

Bagan beat Chennai FC 2-1, but miss out I-League title

KOLKATA, APR 30 /--/ Ten-man Mohun Bagan brilliantly bounced back to down Chennai City FC 2-1 but the result was not enough as they had to settle for a runners-up finish for the second successive time in I-League football here today.

Aizawl drew in Shillong in a dramatic second-half goal to pip Mohun Bagan to second spot with a slender one point difference in the lip-smacking twin Sunday showdowns. The clash lived up to the expectation as there was high drama starting with the news that Aizawl conceded a ninth minute goal to leave the Rabindra Sarobar home crowd in a frenzy mode. But in the 32nd minute, Mohun Bagan's U-22 recruit Nanda Kumar silenced the crowd when he darted the ball and scored with a gentle push, showing immaculate presence of mind. What followed was some missed opportunities with Balwant at the receiving end, but Mohun Bagan finally scored the equaliser in the 45+2 minute through Jeje Lalpekhlua. The unlucky Balwant got this time right to set Katsumi up. The ball was in the air as Balwant with his back to the goal, chested it down to Katsumi who put it past Karanjit Singh. Substitute Jeje Lalpekhlua got the better of Debraj Roy on the right channel and across near the byline saw Duffy place it brilliantly from the first-time shot to take Mohun Bagan ahead in the 77th minute. But all hell broke loose for the home side when their promising custodian Debit Majumder



was red-carded two minutes later in a seemingly dubious decision when he thwarted Nandakumar Soosai Raj inside the box on what appeared a clean tackle. Arguments and protests with referee Tejas Nayenkar followed. Jeje Shibinraj Kumiyil came in for Majumder but Mohun Bagan held on to the lead till the end. With their fate hinging on Aizawl's loss at Shillong, Mohun Bagan got the big news when Lajong

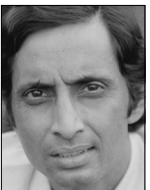
Aizawl FC script history, win I-League title



SHILLONG, APR 30 /--/ In one of the biggest achievements in Indian football history, unseeded Aizawl FC today lifted the I-League crown after they held Shillong Lajong 1-1 in a test-match here in the 67th minute through W Lalunfela as the two sides split points in a highly-anticipated match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. Despite Mohun Bagan defeating Chennai City FC

2-1 in a simultaneous match in Kolkata, Aizawl ran away with the title to script a fairytale story. Aizawl ended the league on 37 points while Mohun Bagan finished second on 36. They have won the I-League title in their second season, becoming the first club from the Northeast to bag the title. It was, in fact, the Leicester moment for the Aizawl side as their fortunes turned around in just a matter of year after they were on the verge of relegation from the I-League last season. Aizawl would not have at all played in the I-League this season as they finished eighth last year but after a few Goan sides pulled out of the country's top-flight league, they got a lifeline to stay afloat. Their feat is comparable to the unheralded English Premier League side Leicester which won the title in 2015-16 season after they were on the verge of relegation the previous year. A club whose budget is just around Rs 2 crore (Mohun Bagan spend the same amount in buying Sony Norde), it's an achievement of enormous proportion. The match, the Northeast derby, was though not without controversy as Aizawl played under protest after finding out that the title-deciding game would be conducted by officials from Bengal. Aizawl protested because Kolkata side Mohun Bagan were also in title contention and playing a simultaneous match. The Northeastern club said that they have earlier requested the AIFF to appoint neutral match officials from other states. (PTI)

Former East Bengal captain Santo Mitra passes away



KOLKATA, APR 30 /--/ Former East Bengal captain Santo Mitra passed away on Sunday morning after a prolonged battle with throat cancer. Family sources said, Mitra was 75. He is survived by daughter and wife.

He was battling throat cancer since 2009, the year he was crowned as Kolkata Sheriff. He passed away at 7.20 am, according to a family source. The former East Bengal left-back represented the red-and-gold brigade from 1959-1972 and won all the top tournaments of the country for the club. He was made captain in 1970 when they won the local league, the IFA Shield after defeating Iran's Pas Club and then the Durand Cup defeating arch-rivals Mohun Bagan. Mitra was named in the India squad for the 1968 Merdeka Cup but he never got the opportunity to play for India. Mitra was also conferred with East Bengal's Lifetime Achievement award in 2012.

