



PRESS RELEASE

LAHIRI READY TO 'HOME' IN ON MAYBANK CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, February 7: Indian star Anirban Lahiri hopes the 'feel-good' factor will propel him to victory at the US\$3 million Maybank Championship which starts on Thursday.

The 2015 Asian Tour Order of Merit winner is amongst the stars gathered at the renowned Saujana Golf and Country Club for the US\$3 million showpiece sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour.

The 29-year-old Lahiri won a Maybank-title sponsored tournament in Malaysia two years ago en route to becoming the region's number one. He also holds four other top-10s in other Asian Tour tournaments in the country.

However, his path to an eighth Asian Tour victory could be blocked by reigning Masters Tournament winner Danny Willett, who is the highest ranked player in this week's elite field at 15th in the world, and another Major winner, Charl Schwartzel.

Like Lahiri, Willett, a five-time European Tour winner, also has a knack of producing some his best golf in Malaysia, with three top-10s here. As he is also the touring professional for Saujana, whose Palm course is nicknamed the 'Cobra', the Englishman will be eager to deliver a "home" victory at the Maybank Championship.

Following two wins last year, world number 26 Schwartzel, who won the Masters Tournament in 2011, will start as one of the contenders as he makes his first appearance at the Maybank Championship, which will also be his first tournament of the year.

Local hopes will be carried by Nicholas Fung, who emerged as the leading Malaysian on the final Asian Tour Order of Merit ranking last season when he finished an impressive 12th, thanks to four top-10s including a runner-up finish in Manila. With his straight-shooting game, Fung is keen to conclude the on-going Chinese New Year celebration with a maiden Asian Tour victory at the Maybank Championship this weekend.

Interesting facts of the day:

- Willett is the highest ranked player in this week's Maybank Championship at world number 15. He won the Masters Tournament in 2016, one of two wins last year and has five wins in his career.

- Willett finished tied 45th at the inaugural Maybank Championship at Royal Selangor last year. In other visits to Malaysia, he has finished tied fifth in 2014, tied third in 2012 and sixth in 2010.
- Willett was the world amateur number one in 2008. His father, Steve, a Church of England vicar, was described by Willett as being his best sports psychologist.
- Schwartzel will be making his first tournament appearance of 2017 and also making his debut at the Maybank Championship.
- His last two tournaments in 2016 saw him finish third and tied fourth at the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai and Alfred Dunhill Championship in South Africa.
- Schwartzel won his lone Major to date at the Masters Tournament in 2011, becoming the third South African to win at Augusta National after Gary Player and Trevor Immelman.
- Schwartzel won twice in 2016 at the Tshwane Open in South Africa and Valspaar Championship in the United States. He has won one on the Asian Tour in the 2012 Thailand Golf Championship and has 15 professional victories in his career.
- Schwartzel has three top-10s in Malaysia in 2008, 2012 and 2013.
- Lahiri has a strong record in Malaysia, winning here in 2015 and posting top-10 finishes in tournaments in 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016.
- Lahiri was the Asian Tour Order of Merit winner in 2015. He holds seven career wins in Asia. He will be making his first appearance at the Maybank Championship. In his last two tournament starts in 2017, Lahiri finished tied 25th and tied 19th at the Career Builder Challenge in the United States and Dubai Desert Classic respectively.
- Fung is coming off his career best finish on the Asian Tour following his 12th placing on the Order of Merit in 2016, thanks to four top-10s.
- Fung finished tied 24th in the Maybank Championship last year.
- He was the Asian Development Tour Order of Merit winner in 2013. He is seeking his first Asian Tour victory.

Key Quotes

Anirban Lahiri

It is like coming back home for me. I won a couple of years ago in Kuala Lumpur. Obviously I've played in two EurAsia Cups here and so many years on the Asian Tour, so it is always a warm welcome for me. I played at Saujana as an amateur many years ago so it is like deja vu for me. It has been a while but it is nice to be back.

I feel like my game is in the right place. I'm making a lot of birdies which is a good sign. I probably need to tighten my round a bit and put four good rounds together. Personally it is very important for me to come back to Asia for many different reasons. I want to stay in touch with my roots. This is where I developed my golf. You will always see me coming back to Asia, to India for sure. These are great events to be playing in. I'm not really making a big sacrifice. It is something that I really enjoy doing.

Danny Willett

I know the course pretty well. I first came here eight years ago, my first event on tour which I was first reserve for and then didn't get in. I've been back here for a couple of corporate days in between so I know the course well. It's a lovely little track, I know they've re-laid the

greens since I was here last November and the course is in really good shape. I think the guys should be in for a treat. It's a fun golf course, a lot of decisions to make off the tee. If you want to lay up and make your second shots easier you can, but then you have a longer iron into the greens. It depends on how you want to play it. It's good to finally get a competitive tournament here finally (last time was 2009).

I think if you look at it on the whole, it (2016) was a great year. If you break it down into sections, there were definitely some better than others so I'm just trying to look back on the bad sections and try and see where it went wrong and try and improve on that. It's been fantastic and it's great to be back in Asia to play golf again. Hopefully I can have a good week here on a golf course that I like.

Charl Schwartzel

I struggled with my knee a little at the end of the year and it never really got better so by the time it came to January for my MRI scan it turned out I needed a longer break. That has actually allowed me to be a lot fresher than I think I would have been, to sort out some of my clubs and get some practice done to get my game in shape. I think overall it's been a good thing. It's been nine weeks since I last played competitively and it's the freshest I've ever been.

I'd like to climb the world rankings more this year. I'm focused on Majors, 2011 is a long time ago so I'm playing PGA Tour for the majority of events so I'll see if I can get it going out there, that's what I'm aiming for.

