

Siddikur's poor start

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman continued his dismal performances, as Bangladesh's premier golfer played one-over-par 72 in the first round of Bank BRI Indonesia Open at the Damai Indah Golf PIK Course in Jakarta yesterday. The 26-year-old golfer had an even start before playing three birdies in the second, fourth and fourteenth holes. But he gave up his two birdies after playing two successive bogeys in the 12th and 13th holes before playing double bogeys in the 18th hole.

Australian Richardson Kalem was on the top of the leaderboard with an eight-under-par 63, while Irish Pdraig Harrington followed him with one shot more.

SLOW OVER-RATE

1-match ban on England captain

AFP, Colombo

England captain Alastair Cook was on Thursday suspended for one match and fined 20 per cent of his undisclosed match fees for his team's slow over-rate in the third one-day international against Sri Lanka.

Match referee David Boon ruled that England bowled one over short in the stipulated time frame during Wednesday's rain-curtailed game in Hambantota which the tourists won by five wickets.

Cook will miss Sunday's fourth match in Colombo with Sri Lanka leading 2-1 in the seven-match series.

Eoin Morgan will take over as captain for the game, England coach Peter Moores confirmed.



Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero scores the equalising goal against Sunderland during their Premier League encounter at the Stadium of Light on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Man City keep pace

AFP, London



Chelsea preserved their six-point advantage at the Premier League summit by beating Tottenham Hotspur 3-0 on Wednesday, while

Manchester City kept pace with a 4-1 success at Sunderland.

Southampton's last-gasp 1-0 loss at Arsenal left defending champions City with a four-point cushion in second place, and the ease of the leading pair's victories suggests the gap is only likely to increase.

Chelsea had been held to a goalless draw at Sunderland at the weekend, but they returned to winning ways against Tottenham, who have not won at Stamford Bridge since February 1990.

Chelsea were missing top scorer Diego Costa due to suspension, but after Spurs striker Harry Kane had rattled the crossbar with an early header, the hosts went ahead in the 19th minute.

Eden Hazard picked the ball up wide on the left, swapped passes with Costa's replacement, Didier Drogba, and beat visiting goalkeeper Hugo Lloris at his near post with a powerful left-foot shot.

It was a disappointing moment for the France goalkeeper, and there was more frustration to come three minutes later.

Lloris fluffed a goal-kick straight to

RESULTS

Arsenal 1 (Sanchez 89) Southampton 0
Chelsea 3 (Hazard 19, Drogba 22, Remy 73) Tottenham Hotspur 0
Everton 1 (Lukaku 34) Hull City 1 (Aluko 59)
Sunderland 1 (Wickham 19) Manchester City 4 (Aguero 21,

Hazard, who in turn fed Oscar, and the Brazilian teed up Drogba to fire home.

Loic Remy replaced Drogba in the second half and he found the target in the 73rd minute to complete a straightforward evening for Jose Mourinho's side.

Manuel Pellegrini's City had lost 1-0 on their previous four visits to Sunderland, but they ended the sequence thanks in no small part to a brace from in-form striker Sergio Aguero.

Captain Vincent Kompany's hamstring injury and Eliaquim Mangala's suspension saw City line up with Dedyck Boyata and Martin Demichelis at centre-back, and they fell behind in the 19th minute when Connor Wickham got ahead of Pablo Zabaleta to score.

But Aguero equalised two minutes later, effortlessly slipping past a defender and crashing home a ferocious shot from just inside the box.

Aguero's astute lay-off allowed Stevan Jovetic to make it 2-1 in the 39th minute.

2 local teams in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Two pairs from hosts Bangladesh moved into the mixed doubles semifinals of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Open International Badminton Challenge, beating their respective rivals at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The pair of Ahsan Habib Parash and Shapla Akter defeated the Indian pair of Satinder Malik and Kristi Das 21-15 and 21-17, while the duo of Moazzam Hossain and Bristy Khatun beat V Mawan of Malaysia and Prajakta Sawant of India 21-11 and 21-15.

In two other quarterfinal matches, the Malaysian pair of Chee Tean Tan and Shevon Jemie Lai beat Nepalese Bikash Shrestha and Nangsal Tamang 21-5 and 21-9, while Wee Geen Tan and Yen Wei Peck of Malaysia defeated Nepalese Ratnajit Tamang and Sara Devi Tamang 21-16 and 21-11.

Sevilla raze Sabadell

REUTERS, Madrid



Sevilla joined holders Real Madrid in the last 16 of the King's Cup when a quickfire Iago Aspas hat-trick helped secure a crushing 11-2 aggregate victory over second-division Sabadell on Wednesday.

Sevilla romped to a 6-1 win in their last-32, first leg at Sabadell at the end of October, when Aspas also netted a treble, and after winning the return 5-1 they will play Andalusian rivals Granada or Cordoba next month for a place in the quarterfinals.

Sabadell took a surprise lead in the 22nd minute at the Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville when Juan Collantes converted a penalty before Kevin Gameiro struck for the home side 10 minutes before halftime.

Aspas, who is on loan from English Premier League club Liverpool, scored three goals in four minutes midway through the second half to underline Sevilla's dominance and substitute Gerard Deulofeu completed the rout in the 81st.

