

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

CHANNEL 9

Federation Cup

Ctg Abahani v Rahamatganj

Live from 5:00pm

SONY SIX

Sri Lanka v England

Solitary T20I

Live from 7:30pm

STAR SPORTS 1

India v West Indies

Third ODI (D/N)

Live from 2:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

English Premier League

Liverpool v Cardiff City

Live from 8:00pm

Leicester v West Ham

Live from 10:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Bundesliga

Mainz v Bayern Munich

Live from 7:30pm

TEN 1

La Liga

Athletic Bilbao v Valencia

Live from 8:15pm

Celta Vigo v Eibar

Live from 10:30pm

TEN 2

Serie A

Empoli v Juventus

Live from 10:00pm

Torino v Fiorentina

Live from 12:30am (Sunday)

Federation Cup

Ctg Abahani v Rahamatganj MFS

Time: 5:00pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



Siddikur Rahman seems to have revived his flagging fortunes with consecutive days of excellent returns at his favourite course of Delhi Golf Club as he took a share of the top spot at the Panasonic Open India yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Siddikur on top

SPORTS REPORTER



Siddikur Rahman continued his superb form in the Panasonic Open India, taking the top spot at the end of the second round but the other three Bangladeshi golfers failed to make the cut yesterday.

Siddikur, a two-time Asian Tour winner whose last title on the tour came at the Delhi Golf Club five years ago, enjoyed a second consecutive day of good form, firing eight birdies against two bogeys at his favourite golf course. The 33-year-old, who had a bogey-free opening round of five-under, aggregated 11-under-par (133) to share the lead with Thai youngster Suradit Yongcharoenchai.

The premier Bangladeshi golfer started the round with back-to-back birdies and ended in the same fashion, with the only blemishes of the day occurring on the 12th and 13th holes.

Placed 97th on the Order of Merit, Siddikur will have the chase at the back of his mind when he bids for a third victory on the region's premier Tour and second at this

golf course.

The 33-year-old is hopeful of turning his season around with a strong showing on his favourite hunting ground, where he holds an impeccable track record. He needs to finish inside the top-60 on the final merit rankings to keep his card for 2019.

"I had another excellent day with eight birdies and two bogeys. Overall, it was still a wonderful round. I am happy because I played exactly the way I wanted to play," Siddikur told Asiantour.com after the end of the day's play.

"I am really enjoying the course so far. I am very comfortable with my driver and three-wood. Nothing really different compared to yesterday. I stuck to my game plan and kept the same strategy," Siddikur added.

However, the three other Bangladeshi golfers -- Shakhawat Hossain, Zamal Hossain Mollah and Dulal Hossain failed to make the cut after a horrendous second round. Zamal missed out with four-over, Sohel failed with six-over while Dulal missed the cut with 10-over on aggregate.

Girls out of reckoning

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's dream of qualifying for the second round of the AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualifiers was shattered after they suffered a 2-0 defeat against Chinese Taipei in their Group D encounter at Hisor Central Stadium in Dushanbe, Tajikistan yesterday.

Two defeats in two matches means Bangladesh have no chance of finishing as the group runners-up as South Korea and Chinese Taipei are now in the top two positions in the four-team group with six points each. Bangladesh and hosts Tajikistan are on the bottom with two defeats.

Having suffered a 7-0 defeat against two-time champions South Korea, the girls in red and green had no alternative but to beat Chinese Taipei, but they could not cope up with the opposition, who were according to team sources, better than they were expected to be.

Chinese Taipei scored either side of the break to ensure the victory after mauling Tajikistan 7-0 in the previous match.

The two defeats may, however, prove to be an eye-opener for the game's local governing body regarding the fact the girls, who have been lighting things up at under-16 level in both South Asia and AFC zones, need more maturity by playing in a domestic league if they want to move further in Asia.

Competition on the cards

Football season begins today through Federation Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



After an eight-and-a-half month gap, country's football season gets underway today through the Walton Federation Cup with a competitive tournament on the cards.

Last season's runners-up Chittagong Abahani will take on Rahmatganj MFS in the opening match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, with Channel 9 telecasting live from the venue at 5:00pm.

Country's top booters have been engaged with the national team over the last four months where they played three successive tournaments -- Asian Games, SAFF Championship and Bangabandhu Gold Cup. Their improved performance in all three tournaments dragged the football lovers to the stadium, especially in the last two tournaments played at home.

It is not sure whether the spectators will turn up at country's premier venue to watch the domestic competition but the national footballers are ready to perform

for their respective clubs along with foreign players to enthrall the spectators.

