

Sports

Man Utd fans' anti-Glazer protest forces postponement of Liverpool clash

MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Premier League clash against Liverpool was postponed on Sunday after fans invaded the Old Trafford pitch as part of a protest against United's owners, the Glazer family. Hundreds of fans managed to make their way into the ground, chanting "we want Glazers out." Large numbers of supporters had also gathered outside the stadium and there were clashes with police as they moved in to disperse the crowd. "Following discussion between the police, the Premier League, Trafford Council and the clubs, our match against Liverpool has been postponed due to safety and security considerations around the protest today," United said in a statement.

"Our fans are passionate about Manchester United and we completely acknowledge the right to free expression and peaceful protest. However, we regret the disruption to the team and actions which put other fans, staff and the police in danger. We thank the police for their support and will assist them in any subsequent investigations." The match had been due to start at 16:30 local time (15:30GMT), but had been delayed by over an hour before the decision to call the match off was confirmed. "The security and safety of everyone at Old Trafford remains of paramount importance," the Premier League said in a statement.

"We understand and respect the strength of feeling but condemn all acts of violence, criminal damage and trespass, especially given the associated COVID-19 breaches. Fans have many channels by which to make their views known, but the actions of a minority seen today have no justification."

Manchester City could have been crowned Premier League champions on Sunday had United lost the match. No rearranged date has yet been agreed for the fixture to be played. Liverpool said they were in "full



MANCHESTER: Supporters protest against Manchester United's owners, inside English Premier League club Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, north west England on Sunday, ahead of their English Premier League fixture against Liverpool. — AFP

agreement" for the match to be called off as the safety of their players and staff could not be guaranteed.

"It is our position that public safety must be the number one factor in any such decision, with the ability to provide a secure environment for the participants, staff and officials being a particular priority," Liverpool said in a statement. "It was clearly not possible for this to be guaranteed today due to a situation which escalated rapidly."

Anger reignited

Anger towards the Glazers has been reignited by United's part in a failed European Super League (ESL) project, that collapsed within 48 hours last month due to a backlash from fans, players, governments and governing bodies.

United and Liverpool were reportedly two of the leading drivers behind the project that sought to guarantee top level European football for 15 founder

members every season without the need to qualify on the pitch.

In a rare public statement, United co-chairman Joel Glazer apologized to fans last month for signing up to the ESL. "You made very clear your opposition to the European Super League, and we have listened. We got it wrong, and we want to show that we can put things right," he said.

United fans also breached security at their club's training ground in the days after the ESL proposals were made public to protest against the Glazers. The Americans have owned United since a controversial £790 million (\$1.1 billion) leveraged takeover in 2005 saddled the club with huge debt repayments.

The combination of interest payments on the debt and dividends paid to the Glazers has already cost the English giants over £1 billion during their ownership. That cost has been borne on the field as United have not won the Premier League since legendary former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Early in the Glazers' reign, United fans wore the green and gold colors of Newton Heath, the club founded in 1878 that eventually became Manchester United 24 years later, as a sign of protest. Green and gold scarves and flares were back at Old Trafford on Sunday, while there were a number of banners aimed at the Glazers.

United's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward has already announced he will be leaving his role by the end of the year amid the fallout from the failed ESL project. "There's huge discontent, not just across Manchester United fans, but I think for football fans up and down the country and I think they are just saying enough is enough," former United captain Gary Neville told Sky Sports. — AFP



VALENCIA: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi scores a goal during the Spanish League football match between Valencia and Barcelona at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia on Sunday. — AFP

Messi double leads Barca to nail-biting win over Valencia

VALENCIA: Lionel Messi missed a penalty but still scored twice, including an exquisite free-kick, as Barcelona edged a five-goal thriller with Valencia on Sunday to stay within touching distance of the top of La Liga. After Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid both won on Saturday, there was no margin for error at Mestalla, where Barca's 3-2 win reduced the gap behind Atletico back to two points, now with four games left to play.

Gabriel Paulista headed Valencia in front early in the second half before Messi missed a penalty, only to smash in from the resulting scramble. Griezmann and a superb Messi free-kick looked to have then made the victory secure but Carlos Soler's stunning strike from distance left Barcelona holding on at the end, a nerve-wracking win meaning they could overtake Atletico Madrid next weekend if they beat Diego Simeone's side at Camp Nou. "We knew we would not have any calm games," said Gerard Pique. "We are still in the fight. Calm games mean you're not competing for anything."

After a frantic week in which Real Madrid drew against Real Betis, Atletico lost to Athletic Bilbao and Barca were beaten on Thursday by Granada, order has been restored to some extent this weekend, with all the top three back to winning ways. Sevilla are

now six points behind Atletico and will need to beat Athletic Bilbao on Monday to stay in the mix ahead of their own crunch game next weekend away at Real Madrid. "The only idea against Atletico is to win," said Pique. "I hope we will be top by the end of the weekend but even if someone else is there, I wouldn't put my house on them being champions."

