

Liverpool back in business with win

Tuchel celebrates first Chelsea win • Brilliant Bamford helps Leeds sink Leicester

LONDON: Mohamed Salah scored twice as Liverpool muscled their way back into the Premier League title race with a 3-1 win at West Ham yesterday after Thomas Tuchel celebrated his first victory as Chelsea boss. Jurgen Klopp's injury-hit champions appeared to have lost their way after a five-game winless spell but are back on track after beating Tottenham and West Ham in the space of 72 hours.

Earlier, defenders Cesar Azpilicueta and Marcos Alonso produced stunning finishes as Chelsea beat toothless Burnley 2-0 at Stamford Bridge. Leicester, looking to close to within two points of leaders Manchester City, took the lead against Leeds but Patrick Bamford played a part in all three goals as Marcelo Bielsa's men stormed back to win 3-1.

Liverpool came into their match against high-flying West Ham with no fit senior center-backs and missing forward Sadio Mane. But two goals from Egypt international Salah lifted them to 40 points after 21 games, a single point behind Manchester United and four behind leaders Manchester City.

Salah put the visitors ahead in the 57th minute with a fine curling lob over Lukasz Fabianski and added the second after a swift break following a West Ham corner. Liverpool grabbed a third when substitutes Roberto Firmino and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain combined to set up Georginio Wijnaldum for a tap-in before a late consolation for West Ham's Craig Dawson.

Earlier, Tuchel celebrated victory at Stamford Bridge in his second match in charge of Chelsea. The former Paris Saint-Germain boss was brought in to replace Frank Lampard last week with a brief to haul stuttering Chelsea back into the race for Champions League spots. He oversaw a frustrating goalless draw against Wolves in midweek but two moments of magic from Azpilicueta and forgotten man Alonso mean the German has four points from six.

Tuchel said the victory would infuse his side with confidence but said they needed to sharpen up their finishing after both goals came from defenders. "It should be a signal to our guys up front that we needed defensive players to score," he told BT Sport. "We lacked precision in the last pass and touch, but in the finishing we will work on this absolutely. We had a lot of touches, half-chances and deliveries in the box, but in the end I could not care less."

Chelsea earned the breakthrough their football deserved five minutes before half-time when Azpilicueta lashed home after a neat assist from the lively Callum Hudson-Odoi. The home side created a succession of chances after the break and Alonso made the three points safe six minutes from time when he controlled a Christian Pulisic cross on his chest and thigh before firing past Nick Pope. The Spaniard, who had been frozen out by Lampard since September, kissed his Chelsea badge as the players celebrated a vital win.

Leicester slip up

Leicester, unbeaten in seven Premier League games heading into their match against Leeds at the King Power Stadium, had a chance to put real pressure on Manchester City. Harvey Barnes gave the home side the lead in the 13th minute but Leeds were level just 127 seconds later when Bamford set up Stuart Dallas, who beat Kasper Schmeichel with a low finish.

The visitors went ahead in the 70th minute when Bamford beat Schmeichel with a left-footed strike into the far top corner of the net and the Leeds forward teed up Jack Harrison for a tap-in six minutes from time. "We have to go away and learn from that and then look to get back to winning ways on Wednesday," said Rodgers, who is missing leading scorer Jamie Vardy. "We had a lot of really good



LONDON: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah shoots past West Ham United's English defender Aaron Cresswell to score the opening goal at The London Stadium yesterday. — AFP

moments in the game where we played through their marking and pressure, but we just couldn't quite find that bit of quality in the final third."

Late Saturday, Manchester United's Premier League title challenge suffered a second setback in four days as they failed to breakdown an under-strength Arsenal in a 0-0 draw at the Emirates. United threw away top spot with a shock 2-1 defeat

to bottom-of-the-table Sheffield United in midweek and are now three points adrift of league leaders Manchester City having played a game more than their local rivals. A point edges eighth-placed Arsenal to within six points of the top four and it was the Gunners who came closest to scoring when Granit Xhaka's free-kick struck the bar in the second half. — AFP



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