

Siddikur three strokes behind

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman ended the first day of the UBS Hong Kong Open in twelfth place yesterday, tied with eight others. Siddikur finished with 3-under-par, but joint-leaders Lu Wei-chih of Chinese Taipei and Italian Andrea Pavana both have scores of 6-under-par, which will be a difficult score for Siddikur to catch up to.

Still, it would be unfair to say that Siddikur played badly, because he is only two strokes off third place and one stroke off sixth. If any of the other golfers slip up then it will be very possible to see Siddikur break into the top-five as early as the second round.

Siddikur's three birdies came in the fourth, twelfth and fifteenth holes at the Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling. He is tied with Thai duo Chapchai Nirat and Prom Meesawat, Englishmen Matthew Fitzpatrick, Ian Poulter and Richard McEvoy, Finnish golfer Roope Kakko, Lin Wen-tang of Chinese Taipei and Indian Anirban Lahiri.

Cruyff has lung cancer

AFP, The Hague

Dutch football great Johan Cruyff, regarded as one of the world's greatest ever players has been diagnosed with lung cancer, his management team said on Thursday.

"In the last few weeks Johan Cruyff has undergone medical tests at a Barcelona hospital. He has been diagnosed with lung cancer," Carol Thate said a statement.

"To respect Johan and his family's privacy and because tests have not been finalised no further information will be given at this stage."



East Bengal's Nigerian forward Essien Orok performs a somersault after scoring the opening goal during his side's 3-1 win against Karachi Electric in a Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup match at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Group B blown open

ANISUR RAHMAN from Chittagong



Hosts Chittagong Abahani left Group B wide open when they handed their more illustrious namesake a surprise 1-0 defeat in the second match of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup yesterday.

The victory of the home side in the second match under lights has now left three teams competing for the final two semifinal spots, despite East Bengal's 3-1 win over Karachi Electric FC in the first match of the day.

Although East Bengal are now leading the table with six points, their next game against Dhaka Abahani suddenly turned into a crucial battle following the host's victory. Both the Abahanis are now tied on three points, with the home team fancying a better

prospect to advance into the knockout stage as they will be facing a relatively weak Karachi Electric, who have already been eliminated from the competition with two consecutive defeats.

Winger Zahid Hasan scored the all-important goal for Chittagong Abahani with a brilliantly struck free-kick in the 47th minute.

The two teams are geographical rivals, but there was no rivalry seen on or off the field. Men and women from Pakistan and India, studying in Chittagong, turned up in numbers to enjoy the match where East Bengal dominated proceedings.

East Bengal took the deserved lead in the 15th minute when

East Bengal goalkeeper Dibyendu Sarkar. At the other end of the pitch, Mohammad Rafique, availing a cut-back from Essien, doubled the margin with a powerful shot in the 25th minute.

After resumption, K-Electric got off to a fine start with crisp passing and pulled one goal back four minutes into the second half, but the strike from Riaz was ruled out due to an offside. East Bengal immediately went on the attack and struck a third goal to take the match away from their Pakistani opponents.

Midfielder Subodh Kumar played a longer ball for Orok Essien, who darted into the box and squared it to Ranti and the Nigerian striker tapped in to the near post in the 50th minute.

However, K-Electric pulled one back as Muhammad Rasool struck the consolation goal in the 84th minute from close range.

EAST BENGAL 3 - 1 KARACHI ELECTRIC
CTG ABAHANI 1 - 0 ABAHANI

The famed Sky Blues had a good chance to level the margin in the 75th minute but Emon Babu wasted that opportunity blasting the ball over the crossbar from a vantage position.

Earlier, East Bengal made light work of Karachi Electric when they stormed to a 3-0 lead by the 50th minute.

Abhinash Ruidas went deep into the left flank and whipped in a low cross for Orok Essien, whose diving header from the six-yard box beat Pakistani goalkeeper Ghulam Nabi.

