

What to WATCH

STARSPORTS 1
English Premiership
Bournemouth v Man City
Live from 8:00pm

STARSPORTS 2
English Premiership

Aston Villa v Chelsea
Live from 5:45pm
Arsenal v Watford
Live from 8:00pm
Liverpool v Tottenham
Live from 10:30pm

STAR SPORTS 4
Bundesliga
Dortmund v Bremen
Live from 10:30pm

SONY ESPN
La Liga
Atl. Madrid v Real Betis
Live from 8:00pm
Las Palmas v Valencia
Live from 10:15pm

Barcelona v Real Madrid
Live from 12:30am (Sunday)
SONY SIX
Serie A
Capri v Sassuolo
Live from 10:00pm

DAY'S EVENT

KFC Independence Cup Venue: BNS



18	SIDDIKUR	14
18	SUJJAN	14
18	UDAYAN	12
18	DEEPIINDER	10
18	SAJIB	9
18	DULAL	9
18	DHARMA	8
18	ZAMAL	8

Siddikur Rahman eyes the target as his Indian competitor Sujjan Singh walks by during the final hole's play of the third round of BTI Open at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. (INSET) The leaderboard shows the two golfers on top at 14-under-par (202).

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Siddikur, Sujjan take lead into final day

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman and India's Sujjan Singh shared joint lead at the end of the third round of BTI Open, raising prospects of a mouth-watering finish in today's fourth and final round.

Siddikur, a two-time Asian Tour winner, and Sujjan, a one-time Asian Development Tour winner, shared a two-stroke lead over the chasing pack, which features a number of prominent golfers from both Bangladesh and India.

The 31-year-old Siddikur, who had been going through a lean patch of form, showed signs of his old self as he produced a bogey-free (66) in the third round at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday afternoon, after having wrapped up the second at two-under-par (70). The ace golfer fired a total of nine birdies over 24 holes on the third day and was looking forward to grabbing the fifth PGTI title of his career in front of his home crowd.

"I've not had a great first few months in 2016. I'll look to turn it around here with a good final round," Siddikur said at the end of day's play. "It'll be highly satisfying to win in

front of my home crowd once again. I have the advantage of local knowledge here but Sujjan [Singh] and Udayan [Mane] are also in good form and therefore would provide tough competition on the final day."

Sujjan, too, came out firing on all cylinders in the third round as he knocked down five birdies on the first 10 holes. He suffered a minor blip on the 13th where he dropped his only shot of the day. The 36-year-old, however, rallied with three consecutive birdies from the 15th through the 17th to end the round with a flourish.

"I didn't play too well at the Indian Open and as a result made a few changes in my swing. I feel those changes are now shaping up well and producing the desired results. I'll have to be at the top of my game to outscore Siddikur in the final round," said the Chandigarh lad.

Udayan Mane and Deepinder Singh Kullar (10-under-206) occupied the third and fourth places respectively while Bangladesh's Sajib Ali and Dulal Hossain, the overnight leaders, lay a further stroke behind at nine-under-par (207).

Earlier 57 players completed their second rounds in the morning session before the cut was declared at three-over-par (147), with 56 professionals and one amateur making it through.

Team BJMC start with a win

SPORTS REPORTER

Team BJMC got off to a winning start in the KFC Independence Cup with a single-goal victory over Rahmatganj MFS in the opening match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian striker Eleta Kingsley separated the sides in the 39th minute of season's first match which took place seven months since the completion of the professional football league.

And there was clear lack of fitness among the players which led to a sluggish affair where the ball was mostly confined in midfield.

However, BJMC enjoyed the upper hand in the first half but Rahmatganj goalkeeper Al Amin made two fine saves from early. Al Amin, though, was unable to stop Kingsley's free-kick, which took a deflection off the wall and found the back of the net.

Rahmatganj stepped up the attack in the second half but Team BJMC defence held firm. They should have doubled the lead in the 69th minute, but Kingsley failed to

Cruyff memory casts shadow over Clasico

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona will honour legendary former player and coach Johan Cruyff as they look to inflict more misery upon eternal rivals Real Madrid in the Clasico on Saturday.

The most watched game in world football is Barca's first since Cruyff passed away at the age of 68 after a short battle with cancer last week.

A pre-match display involving over 90,000 fans will read "thank you Johan" with the same message carried on the Barca players' shirts.

"In what is a special match, it is without doubt extra motivation for us to try and win the game," said Barca captain Andres Iniesta.

Indeed, the emotion surrounding

the occasion supersedes its importance in the title race in La Liga with Barca 10 points clear of third-placed Madrid with just eight games remaining.

