

## 'No excuses' for Arsenal in title bid after January spending: Arteta



Mikel Arteta, Head Coach of Arsenal speaks with his players during the Emirates FA Cup Fourth Round match against Manchester City

AFP | London

Mikel Arteta says Arsenal can have no excuses if they do not win the Premier League title for the first time in two decades after strengthening their squad during the January transfer window.

Arteta splashed out more than £50 million (\$61 million) on three new signings as the club look to hold onto their lead at the top of the table, bringing in Italy midfielder Jorginho, Belgium forward Leandro Trossard and Poland defender Jakub Kiwior.

**What we have to do is train really well and win, and play well to win. That's the only thing we can do**

MIKEL ARTETA

The Gunners are five points clear of second-placed Manchester City with a game in hand on the champions and Arteta knows his side are perfectly placed to win the club's first English title since 2004.

Arteta was asked yesterday about whether there would now be no excuses if Arsenal failed to get over the line.

"If you want to put it that way, that's fine," he said. "What we have to do is train really well and win, and play well to win. That's the only thing we can do."

Arsenal would have spent even more on new signings last month but they missed out on Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk, who instead joined Chelsea, and Brighton's highly rated midfielder Moises Caicedo.

Despite those frustrations, Arteta is pleased with the backing he received from the Arsenal hierarchy.

# Ettihad escape with win against Nuwaidrat

Tightly contested week 19 affair decided in overtime in Zain Basketball League

● Skipper Ahmed Ghanim scores 24 points to pace Ettihad

● Canadian Keanau Post has game-high 33 for Nuwaidrat

TDI | Manama

Al Ettihad outlasted Nuwaidrat 93-89 in overtime last night in a tight week 19 clash of the 2022/2023 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

The game was yesterday's lone fixture at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Ettihad recovered from a slow start to take control of the contest in the second quarter. Nuwaidrat stayed within striking distance after the break and then roared back in the fourth.

Keanau Post and Murtadha Salman both contributed baskets to bring Nuwaidrat to within 81-83 with under two minutes left.

Neither team would score on their ensuing plays, and then Ettihad missed a chance to put the game away after being unable to inbound the ball with 5.2 seconds remaining. Post was then fouled, and he sank both pressure-packed free-throws to send the game into the extra five-minute period.

In overtime, a crucial three-pointer by Ali Jassim gave Ettihad an 89-85 lead. They



Al Ettihad's Adrian Uter looks to drive in the paint against Nuwaidrat's Keanau Post

would maintain that gap until Post scored on a lay-up with a minute to play to get to within two points. But Uter was later fouled and he made both his charities, and Nuwaidrat could not get any closer from there.

Ettihad skipper Ahmed Ghanim had 24 points as his team's top scorer, while American professional Adrian Uter finished with 19. Jassim chipped in with 18 while Ali Ghadeer had 11.

For Nuwaidrat, Post was their top performer with 33 points. The Canadian also took down 19 rebounds in the loss. Abbas Jameel added 14 and Mohayad

Ameer had 13.

With the result, Ettihad claimed their 12th win in 17 games as they improved to 29 points for fourth place on the league standings. Nuwaidrat suffered their 11th loss to go with six wins as they remained in the bottom half of the table.

Nuwaidrat started things off as the aggressors, taking a 26-21 lead at the end of the first quarter. But Ettihad fought back and wrestled away the advantage in a dominant second period, where they outscored their opponents 25-13 to head into the interval up 46-39.

After the break, Nuwaidrat

**BETTER YOU KNOW**

With last night's result, Ettihad claim their 12th win in 17 games while Nuwaidrat suffer 11th loss to go with six wins

### Standings

	P	W	L	Pts
Manama	17	14	3	31
Muharraq	17	13	4	30
Al Ahli	16	13	3	29
Al Ettihad	17	12	5	29
Bahrain Club	18	9	9	27
Al Najma	16	10	6	26
Al Hala	17	9	8	26
Nuwaidrat	16	6	11	23
Sitra	17	4	13	21
Samaheej	17	2	15	19
Isa Town	17	1	16	18

were determined to cut the deficit and outscored Ettihad by just a single point in the third period, which ended with a pair of Uter free-throws that made it 64-58, setting the stage for the tense finish.

League action continues on Thursday next week with the 20th round of games in the league's preliminary stage.

## BCCI secretary Jay Shah in Bahrain for ACC meet, to decide on Pakistan's Asia Cup hosting rights

PTI | New Delhi

Indian cricket board secretary Jay Shah has flown to Bahrain where an emergent meeting of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has been called at PCB chairman Najam Sethi's behest to decide fate of Pakistan's Asia Cup hosting rights.

If sources in the BCCI are to be believed, there is little to no chance of the Asia Cup being held in Pakistan in September. If at all, the tournament will either be shifted to UAE with PCB retaining the hosting rights or Sri Lanka could be the other option.

"Jay is in Bahrain for the ACC meeting. The BCCI's stand will not change. We will not be trav-



Jay Shah

elling to Pakistan as we haven't got any go-ahead from the government," a BCCI source stated.

It is also understood that recent bomb blasts in Peshawar has again raised security concerns about holding cricket tournaments in Pakistan.

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

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In December last year, ACC chairman Shah had released the itinerary of the continental body and the venue of Asia Cup wasn't mentioned.

This led to Sethi accusing Shah of taking "unilateral decision", an allegation that ACC officially refuted stating that repeated emails to PCB seeking recommendations on the itinerary went unanswered.

In October last year, Shah, who is also the supremo of BCCI, had officially told the media that India will not travel to Pakistan.

The erstwhile PCB chief Ramiz Raja had back then threatened that Pakistan will not travel to India for this year's 50 over World Cup.

## 'He'll play': Nagelsmann calls out PSG mind games over Mbappe

AFP | Paris

Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann said yesterday he thinks Kylian Mbappe will play for Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League tie, accusing the French club of "playing poker".

PSG announced on Thursday that the star forward would miss "up to three weeks" with a thigh injury, ruling him out of the February 14 clash in the French capital.



Julian Nagelsmann

"I don't think he'll be out," Nagelsmann said, claiming the Ligue 1 champions had given a speculative diagnosis of the star's condition.

## Newcastle must come to terms with new status, says Howe

AFP | London

Eddie Howe admits Newcastle's new-found status as a threat to the Premier League's big guns will make it harder to sign players from their rivals in future.

The League Cup finalists added Everton forward Anthony Gordon and West Ham full-back



Eddie Howe

Harrison Ashby during the January transfer window.

But their long-standing interest in England midfielder Conor Gallagher came to nothing as Chelsea refused to allow him to join a top-six rival.

Howe, whose team host West Ham on Saturday, are third in the Premier League table, with just one defeat all season.

Asked at his pre-match press conference yesterday whether other clubs now see the Magpies as genuine competition, Howe said: "I think it is potentially difficult for us.

"It depends on the player and it depends on the club, but I think we're probably aware we are seen differently this season to how we were last season.

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