Two minutes later, Karachi Electric came close to levelling the margin, but a harmless drive from Muhammad Raiz did not trouble



Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne celebrates his winning goal against Sevilla during their Champions League encounter at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

De Bruyne lifts City

Martial rescues Man United

AFP, Paris



Belgian playmaker Kevin De Bruyne saw Manchester City home against Sevilla in dramatic style in Wednesday's Champions League action as Paris Saint-Germain held ten-time titleholders Real Madrid to a goalless draw.

De Bruyne's injury time contribution earned City a 2-1 home win against Spain's Europa League champions to improve their chances of escaping from Group D and into the last 16.

An open affair at the Etihad Stadium was heading for a draw after Adil Rami's own goal cancelled out Yevhen Konoplyanka's 30th-minute opener for Sevilla, only for De Bruyne to gather a pass from Yaya Toure and slam home with his left foot seconds into stoppage time.

Manuel Pellegrini's men moved up to second, one point behind Juventus,

RESULTS	
Malmö (Rosenborg 17)	1 - 0 Shakhtar Donetsk
PSG	0 - 0 Real Madrid
CSKA Moscow (Doubmbia 15)	1 - 1 Man Utd (Martial 65)
Wolfsburg (Dost 46, Kruse 57)	2 - 0 PSV
Atl Madrid (Saul Niguez 23, Martinez 29, Oliver Torres 63, Dedečko 89-og)	4 - 0 Astana
Galatasaray (Selçuk Inan 19-pen, Podolski 33)	2 - 1 Benfica (Gaitan 2)
Juventus	0 - 0 Borussia M'gladbach
Man City (Rami 36-og)	2 - 1 Sevilla (Konoplyanka 30)

the Serie A giants held to a 0-0 stalemate by Borussia Moenchengladbach in Turin.

Manchester United, who host City in the Premier League on Sunday, faced a tricky assignment away to CSKA Moscow, their French starlet Anthony Martial firmly leaving his

imprint on the encounter.

The 19-year-old was called for handball which led to CSKA taking the lead on 15 minutes, Seydou Doumbia slamming in the rebound after United keeper David de Gea had parried Roman Eremenko's penalty onto the post.

But the French teenager atoned for his mistake with a fine header after the hour for his first goal in the competition and fifth since his high profile move from Monaco in August.

Bundesliga side Wolfsburg top the pool on six points after defeating PSV Eindhoven 2-0, with United and CSKA on four and the Dutch champions bringing up the rear on three.

Ronaldo, the Brazilian 2002 World Cup winner, was in the stands at Parc des Princes to watch the headline tie between PSG and Real.

But despite both clubs deploying their all-time top scorers the game ended goalless, Real legend Cristiano Ronaldo coming as close as anyone to breaking the deadlock in the French

Afghanistan level series

CRICINFO, Bulawayo

Afghanistan levelled the series against Zimbabwe with a three-wicket win in the fourth one-day international at Queens Sports Club on Thursday, with Mohammad Shahzad's 80 setting up their pursuit of Zimbabwe's 184 for 8.

Afghanistan appeared to be cruising to the win but in spin-friendly conditions they laboured over the latter stages of their chase, slipping from 119 for 1 to 178 for 7.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ZIMBABWE: 184 for 8 in 50 overs (Raza 86; Dawlat 3-37, Rashid 2-37)
AFGHANISTAN: 185 for 7 in 46.4 overs (Shahzad 80; Williams 2-31, Chisoro 3-38)
Result: Afghanistan won by 3 wickets.

Ref reveals 'anti-Barca plot'

AFP, Madrid

A Spanish assistant referee has made a formal complaint to anti-corruption authorities, claiming he was pressured into favouring Real Madrid in next month's El Clasico against Barcelona by the league's refereeing committee.

In a court filing published by Spanish radio station COPE on Wednesday, the official, who didn't want to reveal his identity, claims pressure was put on a senior referee who is expected to take charge of the match on November 21 to handle the game in a manner that would "prejudice the interests of one of the clubs involved, Barcelona."

Benitez hails Real

AFP, Paris



Real Madrid coach Rafa Benitez described his injury-hit team's performance in holding Paris Saint-Germain to a 0-0 draw at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday as "exceptional".

"We deserved to win the match. Given the circumstances the performance of the team was not good, it was exceptional," said Benitez after the Group A clash that failed to live up to expectations as a spectacle but edged both clubs a step closer to qualification for the last 16.