As a coach, he played an instrumental role during the 1984 Nehru Cup when he was the assistant coach along with Karnataka's Amjad Khan under Yugoslavian Ciric Milovan. He also coached Bengal in the 1988 Santosh Trophy and the next year he was made India manager when they won the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic qualifiers. Mitra was the football project director during the 2002 Asian Games. "He was a gentleman to the core, a great human. I have not seen him play but have heard about his achievements..."

May his soul rest in peace," former Indian captain Bhaichand Poojari Bhattacharya said in his condolence message. (PTI)

Listless RCB face strong Mumbai Indians

MUMBAI, APR 30 /--/ All but out of contention for the playoffs, Royal Challengers Bangalore would look to salvage a difficult season by sorting out their batting woes when they take on Mumbai Indians in an evening Premier League match here on Monday.

Mumbai are on the second spot in the IPL standings with 14 points, while Bangalore are second from bottom after having won just two of their 10 games. Mumbai Indians have won seven of their nine games so far and are in contention to make it to the play-offs. When the two sides meet at the Wankhede stadium, the hosts will have a distinct upper-hand as they have just lost one game at the venue. The form of opener Parthiv Patel, who scored a 70 against Gujarat Lions, will please the Mumbai Indians management. Parthiv will like to continue from where he left in the last game and he, along with Englishman Jos Buttler, would like to

give the team a flying start. Mumbai won their match against Gujarat Lions in a super over after both the teams were tied at 150, and they would like to dominate Royal Challengers Bangalore right from the word go. They would expect their batter's Patel, Buttler, skipper Rohit Sharma, Nitesh Rana and the Pandya brothers - Krunal and Hardik - to fire in unison. Mumbai will also like to get back to winning ways at the Wankhede as they lost their last match against Rising Pune Supergiant.

As far as their bowling is concerned, the comeback of Sri Lankan Lasith Malinga, who picked up two wickets last night, will please coach Shane Bond. The biggest positive for Mumbai has been their death overs' bowling, courtesy Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya. Krunal and seasoned off spinner Harbhajan Singh have been effective and the team management would like all these bowlers to restrict the

RPS look to maintain momentum, take on Gujarat Lions

PUNE, APR 30 /--/ Steadily gaining momentum, Rising Pune Supergiant would look to maintain the rhythm when they clash with low-confidence Gujarat Lions in an Indian Premier League match here on Monday.

After languishing in the bottom-half of the table, Supergiant notched up four wins in their last five matches to grab the fourth place. Currently on 10 points from nine games with five wins in their kitty, a win on Monday would ensure that the RPS stay in top-four and strengthen their chances of making the play-offs in the 10th edition of the IPL. In contrast, the Lions are at fifth with eight points from nine games and need to win rest of their matches to keep the chances of booking a play-off berth alive. The Supergiant would draw confidence from their comprehensive 61-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore here last night. Pune bowlers rose to the occasion, defending a sub-par total of 157 with a controlled bowling performance as they rode on brilliant performances by Imran Tahir (2/18) and man-of-the-match Lockie Ferguson (2/7). Even Jaydev Unadkat, Daniel Christian and Washington Sundar chipped in with a wicket apiece. However, the batsmen struggled to top the ante although the pitch was reasonably good and put on a total of just over 155 runs despite losing only three wickets. Skipper Steve Smith would be keen to address the issue of inconsistent batting when they face the Lions. But with the likes of Smith, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Manoj Tiwary and local boy Rahul Tripathi being among the runs so far, RPS would hope for them to fire in unison tomorrow. On the other hand, the Lions are coming into the match following a heart-breaking loss to Mumbai Indians in a thrilling Super Over finish at Rajkot last night. It would be tough to forget the disappointment of a narrow defeat and

bounce back. However, the Lions must be happy to have taken the Rising Pune Over while defending a modest total of 154. The Gujarat fielders were outstanding as they affected four run-outs, including three in the last seven overs. The Pune players showed a lot of character. Besides James Faulkner (2/34) and new-found testie Basil Thampi (3/29), who can bowl yorkers at will, chipping in with important contributions, new recruit Irfan Pathan also kept his nerves while bowling the last over. Gujarat would want their bowlers to continue in the same vein but would want the batsmen to take more responsibility.