Allowing four foreign players in each side is expected to make the season's curtain-raising tournament more competitive compared to the last season where only two foreigners were allowed for each side.

The dominance of African footballers in domestic competition was a constant feature in the past decade, but this time clubs like newcomers Bashundhara Kings, Abahani, Sheikh Russel KC, Chittagong Abahani, Saif SC and Sheikh Jamal DC have flown in some quality players from beyond Africa while some quality players have also been signed under the Asian quota.

"The standard of the tournament will increase this time around because of the inclusion of four foreign players, who are expected to be skilful compared to last season's players," Sheikh Russel coach Saiful Bari Titu said. "Obviously those clubs who formed strong squads on paper with a particular purpose will stay in the race but other teams will also have a shot on title due to foreign players."

Country's top coach Maruful Haque

also believes the standard of the domestic competitions will be high this time due to the presence of quality foreign players.

"The performance of the players will gradually be better due to the presence of four foreign players, who will, I think, draw attention of the spectators through their quality performance," said Arambagh KS coach Maruful Haque, who aims to take last year's Independence Cup champions to the semifinals.

As the champions of Federation Cup will get the ticket for the AFC Cup, the tournament is expected to be more competitive among the clubs who are eligible to play the continental event. In that case, holders Abahani, newcomers Bashundhara Kings, Sheikh Russel KC and Saif SC are expected to take it more seriously than just a preparatory tournament for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier Football League.

The local booters will also hope to draw the attention of national coach Jamie Day by demonstrating good performance as the coach will keep his eyes on the performances of the local players with the aim of picking new players for FIFA friendly matches in November.



Chelsea midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek (L) scores the opening goal against BATE Borisov during their Europa League encounter at Stamford Bridge on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



IQBAL HOSSAIN BHUIYAN

Death of Feni SC footballer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Top-level footballer Iqbal Hossain Bhuiyan passed away at the age of 30 in his hometown in Feni yesterday. The Feni Soccer footballer, who previously played for Mohammedan Sporting Club and Muktioddha Sangsad, fell ill at his home on Thursday evening. He was rushed to the hospital where doctors declared him dead.

According to sources, the footballer trained at the Shaheed Salam Stadium in the afternoon with his teammates of Feni Soccer Club which played in the Championship League last year. The striker then went home in Chanpur village of Chhagalnaiya upazila where he fell ill and hit his head on the staircase. Officer-in-charge of Chhagalnaiya police station MM Morshed informed that there was injury marks on the back of his head.

The post-mortem of the late footballer was done yesterday and later his body was handed over to his family. The body was later laid to rest at the family graveyard yesterday afternoon.

SHORT CORNER

FIFA opposed to La Liga plans for game in USA

FIFA are opposed to La Liga's plans to stage the match between Barcelona and Girona later this season in the United States, Gianni Infantino confirmed on Friday.

"Following a request of guidance from the Spanish FA, US Soccer and CONCACAF...the council emphasised the sporting principle that official league matches must be played within the territory of the respective member association," said the president of world football's governing body at a press conference.

"The council has very clear views on that," added Infantino, who was speaking at the end of a FIFA council meeting in the Rwandan capital Kigali. --AFP

Tearful Osaka retires from WTA Finals
Japanese sensation Naomi Osaka's WTA Finals debut ended in tears on Friday as she was forced to retire against Kiki Bertens, handing the Dutchwoman a surprise spot in the semi-finals.

Bertens won the first set 6-3 in 47 minutes at the Singapore Indoor Stadium before US Open champion Osaka, who wiped away tears, forfeited the match.

It was a bitterly disappointing end for the 21-year-old, who came into Singapore as the form player but lost three-set matches to Sloane Stephens and Angelique Kerber.

But it was enough for Bertens to seal a final four spot in her debut at the season finale, having defeated top seed Kerber earlier in the round-robin phase.

--AFP

UEFA hands Romania stadium ban

Romania will play their next home match behind closed doors as a punishment for "racist behaviour" by their supporters during a recent UEFA Nations League game against Serbia, European football's governing body said on Friday.

The incidents happened during the 0-0 draw with Serbia in Bucharest on October 14.

The game to be staged behind closed doors will be the Nations League fixture against Lithuania in Ploiesti on November 17.

