

What to WATCH

NEO SPORTS

French Open

Men's & Women's Second Rd

Live from 3:00pm

DAY'S EVENT

Asian Men's V'ball C'ship

Venue: Mirpur Indoor Stadium

SEMIFINALS

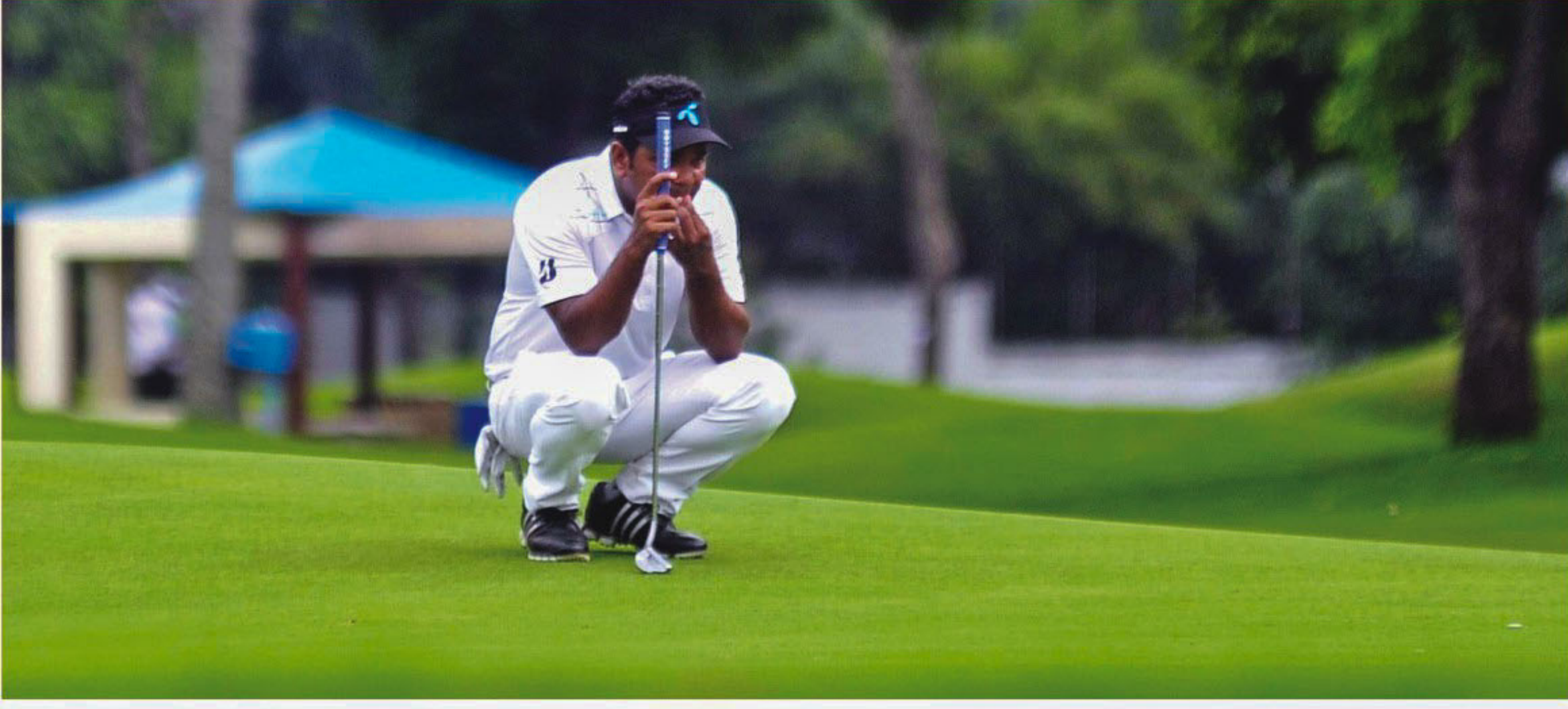
Turkmenistan v Nepal

Time: 3:00pm

Afghanistan v Maldives

TICKETS FROM SPACE!

George Lamb, an Arsenal fan, will be attending this Sunday's FA Cup final at Wembley after stumbling across tickets that had literally fallen from space. The FA fastened a pair of VIP passes to a weather balloon and set it soaring at 6:00am this morning, with the balloon reaching a height of some 8,839 metres before popping. They then plummeted back down to Earth and landed in a village in Sussex, where George's grandmother happened across them, before duly handing them over to her 19-year old



It was not a good day for Siddikur Rahman as he was left disappointed, but he will be confident of turning things around in the second round today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

The perks of being a pro golfer

ATIQUÉ ANAM



Berry Henson is a golfer with a difference or, at least it would seem so, from his laidback attitude and carefree approach. While most golfers here were focusing on their personal expectations during the pre-event press conference of the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open, this American golfer was more interested speaking about how excited he was to add a new destination in his golfing repertoire.

