

**Archer condemns racist abuse after being targeted online**



**LONDON:** England fast bowler Jofra Archer has posted an image of racist abuse he received on social media and called on authorities to deal with the issue properly. The 24-year-old Barbados-born paceman, who helped England win the 50-overs World Cup

last year, posted an image of the message he received on Instagram and said he could not understand why someone would make such comments. "I (have) given a lot of thought about reacting to this and I hope no one else has to deal with stuff like this on a regular basis, it isn't ever acceptable and should be addressed properly in my opinion," Archer wrote on Instagram. "I will never understand how people feel so freely to say these things to another human being, it baffles me." Earlier this year, New Zealand Cricket banned a supporter from attending international and domestic matches in the country for two years after he admitted racially abusing Archer during a test in November. Archer has been out of action since January with an elbow injury. —Reuters

**British horse racing suspended until end of April**



**LONDON:** British horse racing will be suspended until the end of April because of the spread of coronavirus, the British Horseracing Authority said. "This is a national emergency the like of which most of us have never seen before. We're a sport

that is proud of its connection to rural communities and to the local businesses that support our industry," said authority Chief Executive Nick Rust. "But our first duty is to the health of the public, our customers and to racing industry participants and staff so we have decided to suspend racing following the government's latest advice." —Reuters

**Australia bans public from athletes base due to virus**



**MELBOURNE:** Australian authorities have banned the public from the national sports institute in Canberra as part of efforts to reduce the risk of athletes contracting the coronavirus

in the leadup to the Tokyo Olympics. The curbs at the Australian Institute of Sports (AIS) campus in Canberra start from Wednesday, chief executive Peter Conde said. "We don't underestimate the value of the AIS campus to the community, particularly Canberra's community, and we have every intention of resuming business as usual when we see it appropriate," Conde said in a statement on Tuesday. "However, with preparations continuing for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics later this year, we are doing everything we can to support Australia's athletes, coaches and sports to minimise any disruption to their training. "Our Australian athletes have been training much of their lives for this opportunity to represent their country and we thank the community for their understanding in these uncertain times." Australia's major sports have banned fans from stadiums in the wake of a government advisory discouraging gatherings of 500 or more people on Monday. Organisers have said the Tokyo Games will go ahead as planned from July 24 but the event has been thrown into doubt by the outbreak of the coronavirus, which has infected more than 160,000 and killed over 7,000 people worldwide. —Reuters

**Rugani 'doing well' after coronavirus diagnosis**



**MILAN:** Juventus defender Daniele Rugani, the first Italian top-flight footballer diagnosed with coronavirus, said he was "doing well" and hoped

his case "served to sensitise everyone" to the illness. "I'm fine, I reassure everyone. I've always been quite well, I haven't had any serious symptoms. I consider myself lucky," Rugani told Juventus TV. The 25-year-old Italian international was diagnosed last Wednesday with the Turin club saying he was asymptomatic. Since then a total of 11 Serie A players have been diagnosed with the illness which has killed more than 1,800 people in the Mediterranean region. "There was a huge media explosion right away. A lot of people wrote to me and I thank them," said Rugani, who is currently self-isolating in a room at the team's J-Hotel, beside the Italian champions' training centre. "I hope it served to raise awareness, especially those who had not understood the seriousness of this problem. "I'm going to get over it, we're going to get by and I hope we'll all come out even stronger. "The quarantine is tough, even more so because you are alone, so I can't wait to embrace all my loved ones." —AFP

**Euro 2020 set for postponement after UEFA cancels hotel bookings**



**COPENHAGEN:** The postponement of soccer's Euro2020 Championship may already have been decided after UEFA last week cancelled its

hotel bookings in Copenhagen, one of the host cities, Reuters learned from the hotels on Tuesday. The CPH Hotel told Reuters over the phone that UEFA had booked 80 of its 102 rooms but cancelled them a little over a week ago. The Marienlyst Strandhotel, where the Danish team usually bases itself, told Reuters in an email that UEFA had cancelled the rooms booked on behalf of the Danish side. UEFA is meeting with its member federations on Tuesday, where a postponement of Euro2020 to 2021 is expected to be announced following the widespread suspension of Europe's domestic leagues due to the coron-

**Financial fears spur Australian sport to play on despite virus**



**SYDNEY:** As events are scrapped around the world to counter the threat of coronavirus, a handful of Australia's main sports are doggedly pressing ahead, spurred by fear of financial ruin.

