



SYDNEY: An empty Bankwest Stadium, shuttered from fans due to coronavirus outbreak, is pictured before the round 24 A-League football match between Sydney FC and the Western Sydney Wanderers.

## PCB suffers Rs200m loss due to early end of PSL-5

Abdul Mohi Shah

**ISLAMABAD:** Wasim Khan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) claimed losing Rs 200 million in wake of early winding up of the Pakistan Super League (PSL-V), saying the sports in general and cricket in particular will be facing toughest challenges to regroup if by the grace of God Almighty Allah the world overcome COVID 19 in a few months' time.

In a first ever video-conference participated by a group of journalists from all over Pakistan Saturday, Wasim said the virus had completely changed the sporting world and cricket was no exception. "Look we are facing the toughest days in sports where no one is sure as what would happen next. The coronavirus has forced sports organisers to postpone, cancel or abruptly stop the ongoing event. After careful assessment of the situation, we also decided to postpone the PSL-V just before the start of the semi-finals. We are expecting a loss of around Rs 200 million from gate money and other support earning. We also lost the series against Bangladesh because of the threats of virus-a further loss of around three to four million dollar is expected from not hosting Bangladesh for Test and one off one-day. It is a global crisis not only for sports but for every segment of society"

The PCB Chief Executive admitted that the ICC and different cricketing boards around the

world would have to come up with a comprehensive plan to make up for the loss time and finance. "Though it is too early to say anything on the overall cricketing loss, if we succeed in overcoming the virus in a few month time, the ICC as well as all leading cricketing boards will have to come up with a plan to make up for the financial as well as for the administrative loss. Many cricketing series either have been postponed or delayed because of the virus. Thanks God, barring one-day tournament we have already completed out domestic cricket. Other cricket playing countries are facing even worse scenario where one after another series has either been postponed or delayed."

Wasim said that now the PCB was looking at new sponsorship and broadcasting rights. "Bangladesh series was the last one with the old broadcasting deal. We are lucky enough that immediately we are not facing any international cricket and hopefully by the time we would have one, things In-sha-Allah would be in a better position."

About Pakistan coming international commitments in Ireland, England and Holland, he said PCB and respective boards had time at their disposal. "England are to take make their next move by May 28 and hopefully we would have better placed to decide at that time on the future commitments especially in England. Pakistan are to play England late in July. So there is enough time left for respective boards." Wasim



criticized cricketers who used social media in criticizing their fellow players. "It is not right for an active player to speak against players inclusion in the team or not. Using social media for active cricketers to criticize players would not be tolerated. No other player not even English players are permitted to speak against players and policies. It is for cricket board to decide. We are going to make a strict policy about that shortly" Wasim Khan replied to a question on M Hafeez criticizing Sharjeel Khan's inclusion on the national team. Wasim said Sharjeel had done his time now. "Two and half year of complete ban and rest of suspended sentence. It is up

to him to prepare himself for future international commitment. If he is unfit he has no right to claim a place on the team. He has time at his disposal to get ready for next international commitment."

Wasim Khan said for the time being the PCB had no financial constraints and was well equipped to go ahead with their domestic and international plans. "We have no financial problems and can continue our domestic and international business as usual." On the domestic front, he admitted there was a lot to do. "We are to announce formation of provincial associations shortly and are going to improve the grounds standards for future national and international commitments. It will be up to the provincial association to utilize the services of ground staff the PCB had relieved which previously was working with regional associations. Coaches assessment is also on cards. We have time at our disposal and we want to use it proactively. We have already invested a lot on Pindi, Multan and making the Peshawar Stadium ready for next PSL edition."

The PCB Chief Executive said that there were windows available to complete the PSL-V. "First is just after the T20 World Cup and second being in November. The remaining matches could well also be organized before the HBL PSL-VI. We are looking at these options considering all the relevant options under consideration. All decisions regarding PSL whether these

are on finances or other matters including hosting remaining PSL matches will be taken in consultation with the owners. Since the PSL for the first time was organized in Pakistan, we were expecting a set profit and that Rs 200 million loss is from that expected amount."

Wasim Khan defended Misbahul Haq's poor show as a coach with Islamabad United team that finished last in the PSL-V. When asked whether PCB was happy with his coaching prowess especially the one he had shown with United this fall, he said "Look he had joined United just days ahead of the start of the PSL-V. He has improved as a coach internationally. He has been working with players twelve months around. We want Misbah to get additional experience and that was why he and others were allowed for duel jobs."

Luck also matters sometimes. Islamabad United would definitely assess the situation. We will also sit with Misbah as important events are coming up and if he requires any assistant we would consider that. We would definitely assess his status after one year."