The 36-year-old California native, who moved to Thailand after

making his Asian Tour debut in 2011, says he likes to explore new places and cultures and that he has been very excited about coming to Bangladesh.

"I've kind of made Thailand my home and have made new friends there," said Berry while waiting for his car to drive him to hotel after his first round's play.

Born into a well-to-do family in California, Berry was introduced to this game by his grandfather at the age of five. "I was very athletic; I played basketball and baseball too. But golf kept getting better for me and got me a scholarship to go to school. I felt like I had a future in golf." A future which he feels offered more perks than a career in baseball or basketball or even in business, which he had pur-

sued for a while as a student.

"I go on vacations every now and then. I try to go somewhere I've never been before. I've enjoyed so far here and Siddikur (Rahman) has been very kind as he took a few of us to dinner for two nights," said Berry, who has been to most of the golf destinations under the Asian Tour, USA PGA Tour and European Tour circuits apart from his well-earned vacations to many holiday destinations around the world.

On the golf course, though, Berry hasn't enjoyed the best of times in recent years.

And things didn't start on the right note yesterday either as Berry double bogeyed twice in the first four holes before rain intervened and



returned to the clubhouse with a sombre look. But his usual charming smile returned by the end of the day as he successfully managed to wipe out the deficit with four birdies later on. After all making the cut and being among the top on the leaderboard matters a lot to any golfer because the paycheque that comes at the end of it is the biggest perk of all.

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Siddikur & co fall behind

ATIQUÉ ANAM

As Siddikur Rahman shaped up to swing for the approach shot on par-three 16th hole on the back nine of the Kurmitola Golf Club, a sudden noise from about thirty metres away forced him to retrieve from his swing. The two-time Asian Tour winner gave an angry look towards a pack of people from where the noise originated and then went back to his mark. Siddikur eventually missed a six-foot putter on that hole, earning his first bogey of the day after having started with back-to-back birdies. The day didn't get any better for the ace Bangladesh golfer as he traded four more bogeys for three birdies to end the first round of the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open (BBO) at one-over (72) to occupy joint 33rd position.

"The start was good but unfortunately I couldn't keep it up later. To be honest I felt a bit pressure as we are playing before the home crowd. And the rain interruptions didn't help either. But there are three days still left and I am confident that I can play my best golf in the remaining rounds," said Siddikur who felt his short game, which used to be his strength, has been letting him down off late.

Distractions from surroundings happen in all golf courses, including the most professionally-managed ones too. So whether that slight lapse in concentration or the rain-interruptions broke Siddikur's rhythm cannot be said with certainty. Or was it just a case of a lack of confidence due to a lengthy lean period is left to be answered. But one thing that is certain is that the first day of the first-ever Asian Tour event hosted in Bangladesh did not belong to the locals. Among the 26 professional and six amateur golfers from Bangladesh, Siddikur was second-best placed, along with recently-turned pro Sajib Ali and amateur Dil Mohammed, with only Dulal Hossain above

SELECTED SCORES

1	Mardan Mamat (SIN)	-5 (66)
1	Casey O'Toole (USA)	-5 (66)
3	Amardip Malik (IND)	-4 (67)
3	Carlos Pigem (ESP)	-4 (67)
3	Rattanon Wannasrichan (THA)	-4 15*
20	Dulal Hossain (BAN) Par	12*
33	Siddikur Rahman (BAN)	+1 (72)
33	Dil Mohammad (A) (BAN)	+1 (72)
33	Sajib ALI (BAN)	+1 (72)

them on one-under. Dulal, however, finished only 12 holes in the day, as rain interrupted twice to cut short the day's proceedings. Jamal Hossain Mollah, Nur Jamal, Badal Hossain and Mohammad Sayum were all placed at two-over (73) while the other Bangladeshis lagged behind.

The day belonged to Mardan Mamat of Singapore and Casey O'Toole of USA, who took joint lead at five-under (66). The Singaporean veteran, who has been in scintillating form lately, traded seven birdies for a single bogey to share the clubhouse lead with the American.

"It was a long day so I'm very happy with the result. This golf course suits my game a lot. It isn't a power golf course but more a thinking course. You have to keep the ball in play and hit it straight, said the four-time Asian Tour winner.

One shot adrift off Mamat and O'Toole were Amardip Malik of India, Carlos Pigem of Spain and Rattanon Wannasrichan of Thailand, with the latter having completed 15 holes thus far.

The first round of the BBO was suspended at 6.50pm due to fading light. A total of 30 players will return today at 6.25am to complete their rounds.