While major competitions elsewhere have suspended their seasons in hopes of curbing the pandemic, rugby league and football have chosen to continue playing to empty stadiums after the government banned public gatherings of more than 500 people. Players from the country's most popular spectator sport, Australian Rules (AFL), have stated they too want to carry on, with a decision still pending on whether games are played this week as scheduled. At stake is not only Australian fans' deep thirst for watching their favourite teams, but lucrative broadcast commitments, with television money their lifeblood.

Making matters worse, the spiralling virus threat has struck at the start of the season for rugby league and AFL -- both big industries in their own right. The National Rugby League (NRL) only kicked off last weekend and the AFL is due to get underway on Thursday. According to Sydney's Daily Telegraph, every weekend of rugby league is worth around Aus\$1.2 million (US\$740,000) to each of the 16 clubs in TV rights, not to mention ticket sales, corporate hospitality, merchandise, and food and beverage income.

"BIG TROUBLE" In confirming round two would go ahead without fans, Australian Rugby League Commission chairman Peter V'landys warned of dire consequences to the viability of a sport seen as part of Australia's social fabric. "I can't stress enough that our game has never faced such challenges. The longer it takes, the more pressure on our financial viability," he said. "Our money will only last so long, and once it's extinguished, we are in big trouble." Broadcasters do not have to pay if games aren't played, the NRL said on its website, and V'landys has urged the government to help the sport as part of its nearly \$18 billion coronavirus economic stimulus package. The NRL announced a Aus\$30 million surplus in its most recent financial results, but its reserves won't last long if games are cancelled and salaries still need to be paid.

Phil Gould, an influential ex-player, coach, administrator and current television pundit, questioned why the game's financial model had not left it with a bigger war chest. "We've got to learn from what we've done in the past and ask ourselves why we are so vulnerable as a code right at the moment because we have to close down for a season," he said. Some players have voiced concerns about games going ahead, saying the cancellation of global events, including the Australian Grand Prix after a McLaren team member tested positive, should be setting off alarm bells.

NRL chief Todd Greenberg said he had listened to all opinions, but "it remains our plan to continue to play games in round two this weekend".

**DOOMSDAY SCENARIO:** The massively popular AFL faces a similar doomsday scenario, with its blockbuster season-opener between Richmond and Carlton at the Melbourne Cricket Ground set to kick off with no one there. Ordinarily, they would expect a bumper crowd. "A crowd of high 80s, 90,000, would probably return a gate of Aus\$1.2 to Aus\$1.4 million. That's one game. You extrapolate that and it's a big number," said Richmond chief executive Brendon Gale. The players' union on Tuesday said there was overwhelming support to keep playing, but AFL administrators deferred their decision pending updated health advice. —AFP

**PSL 2020 postponed due to coronavirus**

Alex Hales says he's in self-isolation, likely to be tested today

The Business Report

**LAHORE:** The Pakistan Super League has been called off with the knockouts to go, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday.

"PSL 2020 postponed, to be rescheduled. More details to follow in due course," the PCB said in a post on Twitter. Former fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was in agreement with the PCB and added that the decision should have been given a week ago as matches, which were being played behind closed doors, had lost their charm. "It is at this time of hour we needed to do what the world was doing. The PCB should have called off the tournament a week ago as without the crowd it was no fun," Akhtar said. Former cricketer Sikander Bakht suggested that the unfinished tournament can be concluded before the start of the next year. He said that despite the incomplete tournament, the PSL 2020 "achieved its target of showing the world that Pakistan is safe to stage major tourna-



ments" The knockout matches of PSL were scheduled to be played in Lahore today, however, the remaining matches including Wednesday's final has been postponed now. In the first semi-final Multan Sultans were set to face Peshawar Zalmi at 2pm at the Gaddafi Stadium, while Karachi Kings and Lahore Qalandars were set to face each



other in the evening fixture. The final of the tournament was rescheduled to be played tomorrow after the PCB moved the tournament up to March 18 from March 22. A day earlier, the Pakistan and Bangladesh had decided to postpone the upcoming one-day international and Test in Karachi for a later date.