A 4-0 thrashing of Real when the sides last met in November put Barca well on course to retain the title.

However, with Madrid now under new management since Zinedine Zidane replaced Rafael Benitez in January and with the front three of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema fit and in scoring form, Iniesta expects a much tougher task on Saturday.

"These games are different, it doesn't matter how the teams are playing before because we all like to beat your biggest rivals," added the Spanish international.

"We expect a difficult, close game which will be decided by small details. We have all the respect in the world for the team we will face because they

deserve it."

Both coaches should be able to name their strongest starting line-ups with Barca only missing Jeremy Mathieu and Sandro Ramirez, while Madrid have a clean bill of health.

MESSI TARGETS 500TH GOAL

However, tiredness could play an important factor with two of Barca's deadly front three, Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez, only having arrived back in the Catalan capital on Thursday after playing World Cup qualifiers for Argentina and Uruguay respectively in the past week.

Five-time World Player of the Year Messi could also register his 500th career goal having taken his tally to 499 with his 50th goal for Argentina in a 2-0 win over Bolivia on Tuesday.

"It would be nice to score my 500th goal against Real Madrid in the Clasico, but it would be even nicer to win the game," said Messi.

BD Chess team keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh chess team continued their winning run in the Asian Nations Chess Cup with a 3.5-0.5 win over Kyrgyzstan in the fourth round in Abu Dhabi on Thursday. With six points from four rounds, Bangladesh were in joint third position along with Iran, Mongolia and Iraq.

IM Minhaz Uddin Sagar, GM Abdullah Al Rakib and GM Enamul Hossain Razib beat IM Tologontegin Semetey, Taalaibekov Tagir and Kenenbaev Aidar respectively while GM Niaz Murshed drew against IM Abdyjapar Aysl in their boards.

Bangladesh were scheduled to play against Iran last night.

Sk Jamal to play

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club have been included in the KFC Independence Cup after the three-time professional league champions backtracked from their demand of ownership of eight footballers following directives of the court.

Sheikh Jamal have been placed in Group A alongside Chittagong Abahani, Mohammedan SC, Brothers Union, Muktijoddha Sangsad and Uttar Baridhara Club.

The decision was made at an emergency meeting of the professional football league committee after the Dhanmondi-based outfit asked the game's governing body to include them in the season's curtain-raising tournament as well as handed their last season's eight players, who this time signed for three different clubs. Sheikh Jamal were initially left out of the draw.

"Sheikh Jamal backtracked from their earlier demand and agreed to play without the eight footballers as the issue is under the jurisdiction of court," said BFF's senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy after the meeting.

"We have always been in favour of playing and we will be taking part in the tournament without those eight players until the matter is resolved. We are ready to accept the verdict of the court," said Sheikh Jamal's football committee chairman Ashraful Uddin Ahmed Chhunnu.

Sheikh Jamal will play their first match after Sunday's hearing of the full bench at the appellate division.

Gazipur City FA in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazipur City Football Academy moved into the final of Dhaka City Corporation (South & North) Pioneer Football League with a thrilling 3-2 win over Uttara Recreation Club in the second semifinal at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Tariqul Islam provided a 12th-minute lead to Uttara RC before Sujan equalised in the 39th minute. Sujan then gave Gazipur the lead in the 58th minute only to see Joylevelling the margin in the 66th minute. Mim struck the winning goal in the 118th minute for Gazipur, who will play the final against Arambagh FA.

Villa exclude Agbonlahor

AFP, London

Gabriel Agbonlahor has been omitted from Aston Villa's squad for Saturday's match at home to Chelsea as the Premier League's basement club look into the forward's conduct while on holiday.

The 29-year-old, a product of the Birmingham club's academy, has only made 15 Premier League appearances so far this season and his future at Villa Park now looks decidedly shaky.

On Friday, a Villa tweet announced that Agbonlahor, pictured apparently smoking a shisha pipe during a recent holiday in Dubai, would not be involved in the Chelsea match while an internal investigation into his behaviour is carried out.

Caretaker manager Eric Black, in charge after Frenchman Remi Garde left on Tuesday, said: "There's an internal investigation. I spoke to (board member) David Bernstein at length (on Thursday) and the club have taken a decision. I have taken a decision on the footballing side to remove him from the squad, purely because I don't want anything to distract the players."

"I'll speak to him again on Monday and then we'll take it from there. He's back in and reporting for training."

"I'm not going to go into the details because the investigation is on going. I want us to get back to football and football alone."

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