I have memories of this place (Saujana) from 2002, I played the Eisenhower Trophy as an amateur and I don't remember it being this hilly. I can't remember how we did so we obviously didn't win. We had some great fun, myself, Louis Oosthuizen and Shaun Norris who is also here this week. There's a lot of holes that I remembered when I was out there today and I'm actually very excited to be here. It's a course that was a good memory even if we didn't win. It's nice to be back here and hopefully I can make new memories here.

Nicholas Fung

I'm very excited coming back to Saujana. It is one of my favourite golf courses as I've played here so many times when I was an amateur. This golf course is more about being aggressive off the tees. I don't hit it far but if I keep my ball in play I think I can do well. The greens are soft and it is good for me to attack so it suits my game.

I've been playing well. I made the cut in Singapore and Myanmar and I've had a lot of motivation from my friends, family and sponsors. I'm feeling very positive about my game and the week ahead. My target is to go as low as I can. I don't want to think about winning and putting pressure on myself even I'm playing at home. I want to go as low as I can. A top-10 result is achievable but I don't want to overthink things. I just hope my putt drops this week. Hopefully this will be the week I win my first event.

Maybank – Humanising Financial Services

Maybank is among Asia's leading banking groups and South East Asia's fourth largest bank by assets. The Maybank Group has an international network of 2,400 offices in 20 countries

namely Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong SAR & People's Republic of China, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Laos, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, Mauritius, Great Britain and the United States of America. The Group offers an extensive range of products and services, which includes consumer and corporate banking, investment banking, Islamic banking, stock broking, insurance and takaful and asset management. It has over 44,000 employees worldwide (www.maybank.com)

About GlobalOne

GlobalOne (Emerald Evolution Holdings Sdn Bhd) is an executive lifestyle sports promoter and we create sports event ownerships.

We specialise in providing the full spectrum in sponsorship event management and have an excellent track record in planning and delivering on PGA European Tour golf events for Malaysia (Maybank Malaysian Open), Singapore (Singapore Masters) and Indonesia (Indonesia Open) since 1999. We have strong relations with sports governing bodies, the media and commercial sponsors and technical partners to deliver on the bottom line.

We assist all our clients to create strategic, high-return, best practice sponsorship to provide a strong, unified vision, across departments and stakeholders, of the broad range of marketing and business objectives that can be achieved through this sponsorship. We also form and maintain strong relationship with players' managers to source the best players. GlobalOne has staged a highly successful and prestigious tournament in Asia – the Maybank Malaysian Open, (2006 – 2015) which is co-sanctioned by the European Tour and the Asian Tour providing the event with Official World Ranking status.

About the European Tour

The European Tour celebrates men's professional golf on a global stage. In 2016, the European Tour International Schedule features 47 tournaments in 27 countries, all part of the Race to Dubai, the year-long competition which crowns the European Tour Number One at the end of the season, a title claimed in 2015 by Rory McIlroy for the third time.

Since its formation in 1972, the European Tour has witnessed 25 Members celebrate a total of 51 Major Championship titles between them, enjoyed ten Members attaining the pinnacle of World Number One and has celebrated its diversity as players from 36 different countries have won on Tour.

The European Tour also manages the Challenge Tour, which features 28 tournaments in 22 countries in 2016, and the Senior Tour, which features 13 tournaments in nine countries in 2016. It is also the Managing Partner of Ryder Cup Europe, the body which, alongside the PGA of America, administers golf's greatest team contest, The Ryder Cup.

The European Tour broadcasts live coverage of its tournaments to over 490 million homes in more than 150 countries every week, generating in excess of 2200 global broadcast hours for each event. It also enjoys the support of many of the world's leading business brands with Rolex, BMW, Jumeirah Golf Estates, Emirates and Titleist as Official Partners.

About the Asian Tour

As the official sanctioning body for professional golf in Asia, the Asian Tour leads the development of golf across the region, enhancing the careers of its members while maintaining a commitment to the integrity of the game. The Asian Tour, through its

membership of the International Federation of PGA Tours, is the only recognised pan-Asian professional golf tour in Asia. This unique feature positions the Asian Tour at the pinnacle of professional golf in Asia; providing its events with Official World Ranking status. Tour Partners include ECCO (Official Footwear Sponsor), FENIX XCell (Official Apparel Supplier), Hilton Worldwide (Official Hotel Partner), Titleist (Official Web Partner), Bloomberg TV (Official International Media Sponsor), Bloomberg Businessweek Chinese (Official Business Publication Sponsor) and Rolex (Official Timekeeper). Sentosa, Singapore is the Home of the Asian Tour which also has an office in Kuala Lumpur.

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About Saujana Golf & Country Club

Founded in 1984, Saujana Golf and Country Club offers two 18-hole golf courses namely 'Palm Course' and 'Bunga Raya Course'. These courses are exquisitely designed for championship play by the renowned golf course landscaped architect, Ronald Fream Design Group California, USA & Ted Parslow of E&G Parslow, Australia. The two world renowned courses, have been accorded countless international accolades including "The best Championship Course in Asia (Palm Course)" by Asian Golf Monthly 2005 and # 69 "Top 100 Best Courses outside the USA (Bunga Raya Course)" by Golf Digest 2005. Further voted in the World's Top 1000 Golf Courses by Rolex & 6th Toughest Course in the World (Palm Course) by CNNGo.com 2012. SGCC is the 15th Member of the exclusive European Tour Properties, only the third outside of Europe and the first in Malaysia to be an official European Tour Destination. Saujana Golf & Country Club is also nestled alongside the beauty of two hotels, namely The Saujana Kuala Lumpur and The Club Saujana Resort.