

# Faded giants Arsenal and United have modest goals

Runaway leader Liverpool looks to maintain its unbeaten run

PREMIER LEAGUE

REUTERS  
LONDON

At the start of this decade, clashes between Arsenal and Manchester United were still potentially title-deciding affairs, but when the pair meets on New Year's Day at the Emirates they will have more modest goals in mind. United has not won a league title since Alex Ferguson's final season in charge seven years ago, while Arsenal has to go back to 2004 for the last time it raised the Premier League trophy, during the reign of Arsene Wenger. Both clubs entered this season hoping to finish in the top four, but while Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has guided United to fifth place, just a point off the Champions League spots, Arsenal languishes in 12th, 11 points behind fourth-

placed Chelsea after its home defeat to Frank Lampard's side on Sunday. Arsenal's poor form led to the dismissal of its Spanish manager Unai Emery and the arrival of his compatriot, former Gunners midfielder Mikel Arteta.

**Talking big** Having left his role as Pep Guardiola's assistant at Manchester City, Arteta is talking big despite beginning with a draw at Bournemouth before Sunday's loss. "We are the biggest football club in England, and we have to play a little bit with that arrogance, that belief," Arteta told Sky Sports, urging the club's fans to make the Emirates a fortress again. "This stadium has to create fear again. I used to hate coming here as an opponent, and we need to use

that power. The opponent must be uncomfortable playing here," he said. "It was incredible to play here as an Arsenal player. It's one of the most beautiful, exciting stadiums in the world. When this crowd gets going, and you feel them right behind the team, it's an incredible place," he added. United heads to London on the back of wins over Newcastle and Burnley, and with French forward Anthony Martial and England's Marcus Rashford having struck five times in those games. French midfielder Paul Pogba is expected to be part of the United squad for the clash with the Gunners as he continues his return from a three-month injury absence. Runaway leaders Liverpool hosts Sheffield United on Thursday, looking to

maintain its unbeaten run and 13-point advantage over second-placed Leicester City. Brendan Rodgers' Foxes are at Newcastle, while third-placed Manchester City has a tricky test at home to Everton, which has won both its games since appointing Carlo Ancelotti as their new manager. David Moyes begins his second spell as West Ham United manager, following the dismissal of Chilean Manuel Pellegrini, when the Hammers host fellow strugglers Bournemouth. **The fixtures:** Brighton v Chelsea, Burnley v Aston Villa, Newcastle v Leicester, Southampton v Tottenham, Watford v Wolverhampton Wanderers, Manchester City v Everton, Norwich City v Crystal Palace, West Ham v Bournemouth, Arsenal v Manchester United.



**Looking ahead:** Mikel Arteta would be keen to see Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, right, get on the scoring charts and the team to play with a little bit of arrogance and belief to make a match of it. **AP**

## India U-19 loses third ODI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
EAST LONDON

Skipper Priyam Garg's fifty went in vain as India Under-19 team suffered a five-wicket loss to South Africa in an inconsequential third Youth ODI at the Buffalo Park here. India Under-19 had already taken an unassailable 2-0 lead after winning the first two matches of the series. Sent in to bat on Monday, India under-19 team lost three wickets before crossing the fifty-run mark with Achilles Cloete striking twice for the hosts. Garg and N. Tilak Varma (25) then steadied the ship as the two added 58 runs together. The partnership was broken when Garg, who scored 52, got out soon after India Under-19 reached hundred. South Africa restricted India Under-19 to 192 for eight. South Africa Under-19 then returned to overhaul the target with 10 balls to spare, riding on Jonathan Bird's unbeaten 121-ball 88. **The scores:** India Under-19 192/8 in 50 overs (Priyam Garg 52, N. Tilak Varma 25; Pheku Moletsane 2/36) lost to South Africa Under-19 in 193/5 overs (Jonathan Bird 88 n.o., Andrew Louw 31, Yashasvi Jaiswal 2/40).

### BIG FEAST IN 2020

A guide to what's in store for the fans this year

**BADMINTON:** Super 1000s: All England Open: March 11 to 15, Birmingham; Indonesia Open: June 16 to 21, Jakarta; China Open: September 15 to 20, Changzhou; BWF Tour Finals: December 9 to 13, Guangzhou

