

City Football Group to take control of Mumbai club

From Manchester to Mumbai, City owners expand their global empire

MUMBAI, Nov 28, (RTRS): The owners of Premier League champions Manchester City have agreed to buy 65% of Indian soccer team Mumbai City FC, expanding their global stable of clubs to eight in countries from China to Japan to the United States.



Soriano

The City Football Group (CFG) announced the deal just a day after it agreed to sell a stake to US private equity firm Silver Lake for \$500 million, making it the most valuable soccer group in the world with a \$4.8 billion price tag.

While rivals such as Manchester United have focused on building their brand and global following based on one team, CFG has acquired clubs around the world and modelled them on the Manchester City style of play and off-field organisation.

The strategy has helped boost the exposure and popularity of the Premier League champions, whose fortunes have been transformed after decades in the doldrums thanks to an infusion of cash from Abu Dhabi since 2008.

Announcing the Mumbai City deal, Manchester City CEO Ferran Soriano said the group had been looking for years at soccer in India and the Indian Super League (ISL), which is currently in its sixth season.

"Our goal is long term, we are here to stay," he told a news conference in Mumbai. "We are not here to lose money, we will look to help the league generally improve so that everybody makes money, including us. It will take time, we are patient."

Mumbai City FC's home ground is the Mumbai Football Arena, which has a capacity of just 8,000 while the team is sitting in seventh place in the 10-team ISL after five games.

SOCCER

"We believe that this investment will deliver transformative benefits to Mumbai City FC, to City Football Group and to Indian Football as a whole," CFG Chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak said in the statement.

Reuters had reported earlier on Thursday that CFG, which is majority owned by Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, was likely to acquire a majority stake in Mumbai City.

Existing shareholders in the Mumbai club, including Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor and chartered accountant Bimal Parekh, will control the remaining 35% stake.

Cricket-mad India is a massive underachiever as far as soccer is concerned and the country of 1.3 billion people has yet to make a single appearance at a World Cup finals.

A number of European clubs have, however, set up academies on a franchise basis to get a foothold in a po-

Mumbai City and NorthEast United share points in ISL clash

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 28: Mumbai City and NorthEast United FC settled for a point each in the Indian Super League clash on Wednesday.

Panagiotis Triadis put NorthEast in the lead before Mumbai City fought back with two goals from Amine Chermi and it was left for Asamoah Gyan to put Highlanders on par as both teams settled for a point with a 2-2 draw following a first goalpost.

Panagiotis Triadis scored in the 9th minute that put NorthEast the home side but the brake Mumbaikars fought back with two goals from Amine Chermi in the 23rd and 32nd minutes and Asamoah Gyan in the 42nd minute restored parity for the Highlanders before the break.

NorthEast United started the game on a positive note and got off the mark early when Sauvik Chakrabarti failed to clear the ball from a Rakesh Pradhan throw-in and gifted the ball to Triadis, who unleashed a stunning shot from the edge

of artificial pitches in cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi, which have drawn in a young population previously focused chiefly on cricket.

"It is a great endorsement of the increasing appeal of Indian football and for all football fans in India," Nita Ambani, founder chairperson of the ISL, said in the City Group statement.



Asamoah Gyan restored parity after Mumbai City FC had gone 2-1 up.

that gave Amrinder Singh no chance. Mumbai went all out for an equalizer and started creating a few chances. They increased the pace and were rewarded in the 23rd minute. Moham-

med Larbi sent Modou Sougou down the right flank and the striker's sent an accurate cross into the box and all that Amine Chermi had to do was just tap the ball from six yards.

SOCCER

The visitors soon scored another following a weak defending. Paulo Machado's free-kick from the deep fell straight to Nim Dorjee. He struggled to clear the ball and that allowed Chermi's scissor-kick sail into the net, but Gyan was on hand to equalize for NorthEast United just before the break.

From a counterattack, Martin Chaves played Gyan and the fleet-footed Ghanaian beat two defenders and slotted past Amrinder to make it 2-2.

Mumbai continued their aggressive approach after the break and could have gone ahead again, if not for a cru-

cial touch by Mislav Komorski about the hour mark. Larbi past a couple of defenders and found Diego Carlos free in the centre. The Brazilian forward lashed at the ball but his sizzling shot flew past the post following a deflection. Mumbai looked more likely to score another but it was not to be on a night that saw action packed soccer.

At the other end, Gyan's firm shot from a quick break was well saved by the Mumbai goalkeeper, keeping the score line intact. Amrinder Singh nearly allowed a goal when he fumbled with the ball while trying to collect a straightforward free-kick from the deep, but the hosts failed to punish the goalkeeper for his mistake and sent the loose ball over the bar.

Minutes later, Triadis received the ball inside the box on the left and crossed towards the other side of the goal where substitute Maximiliano Barriero failed to connect a close-range header with just the goalkeeper to beat.

total of 498 million viewers in India in 2018 last year compared with 741 million for cricket.