US corruption probe rocks FIFA

AFP, Zurich



The dawn detention of several FIFA leaders and a corruption raid on its headquarters on Wednesday rocked

world football's governing body two days before its leader Sepp Blatter seeks a new term.

A FIFA vice-president was among seven people arrested at the luxury Zurich hotel where they were preparing for a congress starting Thursday. All now face deportation to the United States on charges of accepting more than \$100 million in bribes.

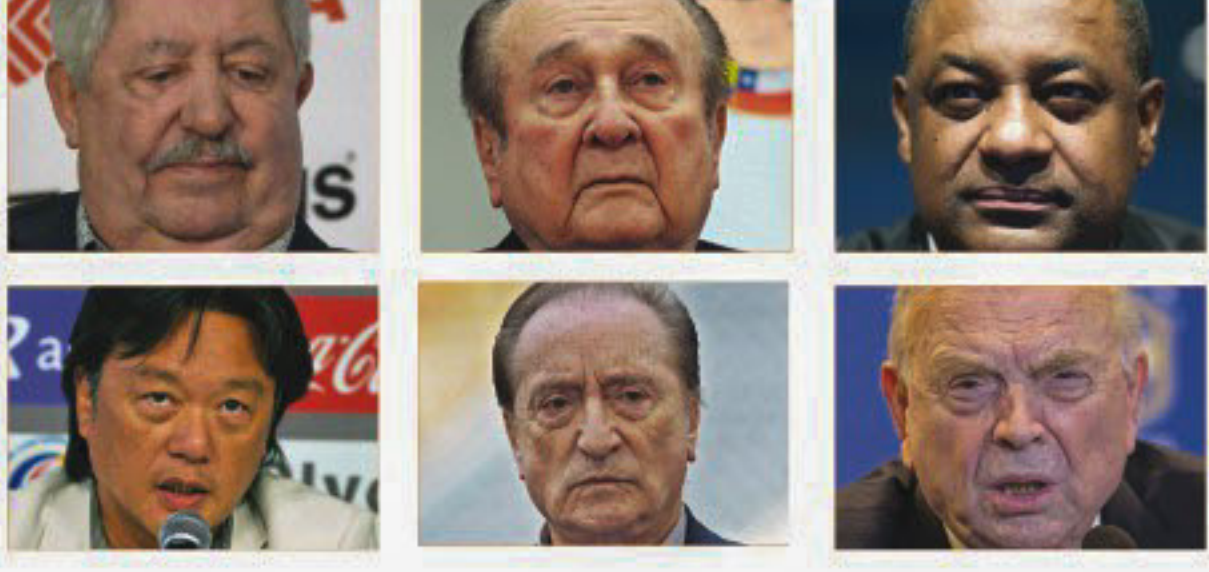
Separately, Swiss police seized files and emails at the FIFA headquarters as part of an investigation into the awarding of the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar.

FIFA spokesman Walter de Gregorio said Blatter is not involved in the investigations and that the presidential vote would be held as planned on Friday.

"The timing is not great," de Gregorio told reporters. But he added that "FIFA welcomes actions that can help contribute to rooting out any wrongdoing in football."

Swiss police gave a surprise 6:00am wake up call to FIFA vice-president Jeffrey Webb, from the Cayman Islands, and other six officials at the luxury Baur au Lac hotel. A US Department of Justice statement said seven people were detained.

US Attorney general Loretta Lynch said the investigations "spans at



(L-R from upper row) Six FIFA officials Rafael Esquivel, Nicolas Leoz, Jeffrey Webb, Eduardo Li, Eugenio Figueredo and Jose Maria Marin are among several soccer officials charged yesterday for allegedly receiving bribes worth millions of dollars.

least two generations of soccer officials who, as alleged, have abused their positions of trust to acquire millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks."

US police also raided the CONCACAF headquarters in Miami. Eduardo Li, a FIFA executive committee member from Costa Rica, and Eugenio Figueredo, president of South American football governing body Conmebol from Uruguay, were also among those detained.

Police in plain clothes took the room keys from the reception and

went to the rooms of the six, the New York Times said. The operation was carried out peacefully, it added.

The Swiss justice ministry said those detained were suspected of accepting "bribes and kick-backs between the early 1990s and the present day."

The seven could agree to be extradited immediately or challenge the move in court. The US Justice Department said the detained officials could face up to 20 years in jail.

The Swiss raid on FIFA's headquarters formally opened an investigation

into the 2018 and 2022 World Cups that FIFA itself asked for in November.

Police are to question 10 members of the executive committee who took part in the 2010 vote while they are in Zurich for the Congress, officials said.

Qatar has strongly denied any wrongdoing linked to its bid. A former FIFA vice president from the Gulf state, Mohammed bin Hammam, was banned for life from FIFA because of corruption.

A former US attorney, Michael Garcia, investigated the World Cup

bids. He left FIFA because it refused to fully publish his report.

