

Ronaldo hat-trick fires Real into semis

MADRID, APR 19 /-/- Cristiano Ronaldo scored a controversial hat-trick to become the first man to reach 100 Champions League goals as Real Madrid overcame 10-man Bayern Munich 4-2 after extra time in a thrilling quarter-final second leg.

The holders surged through 6-3 on aggregate at an exhilarated Santiago Bernabeu to take their place in Friday's semi-final draw for a record seventh consecutive year. But Real were pushed all the way by Bayern, who battled back from a 2-1 first-leg deficit to send the tie into extra time thanks to Robert Lewandowski's penalty and an own goal from Sergio Ramos.

However, after Arturo Vidal was sent off, Ronaldo hit the century mark in Europe's top club competition on 104 minutes and completed his hat-trick five minutes later. Bayern were left incensed, though, as Ronaldo's second and third goals were clearly offside. "To score six goals against a team like Bayern Munich isn't easy so we deserved to go through," the Portuguese striker told Spanish TV station Antena 3. "Real Madrid is Real Madrid, we are used to suffering and we are happy to be in the semis once again." Marco Asensio gave a night of high-class action the finale it deserved with a sensational solo goal to rub salt in Bayern wounds. "The (red) card for Arturo wasn't a card and then the two goals from



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates scoring their third goal to complete his hat-trick — Reuters

Cristiano are offside so clearly we are not happy," said Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes. "In a quarter-final you have to put a better referee, or it is the moment to introduce video refereeing, which is what UEFA are trying because there are too many errors." The German champions had been beaten on their previous four trips to Spain without even scoring a goal.

However, knowing they needed at least two to progress, Ancelotti's men started on the front foot and were left to rue a huge opportunity just eight minutes in. Marcelo made a miraculous goal to deny Thiago Alcantara before forward Real winger Arjen Robben scuffed into the side-netting on his trusted left foot. Much like the first leg, Madrid sweated the early stages and had plenty of chances to go in front before half time.

Jerome Boateng bailed out a rare mistake from goalkeeper Manuel Neuer as he cleared off the line from Ramos after Neuer fumbled a simple cross. The half-time whistle brought some respite to proceedings on the field, although the Bayern fans were involved in a minor clash with police at the break. The disturbances quickly died down and Bayern soon gave the travelling 4,000 from Germany something to cheer when play resumed. Another goal-line clearance by Neuer as many Bayern players sank to their knees knowing Champions League glory had passed them by for another year. (AFP)

pointed to the spot as Robben went down under a challenge from Casemiro. Lewandowski stayed cool under the pressure and converted from the spot for his 39th goal of the season. Ronaldo is used to have Casemiro's nerves when he steered Casemiro's cross into the far corner 14 minutes from time. However, Real's celebrations were very short-lived as just a minute later the ball ricocheted around their box and Ramos turned into his own net. The balance of topsy-turvy tie turned Madrid's way again with five minutes remaining as just as in the first leg, Bayern were reduced to 10 men when Vidal saw a second yellow card for chopping down Asensio. The extra man proved decisive as Madrid settled the tie with a three-goal burst either side of half time in extra time. Ronaldo took advantage at not being flagged for offside as he controlled and fired low past Neuer to become the first man to reach a Champions League century. Four minutes into the second period of extra time he had Marcelo thank for a brilliant run and unselfish pass that allowed the Portuguese the simplest of finishes to complete his hat-trick despite again being in an offside position. Asensio sealed victory in sensational style with a stunning solo run and low right-footed finish as many Bayern players sank to their knees knowing Champions League glory had passed them by for another year. (AFP)



I still have a lot more to offer: Gayle

RAJKOT, APR 19 /-/- West Indies swashbuckling batsman Chris Gayle, who is feeling privileged to become the first batsman to score 10,000 T20 runs, has insisted that he still has a lot more to offer to the fans and would like to get a few more thousand runs under his belt. Gayle's first significant contribution in this season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) — a 38-ball 77 — helped Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Gujarat Lions by 21 runs in Rajkot on Tuesday evening. The left-hander, who was brought in as a replacement for the injured Virat Kohli, put together a 122-run opening stand with skipper Virat Kohli as Royal Challengers blasted 219 for 2, the highest total of the season. Gayle blasted five fours and seven monstrous sixes before he got out. "People are still looking out for Chris Gayle. The universe boss is still here and still alive," ESPNcricinfo quoted Gayle as saying. "It was great fun. You know it's good to be back. I wanted this so badly but first of all to get 10,000 runs, it was actually on my mind, so I'm glad to get that sort of achievement. I just want to thank the fans and all the franchisees where I have actually played around the world. Even playing for West Indies as well. At the end of the day, they have actually played a part in this 10,000 runs as well. So, I want to thank all the franchisees." "It has been fantastic and like I said still I have to look more to offer to the fans. Hopefully, I can keep entertaining and get a few more thousand runs under my belt," he added.

