled in the presence of Olympic bronze medalist Saina Nehwal, former All-England champion Pulella Gopichand, 2010 Commonwealth Games women doubles gold medalists Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa, and the find of the 2012 Olympics, PC Kashyap.

On this occasion, the entire Indian team-bound for the prestigious Super Series in China and top brasses of BAI were present for the unveiling of the official IBL logo and roll-out plan.

The \$1-million IBL will commence with six teams and 6-city based franchise will lock horns in an action-packed format involving 28 ties of best-of-5 matches to a maximum of 140 matches played over three weeks, starting from June 24 to July 11, 2013. The live telecast of all the 28 ties in the IBL is expected to reach more than 150 countries.

A galaxy of international stars will be participating in the IBL, including the world’s top-ranked players from countries like China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Denmark. The foreign stars, Indian national team stars and the emerging Indian players will be paid attractive appearance fees in addition to the prize money in this unique league. Each franchise will comprise of 1 ICON player and 11 players in total, including a maximum of 4 foreigners in each team while a maximum of 3 offshore players can be fielded in action in a match.

The path-breaking IBL will be played in six world-class venues with play beginning at prime time for Indian television. The matches will be played in the most-acclaimed badminton tournament format, the Sudirman Cup, and follow the rules and regulations of BWF and BAI.

On this occasion, Nehwal said, “This is a historic moment for Indian badminton. Post-2012 Olympics, the *junoos* for badminton has reached a peak in India. I’m confident the Indian Badminton League will make the game even more popular amongst the masses and fulfill the high expectations it has raised.”

The legendary Gopichand said, “The IBL heralds a new era in Indian badminton. It will provide a great opportunity for our players to play along with the best players of the world and learn from them. I’m sure the IBL will be a great catalyst in motivating our youngsters and aspiring talent.”

On this occasion, the 2010 CWG gold medalist in women’s doubles Gutta said, “The IBL with its innovative format and fast-pace action could attract millions of youngsters to its fold and become one of the world’s greatest sporting spectacles.” Her doubles partner, Ponnappa said, “This is a great day for Indian badminton. Watching the cream of world badminton in non-stop action in different venues is a dream-come-true for not just Indian badminton players but also to millions of fans in the country.”

BAI President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta said, “BAI seeks to make badminton the No.1 Olympic sport in the country and we hope the path-breaking IBL will trigger the change. Indian badminton is capable of reaching dizzy heights and we seek the support of the sponsors, media and fans to make the IBL a grand success. The revenue generated from the IBL will be pooled back into developing better facilities for badminton players and fans at the venues.”

On this occasion, the CEO of Sporty Solutionz Pvt Ltd, the Commercial Partner of IBL, Ashish Chadha said, “The IBL will be a game-changer – bringing together brilliant players from around the globe to showcase their talent in the most exciting and innovative format to millions of passionate followers of the sport in India. We seek to make the IBL the ultimate sporting destination with high-octane competition, unprecedented buzz and oodles of entertainment around the sport.”

IBL Governing Council’s Vice Chairman Pradeep Gandhe said, “The Indian Badminton League offers a never-before seen incentive for badminton players and a cutting-edge platform for the sport to bloom.”

### **About BAI**

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) is the governing body for badminton in India. Based in Lucknow, BAI is an association registered under the Societies Act and affiliated to the Badminton World Federation, Badminton Asia Confederation, and the Indian Olympic Association. BAI was formed in 1934 and has been holding national-level tournaments in India since 1936. BAI conducts international tournaments in India, national championships in all age categories, selects team and conducts the training camps for international tournaments like the Olympic Games, World Championship and other tourneys, looks after the training of technical officials, umpires, to keep Indian badminton abreast of the changes in the rules, and takes path-breaking initiatives like the IBL to promote the sport.

### **About Sporty Solutionz Pvt Ltd**

Sporty Solutionz Pvt Ltd is India’s leading TV Rights Management Company, and has been associated with almost all the premier sporting events in India like the IPL, Euro 2012, Sri Lanka Premier League, Bangladesh Premier League, FIFA World Cup Qualifying matches etc. Based in Noida (Delhi NCR), Sporty Solutionz also specialises in Sports Production, Talent Management, Sports PR & Press Operations, Sports Event, and Media Solutions. Sporty Solutionz is the Commercial Partner for multiple years for planning and executing the Indian Badminton League.