In May, Blatter denied he was a target of an FBI corruption investigation and that he had no fear of going to the United States.

He said he would probably go in 2016 for a football tournament there and to Canada next month for the Women's World Cup.

The denial came after an ESPN television documentary said the Swiss official was afraid to go to the United States because of the FBI investigation.



SEPP BLATTER

Blatter was "relaxed" about the future fall-out from the investigation.

He isn't dancing in his office. He is very, very calm, he sees what happens. He is fully cooperative with everybody.

PRINCE ALI

Today is a sad day for football.

Clearly this is a developing story, the details of which are emerging. It would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

Mourinho pokes fun at rivals

AFP, London



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho says his Premier League winning players have not been given the credit they

deserve and took time to make fun of the teams that finished below them on Tuesday.

The 52-year-old Portuguese -- whose side finished the season eight points clear of 2014 champions Manchester City -- used the end of season Chelsea dinner to use a convoluted story to poke fun at City, Arsenal, who finished third, and fourth-placed Manchester United.

To a backdrop of a graphic showing a pitch with two goals he

addressed first of all Louis van Gaal-managed United -- the 'plain red shirted team' -- saying they would have preferred to play without goals.

MANCHESTER UNITED

"That team plays really well and the ball goes and goes and goes and the quality of the ball possession is really beautiful, but no goals."

"And they ask the international board of FIFA to play like this, but they were told that it was not possible, that the bigger percentage of ball possession doesn't win matches and they were not champions."

MANCHESTER CITY

City, 'the sky blue shirted team', at least wanted to play with one goal.

"They were fantastic and they scored a lot of goals and the goals



were coming from every position and they score and they score and they score, but they never conceded goals, because no goal.

"Again, the international board

told them 'I'm sorry, you can't be champions because football is with two goals'."

ARSENAL

Vis-a-vis Arsenal, 'the team with red shirts, white sleeves' did want to play with two goals.

"They were scoring some, they were also conceding some. They were fantastic. They scored really beautiful goals, they concede some goals too and they were almost there," said Mourinho, who also guided Chelsea to the League Cup trophy.

"But they asked the international board to play only between January and April. And they were told 'no chance, no chance'."

"You have to play between August and May, so they couldn't be champions."

TheGolfHouse in the stands

SPORTS REPORTER

TheGolfHouse, the first ever golf magazine in Bangladesh, hit the market yesterday, the opening day of Bashundhara Bangladesh Open at the Kurmitola Golf Club (KGC).

The inclusive golf magazine was officially unveiled by ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman, Sri Lankan golfer Mithun Perera, KGC CEO colonel (ret'd) Sardar Hasan Kabir at a simple ceremony at the KGC media centre.

The first issue of this glossy magazine includes articles and interviews on golfers and organisers and explore the prospects of golf tourism in Bangladesh.

Sanchez wins fan award

AFP, London



Arsenal dynamo Alexis Sanchez was on Tuesday announced as the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Fans' Player of the Year after an excellent first season in English football.

Sanchez, 26, joined Arsenal from Barcelona last year in a reported £35 million (\$53.9 million, 49.5 million euros) deal and has been an instant hit, scoring 16 Premier League goals and supplying eight assists.

His performances saw him named on the six-man shortlist for the PFA's Player of the Year award, which went to Chelsea's Eden Hazard.

But the Chile international beat Hazard and Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero to the fans' award in a public poll that received over 200,000 votes.

Later on Tuesday he was also named Facebook's inaugural Player of the Year winner in which over a million votes were cast globally.

KEY POINTS FROM A US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE STATEMENT

Nine FIFA officials and five corporate executives were indicted for racketeering conspiracy and corruption

The indictment alleges that, between 1991 and present, the defendants and their co-conspirators engaged in various criminal activities, including fraud, bribery and money laundering

The soccer officials are charged with conspiring to solicit and receive well over \$150 million in bribes and kickbacks in exchange for their official support of the sports marketing executives who agreed to make the unlawful payments

Other alleged schemes relate to the payment and receipt of bribes and kickbacks in connection with the sponsorship of CBF by a major U.S. sportswear company, the selection of the host country for the 2010 World Cup and the 2011 FIFA presidential election

Seven Defendants Arrested Overseas; Guilty Pleas for Four Individual Defendants and Two Corporate Defendants

Jeffrey Webb and Jack Warner -- the current and former presidents of CONCACAF -- are among the soccer officials charged with racketeering and bribery offenses

Also yesterday morning, a search warrant was being executed at CONCACAF headquarters in Miami, Florida

Charles Blazer, the long-serving former general secretary of CONCACAF and former U.S. representative on the FIFA executive committee pleaded guilty

The charges in the indictment are merely allegations,