The Romanian Football Federation were also given a fine of 50,000 euros (\$56,760), as well as a further fine of 23,000 euros for other incidents. --AFP

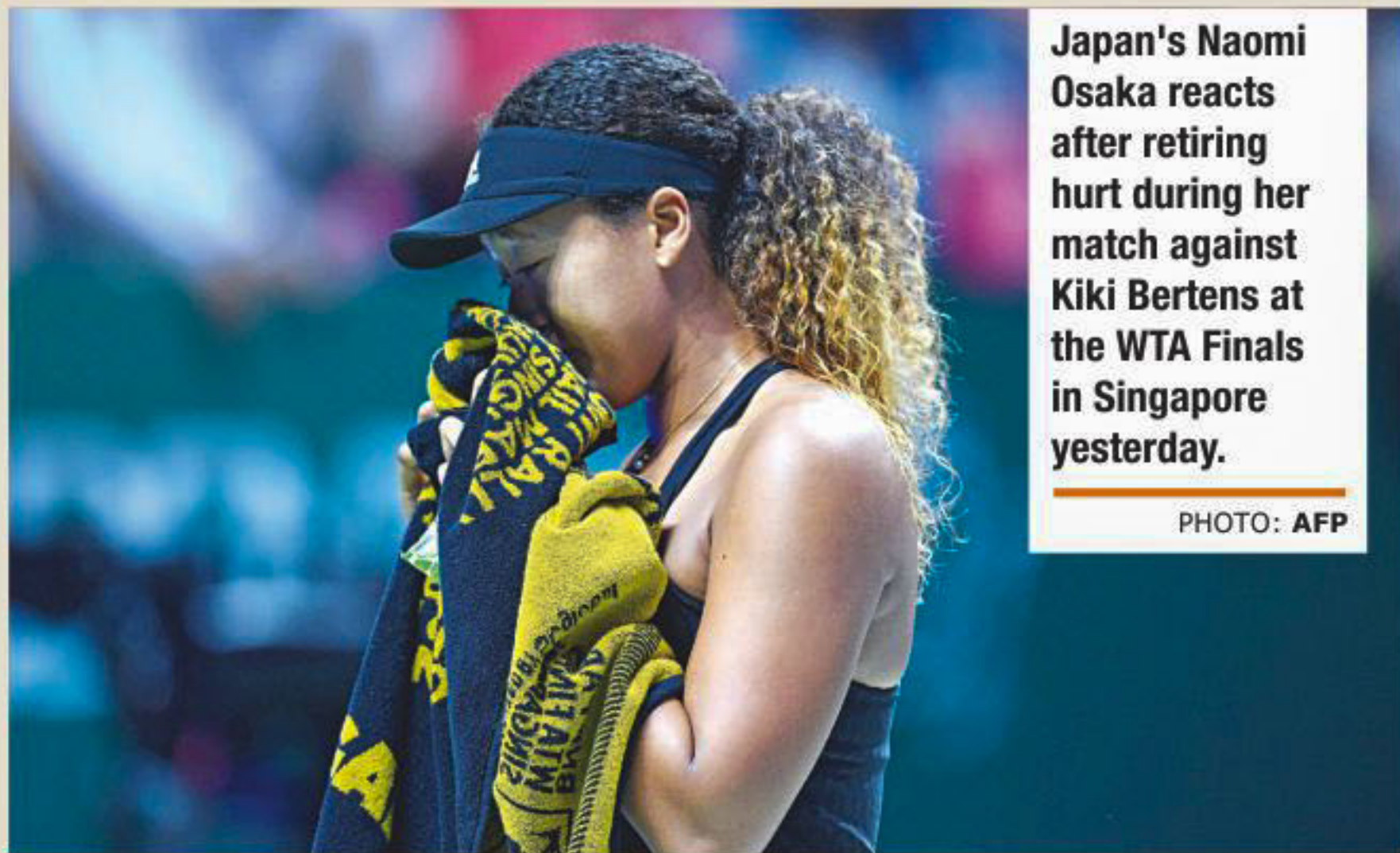
First ever Dwarf Copa America tackles prejudice

The first Dwarf Copa America has started in Buenos Aires with the goal of using football to tackle social prejudices.

Teams from Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Canada, Paraguay, Peru, and Bolivia are taking part in the continental tournament with Morocco joining the line-up by special invitation. It began Thursday and runs through Sunday.

"We belong to the most discriminated against group in the world. We have managed to change that, to show what we are capable of -- to play football, to work and to study," said Facundo Rojas, captain of Argentina.

Matches are played on indoor pitches with teams of seven-a-side. Goal posts are smaller: 1.70m high and 2.0m wide, against 2.44m and 7.32m for traditional full-size goals. --AFP



Japan's Naomi Osaka reacts after retiring hurt during her match against Kiki Bertens at the WTA Finals in Singapore yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

U-15 SAFF C'SHIP Boys take on Maldives today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look to seal a semifinal berth in the SAFF U-15 Championship when they take on Maldives in their first Group A match at the ANFA Complex in Kathmandu today. The match will kick off at 2:45pm (BST). Bhutan will take on Pakistan in the second match of Group B.