Teams (from):
Rising Pune Supergiant: Steve Smith (c), Ajinkya Rahane, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Ashok Dinda, Mayank Agarwal, Faf du Plessis, Ankit Sharma, Baba Aparajith, Anshu Bains, Rajat Bhatia, Deepak Chahar, Rahul Chahar, Dan Christian, Lockie Ferguson, Imran Tahir, Jaskaran Singh, Usman Khawaja, Saurabh Kumar, Ben Stokes, Washington Sundar, Milind Tamankar, Manoj Tiwary, Adnan Zampa, Jaydev Unadkat, Ishwar Pandey, Rahul Tripathi, Shardul Thakur.
Gujarat Lions: Suresh Raina (capt), Akshdeep Nath, Basil Thampi, Shubham Agarwal, Wasim Smith, Chirag Suri, James Faulkner, Aaron Finch, Manpreet Gony, Ishan Kishan, Ravindra Jadeja, Shadab Jakati, Dinesh Karthik, Dhaval Kulkarni, Praveen Kumar, Brandon McCullum, Vinay Prasad, Sangwan, Jason Roy, Jaydev Shah, Shelly Shourya, Nathusingh, Tejas Baroka and Andrew Tye. (PTI)

Match starts 8pm.

Kings XI Punjab decimate Daredevils by 10 wickets

MOHALI, APR 30 /--/ A lacklustre Delhi Daredevils suffered an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat following a pathetic batting show during which they were shot out for just 67 runs by Kings XI Punjab, here today.

After bowling out Daredevils in 17.1 overs for the second lowest score in this edition of IPL, the hosts knocked off the runs in 7.5 overs with Martin Gupthill smashing 50 off 27 balls. Gupthill's seven fours and two sixes meant that Kings XI Punjab just manage to keep their play-offs hopes alive with eight points at the bottom of the eight-team table. After RCB, Daredevils are another team that is looking distinctly out-of-depth which was evident in their performance where the players simply looked disinterested. The match as a contest was over in the first 10 overs during which Daredevils were reduced to 33 in six. Most disappointing aspect was complete lack of gumption to fight it out. Kings XI Punjab's chase was a walk in the park with Gupthill making a minicameo of the bowling. With no pressure



Sandeep Sharma and Axar Patel picked up six wickets and conceded 42 runs

of a target, he used the Powerplay overs well. Mohammed Shami looked rusty after finally getting to play another match. It's not only the players but even the team management including chief coach Rahul Dravid would have to answer a few tough questions pertaining to planning. Every year, some team or the other loses out on key players but even from the start looked like a team that was only adding up the numbers. The two victories achieved were partly due to some good late-order hitting. Lacking quality in batting department with confidence hitting the lowest ebb, Daredevils looked like a rudderless ship with none of the batsmen getting past 20-run mark. The highest individual score was 18 from Corey Anderson. This was the second lowest score in Kings XI Punjab after 49 by Royal Challengers Bangalore. Daredevils batting show is even more

Kuldeep can be effective if picked for Champions Trophy: Hogg

NEW DELHI, APR 30 /--/ A Chinaman bowler himself, Australian Brad Hogg has an edge over the experts who are analysing Kuldeep Yadav's abilities, which he feels will help India if he is picked for the Champions Trophy in England. Hogg has been Yadav's teammate in the Kolkata Knight Riders to deliver and

"Yes, Kuldeep can be effective in England. The best cricketers are the ones who can adapt to foreign conditions," Hogg told PTI during an interaction. "Great cricketers are not two countries are same. There is always something different that adds to the variety of different individuals. One of his (Kuldeep) next job will be to bowl on different

wickets." The 46-year-old of the kind of stock delivery (his go-to ball), he wants to bowl. Hogg explained it would depend on the format one plays.

"If you are playing 50-over cricket, a leg-spinner can be a bit more effective. I use his leg-break. In Test cricket, it's entirely different where you have to be very patient and wait for T20, one needs to be a bit more quicker through the air," he said. Hogg then gave the example of the title-winning one of the successful spinners in the shortest format. "Someone like Badshah Khan delivered into pads a little bit more so that batsmen don't free their arms. In T20 cricket, one doesn't want to be a bit quicker so that the batsmen don't come out of their crease.