Messi the trump card

Barcelona's key strengths and weaknesses were clearly demonstrated against Valencia where again they proved themselves to be the most creative team in the division while also showing their vulnerabilities at the back. And if they have one trump card during the run-in, it is Messi, whose double takes his La Liga tally to 28 goals for the season, seven ahead of Karim Benzema and even more remarkable given his relatively slow start. The Argentinian now has seven in his last five games.

Ronald Koeman was banned from the bench after being sent off against Granada, with assistant coach Alfred Schreuder in his place on the line. Barcelona had the better of the chances in the first half but Valencia could take encouragement from some clear openings on the break. They should have capitalized early in the second half as Goncalo Guedes ran onto Soler's pass but failed to beat Marc-Andre ter Stegen with a poked finish. But Valencia scored from the resulting corner, Gabriel heading into an empty net at the back post, with Barca claiming a foul on Ter Stegen. Thierry Correia had stepped across the goal-keeper but it was not enough for a free-kick. Correia could have made it two shortly after but missed the target and instead, Barcelona scored three times in 12 minutes. —AFP

News in brief

Police probe protest

MANCHESTER: Police have launched an investigation after an officer required emergency hospital treatment following the protest that led to the postponement of Manchester United's Premier League clash at home to Liverpool. Two officers were injured, with one "attacked with a bottle and sustaining a significant slash wound to his face, requiring emergency hospital treatment", according to a Greater Manchester Police statement. Assistant chief constable Russ Jackson criticized the "reckless and dangerous" behavior of supporters involved in violent acts, saying it meant GMP had to "take officers from front-line policing and call in support from neighboring forces to prevent the disorder getting worse." — AFP

Valencia sack coach

MADRID: Valencia have sacked Javia Gracia as coach, the Spanish club announced yesterday, with just four games left of the season. A 3-2 defeat by Barcelona at Mestalla on Sunday proved to be Gracia's final match after just 10 months in charge. Valencia are 14th in La Liga after six games without a win but Gracia had steered them clear of the bottom three, a feat in itself after the club sold several key players last summer. They are currently six points above the relegation zone. — AFP

Ajax clinch title

AMSTERDAM: Ajax claimed their 35th Dutch league title on Sunday with a 4-0 victory over Emmen that gave the Amsterdam giants the Eredivisie crown with three games to spare. Jurrien Timber, Sebastien Haller, Davy Klaassen and Devyne Rensch scored for Ajax in a game played in front of empty stands at the Johan Cruyff Arena due to anti-COVID measures. The win gives Erik ten Hag's side an unassailable 14-point advantage over second-place PSV Eindhoven, who could only draw 2-2 against Heerenveen later on Sunday. Ajax completed the Dutch double two weeks after beating Vitesse Arnhem 2-1 in the Dutch Cup final. — AFP



UDINESE: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring a goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Udinese and Juventus at the Dacia Arena Stadium in Udine, on Sunday. — AFP

Ronaldo brace rescues Juve against Udinese

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice late to rescue a 2-1 win for Juventus at Udinese on Sunday hours after the Turin giants lost their Serie A crown to Inter Milan. Inter broke Juve's nine-year streak of domestic dominance by clinching their 19th 'Scudetto' after nearest rivals Atalanta drew 1-1 at Sassuolo to leave the 'Nerazzurri' 13 points clear with four games remaining.

Antonio Conte's side had needed just one point to take the title regardless of how Atalanta fared after their 2-0 win at Crotone on Saturday, and have denied Juve a 10th consecutive league triumph. Juve's win moves them up to third as they target a Champions League spot, but are equal on 69 points with second-placed Atalanta and AC Milan in fourth.

Napoli are two points behind in fifth after a 1-1 draw against Cagliari while Lazio are still in the running, five points off a top-four finish with a game in hand after an exciting 4-3 win over Genoa. "The nine years are over, we will no longer have the Scudetto attached to the shirt, but we will start again with the same desire as before," said Juve coach Andrea Pirlo.

"We earned this win with effort and pride, and it's a very important one given the other results this afternoon. We lost points against teams that we should have beaten, sometimes naively, we let Inter escape and now we are focused on reaching the Champions League." — AFP

Classifieds

HOSPITALS

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
---------------	----------

Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsia	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Kuwait Times

Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSALHOTLINE 128

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaik Ghouse Mohiddin S/O Shaik Mohammed holder of Indian passport no. U0467072, R/07-721 Vayalpaduchittoor Dist., A.P., now changed my name as Malayanur Mohammed Ghouse. Given name: Mohammed Ghouse and Surname: Malayanur. (C 0245) 4-5-2021

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**