**CRICKET (INDIA SPECIFIC):**  
**Tour of New Zealand:** T20Is: Jan. 24, 26, 29, 31 & Feb. 2 (matches start at 12.30 p.m. IST); ODIs: Feb. 5, 8 and 11 (7.30 a.m. start) Tests: Feb. 21 to 25 and Feb. 29 to March 4 (4 a.m. start)  
**Under-19 World Cup (South Africa):** Jan. 19: Sri Lanka; Jan. 21: Japan;  
Jan. 24: New Zealand. Quarterfinals: Jan. 28 to 31. Semifinals: Feb. 4 & 6. Final: Feb. 9. (All matches at 1.30 p.m.)  
**Women's T20 World Cup (Australia):** Feb. 21: Australia (1.30 p.m.); Feb. 24: Bangladesh (4.30 p.m.); Feb. 27: New Zealand (8.30 a.m.); Feb. 29: Sri Lanka (1.30 p.m.); March 5: Semifinals; March 8: Final.  
**IPL:** likely to begin in the final week of March/first week of April and end in May  
**Men's T20 World Cup (Australia):** Oct. 24: South Africa (4.30 p.m.); Oct. 29 (opponent to be announced): 1.30 p.m.; Nov. 1: England (1.30 p.m.); Nov. 5: (opponent to be announced), 2 p.m.; Nov. 8: Afghanistan (1.30 p.m.); Nov. 11 & 12: Semifinals; Nov. 15: Final  
**Tour of Australia:** Dates yet to be confirmed for the series to be held from November

**FORMULA ONE:** March 15: Australia (Melbourne); March 22: Bahrain (Sakhir); April 5: Vietnam (Hanoi); April 19: China (Shanghai); May 3: The Netherlands (Zandvoort); May 10: Spain (Barcelona); May 24: Monaco (Monaco); June 7: Azerbaijan (Baku); June 14: Canada (Montreal); June 28: France (Paul Ricard); July 5: Austria (Red Bull Ring); July 19: Britain (Silverstone); August 2: Hungary (Hungaroring); August 30: Belgium (Spa); September 6: Italy (Monza); September 20: Singapore (Marina Bay); September 27: Russia (Sochi); October 11: Japan (Suzuka); October 25: United States (Austin); November 1: Mexico (Mexico City); November 15: Brazil (Interlagos); November 29: Abu Dhabi (Yas Marina)

**TENNIS:** Australian Open: January 20 to February 2; French Open: May 18 to June 7; Wimbledon: June 29 to July 12; US Open: August 24 to September 6

**EURO 2020**  
June 12 to July 12 at 12 venues across Europe

**SUMMER OLYMPICS:** July 24 to August 9

**GOLF:** April 9 to 12: The Masters (Augusta National); May 14 to 17: PGA Championship (TPC Harding Park, San Francisco); June 18 to 21: U.S. Open (Winged Foot, NY); July 16 to 19: The Open (Royal St. George's, Kent)

**HOCKEY (INDIA AT THE OLYMPICS)**

**MEN:** July 25: vs New Zealand (6.30 a.m.); July 26: Australia (3 p.m.); July 28: Spain (6.30 a.m.); July 30: Argentina (6 a.m.); July 31: Japan (3 p.m.); August 2: Quarterfinals; August 4: Semifinals; August 6: Bronze medal match (7 a.m.) and Final (3.30 p.m.).

**WOMEN:** July 25: Netherlands (5.15 p.m.); July 27: Germany (5.45 p.m.); July 29: Great Britain (6.30 a.m.); July 31: Ireland (8.15 a.m.); August 1: South Africa (8.45 a.m.); August 3: Quarterfinals; August 5: Semifinals; August 7: Bronze medal match (7 a.m.) and Final (3.30 p.m.).

## Carlsen asserts supremacy

Retains the World blitz crown; Koneru Humpy finishes 12th

CHESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MOSCOW

Magnus Carlsen again proved why he is the best chess player around by retaining the World blitz title, after winning a playoff against Hikaru Nakamura, here on Monday. Veteran Vladimir Kramnik won the bronze medal. The Norwegian, who had

claimed the Rapid crown a few days earlier, now holds all three titles in chess again – classical, rapid and blitz – and will be on top of the rankings in all formats in the next FIDE list. Carlsen's World title tally now has four classical crowns, three rapid titles and five blitz honours. Russia's Kateryna Lagno retained the women's blitz crown even as a hat-trick of

losses pushed the newly-crowned rapid champion Koneru Humpy to the 12th place. Humpy, who had claimed the rapid title after drawing the Armageddon game against Lei Tingjie of China on Saturday, was placed second with seven points from nine rounds after the opening day of the blitz competition.



**Historic triumph:** Koneru Humpy with her reward for winning the World rapid chess crown. **COURTESY: FLICKR.COM/FIDE**

# The Big Three and the challenge of balance in world cricket

There is no proposal yet for a percentage of the money made from the Super Series to be invested in developing the game



