

18 Djokovic's charity event exposes risks faced by professional athletes



19 Milik, Lozano goals help Napoli with a 2-0 win on Serie A return



19 Schmeichel saves Leicester with penalty stop



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane (R) shoots past West Ham United's Spanish midfielder Pablo Fornals during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. — AFP

Kane strikes to keep Tottenham in chase

I can't believe they have ruled that as a goal: Moyes

LONDON: Harry Kane believes he is as fit as he has ever been after netting his first goal of 2020 as Tottenham kickstarted their challenge for a Champions League place next season with a 2-0 win over West Ham on Tuesday.

The England captain looked far more like his old self after a laboured performance in his first appearance for six months against Manchester United on Friday, and was rewarded with a goal eight minutes from time.

"I'm in good shape. I've been working very hard through my rehab, lockdown and training. I feel as fit as I probably ever have done before," Kane, who had surgery on a hamstring injury prior to the season's shutdown due to coronavirus, told Sky Sports.

"When you have been out for six months it is just getting that feeling back on the pitch. You can train as much as you want but being out here is totally different."

Tomas Soucek's own goal had opened the scoring as West Ham remain precariously poised outside the

relegation zone only on goal difference.

But Hammers boss David Moyes was furious the opener was not ruled out for a handball by Davinson Sanchez as he flicked a corner into Soucek's path.

"I can't believe they have ruled that as a goal," said Moyes. "Who is on VAR tonight? He needs subbed I know that. That's the rules."

Jose Mourinho's men were well worthy of a first win in eight games dating back to February. Victory takes Spurs to within six points of the top four and within one of Manchester United in fifth.

Should Manchester City's appeal against a two-season ban from European competitions not prove successful, fifth would be good enough to qualify for the 2020/21 Champions League. "I am happy with the result, the clean sheet, it means the team is more solid, the players have less

doubts," said Mourinho.

In keeping with many of the 14 games since the Premier League's restart seven days ago, this was another slow burner as Spurs took time to start picking holes in West Ham's rearguard.

Son Heung-min thought he had broken the deadlock on the stroke of half-time with a smart finish at Lukasz Fabianski's near post, but the goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR review.

Mourinho launched an impassioned defence of his record of working with world-class strikers on the eve of the game after criticism that his playing style could see Kane look for pastures new.

And Kane had no shortage of opportunities after the break as his near post flick was turned behind by Fabianski before he fired wide after sprinting the full length of the field as Spurs broke dangerously from a

West Ham corner. "He has been phenomenal in lockdown, he did amazing work at home and he is in the condition to help the team," added Mourinho.

In between times, Pablo Fornals dragged wide West Ham's big chance to go in front and aid their battle to beat the drop.

Moyes's men were undone by one of their own when Soucek unwittingly turned a corner into his own net 26 minutes from time.

Jarrod Bowen smashed a shot against the post as the visitors suddenly had to alter their gameplan of containing Tottenham to look for an equaliser.

But in doing so, they left themselves exposed at the back and Kane timed his run perfectly from a Son pass before coolly slotting past Fabianski and collapsing to the ground in a mixture of relief and exhaustion.

"I probably should have scored one other but it was nice to put that one away," added Kane.

"As a striker it's what you want to do. You want to score goals and want to help win the games." — AFP

Barcelona grind out Bilbao win to put pressure on Real

MADRID: Barcelona limped to a 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao on Tuesday that sends them back to the top of La Liga, for 24 hours at least, three points ahead of Real Madrid.

Only a goal from substitute Ivan Rakitic in the 71st minute prevented Barca from another stalemate after a draw at Sevilla on Friday had allowed Real to go top on head-to-head.

Madrid will return to the summit if they beat struggling Real Mallorca on Wednesday but Barcelona's victory at least puts the pressure back on Zinedine Zidane's side, whose upward momentum is yet to be reflected by the table.

This Barca performance though was hardly a

statement of intent, devoid of chances, lacking zip and tinged with frustration rather than the free-flowing football Quique Setien was appointed to bring in.

"We knew it was going to be complicated," Setien said. "Also because of the situation there is some anxiety because there's less and less margin for error."

"Sometimes we didn't play with that composure and that showed in the first half when we were more inaccurate than usual. We gave some belief and confidence to Athletic."

Lionel Messi looked particularly wearied by his team's display. The Argentinian was creator-in-chief again but the dependence on him was high and he remains one away from the 700th goal of his career.

Rakitic is likely to be among a handful of players allowed to leave this summer. He has not been a regular this season and this was his first Barca goal since the Clasico in March last year.

"It's a difficult period but we have to stick together," said Rakitic. "It was an important goal, it was a tough game, it was hard for us to open the game up." Arthur Melo started, despite reports he could be close to joining Juventus, and struggled.

Sergio Busquets picked up a yellow card and will be suspended against Celta Vigo on Saturday but that should be a simpler assignment than the ones that come after against in-form Atletico Madrid and Villarreal.

Athletic Bilbao stay 10th after suffering their first defeat since La Liga returned.

They created the better chances in the first half. Inaki Williams, playing his 150th game in a row, darted in behind and Yeray Alvarez should have scored when free at the back post but missed from four yards.

Messi cut a frustrated figure as he tried to create a spark but his efforts from distance, including one chip easily collected, hinted at desperation too.

In the second half, Messi's lifted pass found Antoine Griezmann clear in the area but Unai Simon was quick to close the space and Griezmann failed to react. Griezmann's disappointing night came to an end when he was replaced by Ansu Fati, who headed over with his first touch. Riqui Puig also came on and it was the 20-year-old's pass that started the attack for the goal. Messi crossed to the back post and Ar-

turo Vidal's header should have been cleared by Mikel Balenziaga. Instead, he gave it back to Messi, whose reverse pass was taken on by Rakitic, who bundled through and finished.

Raul Garcia had an open net late on after Gerard Pique and Marc-Andre ter Stegen both evaded a cross but he failed to connect. Fati struck the post with a rebound in injury-time.

Earlier, Atletico Madrid continued their surge towards Champions League qualification by winning 1-0 at Levante to climb to third, thanks to an early own goal by Bruno Gonzalez.

Since matches restarted in Spain two weeks ago, Atletico have taken 10 points from a possible 12 and are now six points clear of fifth, as their top-four rivals have crumbled around them.

One of them is Getafe, who continued their post-suspension slump as they were held to a 1-1 draw against struggling Real Valladolid.

Getafe are fifth but without a win in the four games since La Liga resumed.

Valladolid are 15th, seven points clear of the relegation zone. Levante stay 11th. — AFP

“Fitter than ever”