Mumbai City has had Premier League veterans such as Freddie Ljungberg, Nicolas Anelka and Diego Forlan as marquee players in the past. The first edition of the ISL was won by Atletico de Kolkata, which then counted Atletico Madrid as a co-owner.

Champions League games now draw millions of viewers and are easily available on India's big streaming networks for subscriptions of \$7 to \$13 a year.

The ISL is promoted by billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries and TV network Star India, which is owned by Walt Disney.

According to the Broadcast Audience Research Council, soccer had a

No. 4 Kansas outlasts Dayton in OT, wins Maui Invitational title

Brooks, No. 6 UNC beat Alabama 76-67 in Battle 4 Atlantis

LAHAINA, Hawaii, Nov 28, (AP): Devon Dotson scored 31 points, Udoka Azubuike had seven of his 29 in overtime and No. 4 Kansas outlasted Dayton 90-84 to win its third Maui Invitational title.

The Flyers and Jayhawks spent much of the afternoon trading leads and highlight-reel plays in a bleacher-shaking atmosphere inside the bandbox Lahaina Civic Center.

Kansas (6-1) used a late 11-0 run to go up by three, but Dayton's Jalen Crutcher buried a 3-pointer from about 5 feet behind the new, deeper arc with 2.1 seconds left in regulation to tie the game at 73.

BASKETBALL

The Jayhawks went to Azubuike early in the overtime and the 7-footer delivered, scoring three baskets at the rim. A 32% free throw shooter entering the game, he also hit three from the line in overtime.

Michigan State 75, UCLA 62
In Lahaina, Hawaii, Cassius Winston scored 20 points, Xavier Tillman had 14 and Michigan State beat UCLA in the Maui Invitational fifth-place game.

The Spartans (5-2) opened the tournament with a loss to Virginia Tech, but bounced back with consecutive solid performances.

Winston had a second straight strong performance after struggling in the opener and Michigan State used an 18-2 advantage in fast break points to close its Maui trip with a flourish.

North Carolina 76, Alabama 67
In Paradise Island, Bahamas, Garrison Brooks scored 16 of his 20 points in the first half and North Carolina overwhelmed Alabama on the glass in a Battle 4 Atlantis first-round game.

Freshman big man Armando Bacot had 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Tar Heels (5-0), who entered the game as the nation's No. 1 team in rebounding margin. The Tar Heels nearly doubled the Crimson Tide to finish with a 60-31 edge on the glass.

Virginia 46, Maine 26
In Charlottesville, Virginia, Ma-



Kansas guard Devon Dotson (1) collides with Dayton guard Dwayne Cohill during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game on Nov 27 in Lahaina, Hawaii. (AP)

madi Diakite scored 15 points and Jay Huff had 13 as Virginia beat Maine.

The Cavaliers (7-0) played without starting guard Braxton Key, their second-leading scorer and top rebounder, after the school said he had wrist surgery and will be sidelined indefinitely. They also were without Kody Stattmann, another starter, who missed his fourth consecutive game with an undisclosed illness.

Maine (2-4) kept it close for much of the game, more because Virginia had trouble scoring than anything else.

Gonzaga 94, Southern Miss 69
In Paradise Island, Bahamas, Corey Kispert broke loose from a brutal three-game shooting funk to match his career high with 28 points and hit seven 3-pointers as Gonzaga beat Southern Miss in the first round of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

Joel Ayayi added 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Bulldogs (7-0), who had no trouble against a team picked to

finish last in Conference USA. Killian Tillie, a preseason all-West



Oklahoma State forward Yor Anei (14) goes to the basket during the first half of an NCAA college semifinal basketball game against the Syracuse in the NIT Season Tip-Off tournament on Nov 27, in New York. (AP)

Coast Conference pick, didn't play.

Oregon 71, Seton Hall 69
In Paradise Island, Bahamas, Shakur Juiston scored on a putback with 14.4 seconds left and Oregon rallied from 19 points down in the second half to beat Seton Hall 71-69 in the opening round of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

The Ducks (6-0) trailed 49-30 early in the second half but hung around despite a brilliant performance from Seton Hall's Myles Powell, who had 32 points for the No. 2 scoring total in the nine-year history of the event.

Oklahoma St 86, Syracuse 72
In New York, with a few words on Wednesday night, Oklahoma State coach Mike Boynton almost guaranteed opponents may experience sleepless nights. That, they did.

Oklahoma State (6-0) will meet Mississippi in the championship game Friday night, which will follow Syracuse's (4-2) date with Penn State in the consolation.

Afghanistan lead by 19 runs

West Indies on brink of 3-day Test victory against Afghans

LUCKNOW, India, Nov 28, (AP): West Indies was on the brink of victory against Afghanistan in their one-off Test after stocky off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall achieved a match haul of 10 wickets on day two Thursday.