**Years of continuous soccer on the cards on the back of potential Euros postponement**

**ROME:** Tuesday is decision day on soccer's European Championship but if the coronavirus epidemic forces it to be postponed until next year, as is widely expected, it will be only the first of many such calls to be made on the sport's revised calendar.

European soccer's governing body UEFA is holding a teleconference call with all 55 member associations on Tuesday and, amid pressure to find time to complete the major domestic leagues that are all currently suspended, shifting the Euros back a year looks the most obvious first step. A decision is expected to be announced late in the European afternoon. Currently set to be held in 12 venues, with the semi-finals and final in London, it would obviously be a logistical and financial challenge but one that UEFA would be confident of carrying off. Next year, however, is far from being the "fallow year" many people think. The women's European Championship is due to be held in England in the summer 2021, while FIFA's revamped Club World Cup in China is currently pencilled in from June 17-July 4 and will feature eight European club sides. It will be the inaugural staging of the expanded tournament, which FIFA President Gianni Infantino has pledged "will become the best cup competition in the world", but it would appear impossible for it to retain its spot in the calendar if the Euros are moved. Additional clashes are with the European Under-21 Championship, set for June in Slovenia and Hungary, and the UEFA Nations League finals. —AFP



DUBAI: A women's rowing team practice in Dubai's Marina rivet.

**Some great records produced in PSL 2020**

**ISLAMABAD:** The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2020 may have been postponed, but there had been some great records produced in the tournament, whether it is of scoring runs, taking wickets, grabbing catches or most dismissals.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday postponed and rescheduled the PSL semifinals and final, which were to take place in Lahore on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively. The semifinals were due to be played between Multan Sultans v Peshawar Zalmi and Karachi Kings v Lahore Qalandars.

Earlier, PCB had rescheduled the PSL matches by replacing the playoffs with semi-finals on March 17 and final on March 18.

Multan Sultans were leading the points table with 14 points followed by Karachi Kings (11 points), Lahore Qalandars (10 points) and Peshawar Zalmi (9 points). However speaking about the PSL records, when it comes to hitting most runs Pakistan Twenty20 Skipper and Karachi King's top batsman Babar Azam was topped the batters as he scored 345 runs in the league so far followed by Chris Lynn (Lahore Qalandars, 284 runs), Ben Dunk (Lahore Qalandars, 266 runs), Luke Ronchi (Islamabad United, 266 runs) and Shadab Khan (Islamabad United, 263 runs).

Lahore Qalandars Chris Lynn top scored with 113 not out in PSL followed by Kamran Akmal (Peshawar Zalmi, 101 runs), Rilee Rossouw (Multan Sultans,

100 not out), Ben Dunk (Lahore Qalandars, 99 not out) and Mohammad Hafeez (Lahore Qalandars, 98 not out).

Mohammad Hasnain of Quetta Gladiators on shined in the bowling department bagging 15 wickets. Shaheen Shah Afridi of Lahore Qalandars was the second promising bowler to take 13 wickets followed by Wahab Riaz of Peshawar Zalmi on third with 11 wickets. Sohail Tanvir and Imran Tahir of Multan Sultans remained fourth and fifth on the table with 10 wickets, respectively.

The best bowling figures in PSL were led by Samit Patel of Lahore Qalandars who bagged four wickets for 5 runs while his team mates Shaheen Shah Afridi (4 for 18) and Dilbar Hussain (4 for 24) also backed him and attained

third and fourth spots on the table, respectively.

Multan Sultans Sohail Tanvir (4 for 13) bagged the second place while Mohammad Hasnain of Quetta Gladiators remained fifth with 4 for 25.

Most catches were taken by Mohammad Nawaz (8) of Quetta Gladiators followed by Tom Banton (Peshawar Zalmi, 7), James Vince (Multan Sultans, 6), Moeen Ali (Multan Sultans, 6) and Liam Livingstone (Peshawar Zalmi, 6).

Luke Ronchi of Islamabad United had the most dismissals 7, as a wicketkeeper. He was followed by Chadwick Walton (Karachi Kings, 7), Sarfaraz Ahmed (Quetta Gladiators, 7), Zeeshan Ashraf (Multan Sultans, 6) and Dane Villas (Lahore Qalandars, 5). —APP