

Siddikur, Jamal stay in the hunt

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Siddikur Rahman stayed in contention for his third Asian Tour title while Jamal Hossain Mollah also stayed in the mix at the end of the third round of the Panasonic Open in New Delhi yesterday.

The 30-year-old Siddikur, who won at the Delhi Golf Club once apart from finishing second on three occasions in the last five years, moved to within a stroke of leader, Chiragh Kumar of India, after enjoying a bogey-free four-under in the penultimate round on Saturday.

Having started the day slowly with his first birdie coming in on the eighth hole, the two-time Asian Tour winner picked up the pace at the back nine, firing birdies on the 11th, 14th and the 18th holes.

"This is one of my favourite golf courses and I really enjoy playing here. I'm happy with my game because I kept my ball on the fairway, stayed out of trouble and that's the

TOP 5					
Pos	Golfer	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Aggregate
1	Chiragh (IND)	67	66	72	-11 (205)
2	Siddikur (BAN)	68	70	68	-10 (206)
3	Chikka (IND)	69	71	68	-8 (208)
3	Jamal (BAN)	71	67	70	-8 (208)
5	Wiratchant (THA)	68	72	69	-7 (209)

key to a good score. I don't have a score in mind. I just want to focus in the final round," Siddikur told Asiantour.com at the end of the round.

While Siddikur was staying out of trouble, his compatriot Jamal kept himself within striking distance of a first-ever win on the Asian Tour despite an erratic performance in the third round. The 30-year-old golfer traded five birdies for a bogey and a double bogey to get up to joint third position at eight-under, just three shots behind Chiragh.

Chiragh battled to an even-par to hold on to the lead to stay in the hunt for a first Asian Tour victory at the 400,000-dollar event.



Jamal Hossain Mollah (L) hit a two-under to move up to third while Siddikur Rahman carded four-under to move to second position in the Panasonic Open on Saturday.



PHOTOS: AFP



Manchester United midfielder Jesse Lingard (R) celebrates his opening goal with teammate Marcos Rojo during their Premier League encounter against West Bromwich Albion at Old Trafford yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

BHF look to woo Jamal, Russel

SPORTS REPORTER



The new president of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), air marshal Abu Esrar, has said that the BHF is going to approach some big clubs including Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra to form hockey teams so that the premier division league becomes more lucrative.

Esrar visited the federation for the first time yesterday and watched an exhibition match between national team and under-21 team at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

"I personally believe that 12 clubs are not enough for a premier league. I think if we can introduce some big clubs like Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell in hockey, it will be great for the game. We are yet to discuss the matter with the clubs, but we are thinking of proposing those clubs officially," said the recently-appointed BHF chief.

Esrar also said that he will try to raise funds for the game by seeking financial assistance from different quarters.

"If needed, we can ask for financial support from Bangladesh Cricket Board as well as the government for the betterment of the game. We will also ask for the support of the honourable prime minister," added Esrar.

The BHF president met with representatives of premier league clubs and asked them for full support to take the game ahead.

Meanwhile, the BHF lifted suspension on four former players, who were banned from the game since July, 2013. The game's governing body had handed a lifetime ban on Hockey Players' Welfare Association (HPWA) president Russell Khan Bappi for assaulting former coach Naveed Alam while Ariful Haque Prince, general secretary of HPWA, was handed a 10-year ban for the same offence. Former players Asaduzzaman Chondon and Shamsuddin Tuhin received five-year bans for that incident.

The decision came after a meeting of BHF's working committee, which was approved later, said officials.

Lingard inspires MU

AFP, London



Jesse Lingard's first Manchester United goal inspired his side to a 2-0 win over West Bromwich Albion on Saturday that left them a point shy of the Premier League summit.

United had ended a 404-minute goal drought against CSKA Moscow in mid-week, but they laboured again until Lingard broke the deadlock in the 52nd minute at Old Trafford. Juan Mata added a stoppage-time penalty.

Victory kept Louis van Gaal's side in fourth place, but they are now a point below co-leaders Manchester City and Arsenal, both of whom play on Sunday, and third-place Leicester City, who won 2-1 at home to Watford.

Van Gaal named the same team that had shaded CSKA 1-0 in the Champions League, but they created only two real chances in the first half, with Mata curling wide and Anthony Martial stinging Boaz Myhill's palms.

It drew the familiar chant of 'Attack! Attack!' from the home fans, but early in the second half Lingard made the breakthrough, gathering Chris Brunt's clearing header and brilliantly curling in from outside the box.

Mata stroked home a penalty after Gareth McAuley had been sent off for chopping down the fleeing Martial.

At the King Power Stadium, Jamie Vardy scored for the ninth league game running as Leicester sank Watford to continue their fine start to the season under manager Claudio Ranieri.

A howler from Heurelho Gomes saw the Watford goalkeeper allow N'Golo Kante's toe-poke to trickle through his fingers in the 52nd minute.

