

Juventus to rest Ronaldo for match against Brescia



MILAN: Juventus will rest Cristiano Ronaldo for Sunday's Serie A game against Brescia but defender Giorgio Chiellini is set to return after a long injury layoff. Ronaldo, 35, has scored in ten consecutive Serie A games, but coach Maurizio Sarri has opted to rest the forward with Juventus playing Lyon in the Champions League last 16 on February 26. Captain

Chiellini is set to return after rupturing cruciate ligaments in the right knee at the end of August. The 35-year-old has been training again with the eight-time reigning champions and was on Saturday named in the squad to play Brescia in Turin. His presence should provide a boost for Juventus who have lost top spot in Serie A to Inter Milan on goal difference and suffered two defeats in their last three games. Chiellini scored the first goal of the Serie A season against Parma before picking up a knee injury in training. —AFP

Golf: Park wins Australian Open, boosting Olympic hopes



ADELAIDE: South Korean Park In-bee boosted her chances of being eligible to defend her Olympic title when she notched a three-shot victory at the Women's Australian Open on Sunday. After starting the final round with a three-shot cushion, Park remained clear despite not exactly setting Royal Adelaide on fire in shooting one-over-par 74. She finished at 14-under 278, while

American Amy Olson carded 70 to claim second place on 11-under. In recording her 20th victory on the LPGA Tour, Park also picked up a healthy dose of valuable world ranking points. So dominant are South Korea's women golfers that making the nation's team for Tokyo 2020 is one of the toughest Olympic challenges in any sport. Only four players from any nation are allowed, and Park went into the Australian Open ranked the sixth South Korean, with Ko Jin-young, Park Sung-hyun, Kim Sei-young, Lee Jeong-eun6 and Kim Hyo-joo ranked ahead. The Olympic women's tournament will be held at Kasumigaseki Country Club outside Tokyo from Jul 30 to Aug 2. The venue is a controversial choice. Women were not granted full membership of the club until 2018, and the course is located in one of the hottest places in all of Japan in mid-summer. Park clinched the Olympic gold medal by five strokes in Rio four years ago. —Reuters

Bangladesh axe Mahmudullah for Zimbabwe Test



DHAKA: Bangladesh have dropped batsman Mahmudullah and recalled pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman for the one-off Test against Zimbabwe starting next Saturday. Wicket-keeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim also returns to the side for the Dhaka match after opting out of the Test against Pakistan earlier this month over

safety concerns. The 16-member squad named Sunday has four changes from the team that lost to Pakistan by an innings and 44 runs in Rawalpindi. Spinner Mehidy Hasan and pacer Taskin Ahmed are back after recovering from injury while batsman Soumya Sarkar, pacers Rubel Hossain and Al-Amin Hossain were dropped. Batsman Yasir Ali Chowdhury and fast bowler Hasan Mahmud are the two uncapped players in the squad. "I believe we have selected the best possible Test squad under present circumstances. There is a very nice blend of experience and potential," chairman of the selection panel, Minhajul Abedin, said in a BCB statement. "It is unfortunate that some players had to miss out but our priority has been to ensure balance and continuity. We felt that Mahmudullah needed a break from the red ball." Mahmudullah has scored only one half-century since making 146 runs against New Zealand in March last year. Bangladesh are currently on a bad run of form in Tests, losing their last six matches - three of them by an innings margin. The hosts will also play three one-day internationals and two Twenty20s in the upcoming series in March. —AFP

Olympics, FC Barcelona Twitter accounts hacked

NEW YORK: Twitter said that an official Twitter account of the Olympics and the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) media Twitter account had been hacked and temporarily locked. The accounts were hacked through a third-party platform, a spokesperson for the social media platform said in an emailed statement, without giving further details. "As soon as we were made aware of the issue, we locked the compromised accounts and are working closely with our partners to restore them," the Twitter spokesperson said. A spokesperson for the IOC separately said that the IOC was investigating the potential breach. Twitter also said Spanish soccer club FC Barcelona's account faced a similar incident. "FC Barcelona will conduct a cybersecurity audit and will review all protocols and links



BAHAWALPUR: Jeeps run towards their ending point during the 15th Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally.

Indian buffalo jockey compared to Usain Bolt as he clocks record



NEW DELHI: Indian sports authorities announced they will hold trials for a buffalo jockey whose record-setting performance in a traditional footrace has seen him compared to Usain Bolt. On a track of muddy slush, Srinivas Gowda ran 142.50 metres in 13.62 seconds on Jan 31, setting a record in the traditional buffalo race known as Kambala held every year in southern Karnataka state. The 28-year-old farmer has since become a sensation after people praised him on social media and compared him to retired Jamaican sprint superstar Bolt, who is the world's fastest man for his record run of 100 metres in 9.58 seconds.

Comparing Gowda's performance with the Jamaican star's record, commenters have assumed that the farmer would have run 100 metres in 9.55 seconds, which is 0.03 seconds faster than the Olympian's feat. India's junior sports minister Kiren Rijiju said that authorities have called Gowda to the capital New Delhi for trials under the country's best coaches.

"Officials from Sports Authority of India (SAI) have contacted him. His rail ticket is done and he will reach SAI centre on Monday. I will ensure top national coaches to conduct his trials properly," Rijiju wrote on Twitter.