"I was convinced the team would play well and try to win the game. We had chances to win it, more than them, and decent control of the match against a team who are not easy to play against."

"As coach I am very satisfied with the performance of the players."

Real were without Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema and James Rodriguez for the trip to the French capital, along with Pepe, so their attacking potential was greatly reduced, although they could still call upon their all-time leading scorer in Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Portuguese superstar came as close as anyone to winning the game with a 72nd-minute volley that flew just wide, but the point keeps Real on course for qualification for the last 16 from Group A and makes them favourites to win the section.

They host PSG in the Spanish capital in a fortnight, with both clubs on seven points, four points clear of Malmo, who beat Shakhtar Donetsk 1-0 in Sweden in the night's other game.

Critics who label Benitez an overly defensive coach will point out that Madrid failed to score for the first time in 41 Champions League group games since a 2-0 defeat to Juventus back in 2008, when Bernd Schuster was in charge.

Messi won't rush his recovery

AFP, Madrid



Four-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi has insisted he won't rush his recovery from knee ligament damage despite upcoming clashes with Brazil and Real Madrid for Argentina and Barcelona respectively.

Messi suffered a torn internal collateral ligament in his left knee during Barca's 2-1 win over Las Palmas on September 26 that was expected to keep him out of action for up to eight weeks.

A return to fitness within that timeframe would allow him to feature when Barca face Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu on November 21.

However, it is a race against time if he is to be included for Argentina's World Cup qualifiers at home to Brazil on November 13 or away to Colombia four days later.

"Being injured is the worst feeling in the world for a sportsman, but right from the start I accepted that I had an injury and that

the only thing to do was to recover from it the best way possible," Messi told Yahoo Sports on Thursday.

"The most important thing for me is to be at 100 per cent fitness."

"I am improving every day without setting myself any targets. I have always said that I don't set myself any dates because it isn't up to me. As much as I would like to play tomorrow, the doctors wouldn't let me."

"When they tell me that I have recovered completely will be the time that I will make my return onto the pitch."

The inspired form of Neymar has allowed Barcelona to negotiate most of the obstacles presented since Messi went out, despite a 2-1 defeat to Sevilla, they remain joint top of La Liga and well on course to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League.

However, Argentina missed their star man badly as they took just one point from their opening two games of World Cup qualifying, losing 2-0 at home to Ecuador before a 0-0 draw at to Paraguay earlier this month.

Man behind Solid base

ANISUR RAHMAN from Chittagong



Of the five foreign clubs taking part in the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, Sri Lanka champions Solid SC are considered weaker than the sides from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, but they produced a stunning 2-1 result against Kolkata Mohammedan. Shock results are nothing new to Solid. In their second appearance in top-flight football in Sri Lanka, they became Premier League champions and took the title outside of Colombo for the first time after 50 years.

Their 32-year-old team manager WPS De Souza informed that Solid were initially a soft-ball cricket club in the Anuradhapura province, some 210 kilometres away from Colombo, and later turned into a football club. They entered the Sri Lanka Premier League in 2013, after gradually qualifying from the third, second and first divisions.

Coach WPS Jusmin was the main architect of Solid's success in the Premier League. Jusmin faced a lot of hardship throughout his life during the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) battle against the Sri Lankan government, but even that did not deter him from football.

"Our family was on the run for 15 years as the LTTE forced every Muslim to leave our home in Manna, near Jaffna. Though there were no clashes between Hindus, Muslims or Christians in Manna, we had to travel to a lot of parts of Sri Lanka before settling down in 2002. We returned to our home in Manna in 2005," said Jusmin during the training session at Dampara Police Line ground yesterday.

"I was then appointed the coach of the state team and led them to win different championships. I had been with the team for 13 years before joining the Sri Lanka Football Federation," said the 45-year-old AFC licensed coach, who also got diplomas in football from Germany and Hungary.

Jusmin believes dedication is all that is needed to succeed in football.

"A coach can't do anything if the players don't respond. Dedication from players, coaches and officials is required for success," said Jusmin.



WPS JUSMIN