

SPORT



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Manchester City players celebrate with the Premier League trophy after completing an unprecedented run that saw them win the top-flight English football league four times in a row following a commanding 3-1 victory over West Ham United at Etihad Stadium on Sunday. [Inside story] City's incredible showing left Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and midfielder Declan Rice dejected, much like their fans, as the Londoners had to stay satisfied with a second-place finish despite a 2-1 win over Everton on the final matchday.

PHOTO: REUTERS/AFP

Incredible City make history

AGENCIES

Manchester City created English football history on Sunday, overcoming West Ham 3-1 to win their fourth straight Premier League title and break Arsenal's hearts.

City, who have now won six titles in seven years, stand alone as the only English team to have won four straight top-flight titles, eclipsing the achievements of the great Liverpool and Manchester United teams of the past.

Two glorious early goals from league player of the season Phil Foden created a party atmosphere in the sunshine at the Etihad Stadium before a stunning bicycle kick from Mohammed Kudus before halftime brought West Ham briefly into the game.

"It is so hard to put into words what we've done today," Foden told Sky Sports. "No team has ever done it (won four in a row). We have put ourselves into the history books."

Rodri sealed the victory for City with a low 59th minute shot from outside the area, giving Pep

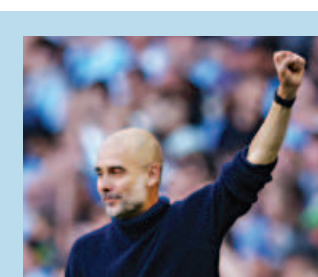
Guardiola's side a phenomenal sixth title in seven years. Fans danced in their seats, belting out: "Champions again!" and "Are you watching Arsenal?"

Arsenal started the day two points behind their rivals and praying for a miracle to deny City their coronation, knowing that a win against Everton would not be enough



if the champions won on home turf.

The Gunners, without a Premier League title since 2004, came from a goal down to beat Everton 2-1 but had to content themselves with second in the table for a second straight season.



Manchester City became not only the first team in the Premier League but the only team in English top-flight history to win four successive league titles.

City took their unbeaten tally to 35 matches in all competitions (W29 D6), the longest run ever by a Premier League team. In English top-flight history, only Nottingham Forest has a longer unbeaten run (40 matches in a row).

Phil Foden, who was voted the Player of the Season, scored six goals from outside the box in the Premier League this season, the most by any player in the competition since Christian Eriksen hit six in 2018-19.



Can Fizz break CYCLE OF REGRET?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

When Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman took part in his first T20 World Cup, he was still in his first year in international cricket. He came into the 2016 T20 World Cup as a prodigious talent, having already bamboozled some of the biggest stars in world cricket.

That World Cup, however, ended

BANGLADESH WITH FIZZ IN T20 WC

2016 Bangladesh won their first-round matches against the Netherlands and Oman but lost against Australia, India, and New Zealand in the Super 10.

2021 Mahmudullah Riyad-led Bangladesh were stunned by Scotland in their opening first-round fixture but came back to beat Oman and Papua New Guinea to qualify for the main stage of the tournament in which the Tigers lost all five of their encounters.

2022 Bangladesh's best outing in a T20 World Cup came in this edition as they managed to win two matches (against Zimbabwe and the Netherlands) in the main stage of the tournament for the first time. The Tigers lost the other three fixtures.

in disappointment for Mustafizur and Bangladesh, much like the ones that have followed since.

Following that first T20 World Cup, where he picked 11 wickets in four matches, Mustafizur had the mark of big player on

MUSTAFIZUR IN T20 WORLD CUPS

YEAR	MATCHES	WICKETS	ECON RATE	STK-RATE	AVERAGE
2016	3	9	7.16	8	9.55
2021	7	8	9.25	18	27.75
2022	5	3	5.6	40	37.33

him. His reputation swelled further after he helped Sunrisers Hyderabad win their maiden IPL title in his debut season, picking up 17 wickets in 16 games.

It appeared the left-arm seamer is bound to reach greater heights but struggles with injuries among other things halted his rise.

So sharp was his decline, questions were raised whether he would ever touch those heights again. After many average to underwhelming seasons at the IPL, Mustafizur conjured up some of his old magic for the Chennai Super Kings this season.

He bagged 14 wickets for Chennai, and was the joint highest wicket-taker in the tournament before his NOC ended.

