

Siddikur steady in Thailand

Sports Reporter

Siddikur Rahman played a three-under-par (68) in the second round of the Queen's Cup in Thailand yesterday to lift himself to joint ninth position. The 32-year-old, who had started the day in 12th position having carded a 68 in the opening round as well, was most consistent than anyone else in the field. While he did not set himself on a birdie spree like the first round, three birdies against no bogeys made sure he remained in contention for a top finish in the 500,000 dollar event at the Santiburi Samui Country Club.

Siddikur was still three shots off the pace, with Thailand's veteran star Thaworn Wiratchant snatching the halfway lead with an eight-under-par (63).

Turin stampede victim dies

Afp, Rome

A woman left in a coma after a crowd stampeded in Turin during a soccer match between the Champion League final on June 3 died overnight, the hospital where she was being treated said Friday.

The patient, identified as Erika, a 38-year-old local woman who had come to watch the match with her boyfriend, was among more than 1,500 people injured in the panic.

There were around 300,000 people in San Carlo square at the time, who were gathered to watch their favorite footballers Juventus play Real Madrid in the Welsh city of Cardiff.

The stampede was apparently triggered by fireworks which were detonated as the match drew to a close.

Two other people were seriously injured, including a seven-year-old boy, who was also left in a coma but was now recovering.

Some of the injuries occurred after a railing around the entrance to an underground car park beneath the square gave way.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Harrison contemplated suicide!

Former leading England pace bowler Steve Harrison has revealed his battle with depression got so bad at the peak of his career he contemplated suicide.

Rickie Fowler sets the pace at US Open

Rickie Fowler produced a record-equalling low-scoring round to take a one-shot lead at the US Open as the big-hitters failed to fire.

Erasmus, Kettelleigh to umpire Ind-Pak

South Africa's Marais Erasmus and England's Richard Kettelleigh will be on-field umpires for the Champions Trophy final between arch-rivals India and Pakistan, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced.



Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa dives for the ball during a training session in Kazan yesterday ahead of their Confederation Cup encounter against Portugal on Sunday.



GRIEZMANN WEDS IN SECRET

France striker Antoine Griezmann tied the knot with his long-term partner Erika Choperena in a secret ceremony at a beauty spot in Toledo, Spanish media revealed on Friday. The 26-year-old, who last week extended his Atletico Madrid contract until 2022, met Choperena in San Sebastian when she was studying and he played at Real Sociedad. The pair, who have a one-year-old daughter, were married Thursday afternoon at the Palacio de Galiana, a celebrated 11th-century edifice in the old Spanish capital. Several of Griezmann's Atletico teammates attended the ceremony including Juanfran, Koke and fellow Frenchman Kevin Gameiro. In a short video on Griezmann's Instagram account the player is also seen popping a champagne cork at a celebration around a pool. "The celebration of this wedding took the media by surprise," said Spanish daily El Mundo.

—Afp

Donnarumma makes Milan angry

Afp, Rome

AC Milan were left fuming Thursday when their highly-rated 18-year-old goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma said he would not sign an extended contract with the Italian giants.

Considered the heir to Italy and Juventus' goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, Donnarumma is a target for a number of top clubs and making a move will be of the club's future with an extended contract had been Milan's number one priority.

"Mino Raiola (the player's agent) has just told me there will be no extension with Donnarumma and that the decision is definitive," the club's general manager Marco Fassone told reporters after a 40-minute meeting with Raiola.

"We are bitterly disappointed about the decision, but we move on," Milan's move on.

Italian media have speculated the keeper will be sold this summer with Raiola citing interest from Real Madrid and Paris Saint Germain.

PHOTO: Afp

Russia, NZ kick it off tonight

Afp, Moscow



Hosts Russia kick off the Confederations Cup against New Zealand in Saint Petersburg on Saturday.

targeting victory in their opening match to set the tone for a successful tournament.

"We've worked hard and I believe now we are prepared for the opening game," Zenit midfielder Iгор Smolnikov told Russian TV.

"But we will be able to check whether we've done everything right only once we play in official matches."

"We're all feeling brave and will take things on full of optimism. Hopefully, the arena in Saint Petersburg will be a lucky venue for our team."

Russian President Vladimir Putin will attend the opening along with FIFA boss Gianni Infantino at Saint Petersburg's purpose-built World Cup 68,000-seater stadium.

It will be the first meeting between Russia and New Zealand, the champions of Oceania, in the post-Soviet era. The USSR beat New Zealand 3-0 at the

1982 World Cup in Spain.

Organisers have laid fresh turf at the Krestovsky Stadium to allay fears over the condition of the pitch that prompted Zenit to shift their final league match to their former ground.

Russia manager Stanislav Cherchesov takes charge of his first competitive match with the national team, having stepped in to the role after the country's disastrous Euro 2016 campaign.

The former Russian international goalkeeper has set his squad the ambitious task of winning the Confed Cup, a dress rehearsal for next year's World Cup.

But Russia have achieved mixed results since his appointment with three wins, three draws and three defeats.

Russia salvaged an impressive 3-3 draw with Belgium, but that followed a 2-0 home defeat to Ivory Coast – Russia's first loss to an African team – and a 2-1 defeat to Qatar.

However results in recent friendlies – a 3-0 win in Hungary and 1-1 draw with Copa America holders Chile –

have given the country's football fans some hope.

New Zealand are appearing at the Confed Cup for the fourth time, although the All Whites are still hunting for a first victory in the eight-team competition.

