



## Porto record first win over Juventus

Moussa Marega celebrates scoring their second goal with Mehdi Taremi, who pounced on a sloppy back pass after sixty-three seconds to put Porto ahead during a 2-1 victory against Juventus in the Champions League last-16 first leg clash on Wednesday. On a night when little went Juventus's way, Federico Chiesa's late strike at least handed them a lifeline going into the return leg in Turin on March 9. "Our approach made the game an uphill struggle," Chiesa said. "We conceded a goal after a few seconds and in the Champions League when you're not fully focused they will punish you. The away goal will give us strength for the second leg," he added. Porto coach Sergio Conceicao said he will not send his team to Italy simply to hold onto their slender advantage in the second leg in Turin. "Juve need to perform a comeback, but that doesn't mean we will go there just to defend. We'll see who will play, if the characteristics of the players are different," Conceicao said.

## PROLIFIC HAALAND THANKS MBAPPE

Borussia Dortmund's Erling Haaland continued his prolific run in the Champions League by scoring twice as his side came from behind to earn a 3-2 win at Sevilla in a last-16 first leg on Wednesday. Haaland later said he was inspired by watching Kylian Mbappe score a hat-trick against Barcelona. Mbappe had set Europe's elite competition alight on Tuesday with a stunning treble in the 4-1 drubbing of Barca, but Haaland was also out to make his mark, netting two superbly-taken goals in his side's win. "When I saw Mbappe scored the hat-trick yesterday I got free motivation so thanks to him. I got a free boost from him," said Haaland. "We didn't deserve to lose, but in the end they had one of the best players in the world up front and he made the difference in three situations which could have been avoided," said Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui.



PHOTO: TWITTER

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Morris becomes most expensive buy

REUTERS, New Delhi

Chris Morris of South Africa and Australia's Glenn Maxwell emerged as millionaires from the early round of the player's auction for this year's Indian Premier League (IPL), which welcomed back China's Vivo as its title sponsor on Thursday.

Morris became the IPL's most expensive overseas player after returning to the Rajasthan Royals for 162.5 million Indian rupees (\$2.2 million) following a fierce bidding war involving the Punjab Kings.

"He's one of those players with experience who can deal with a price tag like that," Rajasthan chief operating officer Jake Lush McCrum told a video conference. "We've rebalanced the side this year. He fills an important role for us," he said of the 33-year-old bowling all-rounder.

"A quality bowler for all phases of the game, and he can win a game with a bat as well."

Maxwell also triggered a bidding war in which Royal Challengers Bangalore outbid Chennai to snap up the explosive all-rounder for 142.5 million rupees. He joins Bangalore's star-studded lineup that includes India captain Virat Kohli and South African stalwart AB de Villiers.

England all-rounder Moeen Ali was sold to Chennai Super Kings for 70 million rupees, while compatriot and top-ranked T20 batsman Dawid Malan joined Punjab for 15 million.

## IPL PLAYERS' AUCTION

# Shakib, Fizz maintain status quo

SPORTS REPORTER



Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman were the only Bangladeshi players that demanded attention at the players' auction for the Indian Premier League on Thursday.

The Tigers' dependable wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim had thrown his name in the hat at the eleventh hour, but failed to garner any bidders. Bangladesh's T20I captain Mahdullah Riyad also failed to attract bids, as did all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin.

The BCCI informed teams the day prior to the draft that players from all countries barring Bangladesh would be available for the entirety of the tournament, which perhaps was why no team was willing to risk a spot in their squad.



There was a small bidding war over Shakib, who missed the previous edition of the IPL due to a one-year ban imposed on him by the ICC for failing to report corrupt approaches from a bookie.

The left-hander's value rocketed from a base price of two crore rupees as Kings XI Punjab attempted to snap up the all-rounder with a bid of 2.6 crores. However, Kolkata Knight Riders, with whom Shakib



had won the title in both 2012 and 2014, prevailed in that mini-bout by roping in the southpaw for 3.2 crore rupees.

Mustafizur, another Bangladeshi who has lifted the IPL trophy, was sold for his base price of one crore rupees to the Rajasthan Royals, the third team that he will represent in the tournament.

The left-arm pacer struck gold in his first stint in the IPL in 2016 after being drafted by the Sunrisers Hyderabad. He took 17 wickets in 16 matches and became the first foreign player to win 'Emerging Player of the Tournament'.

However, his stock has plummeted since, with the mystique around his bowling fading as the spotlight got brighter. He also represented Mumbai Indians in the 2018 IPL, scalping seven wickets in as many matches.

A total of 1,097 players initially registered for the auction, of which 292 were selected, including 125 overseas players and three players from associate nations.

The 2021 IPL will be held in India between April and May, although no dates have been confirmed yet.

## CRICKETERS GET VACCINATED



Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz being administered the Covid-19 vaccine yesterday. A number of Bangladesh cricketers, who are expected to be named in the preliminary squad for the upcoming New Zealand tour, got the coronavirus vaccine at the Kurmitola General Hospital under the supervision of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). "The thing about vaccination is that if you know how helpful it is for you then I think your fear will be reduced. I will not deny that I was afraid. When the first approach was made, I was not sure whether to take it or not. But after talking to the BCB and when many people suggested that it is normal to have symptoms, it seemed to me that I could take it," said Tamim after getting vaccinated.

PHOTO: BCB

## 'One of the greatest'

AFP, Melbourne

Novak Djokovic praised Serena Williams as one of the greatest athletes in history after a tough loss set back her bid to tie the all-time record for Grand Slam titles yesterday.

Djokovic said Williams, who has been stuck on 23 major titles since 2017, needed to see the "larger picture" of her achievements following her defeat by Naomi Osaka at the Australian Open.

The 39-year-old's Grand Slam tally is second only to the 24 held by Australia's Margaret Court, including 13 won in the pre-1968 amateur era. "I can empathize with Serena and what she's going through," Djokovic said. "She's such an amazing champion that inspires both male and female athletes around the world." He added: "But I think when you see a larger picture for her and everything that who she is, what she stands for on and off the court... she's one of the greatest ever... athletes, not just tennis player."



## Osaka shatters Serena's aura

Naomi Osaka ended Serena Williams' bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title with an imperious 6-3, 6-4 win yesterday, a victory that booked her spot in her second Australian Open final and left the American great in tears. Osaka will meet Jennifer Brady, who ensured there would be at least one American in the final.

## Djokovic ends Karatsev's dream run

Defending champion Novak Djokovic ended the remarkable run of Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev to ease into his ninth Australian Open final with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win yesterday. In one of the more improbable semi-final matchups at a Grand Slam, Djokovic was broken twice by the world number 114 Karatsev but ensured there would be no Russian revolution under the lights of Rod Laver Arena. As a long tournament took its toll on Karatsev, Djokovic raised his game in the third set and sealed the win with an ace to trigger a roaring ovation from Serbian fans in the crowd. Djokovic will face either Stefanos Tsitsipas or Daniil Medvedev, the pair who set to meet in Friday's semi-final, in Sunday's final.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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