There was plenty of criticism regarding his tournament being cut short, many experts feeling he would have been better served by continuing to play in the IPL and skipping the Tigers' series against Zimbabwe at home. The BCB, however, had other plans.

Mustafizur, in a literal way, is a man with the golden arm. His cutters, with great revolutions that he puts on the ball, takes a lot out of him. There is a limit to how many of those special variations he can bowl under duress in a month-long

tournament and he needs to be fresh to bowl at his best.

Cutting his IPL stint short should help him to rest, recharge and be at his effective best in the T20 World Cup.

Momentum is on Mustafizur's side as he steps into his fourth T20I World Cup, which also presents him with a chance to correct the biggest regret of his career.

"When it comes to big players, after winning a big event or a trophy one can be called a big player. So, that regret has always been there," the 28-year-old said in a video posted by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on social media yesterday.

This statement from Mustafizur, who is usually known as a man of few words, bears the mark of maturity.

The likes of Shakib Al Hasan, who has featured in every editions of the T20 World Cup, may have similar regrets and the onus will be on Mustafizur and Shakib to lead Bangladesh's charge in the tournament.

If Mustafizur can carry his IPL form into the USA and the Caribbean, and fellow pacers like Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam and Tanzim Sakib can be at their best, the Tigers can dream of putting forth a far better display than they have ever done.

SHORT CORNER



Hyderabad chase 200-plus total for first time this IPL

Indian batter Abhishek Sharma smashed 66 as Sunrisers Hyderabad chased a total north of 200 for the first time in this edition of the Indian Premier League to down Punjab Kings by four wickets on Sunday. Chasing 215 for victory, Hyderabad, who are already among the top four teams to have made the play-offs, reached the target with five balls to spare at their home.

From the boxing rings of XBC to the prestige of WBC

For the first time, a Bangladeshi professional boxer has qualified to contest under the prestigious international boxing professional organisation, WBC (World Boxing Council). Rajshahi's boy, Utshob, will contend for the WBC Asia Silver Super Flyweight Title against one of India's top super flyweight boxers, 32-year-old Mazhar Hussain.

Paolo Montero to manage Juve until end of season

Paolo Montero will take charge of Serie A side Juventus for the remainder of the season, the club said on Sunday following the dismissal of Massimiliano Allegri. Juventus sacked their former coach Allegri on Friday over his behaviour during and after this week's Coppa Italia final in which he was sent off.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

'Leverkusen engraved in BUNDESLIGA HISTORY'

AGENCIES

Bayer Leverkusen's undefeated run to their maiden Bundesliga title will need time to sink in as coach Xabi Alonso said that the club now have made themselves an irreplaceable part of the German top-flight football's history.

Long derided as 'Neverkusen' for their failure to win a major title for decades, Leverkusen became the first-ever team in the Bundesliga to complete a full season without a loss following a 2-1 victory over Augsburg in the season finale on Saturday.

The club hailed the achievement by giving themselves a new nickname on their social media channel - 'Bayer 04 Neverlusen'.

"It is an exceptional season, not only in Germany but in Europe," Alonso said in a press conference. "We deserve now to be part of that history of European football. In 20 years we will look back and we will say 'we did that'."

"It is an important day for the club.



We have to be proud of the way we played. 90 points and undefeated," he said. "We need a bit more time to value this title. The first Bundesliga title but a big Bundesliga title victory.

"We will remember this day. It is a special day to have the league trophy here and having done it undefeated. This team has now been engraved in Bundesliga history."

Alonso's team also stretched their European record unbeaten run across all competitions this season to 51 matches as they look to add two more titles next week.

While Xabi realises how big an achievement is to go an entire season unbeaten is for his team, he also mentioned that they barely have a moment to enjoy their exceptional season as they are chasing more trophies in an attempt to complete the treble.

Leverkusen face Atalanta on Wednesday in the Europa League final before taking on Kaiserslautern in the German Cup final on May 25.

"I believe it (the unbeaten title win), but I need more time. But we have no time because we have the next big goal (on Wednesday). It is a unique opportunity," Alonso said.



Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk lands a punch on Britain's Tyson Fury during a heavyweight boxing world championship fight at Kingdom Arena in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Saturday. Usyk beat Fury by split decision to win the world's first undisputed heavyweight championship in 25 years. Usyk, who remains undefeated, joins the likes of Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis and Mike Tyson as undisputed heavyweight champion, the first since boxing recognised four major belts in the 2000s.

PHOTO: REUTERS