Anthony Hudson's side are through to the final round of regional World Cup qualifying and will play Solomon Islands in a two-legged play-off, but New Zealand suffered 10 defeats to Northern Ireland and Belarus in recent friendlies.

Hudson though insists his players are raring to go in Russia.

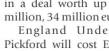
"We're 100 percent ready. We have a very good team, we have some good players in the team, and the objective for us is to do something significant," he told reporters on Friday.

"We're very optimistic coming into this tournament."

"There is no point in being here if we're not trying to win. The first game for us is Russia and we want to win that game. And we will go into the next game with the same mindset. We know they are strong but we have no fear of them."

Double swoop for Everton

Afp, London



Everton made Jordan Pickford Britain's most expensive goalkeeper on Thursday as they signed the Sunderland star in a deal worth up to £30 million (\$38 million, 34 million euros).

England Under-21 international Pickford will cost Everton an initial £25 million, surpassing the £10 million Southampton paid to sign his international colleague Fraser Forster in 2014. The 21-year-old is the third most expensive goalkeeper in the world behind Manchester City's recent 40 million euros signing of Benfica goalkeeper Ederson and Gianluigi Buffon's £3 million euros switch from Parma to Juventus in 2001.

Everton weren't finished spending yet and they completed a busy 24 hours by landing Ajax midfielder Davy Klaassen for £23.5 million.

The 24-year-old Netherlands international played in Ajax's Europa League final defeat to Manchester United last season.

He made 163 appearances for the Dutch club, scoring 49 goals and winning three Eredivisie titles.

"It is difficult to leave Ajax but I think this

is a good step for me now," Klaassen said.

Pickford, who has signed a five-year contract with Everton, was managed Ronald Koeman's top target to take over from Maarten Stekelenburg and Joel Robles, who both endured inconsistent spells at Goodison Park last season.

"Last season was my first in the Premier League so to get this opportunity with Everton now, to be able to go forward with my career and show everyone what I can do with Everton is unbelievable," Pickford told Everton's website.

"It's a great club, a massive club and I think it's a great opportunity and the right time for me to come to Everton."

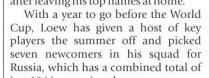
"This is an exciting time for the club and I think the future is looking very bright."

Klaassen was one of the few bright spots as Sunderland were relegated from the Premier League last season and earned a nomination for the PFA Young Player of the Year award.

Pickford was one of the add-ons that the terms of each of the add-ons be paid. Pickford would become Everton's record signing, eclipsing the £28 million they paid Chelsea for Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku in 2014.

Loew to blood rising stars

Afp, Sochi



World champions Germany head to the Confederations Cup with coach Joachim Loew looking to nurture his next generation of stars after leaving his top names at home.

With a year to go before the World Cup, Loew has given a host of key players the summer off and picked seven newcomers in his squad for Russia, which has a combined total of just 104 international appearances.

The likes of Thomas Muller, Miroslav Klose, Mario Gomez and Jerome Boateng, Germany face Australia in Sochi on Monday; with Chile and Cameroon to follow in Group B.

The tournament kicks off on Saturday when hosts Russia host New Zealand on June 17 with Mexico and Portugal also in Group A.

Rather than targeting a place in the St Petersburg final on July 2, Loew is thinking 12 months ahead.

"The 2018 World Cup, and winning the title again, that is the vision," said the 57-year-old, who has been Germany's head coach since 2006 and steered his country to the 2014 World Cup title.

The France-based coach has split his squad since taking charge following Japan's poor result coming after Japan finished last in the 2015 Asian Cup.

Halilhodzic has split opinion since taking charge following Japan's poor result coming after Japan finished last in the 2015 Asian Cup.

"We are relieved it wasn't serious and no one sustained injuries. We have



and class, but they need competition for their places."

Loew has been a sharp critic of the Confederations Cup – the quadrennial tournament involving the six winners of Fifa's confederation championships. Russia, the hosts of next year's World Cup, and reigning world champions Germany.

He has justified leaving his leading team behind by arguing the cup has little place in an already congested fixture schedule.

"Some players are getting a rest from me, because I think three tournaments in three years is borderline," said Loew, referring to Euro 2016, the 2018 World Cup and the 2019 Confederations Cup.

"Just as we did before Brazil and South Africa, we'll brief the squad, but we must not forget we are guests in Russia and football should not be expected to overcome problems and grievances."

"But we certainly won't close our eyes."

Confederations Cup and next year's World Cup.

"I probably wouldn't be sad if the Confederations Cup didn't take place in 2021."

"It's a dangerous game – we mustn't pull too hard on the rope," he warned.

"One has the impression that things are already bloated and the fixture list looks anything but happy."

With Mueller or Gomez around, RB Leipzig's Timo Werner, the Bundesliga's top-scoring German forward last season with 21 goals, and Hoffenheim's striker Sandro Wagner will have their chance to shine.

Likewise, with Mesut Ozil or Toni Kroos, the pressure to run Germany's attack falls on Julian Draxler.

The attacking midfielder has had a good six months with Paris Saint-Germain, but this will be a big test for the 23-year-old.

Without Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng, Arsenal's Shkodran Mustafi and Bayern Munich-bound Niklas Sule could forge a few partnerships at centre-back.

Loew is aware of the challenges of playing in Russia, given the political situation.

"I think it's important to look behind the scenes and to form an opinion," he said.

"Just as we did before Brazil and South Africa, we'll brief the squad, but we must not forget we are guests in Russia and football should not be expected to overcome problems and grievances."