Shamarh Brook's maiden Test hundred anchored the West Indies to 277 in its first innings and a 90-run lead just before tea. By stumps, Cornwall had 3-41 and reduced Afghanistan to 109-7 for an overall lead of just 19 runs.

West Indies didn't complete the win on Thursday only because of the resistance of Javed Ahmadi, who scored 62 runs until he was out on the last ball of the day to a brilliant low catch by Cornwall, giving off-spinner Roston Chase innings figures of 3-1-10-3.

CRICKET

Ahmadi was Afghanistan's last recognized batsman, and his exit ensured his team will not become the first to win three of its first four Tests.

Cornwall took 7-75 on Wednesday as Afghanistan was dismissed for 187 on the opening day. He again bamboozled the home team's top order on Thursday, and should have dismissed Ahmadi in his second over, but Cornwall overstepped and bowled a no-ball.

Afghanistan opens Ahmadi and Ibrahim Zadran (23) splendidly saw off the seamers in the second innings and looked steady by adding 53 runs.

But when Cornwall began and had Zadran lbw when the batsman offered no shot to the off-spinner, Afghani-

stan slipped to 59-4 in the space of six runs. The flurry of wickets included a bizarre run out of Ihsanullah as Ahmadi first ran and then refused to go for a sharp single with Ihsanullah left stranded in the middle of the pitch.

Debutant Nasir Jamal (15) resisted against Cornwall before Chase arrived and took three quick wickets. Earlier, the 31-year-old Brooks, playing in only his third Test match, made 111 off 214 balls before the West Indies was bowled out.

Brooks featured in two half-century partnerships to the frustration of the Afghan spinners led by captain Rashid Khan.

Brooks hit 15 fours and a six before he finally fell in the second session to a rare reckless shot and was bowled by left-arm spinner Amir Hamza, who took 5-74 in his debut Test.

Rashid, 3-114, bowled an unchanged spell of 13 overs in the first session and got lbw decisions against Shimron Hetmyer (13) and Cornwall (5). There's no television referrals for this Test, otherwise both decisions may have gone in West Indies' favor on review.

The West Indies resumed on day two at 68-2 and some aggressive batting netted 127 runs in the first session.

Brooks added 82 runs with John Campbell (55) as they played aggressive shots against the Afghan spinners in the first hour.



Brook

Afghanistan vs West Indies Scoreboard

LUCKNOW, India, Nov 28, (RTRS): Scoreboard at stumps on the 2nd day of the only Test between Afghanistan and West Indies on Thursday.

AFGHANISTAN 1st Innings 187 (J. Ahmadi 39; H. Hotak 34; R. Cornwall 7-75)

WEST INDIES 1st Innings
K. Brathwaite lbw Hotak 11
J. Campbell c Ihsanullah b Hotak 55
S. Hope c Ihsanullah b R. Khan 7
S. Brooks b Hotak 111
S. Hetmyer lbw R. Khan 13
R. Chase c I. Zadran b Z. Khan 2
S. Dowrich lbw Z. Khan 42
J. Holder st Zazai b Hotak 11
R. Cornwall lbw R. Khan 5
K. Roach lbw Hotak 3
J. Warrican not out 4
Extras: (12b, 1nb) 13
Total: (83.3 overs, all out) 277
Fall of Wickets: 1-27 (Brathwaite), 2-34 (Hope), 3-116 (Campbell), 4-137 (Hetmyer), 5-150 (Chase), 6-224 (Dowrich), 7-243 (Holder), 8-260 (Cornwall), 9-270 (Brooks), 10-277 (Roach)

Bowling: Ahmadzai 10-3-24-0, Hotak 28-3-4-74-5, R. Khan 32-5-114-3, Z. Khan 13-2-53-2

AFGHANISTAN 2nd Innings
I. Zadran lbw Cornwall 23
J. Ahmadi c Cornwall b Chase 62
Ihsanullah run out (Hope) 1
R. Shah c Brooks b Cornwall 0
A. Stanikzai c Brooks b Cornwall 0
N. Jamal b Chase 15
H. Hotak c Cornwall b Chase 1
A. Zazai not out 2
Extras: (4lb, 1nb) 5
Total: (36 overs, 7 wkts) 109
Fall of Wickets: 1-53 (I. Zadran), 2-55 (Ihsanullah), 3-55 (R. Shah), 4-59 (Stanikzai), 5-96 (Ahmadzai), 6-98 (Hotak), 7-109 (Ahmadi)
To Bat: R. Khan, Ahmadzai, Z. Khan
Bowling: Roach 4-2-5-0, Holder 3-0-18-0, Warrican 12-3-31-0, Cornwall 14-3-41-3, Chase 3-1-10-3
Match Situation: Afghanistan lead by 19 runs with 3 wickets remaining
Umpires: Paul Reiffel, Nitin Menon
TV Umpire: Ahmed Pakteen
Match Referee: Brian Broad

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