



LAHORE: Fakhar Zaman looks on after play a pull during PSL match against Sul-



LAHORE: Chris Lynn celebrates a hundreded against Multan Sultans.

Lynn's 55-ball 113 takes Lahore Qalandars to maiden semi-final

LAHORE: The dynamic opening duo of Fakhar Zaman and Chris Lynn terrorised a second-string Multan Sultans bowling unit, pummeling 72 runs in the powerplay during a 100-run partnership to mow down a target of 187 as Lahore Qalandars clinched their first-ever playoff berth in the fifth season of the Pakistan Super League with a nine-wicket win. A blazing half-century by Zaman was followed by Lynn's match-clinching ton, the first-ever by a Qalandars batsman in their five-year history in the tournament.

Qalandars were off to a shaky start again early in the tournament this season after losing their first three matches but a stunning resurgence propelled in their fourth match by the ferocious hitting of Ben Dunk dug them out of the cellar. The pyrotechnics of Zaman and Lynn in their season finale against Sultans ensured Dunk's prior efforts were not in vain. Bouncing back from a 10-wicket drubbing at the hands of Karachi Kings on Thursday, Zaman and Lynn seized on the fact that Sultans could afford to rest several of their frontline bowlers after having clinched first place outright 48 hours earlier.

Zaman led the initial onslaught, bringing up a 25-ball half-century during a brutal seventh over assault on Moeen Ali's offspin. After Zaman was stumped following a charge gone awry to Usman Qadir's legspin in the 9th, Lynn took centrestage with more belligerent hitting. The Australian

brought up a 22-ball half-century in the 10th over swatting Ravi Bopara over cow corner for six. The maximum barrage continued against Khushdil Shah in the 14th, who was carted for back-to-back straight sixes to take Lynn into the 80s. Another heave over cow corner off Bilawal Bhatti took him to 98 before a pair of singles off Junaid Khan brought up the first century by a Qalandars batsman in their five-year history. Lynn then ended the match by heaving Ali Shafiq twice over the leg side rope in the 19th to seal his side's maiden playoff appearance with seven balls to spare.

Karachi Kings make it to PSL semis: Karachi Kings became the second team in the HBL PSL 2020 to secure a semi-final berth with a four-wicket win over Islamabad United at Karachi's National Stadium on late Saturday.

With this defeat, Islamabad United, the two-time champions, are knocked out of the tournament. Kings' chased down the 137-run target with four balls spare as Umaid Asif hit the winning runs by dispatching Ruman Raees for a boundary over mid-off fielder.

Kings were on their way to a comfortable win when United captain Shadab Khan dismissed Colin Munro (11 off 24) and Ifikhar Ahmed (one off four) in the middle-phase of the innings which lightened up the contest. Zafar Gohar dismissed King's captain Imad Wasim (26 off 34) on the first ball of the 17th over as the home side slipped to 106 for

five from 90 for two. Kings were provided a blistering start by Sharjeel Khan, later named man of the match for his 14-ball 37. He smashed two sixes and two fours off Musa Khan in the first over of the run chase.

The left-handed opener spanked Zafar for two consecutive sixes in the next over to help Kings pile up 35 runs from the first two overs. Sharjeel put a sparkling 60-run opening stand – stretching across first five overs – with Babar Azam (19 off 20).

Sharjeel was Kings' first wicket to fall as he was trapped LBW by Akif Javed and Babar followed him back in the next over as Kings lost both openers without any score added to the total. A 30-run partnership between Delpert and Imad followed which provided stability to the run chase.

Earlier, Islamabad United, asked to bat first, made 136 for the loss of six wickets. With 37, Hussain Talat top-scored for United. The all-rounder struck four fours in his 30 ball stay. United looked on course of setting a high total as they were 76 for two by the end of the first half of their innings with Hussain well-set at the crease and in-form Shadab, the fourth highest run-getter this season, joining him.

But, the dismissal of Shadab (12 off 14) by Arshad Iqbal on the penultimate ball of the 11th over turned the innings on its head as United managed only 54 runs in the last nine

Football: Long wait continues for Beckham club's MLS home debut

MIAMI: David Beckham's six-year wait to watch his Major League Soccer club make its home debut, which was to have ended has been extended by the league's coronavirus shutdown. Beckham's Inter Miami was to have hosted the Los Angeles Galaxy, the MLS club where the former England and Manchester United star played from 2007 through 2012, in its first match at its temporary home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Instead, the entire league has joined all major North American sports leagues and shut down its season for 30 days due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. That left Inter Miami owner and president Beckham and his wife, Victoria, to post messages on Instagram with photos taken in an empty 20,000-seat stadium. "It's times like these when we are reminded of the things that are truly important in life," Beckham posted on Instagram. "Our health. Our loved ones and looking after those that need support in our communities."



