

Sports Mail



Dipika Pallikal loses in final of Toronto squash

Chawrasia stays in FRONT

A BIRDIE on the closing hole by defending champion Siddikur Rahman of Bangladesh might have put overnight leader S.S.P. Chawrasia under some pressure, but the Indian succeeded in holding his lead after the third round of the Hero Indian Open golf in New Delhi on Saturday.

Chawrasia, who won the Asian Tour's Panasonic Open at the Delhi Golf Club in November, strengthened his chances of a second title in four months at the same course, after he returned a two-under 68 card on Saturday. The round took him to 12-under 201, two strokes in front of Siddikur, who shot a 70 at the par-71 course.

Australian Marcus Frazer, playing on medical exemption, also raised his title hopes after a bogey-free 67 to be sole third, five strokes adrift of the leader. The best round of the day, however, was shot by 2015 Asian Tour Q-School winner Daniel Chopra, who sank four birdies and an eagle for a six-under 65 and jumped to fourth position to join Thai Prayad Marksang, who carded a 69.

Anirban Lahiri, the best-ranked golfer in the field, knocked in five birdies but two bogeys and a double bogey didn't do him any good and, after a 70 in the third round, he is tied sixth with Paul Peterson of the United States, seven strokes behind Chawrasia.

Veterans Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa had rounds of 68 and 69 to jump to tied 21st place

By **Shaghil Bilali** in New Delhi

in company of cigar-chomping Spaniard great Miguel Angel Jimenez (71). Arjun Atwal's 75 pushed him to 50th place with Shiv Kapur (73) and Amardip Singh Malik (71).

Chawrasia started the day one stroke ahead of Siddikur and made his intentions clear from the word go as he picked up a birdie on the opening hole for the third day in a row. It was followed by another birdie on the par-4 second hole, where he converted a 12-footer. Chawrasia, known for his fabulous short game, was expected to continue his good putting, but wasn't able to put finishing touches on his birdie putts, as a result of which he missed birdies on the third, fifth and eighth holes.

The Kolkata pro, however, parred 10 consecutive holes before he upped the ante on 13th with a birdie. He missed birdies from close range on 14th, 15th and 16th, but what rankled him was his first bogey of the tournament on 17th.

Standing on the par-3 17th tee, Chawrasia was four strokes ahead of Siddikur, but the Indian sliced his tee shot, which landed near the right bush. From a difficult position, he played his second shot, which went past pin by 20 feet. He missed his par putt to drop the shot. Chawrasia received more blows when Siddikur saved a good par on the same hole and sank an eight-footer for a birdie on the closing hole.

"I putted well initially but I missed some close putts for birdies on many holes and that



S.S.P. Chawrasia shot a two-under 69 in Round 3 of the Hero Indian Open golf in New Delhi on Saturday.

Holds a two-stroke lead over Siddikur Rahman after Rd 3 at the Indian Open. Daniel Chopra is fourth while Anirban Lahiri is sixth

was the worst part of my game today," Chawrasia said.

"I knew that Siddikur was not far behind and his birdie on 18th brought him closer, but I am not under any pressure. I feel I should shoot at least five or six-under to win," said the man who won the European Tour's 2008 Indian Masters here.

The low point for Siddikur was a double bogey on 15th, which put him four strokes behind the Indian. "It was a good day. I had a nice rhythm and picked up a couple of shots until the double bogey. But I managed to recover well. Anything can happen in this game and I am looking forward tomorrow," said Siddikur.

DAY 4 IS GOING TO BE VERY EXCITING

by Shiv Kapur



GUEST COLUMN

IT WAS not the kind of a day you expect from yourself on a Saturday when everyone expects to make a move at a big golf tournament. Instead, I actually moved back from something like tied 25th to tied 50th in the Hero Indian Open, a tournament that means a world to me.

I have always been desperate to do well at this event and it just did not work for me today.

While nothing worked for me, S.S.P. Chawrasia and Siddikur, whose love for this golf course keeps growing by the hour, put on a terrific show. It was an exhibition that resembled a match-play and both matched each other shot for shot.

Since I finished fairly early I had a good look at them on the TV at the Hero marquee and I can tell you it had a lot of people on the edge of their seats.

Starting the day one shot ahead, S.S.P. doubled the lead, but Siddikur is right there and both know that two shots mean



nothing on this golf course. In fact if I remember right, S.S.P. moved four clear with Siddikur double bogeyed the 15th. But he came right back as S.S.P. dropped his first shot of the week on 17th and the defending champion sank his own birdie on the last to keep the gap to two.

The duo, who were first and second — Siddikur won and SSP was tied second — in 2013 are back for another clash at the Hero Indian Open. And yes, there is also Anirban Lahiri, who despite being seven behind S.S.P. is capable of turning in a magical round and add to the drama. Daniel Chopra's fine 65 on the third day was also a great round and at tied fourth, and six behind the leader, he can also queer the pitch if some ahead slips a bit.

For me, in the third round the birdies were hard to come by — just one through the entire day — and even making pars was an effort as I was all over the course. For the first three holes I was all over and then had my only birdie of the day on fourth. True, it was not a disaster in terms of scoring, but I was struggling out there. Almost to the extent I was relieved to come off the course.

Still I will do my best and play for my pride and it is my National Open. As a pro golfer, regardless of where I am placed, I always do my best when I tee for any round.

Lal and Thapar shine at BT golf



Dev Bhattacharya, business head, corporate strategy, Aditya Birla Group, tees off in Mumbai on Saturday.

By **Mail Today Bureau** in Mumbai

TOP executives of the corporate world on Saturday took a day off from their daily hectic schedule and took to golf to participate at the 19th edition of the Business Today-LLOYD Pro-Am of Champions 2015, which concluded at the Wellington Sports Club in Mumbai.

Dinesh Lal, director of the AMI India Logistics Pvt. Ltd., scored 34 points to win the championship in the (19-24) handicap category. Anuj Thapar, director of the Aspher Foods Pvt. Ltd., scored 42 points to win in (11-18) handicap category, while

Rahul Divan, partner in Rahul Gautam Divan and Associates, won the (0-10) handicap category with 34 points.

The team comprising Anuj Thapar, Madhav Nair, country head and CEO of the Mashreq Bank, Neville Mehta, managing trustee of P.N. Mehta Educational Trust, and Mayank Ruia, group director, residential, Phoenix Mills, emerged champions in the team competition by scoring 102 points.

The team of Sachin Khanna, director of i opt 4 more, Vijay Chauhan, chairman and managing director of the Parle Products Pvt. Ltd., S.V. Patkar, chief engineer, Ex Johnson and Johnson, and by Surjit Dugal, CEO-SSD and associates-business consultants, emerged runners-up with 95 points.

Nipun Singhal, director, LLOYD Electric and Engineering Ltd, gave away the prizes. The finale of the event will be held in New Delhi in March 2015

Lal wins the title in 19-24 handicap category while Thapar tops 11-18 category at the Business Today-Lloyd Pro-Am of Champions