"Let's see if this can become a habit," Aspas, who has been unable to nail down a regular starting place in coach Unai Emery's side, told reporters.

"These three goals will do me good to keep on gaining in confidence," added the 27-year-old.

Real set up a likely last-16 clash against city rivals Atletico Madrid when they secured a 9-1 aggregate success against third-tier minnows Cornella on Tuesday.

Both ties were brought forward because of Real's participation in the Club World Cup this month as European champions and the resulting disruption to the La Liga calendar caused by the tournament in Morocco.

In last-32, first leg games, La Liga champions Atletico, who beat Real 2-1 after extra time in the 2013 Cup final at the Bernabeu, won 3-0 at third-tier Hospitalet.

The winner of a probable tie between Real and Atletico is likely to meet record winners Barcelona in the quarterfinals.

A second-string Barca, missing most of coach Luis Enrique's regular starting 11 including Lionel Messi and Neymar, thumped Huesca, another third-tier club, 4-0.

Ivan Rakitic opened the scoring in the 12th minute with a splendid free kick, Andres Iniesta struck on his return from injury four minutes later, Pedro made it 3-0 six minutes before halftime and a deflected effort from Rafinha completed the scoring in the 72nd.

Malaga took an early lead at Deportivo's Riazor stadium before the home side levelled midway through the second half and the match ended 1-1. The return legs are in two weeks.



Chelsea's veteran striker Didier Drogba celebrates his goal against Tottenham Hotspur during their Premier League clash at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Drogba sets the tone

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho believes Didier Drogba's dynamic display in Chelsea's 3-0 win over Tottenham

proved the Premier League leaders have the strength in depth to last the pace in the title race.

Mourinho's side maintained their six-point lead at the top of the table thanks to a throwback performance from Ivory Coast striker Drogba, who scored his fifth goal of the season at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday to make the absence of suspended leading scorer Diego Costa a mere footnote.

Drogba, 36, showed there is still plenty of life in his ageing legs by laying on Eden Hazard's 19th minute opener, then netting with a clinical finish in the 23rd minute before substitute Loic Remy's fine finish in the 73rd minute sealed Chelsea's seventh successive home win.

Even Mourinho, who brought

Drogba to west London from Marseille for his first spell with the club in 2004, was moved to single out the Blues legend for special praise after a performance which showed Chelsea should have enough firepower in reserve if the injury-prone Costa falters.

"Yes, it is remarkable. Didier is a team player, one of these with an old school mentality. Not selfish, not vain, a humble guy who plays for the team, fights for the team. Fantastic," Mourinho said.

"When he is on the bench and comes on for the last few minutes to help the team defend, he does that with the same enthusiasm as when he starts a game against Tottenham.

"We played against him when he was at Galatasaray last season so I could feel the kind of potential he still has and I was expecting exactly this, with not even a doubt about a player who is not playing every game. I knew he would adapt very well mentally to his role."

Thanks to Drogba's inspirational efforts, Chelsea have equalled a club

record, set previously in 2007 and again in 2009, by extending their unbeaten run to 23 matches in all competitions -- 21 this term and two games at the end of last season.

They have also matched the club's record unbeaten start to a league season of 14 games without defeat set in the second tier in 1925-26.

Mourinho puts his team's scintillating form down to their refusal to look for excuses when they are hit by bad luck or injuries and suspensions.

"We need him (Costa) but we have the right mentality. If we don't have a player we don't cry about it," Mourinho said.

"(Nemanja) Matic is suspended for the Newcastle game on Saturday? No problem. Did you remember Diego Costa today? I didn't."

"We give confidence to the players and they respond in the best way.

"We were able to face a difficult moment against Tottenham, be stable, score the goals and then manage the game."

High Noon showdown

AFP, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund's Jurgen Klopp is set to make changes for Friday's home clash with Hoffenheim, which he describes as a "High Noon" showdown with his side bottom of the Bundesliga.

Dortmund are enduring the worst start to a league season in their history.

Their 2-0 loss at Eintracht Frankfurt last Sunday was their eighth defeat in 13 league games to put them back on the bottom of the Bundesliga table.

But Klopp says his side must show their mettle and has threatened to make changes against seventh-placed Hoffenheim with Dortmund having claimed only 11 from a possible 39 points.

"Friday is our High Noon. We have to show what we are made of," Klopp said.

"We are trying to find out in training who can withstand this situation and will make our selection accordingly."

"We have a tremendous opportunity to emerge stronger from the crisis, without having been divided during this difficult period."

With Dortmund already through to the Champions League's last 16 before Tuesday's home match against Anderlecht, Klopp knows their problems come down to attitude.

FIXTURES

(all times 1430 GMT unless stated)

Friday
Borussia Dortmund v Hoffenheim (1930)
Saturday
Borussia Moenchengladbach v Hertha Berlin, Hanover 96 v VfL Wolfsburg, VfB Stuttgart v Schalke 04, Cologne v Augsburg, Paderborn v Freiburg, Bayern Munich v Bayer Leverkusen (1730)
Sunday
Hamburg v Mainz, Eintracht Frankfurt v Werder Bremen

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