"In these moments, sports take a back seat. We must all listen to expert advice and do the right thing. Stay safe and look out for yourselves and your families." Inter Miami still seeks a first-ever MLS triumph, having lost 1-0 at Los Angeles FC on Mar 1 and 2-1 at DC United six days later. Those matches culminated a wild six-year effort filled with setbacks and frustrations. Beckham, 44, came to the United States in 2007, the global icon leaving Real Madrid for a deal with the Galaxy that included the option to buy an MLS expansion club at a discounted price. Over six seasons with the Galaxy, Beckham helped raise the sport's US profile and was a major contributor to the club's 2011 and 2012 MLS Cup titles. After retiring in 2013, Beckham decided to exercise his option for an MLS expansion team in 2014 and sought to build a soccer-specific stadium in Miami.

Struggles with city leaders and civic groups followed, location after location foiled by one problem after another, and MLS hesitated to award a franchise to a group without a stadium plan set in place. Beckham joined with Miami-based construction magnates Jorge and Jose Mas in 2017 and that represented a turning point in his quest. —AFP

Badminton: Taiwan's Chou to face Axelsen in All England final

LONDON: Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen and Denmark's Viktor Axelsen will meet in the final of the All England Championships after taking contrasting routes through their last-four matches. World number seven Axelsen had to hit back to beat Malaysian world number 13 Lee Zii Jia 17-21, 21-13, 21-19 in Birmingham. Chou had an easier ride as his opponent, Denmark's Anders Antonsen, retired while trailing 17-14 in the first game. Axelsen is bidding to avenge last year's final defeat against Kento Momota as he looks to build on his recent success at the Barcelona Masters and Indonesia Open. "It was a really tough match. Lee made it really tough for me but I just tried to stay in there and do my best," Axelsen said. "I managed to keep calm through to the end of the third game, but luck was also on my side as it could have gone either way." —AFP



Biathlon great Fourcade ends career with victory but title near miss

KONTIOLAHTI, Finland: Martin Fourcade ended his glittering biathlon career on Saturday with another victory, as he took the pursuit in Kontiolahti in Finland, but it was not enough to secure another World Cup overall title. The 31-year-old Frenchman, who had announced the end of his career on Friday, bid adieu with his 83rd World Cup win but it was not enough to overtake Norwegian Johannes Thingnes Boe at the top of the overall standings. Fourcade led from the start but Boe fought back from some problems shooting to take fourth place and finish two points ahead of Fourcade to secure a second straight overall World Cup crown. Fourcade is a five-time Olympic champion. He made his World Cup debut in 2008 and in 13 seasons collected seven overall crystal globes, winning every year from 2012-18, and 25 discipline titles. The season was originally scheduled to end with three races in Norway, Mar 20-22, but they were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fourcade has become an icon in France and was the team flag bearer at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics and is the chair of the Paris-2024 Athletes' Commission. —AFP

Formula E is 'literally the future,' says pop star and environment campaigner Ellie Goulding

LONDON: A childhood Formula One fan, but also an environmental enthusiast, supporting Formula E makes sense to Ellie Goulding.

Although the British singer-songwriter was introduced to motor racing via the petrol version, the environmental aspect of Formula E makes it "much more cool," she says.

"The cars are incredible, in watching how they're made, watching the craftsmanship, the work that goes into them, the technology, the teams," Goulding told CNN's Supercharged at the Marrakech ePrix in Morocco. "They're making it cool and it should be and that's why I'm here. I want to show my younger fans that this is the future," added Goulding, who while she was in Marrakech also attended a Formula E Mad Hatters Moroccan Tea Party in celebration of the country's ePrix at the Hotel Amanjena. Goulding has three UK number one singles and two albums to her credit. Her hit "Love me like you do" has had more than 2.1 billion views on YouTube, while more than 40 songs



she has either produced or featured in have surpassed 10 million views.

The global superstar is also using the reach of her social platforms -- she has more than 20 million combined followers on Twitter and Instagram -- to promote her hopes of a greener planet.