Bangladesh, the champions of the 2015 edition, will be through to the semifinals as Nepal beat Maldives 4-0 in the first game of the three-team group.

The first match of Group B ended in a 2-1 win for Pakistan over defending champions India.

The Bangladesh team, a collection of players from an open trial, went to Nepal with only two months of training and their initial target is to reach the semifinals.

The boys in red and green made the semifinals in all four previous editions. According to team sources in Kathmandu, the Bangladesh team, which flew to Kathmandu on Tuesday, is in good spirits and had its final practice session yesterday afternoon. They later had a video analysis session in the evening.

The tournament began on October 25. The final will take place on November 3.

Loftus-Cheek fires treble

AFP, Paris



Ruben Loftus-Cheek capitalised on a rare start for Chelsea by scoring a hattrick in Thursday's 3-1 Europa League victory over BATE of Belarus, while Arsenal extended their winning run to 11 games away to Sporting Lisbon.

Loftus-Cheek, part of England's World Cup squad in Russia, started for just the second time this season under Maurizio Sarri and struck twice inside the opening eight minutes as Chelsea dominated at Stamford Bridge.

The 22-year-old midfielder drilled in a low Davide Zappacosta cross as the Blues led after two minutes, and Loftus-Cheek doubled his tally when he hooked in from a corner.

He completed his hat-trick with a side-footed effort from the edge of the area on 54 minutes, although BATE left with a consolation goal after an unmarked Aleksei Rios turned in from a late free-kick.

"It feels really good," Loftus Cheek told BT Sport after he became the first Chelsea player to score a hat-trick in Europe since Didier Drogba 12 years ago.

"It's up there, it's my first hat-trick in a while, even since playing for the youth team. It feels nice.

"Any player will tell you it's nice to score a hat-trick and it feels good, I'll get the ball signed and put in a glass box. Hopefully there are many more to come."

Three wins from three in Group L have Chelsea poised to reach the last 32 of the competition, with Unai Emery's Arsenal set to join them following a 1-0 victory in Portugal.

Danny Welbeck pounced on a defensive lapse by former Liverpool defender Sebastian Coates on 78 minutes to keep Arsenal on maximum points in Group E and prolong the club's best run since 2007.

AC MILAN, MARSEILLE LOSE

Seven-time European champions AC Milan crashed to a 2-1 home defeat by Real Betis as Gennaro Gattuso's team dropped their first points in Group F.

Goals from Antonio Sanabria and Giovanni Lo Celso, on loan from Paris Saint-Germain, earned group leaders Betis a memorable win at the San Siro.

Patrick Cutrone grabbed a consolation for Milan who finished the game with 10 men after Samuel Castillejo saw red for the hosts in injury time.

Olympiakos beat Dudelange of Luxembourg 2-0 in the group's other fixture, while there was more misery for Brendan Rodgers and Scottish champions Celtic in Germany. Brazilian striker Matheus Cunha and Portugal winger Bruma, who scored against Scotland in a friendly this month, were both on target in the first half as RB Leipzig won 2-0.

Last season's runners-up Marseille are in danger of an early exit after losing 3-1 at home to Lazio, while five-time champions Sevilla thrashed Turkish club Akhisar 6-0.

Time-wasting targeted by lawmakers

AFP, London

Time-wasting is to be tackled by football's lawmaking body the International Football Association Board (IFAB), British daily The Times reported on Friday.

Measures such as forbidding substitutions after 90 minutes -- which is seen as a habitual tactic to wind down the clock -- could be looked at, the board member who spoke with The Times said.

Also players may be ordered to take the shortest route off the pitch when they are substituted rather than trudge across the pitch towards the dug outs shaking hands with teammates which is often the case -- this is already being tested in junior tournaments.

According to The Times substitutions after 90 minutes have happened in 24.3 per cent of Premier League matches since the start of last season, up 3 per cent since 2012.

The average playing time for a Premier League match is 55 minutes 9 seconds this season but varies markedly.

The nadir in terms of playing time has been the clash between Cardiff City and Burnley on September 30 with fans witnessing 42 minutes 2 seconds of action although it did produce three goals -- Burnley winning 2-1.

"Looking at ways to cut down on time-wasting, speed up the game and increase playing time is one of our priorities," the member of the IFAB board told the paper.