Tendulkar's philosophical reply to SRK's sentimental tweet

NEW DELHI, APR 19 /-/- In his own inimitable way, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan today wished Sachin Tendulkar for his upcoming film and elicited a philosophical response from the cricket legend. A film on Tendulkar — Sachin A Billion Dreams — will release worldwide on May 26 and celebrities across various walks of life have been wishing the cricket legend on social media. Shah Rukh's good luck post, though stood out. Tendulkar, who rarely shows his emotions, gave a glimpse of his philosophical side while responding to the gesture of extremely popular actor. "I believed, when u did well i would 2 & when u did n, i will fail. Like a billion others i miss my guiding lite. AFB for the film." Shah Rukh tweeted. In reply, Tendulkar tagged Shah Rukh's post and replied: "Zindagi me haara na hoti to koi kabhi jeeta na nah aur kuch seekhta bhi nah. Touched by your words like a billion others, love @iamsrk-07." Among the other notable personalities to have wished Tendulkar include Rajnikanth, Madhuri Dixit-Nene, Shreya Ghoshal, (PTI)

Mumbai Indians look to continue winning streak against KXIP

INDORE, APR 19 /-/- On a roll with four consecutive victories, two-time champions Mumbai Indians would look to continue the winning streak when they take on Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match, here on Thursday. Having won four out of the five matches they played so far, Mumbai Indians are placed second with eight points and would certainly start as favourites against Kings XI Punjab, who have managed to win just two of their five games. Even though Mumbai's top order is yet to click, the middle and lower order have more than made up for the poor starts. Skipper Rohit Sharma, who did not have an ideal start to the tournament, made a strong comeback in the previous match against Gujarat Lions with an unbeaten 40 off 29 deliveries, while Kieron Pollard continued with his fine run, scoring a quickfire 23-ball 39. Mumbai Indians look to continue winning streak against KXIP Young Nitish Rana has been a consistent

contributor for Mumbai this season. He chipped in with a brilliant half-century in the last match to enable Mumbai to topple Gujarat Lions by six wickets. In fact, one of the biggest positives for Mumbai has been the form of the

hand, will have their task cut out against a strong Mumbai outfit. Despite starting their campaign with back-to-back victories, Kings XI slipped in the next three games and would now be desperate to get back to winning ways. Kings XI have some dangerous batsmen, especially the three 'Ms' — skipper Glenn Maxwell, David Miller and Eoin Morgan — besides Hashim Amla who can pile up runs but none of them clicked in the last three outings. The



battle was fought by Manan Vohra in the last match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, as he scored a fabulous 50-ball 90 but Kings XI still lost by five runs while chasing a modest 160-run target due to lack of support from the other end. Kings XI would desperately want the big names to stand up and make their presence felt against Mumbai tomorrow. Their bowling unit, which includes a reliable Mohit Sharma, experienced Ishant Sharma and talented Axar Patel, needs to fire in unison.

East Bengal coach injured on first day of training, ruled out



KOLKATA, APR 19 /-/- East Bengal's newly-appointed coach Mirul Islam got injured during his very first training session with the club, a "ruptured" Achilles tendon ruling him out for four weeks and adding to his woes. Out of I-League title race, East Bengal appointed the Santos Trophy-winning coach on an interim basis, his tenure fixed till the Federation Cup. With less than a month to go for the Federation Cup, the 56-year-old suffered the injury on his left foot. "I've ruptured my Achilles tendon and will be out of action for at least four weeks. I wanted to give it all for East Bengal in the remainder season but such a big opportunity is wasted in such a cruel

manner," an emotional Banerjee said after he was discharged from the hospital. The former Mohammedan Sporting AFC-LI-license holder coach tumbled on the field in an awkward manner after his foot landed on an uneven surface. Banerjee was named coach less than 12 hours after Englishman Trevor Morgan shot off a resignation letter following a string of losses, including a humiliating defeat in I-League derby. A 0-1 defeat to DSK Shivajians on April 16, their latest, meant their elusive I-League title hopes were dashed. East Bengal are third on the table with 27 points from 16 fixtures, below title contenders Aizawl FC and Mohun Bagan.