RESULTS		
Bournemouth	0 - 1	Newcastle (Perez 27)
Leicester	2 - 1	Watford (Deeney 75-pen)
Man United	2 - 0	West Brom (Lingard 52, Mata 90-pen)
Norwich	1 - 0	Swansea (Howson 70)
Sunderland	0 - 1	Southampton (Tadic 69-pen)
West Ham	1 - 1	Everton (Lanzini 30)

Gomes then fouled Vardy inside the box and the England forward netted the ensuing penalty to close to within one game of former United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy's Premier League record of scoring in 10 successive games.

Troy Deeney replied from the spot for Watford.

West Ham United failed to make ground on the leaders after a 1-1 draw at home to Everton, who levelled through Romelu Lukaku after Manuel Lanzini had put the hosts ahead with a fine, bending effort on the half-hour.

Lukaku equalised two minutes before half-time, rounding Adrian from Gerard Deulofeu's pass and rolling home his seventh goal in seven games against West Ham.

In a further blow to the hosts, they lost chief creator Dimitri Payet to injury early in the second period.

Newcastle United climbed out of the relegation zone at Bournemouth's expense after a 27th-minute Ayoze Perez strike and a string of saves by goalkeeper Rob Elliot earned them a smash-and-grab 1-0 win at Dean Court.

Novak, Andy in semis

AFP, Paris



Novak Djokovic extended his win streak to 20 at the Paris Masters on Friday, defeating Tomas Berdych 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (10/8) to reach the semifinals.

Andy Murray and David Ferrer also made it through to the last four in the bottom half of the draw on a day of marathon clashes, but Rafael Nadal crashed out to Stan Wawrinka.

The straight sets victory for world number one Djokovic also meant that he has now won 28 sets in a row - the best run of his career - dating back to the US Open final in early September.

But he had a battle on his hands against fifth-seeded Berdych, a winner in Paris 10 years ago when he was just 20.

Neither player could manage a break of

serve, the first time that has happened to Djokovic in 680 career wins, according to ATP statistics.

Despite having lost all 16 of their previous hardcourt matchups, the towering Czech had the better of the first set behind a powerful display of serving and forehand blockbusters.

Berdych kept his nose in front and his chance came with a set point at 6-5 up only for Djokovic, the top seed and defending champion, to produce a big first serve and a forehand winner off the blocked return.

The tie-break, however, was dominated by the Serb winning four of the first five points to take control.

Serves again dominated in the second set with both men holding firm to bring up a second straight tie-break which Djokovic edged 10/8 despite Berdych having another set point.

Bayern thrash Stuttgart

AFP, Berlin

Robert Lewandowski claimed his 14th Bundesliga goal of the season on Saturday as Bayern Munich went eight points clear in the table with a 4-0 win over VfB Stuttgart.

Bayern's star-studded attack ran riot at the Allianz Arena with Arjen Robben, Douglas Costa and Thomas Mueller also getting on the scoresheet as defeat pushed Stuttgart back into the bottom three.

With second-placed Borussia Dortmund hosting Schalke on Sunday in the Ruhr derby, Bayern took the chance to extend their lead.

The Bavarian giants have now claimed 34 points from 36 and are the only unbeaten team in Germany's top flight.

They took the lead after just 11 minutes after creating a five-on-one attacking opportunity.

Costa then doubled the tally with a long-range strike on 18 minutes.

Warner again the aggressor

AFP, Brisbane



Joe Burns smashed two sixes to reach his maiden Test century and David Warner joined illustrious company with back-to-back tons as Australia amassed a huge lead over New Zealand in the first Gabba Test on Saturday.

Burns, playing in only his third Test match but his first as opener, blasted spinner Mark Craig for two sixes over long off to race from 88 to 100 in just three balls.

When bad light stopped play on the third day, Australia had stretched their overall lead to 503 runs at 264 for four and an overnight declaration imminent. First-innings centurion Usman Khawaja was not out nine with Adam Voges on one.

Burns, who belted 129 off 123 balls with 14 fours and four sixes, thrilled his home Queensland crowd with some prodigious hitting to reach his first Test ton after three consecutive Test half-centuries.

Warner dashed to his second century of the match and 14th overall with 116 before he gave his wicket away with a switch hit to the deep off spinner Mark Craig.

It was only the third time that a batsman has scored a Test century in both innings on three separate occasions along with Test

greats Ricky Ponting and Sunil Gavaskar.

It was also the first time any opening pair had compiled 150-run plus partnerships in each innings of a Test match.

It was remarkable scoring by Test rookie Burns and even relegated the usually rapid-scoring Warner to a supporting role against the under-strength Kiwi bowling attack, which was minus pace spearhead Tim Southee, off the field with a back injury.

It was the fourth century of the Test after Warner (163) and Khawaja (174) in Australia's first innings and Kane Williamson's defiant 140 in New Zealand's innings.

Skipper Steve Smith was given out for one to a close-to-the-ground catch by Williamson off Trent Boult that needed a lengthy umpire's review.

The Australians earlier dismissed the Black Caps for 317 with Williamson the last man out, caught behind, giving Mitchell Starc his fourth wicket of the match.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 556-4 declared
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 317 all out in 82.2 overs (Latham 47, Williamson 140, Watling 32; Starc 4-57, Johnson 3-105)
AUSTRALIA: Second innings 264 for 4 (Burns 129, Warner 116; Boult 1-61, Craig 3-78)

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