Many users have however cast doubts on his performance, considering the high standards of the Olympics and the help received from the buffaloes, who during the races are lashed together with ropes and outfitted with a plough while a participant matches their speed and controls them. Gowda is a regular participant in the popular buffalo races held in the farming belts of the southern coastal state during the winter. "I did not think I would run this fast. The buffaloes were quick and I followed them," Gowda told reporters. The sport was briefly banned following petitions by animal rights groups who decried it as cruel, but races resumed in 2017

Football: Leipzig back on top with 3-0 win over strugglers Werder

BERLIN: RB Leipzig eased past struggling Werder Bremen 3-0 to reclaim top spot in the Bundesliga, two points ahead of champions Bayern Munich. Having failed to win in their last four games in all competitions, Leipzig were desperate to bounce back on their home ground and Lukas Klostermann's 18th minute goal quickly put them in the driving seat. Patrik Schick, who had set up Klostermann, then grabbed one himself, heading in his sixth league goal in the 39th minute before Nordi Mukiele latched on to a deep through ball to fire in their third goal a minute after the restart. Leipzig, who face Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League last-16 on Wednesday, move up to 45 points, with Bayern, in action against Cologne on Sunday, on 43. Borussia Dortmund, winners 4-0 over Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday, are in third place on 42. "We played a good game and fully deserved to win," Czech international Schick told reporters. "I am happy for my goal but more importantly it is a big boost ahead of Spurs." Lars Stindl scored twice as Borussia Moenchengladbach stormed to a 4-1 win at Fortuna Dueseldorf -- their first away win since November -- to join Dortmund on 42 points.

Former champions Werder, who have now lost eight of their last nine league games, are stuck in 17th place, a point above last-placed Paderborn. Bayer Leverkusen kept their Champions League hopes in tact when Karim Bellarabi struck in stoppage time to secure a hard-fought 3-2 victory at Union Berlin to keep them within striking distance of a top-four spot, in fifth place on 40. The game was repeatedly interrupted after fans lit flares and smoke bombs in the stands. Hertha Berlin made a winning start to life after Juergen Klinsman, beating Paderborn 2-1 with a goal from Dedryck Boyata and an own goal from Jamilu Collins, in their first game since their former coach's surprise departure this week.

Klinsmann, a former Germany and U.S. national team coach, quit after only 76 days in charge, complaining about a lack of trust and support. Hertha's win lifted them further away from the relegation zone and into 13th place. Dutchman Wout Weghorst scored a hat-trick in VfL Wolfsburg's 3-2 victory over Hoffenheim, who twice come back from a goal down only to lose. —Reuters

Tennis: Bertens sets up clash with Rybakina in St Petersburg final

MOSCOW: Holder Kiki Bertens battled past Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-1 4-6 6-1 in the St Petersburg Ladies Trophy semi-finals to set up a title clash with Elena Rybakina. The world number eight dominated the first set before losing the second to an inspired Alexandrova, but found her rhythm in the decider where she lost only three points on her serve to close out the victory. It was the Dutchwoman's third straight win over a Russian, following victories over Veronika Kudermetova and Anastasia Potapova, as she reached her first final of the year. Earlier, Hobart International winner Rybakina advanced to her third final in four events this season with a gritty 3-6 7-5 6-1 victory over Greek sixth seed Maria Sakkari. The 20-year-old Kazakh, who saved two match points to get past French qualifier Oceane Dodin in the quarter-finals, was staring at defeat down 5-4 in the second set against Sakkari. But the world number 25 won nine of the last 10 games of the match to storm into the biggest final of her career as she chases a third title. Rybakina faces a potentially tricky test against second seed Bertens, who easily beat her in their only previous meeting, in the semi-finals of the Rosmalen grasscourt event in June last year. —Reuters



PSL fever grips Pakistan's showbiz industry



KARACHI: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) has become a unifying factor in Pakistan which brings everyone on the same page, and our showbiz industry is no exception. With PSL just around the corner, the country's top stars are hopeful that the fifth edition of the league will provide some exciting cricket to fans in the country.

Renowned TV actress Maria Wasti says she's excited to see the tournament's fifth edition happening in Pakistan and revealed that she is supporting Karachi Kings. "I am very excited to see the fifth edition of PSL happening in Pakistan. Waiting to see how teams have geared up for these matches and eagerly waiting for all the excitement and energy it is going to bring to the crowds," said the actress. "I am supporting Karachi Kings, but may the best team wins," Wasti added.

Musician Arshad Mahmood also shared his excitement ahead of the action-packed tournament and said that having all matches in Pakistan was very great news.

"Whoever wins the PSL, it will be a victory of Pakistan," he said. Senior artist Iffat Omar said that she is hopeful of a better performance by Lahore Qalandars.

"I am really excited about PSL. I am supporting Lahore Qalandars, like always. I wish that they do well this time and provide Lahoris something to cheer about. I wish all the best to each team and looking forward to a great tournament," said Omar. Renowned artist Faisal Qureshi was also

on the same page and said people were waiting for this day for the last four years. "This will also help our economy. Our youngsters will be playing in grounds echoed with chants of local fans, which will be very confidence-boosting. I am supporting the whole of PSL, not just one team. I pray for the success of the event," Qureshi said.

While Sajid Hasan urged Pakistanis to cheer for the league and support PSL saying that tournament was very beneficial for Pakistan cricket. "It is one of best leagues in the world which provides us best quality cricket," said Hassan.

"This will also help our tourism industry as people from different countries will be taking part in the league. This will also provide us telling the world that Pakistan is a safe country," he highlighted. Renowned singer Faakhir who sang Quetta Gladiators anthem "Kai Kai Quetta," said that he has been supporting Gladiators from day one and once again cheering for defending champions.

"I hope they'll do it again. Go, Gladiators, do it again," he said. Fakhr-e-Alam stated that he always wished to see top cricket stars in Pakistan and finally that moment is here.

"I am looking forward to an extraordinary PSL this time and I want fans to make all matches house full and give a positive message to the world so that these players return to their respective countries with good feedback," Alam said. The fifth edition of PSL begins on February 20 in Karachi.