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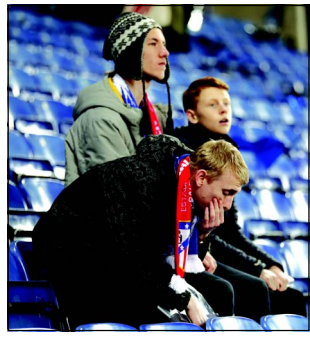
Afriidi gets special retirement gift from Indian cricket team

NEW DELHI, APR 19 /-/- In a heartwarming show of sportsmanship and camaraderie, the Indian cricket team sent a special retirement gift to Shahid Afridi by presenting him a Virat



Kohli shirt signed by all the players. A Pakistani journalist uploaded the picture on which Kohli wrote: "Shahid Bhai, best wishes, always a pleasure playing against you." The jersey — number 18 and VIRAT on it — had the signatures of Kohli, Ashish Nehra, Suresh Raina, Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ajinkya Rahane, Shikhar Dhawan, Ravichandran Ashwin, Hardik Pandya and others. The 37-year-old Afridi bid adieu to his 21-year-old international career in February when he announced his retirement from the T20 version of cricket. He had already retired from Test and One-Day formats of the game. (PTI)

Vardy in vain as Atletico end Leicester fairytale



Leicester fans look dejected after the match Action — Reuters

LEICESTER, APR 19 /-/- Jamie Vardy scored in vain as Leicester City's Champions League fairytale came to a valiant end following a 1-1 quarter-final draw at home to Atletico Madrid. Seeking to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit, Leicester fell further behind to Saul Niguez's first-half header, before Vardy's 61st-minute strike gave them hope. But despite heavy Leicester pressure and furious noise inside the King Power Stadium, Atletico last night completed a 2-1 aggregate win to reach the semi-finals for the third time in four seasons. "We had them rattled with the effort and commitment we showed. It's no discredit to lose to a team of that calibre," Leicester manager Craig Shakespeare told BT Sport. "The whole club, from the supporters to the players to the owners can be immensely proud, but I've just said to the players that they should want more of this and they've agreed that that's what they want." Leicester had hoped to become the competition's first debutant semi-finalists since Villarreal in 2006, but they

were unable to engineer a repeat of their last-16 triumph against Sevilla. Their exit brings to an end a golden adventure sparked by last season's stunning Premier League title win. Having successfully staved off the threat of relegation under new manager Shakespeare, the rest of their season holds nothing more than a return to pre-title normality. It is the third time Atletico have eliminated Leicester from continental competition, after previous triumphs in the 1961-62 European Cup Winners' Cup and the 1997-98 UEFA Cup. Beaten by city foes Real Madrid in the 2014 and 2016 finals, Diego Simeone's side can continue to dream that this will be the year they finally end their wait for a European football's biggest prize. "The full of emotion and pride at the performance of my team," said Simeone. "It also has to say what a great performance from our opponents. It was almost a pleasure to compete against them." Leicester's desire to make the most of the occasion was clear from the start, pyrotechnics greeting the players as they came out while fans twirled white, blue and gold foil flags distributed by the club. But whereas Leicester had quickly taken charge of their second-leg match against Sevilla in the previous round, Atletico made it clear they would not be pushed around. They defended with their customary tenacity, while two dangerous crosses from Yannick Carrasco — preferred by the fit-again Kevin Gameiro — demonstrated their threat on the counter.

It was just as Leicester were threatening to make inroads, Shinji Okazaki stabbing wide at the near post from Vardy's cross, that the visitors tightened their grip on the tie. Filipe Luis was given space to shape a cross into the box from the left and the unmarked Saul expertly headed a header past Kasper Schmeichel's outstretched right hand. Riyad Mahrez volleyed straight at Jan Oblak at the other end after Marc Albrighton's cross was headed away, but it was the voices of the away fans that rang

loudest as the half-time whistle sounded. The second half twirled with it drastic changes for the hosts, with Ben Chilwell and Leonardo Ulloa replacing Yohan Benalouane and Okazaki as Shakespeare switched to a bold 3-4-3 system. Antoine Griezmann gave them a goal less than 12 hours after Englishman Trevor Morgan shot off a resignation letter following a string of losses, including a humiliating defeat in I-League derby. A 0-1 defeat to DSK Shivajians on April 16, their latest, meant their elusive I-League title hopes were dashed. East Bengal are third on the table with 27 points from 16 fixtures, below title contenders Aizawl FC and Mohun Bagan.