He also hinted at taking action against all those cricketers who were guilty of acting nonsense on the field and during the course of PSL-V. Wasim Khan rejected any chances of hosting Pakistan leg of international series on any outside venue. "Even England turned down West Indies offer. At moment no country in the world is safe from pandemic."

## Thousands flock to see Olympic flame in Japan despite COVID-19 fears

**SENDAI:** Tens of thousands of people flocked to a cauldron with the Olympic flame in northeastern Japan over the weekend despite concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The flame arrived in Japan to a scaled-down welcoming ceremony on Friday as doubts grew over whether the 2020 Tokyo Olympics will go ahead on schedule as the deadly virus causes chaos around the world. The pandemic has already shredded the global sports calendar, with top sports leagues suspended and major tournaments postponed. More than 50,000 people queued to watch the flame displayed at Sendai station in Miyagi, chosen as part of the "Recovery Olympics" to showcase the region's revival after the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown. Some had to stay in a 500m queue for several hours, local media said. Many of them wore masks as they took pictures with the cherry blossom-shaped cauldron. "I queued for three hours but watching the Olympic flame was greatly encouraging," a 70-year-old woman told public broadcaster NHK. Organisers are under pressure to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Games because of the coronavirus pandemic But organisers, concerned about the bigger-than-expected gathering, have warned the viewing event could be suspended if a crowd becomes "extremely dense", local media reported. The nationwide torch relay begins on Mar 26, starting from the J-Village sports complex in Fukushima that was used as a base for workers during the 2011 nuclear disaster. But organisers have been forced to scale back the relay, closing daily ceremonies to the public and urging spectators to "avoid forming crowds" along the route. —



## Former Milan defender Maldini, son infected with virus

**MILAN:** Former AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini and his son Daniel, a current player for the same club, have both contracted the coronavirus, the club said in a statement. Paolo Maldini, 51, a one-club player and current technical director at the club, is regarded as one of the best defenders Italy has ever produced and made a joint-record 647 Serie A appearances. Daniel, 18, made his AC Milan debut this season. "Paolo Maldini learned that he had contact with a person who tested positive and was suffering from symptoms of the virus. He was tested yesterday and found positive for the coronavirus," the club said in a statement. "The same goes for his son Daniel. "Paolo and Daniel are in good condition and, having already spent more than two weeks at home without outside contact, as required by medical and health protocols, will extend the quarantine for the time necessary for a complete clinical recovery." —Reuters



## Second NHL Senators player tests positive for coronavirus



**OTTAWA:** A second Ottawa Senators player has tested positive for coronavirus, the NHL club announced the same day the 2020 World Ice Hockey Championships were called off. The unidentified player becomes the second in the league to test positive for the COVID-19 virus that has become a global pandemic and shut down most of world sport, including the NHL. Switzerland would have hosted the 2020 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championships in May but officials canceled the tournament Saturday due to the pandemic. The Senators player, and another unidentified Ottawa player who was announced Wednesday as coronavirus positive, traveled on the team's Mar 8-12 road trip to California with games in San Jose, Anaheim and Los Angeles. In revealing the second positive, the team announced that all 52 people who traveled with the club were instructed to self-quarantine on Mar 13 and remain in that status. Of the players, staff, reporters, guests and flight crew on the Senators' trip, 44 have shown no coronavirus symptoms, eight were tested and two positives were found. "We are awaiting the results from tests that took place on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday," the team said in a statement. —AFP

## Le Clos faces uncertain training future amid Olympic doubts

**CAPE TOWN:** Olympic swimming gold medalist Chad le Clos had to leave his Turkish base in a rush after his training schedule for the Tokyo 2020 Games was thrown into disarray, and has doubts over whether the event will go ahead. Le Clos had set up in Turkey after an earlier camp in Italy had been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, but is now at home in Cape Town and uncertain of his immediate future plans. "There's no real plan going forward. I have no coach, no training partners. I could be stuck here until the Olympics," he told South Africa's Sunday Times newspaper. "If they shut the gyms here, I don't have a plan B (for a pool). It's scary. I've spoken to some guys literally stuck in their homes. They can't do training." "I was told Penny Oleksiak, the Canadian Olympic champion, hasn't swum in 20 days in Toronto." Le Clos said it had been a turbulent week, which included a mad dash out of Turkey. "On Monday the plan was to stay six, seven weeks (in Turkey). Suddenly, the country is going into lockdown and hotels are probably going to be closed. We had 36 hours to get out. "Luckily I got tickets the same night. It's such a whirlwind. One minute you're training hard, everything's gone great, and then you have to leave." —Reuters