SURESH MENON

Here we go again. The Big Three. Exclusive tournament. More money. Déjà vu. Déjà entendu. Seen that. Heard that. The BCCI-sation of international cricket continues apace following a brief lull while the Supreme Court came into and went out of administration in India. The 'Super Series', an annual ODI tournament for India, England and Australia and a fourth team (breaking the ICC rule of not having more than three) isn't confirmed yet, but could soon be. For what India thinks today, the world (of cricket) thinks tomorrow. New BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket

in India) president Sourav Ganguly's initiative has been welcomed by both England and Australia, the latter calling it "innovative". It is a version of the unsuccessful plan five years ago when the Big Three hoped to take over world cricket. But the idea of making more money while forming an exclusive club was never shelved. The International Cricket Council cannot take the moral high ground, for they too wanted more tournaments so there would be one every year from 2023 to 2031. This is not some arbitrary date, but the television rights cycle. Television, unlike cricket bodies, does not have the responsibility for developing the game. Money from World Cup tournaments goes to the ICC, from bilateral tournaments to the respective boards. Cricket unites the money-making classes. **Most successful financially** Former BCCI president N. Srinivasan

was not the first official in the world to put his national body above the world game, but he was by far the most successful financially. In 2018, the BCCI (Srinivasan was no longer president then, but he had set the template), sold television rights for a five-year period for over 4.5 billion dollars. The ICC has traditionally been run by cricket boards that had the biggest financial muscle. In the case of England and Australia, that was made muscular still by the veto vote. This set up a bunch of "lesser" countries who were upset but powerless to do anything about it. In 1993, the veto was removed, and soon India began to emerge as the nerve centre of the game. The former veto powers were quick to realise on which side their bread was buttered. As Gideon Haigh wrote, "England and Australia could either collude in or face exclusion from (the new dispensation). Pragmatically, they chose collusion."

The new plan from the Big Three will see them get richer, but the others, especially the non-Test countries are left out. There is no proposal yet for a percentage of the money made from the Super Series to be invested in developing the game. South African captain Faf du Plessis has said it is better to help develop the game than have more fixtures restricted to the elite teams. All organisations, from the United Nations to international governing bodies of sports have an important question to answer. Should the respective national bodies focus only on what's good for them, or do they have a responsibility for the bigger picture which might include giving a boost to the less fortunate? Cricket Australia Chairman Earl Edgington referred to this when he said, "I think there's a balance between looking after your own backyard and understanding your responsibilities as a cus-

todian of the global game, and I think that's always a challenge." **Will widen the gap** While what Srinivasan did and Ganguly proposes to do might enrich Indian cricket, it will certainly widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots. New Zealand Cricket has been losing money three years in a row; the West Indies Cricket Board is not in great shape either. Ireland cancelled matches recently for lack of funds. In the long run, the imbalance fostered by the elite teams could return to bite them in the leg. You just have to imagine a 13-match series against Australia followed by a 17-match series against England ad infinitum to realise this. The ideal solution lies where self-interest meets global need. As Adam Smith said, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher or baker that we expect our dinner, but from their self-in-

terest." But that is a pipe dream. The ICC is not strong enough to take on the Big Three. Earlier plans came to naught because its independent chairman Shashank Manohar rolled back the original Big Three proposal. He has said he does not wish to continue after his term ends in May 2020. Should the BCCI be concerned about how the game develops in Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe or Ireland? The short answer is yes, for all administrators ought to be involved in all cricket. But money is a powerful argument, and BCCI-sation seems almost a patriotic duty for the Indian administrators. There is an argument for it; equally there is one for pumping some of the money back into the world game. In cricket as in life, the strong have a duty to look after the weak. That's something to think about as a new year begins. Not a new decade, though – that will dawn on the same day in 2021.

## 'A year of accomplishments and learning'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

India speedster Jasprit Bumrah on Tuesday described 2019 as a year of accomplishments and learning and said he was eagerly looking forward to another successful year in 2020. "2019 has been a year of accomplishments, learning, hard work and making memories, on the field and off it too. And on the last day of the

year, I'm looking forward to everything that 2020 has to offer!" Bumrah wrote on his Twitter handle along with a few pictures of his achievements and learning in the year gone by. In 2019, Bumrah not only emerged as India's pace spearhead in all three formats of the game, but also became one of the best bowlers of the world. Bumrah, 26, finished 2019 as the *numero uno* bowler in

one-day cricket while occupying the sixth spot in ICC Test bowlers rankings. In the year gone by, he also achieved a rare feat, becoming only the third Indian to scalp a hat-trick in Tests after Harbhajan Singh and Irfan Pathan. Bumrah, who has picked up 62, 103 and 51 wickets from 12 Tests, 58 ODIs and 42 T20Is respectively, has been out of action since August af-

ter India's tour of the West Indies because of a stress fracture on his back. Bumrah, however, has recovered from the injury and is set to make his return in the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka starting in Guwahati on January 5. He has also been picked in the squad for the three-match ODI series against Australia to begin in Mumbai on January 14 after the Sri Lanka series.



Jasprit Bumrah...a phenom emerges **AFP**

## ECB backs ICC's four-day Test plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has found a backer in England as the sport's apex body plans to scrap five-day Tests from 2023 to ease player workload in a crowded calendar. "We believe it could provide a sustainable solution

to the complex scheduling needs and player workloads we face as a global sport," an ECB spokesperson was quoted as saying in the *Daily Telegraph*. "We're definite proponents of the four-day Test concept, but cautiously so, as we understand it's an emotive topic for players, fans and others."