And as a result of her regular postings

on social media about climate change, she was signed as a Global Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations Environment. "I was approached by the UN a few years back because I was posting a lot of content about the environment, about how concerned I was about plastic pollution, about climate change,

about the fact that my country, the UK, I didn't think, was doing enough to counteract," she said. Ellie Goulding attends The ABB FIA Formula E Mad Hatters Moroccan Tea Party in celebration of the 2020 Marrakech ePrix at the Hotel Amanjena

Ellie Goulding attends The ABB FIA Formula E Mad Hatters Moroccan Tea Party in celebration of the 2020 Marrakech ePrix at the Hotel Amanjena Goulding believes it was her upbringing in rural Britain that played a key part in why she has taken such an interest in environmental issues. "I grew up in the countryside, in the middle of nowhere, so I have an affinity for the natural world," she explained. "So I've always been really concerned about it."

"And through the UN, I've managed to speak to climate scientists, experts, who were very, very worried. And I've learned so much and it means I can pass that knowledge on to my fans and to younger people, the people that follow me, and use my platform for something good." —CNN

UEFA urged to postpone Euro 2020, focus on domestic leagues

MANCHESTER, England: UEFA is being urged to prioritise domestic competitions in the wake of the coronavirus, with pressure growing for Euro 2020 to be postponed.

Top-flight football across Europe has ground to a halt as a result of the spread of the coronavirus, with national and continental club competitions suspended or postponed. Representatives of European clubs and leagues will join national federations on an emergency video-conference call.

The 24-team Euro 2020 tournament, scheduled to be held in 12 countries from June 12-July 12, could be pushed back a year which would create a longer window for national leagues to finish their seasons. Multiple sources have told Reuters that the meeting will hear demands that plans for the eventual resumption of play should focus on completing national leagues above concerns about the Champions League,

Europa League and the Euro 2020 tournament. The European Leagues body, which represents the national competitions, will be on the call and issued a statement on Friday saying "it is most essential that domestic competitions can be completed this season, to limit the negative impact for the entire football ecosystem." "This crisis is also causing very serious sporting and financial consequences to all parties involved in the game. We are ready to cooperate with UEFA and other stakeholders to find common solutions to all these issues in a constructive way, including the international club competitions and Euro 2020." One football federation official said "all options are on the table" for the meeting and another source said those options include one-legged ties for the remainder of the Champions League and Europa League games to halve the fixture load. The focus on completing domestic competi-

tions reflects a concern that clubs throughout Europe will lose significant ticket and associated match-day revenue by not completing the season while still having to pay player salaries. There is also the added complication that incomplete seasons would raise questions over qualification for next season's Champions League and Europa League competitions, with eligible teams scheduled to begin qualifying matches from June 23.

Euro 2020 already faces the problem that the remaining qualifying playoffs for the tournament, with 16 nations battling for four places, are scheduled for March 26 and 31. FIFA has recommended that all international games in that period be postponed. FIFA have also said that the rules which normally oblige clubs to release players for national team matches will not apply for the up-coming international windows in March/April. —Reuters

Scandal-hit French skating elects president in chaotic vote

PARIS: Former ice champion Nathalie Pechalat was elected president of the scandal-hit French ice sports federation (FFSG) on Saturday in a chaotic vote in Paris.

All three of Pechalat's rivals had requested a postponement because of the coronavirus pandemic. Two of them, skating club official Damien Boyer-Gibaud, and former bobsledder Michelangelo Marie-Calixte, had officially withdrawn before the vote. Former speed skater Gilles Jouanny remained on the ballot, although he told AFP he had phoned to have his name removed.

He said he could not travel because of a case of coronavirus in the building where he lives. According to the FFSG's official tally, Pechalat won in the first round, with 504 votes (out of a possible 872), while Jouanny received zero. Pechalat, 36, a double European champion (2011, 2012) and



double world bronze medallist (2012, 2014) is the first woman president of the FFSG. She succeeds Didier Gailhaguet, who was forced to resign in early February because of his han-

dling of a sex scandal. "We categorically refuse to associate ourselves and our supporters with a new scandal that has struck our federation: that of the manipulation of the election in order to install a previously designated candidate," Jouanny, Boyer-Gibaud and Marie-Calixte, said a joint statement.

They pointed out that the French government had prohibited gatherings of more than 100 people.

French skating is trying to recover from allegations that it turned a blind eye to sexual abuse of young skaters. Gailhaguet ran French skating from 1998-2004 and from 2007 to 2020, but his sixth term of office came to an abrupt end after several former female skaters, including former champion Sarah Abitbol, revealed that they had been victims of rape and sexual assault by coaches when they were teenagers. —AFP