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## Bagnaia wins last-lap scrap to take Spanish MotoGP



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## Swiatek into Madrid Open last 16 after 'tricky' clash




Monday, May 1, 2023
Shawwal 11, 1444 AH

GULF TIMES
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FORMULA 1

## Red Bull's Perez wins Azerbaijan Grand Prix from Max Verstappen

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## POLICE, QATAR SC IN AMIR CUP VOLLEYBALL SEMI-FINALS







Police defeated Al Gharafa 3-0 (25-23, 25-19, 25-18) and Qatar SC (right) beat Al Ahli 3-1 (25-23, 25-23, 19-25, 25-19) to enter the Amir Cup volleyball semi-finals.

## Qatar's Mohamed wins 400m hurdles gold




Qatar's Abdurrahman Mohamed celebrates with a team official after winning 400m hurdles gold at the Asian Youth U18 Asian Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, yesterday. Mohamed clocked his personal best of 50.91s to win the race.

PREMIER LEAGUE

# City back on top as Newcastle, Man United press top-4 claims

Norway striker Haaland breaks 92-year goal landmark, Jota ruins Spurs fightback as Liverpool win seven-goal thriller

**AFP**
London



Manchester City's Erling Haaland controls the ball during the Premier League match against Fulham in London yesterday. *(AFP)*




Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes celebrates with teammate Jadon Sancho after scoring against Aston Villa in Manchester. *(AFP)*

Erling Haaland scored his 50th goal of the season yesterday as Manchester City beat Fulham to return to the Premier League summit, with Newcastle and Manchester United winning to close in on a top-four finish.

Liverpool maintained their unlikely pursuit of a Champions League place by beating Tottenham 4-3 in a thriller but Southampton and Leeds are staring into the abyss.

City's 2-1 win at Craven Cottage left Pep Guardiola's men a point clear of long-time leaders Arsenal, with a game in hand.

The defending champions, chasing their fifth Premier League title in six seasons, were ahead in the third minute when Haaland scored from the penalty spot after Julian Alvarez was fouled.

Haaland's 34th Premier League goal of the season equals the competition record held by Andy Cole and Alan Shearer - set in the days of 42-game campaigns.

The Norwegian is the first player to reach a half-century of goals across all competitions in a single English top-flight season since 1931.

"Before Winston Churchill was Prime Minister? Wow. Sounds a long time ago. Congratulations to Erling," said City boss Guardiola.

Fulham equalised in the 15th minute through Carlos Vinicius but Alvarez restored City's lead nine minutes before half-time.

Treble-chasing City, on top for the first time in 10 weeks, have won their past eight league games and are unbeaten in their past 18 matches in all competitions.

They are red-hot favourites to retain their title, taking full advantage of Arsenal's stumbles -the Gunners are winless in their past four matches.

Arsenal host struggling Chelsea tomorrow, with City at home to West Ham the following day.

"It's important but on Tuesday Arsenal will play," said Guardiola. "Important is the West Ham game, it's a game in hand. After that we'll be top of the table and it will be more real."

Callum Wilson came off the bench to score twice as third-placed Newcastle fought back to beat Southampton 3-1 and edge their opponents towards relegation.

The England forward was left out of Eddie Howe's starting line-up despite scoring twice at Everton in midweek but produced the perfect response.

He cancelled out Stuart Armstrong's first-half opener and then helped himself to a second after Theo Walcott's own goal had given the Magpies the lead.

The win keeps Newcastle two points ahead of Manchester United but Southampton are anchored at the foot of the table, six points from safety with just four games to play. Erik ten Hag's Manchester United edged in-form Aston Villa 1-0, courtesy of a first-half goal from Bruno Fernandes.

"We look from game to game and next we have Brighton so we need to work hard again," Ten Hag told the BBC.

"We need to show passion again and not worry about the table. We are totally in control (in the race for the top four). It's all about us and it's in our hands."

A group of United fans marched to Old Trafford on Sunday in protest against the Glazers, with a giant banner reading "Full Sale Only".

In the later kick-off, Liverpool hit managerless Tottenham with a three-goal blitz in the first 15 minutes but the visitors stormed back and Richarlison scored an improbable equaliser in the 93rd minute.

Just when it seemed that Spurs had grabbed a dramatic point Diogo Jota won the game, leaving the Reds in fifth spot, seven points behind fourth-placed Manchester United having played a game more.

"We got away with it thank to Diogo Jota - it makes it spectacular and everybody goes home buzzing," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told Sky.

Colombia midfielder Jefferson Lerma scored twice in four first-half minutes as Bournemouth moved 10 points clear of the relegation zone with a 4-1 home win over Leeds, who remain in deep trouble.

**RESULTS**

Bournemouth 4 (Lerma 20, 24, Solanke 63, Semenyo 90) Leeds 1 (Bamford 32)
Manchester City 2 (Haaland 3-pen, Alvarez 36) Fulham 1 (Vinicius 15)
Liverpool 4 (Jones 3, Diaz 5, Salah 15-pen, Jota 90+4) Tottenham 3 (Kane 40, Son 77, Richarlison 90+2)
Manchester United 1 (Fernandes 39) Aston Villa 0
Newcastle 3 (Wilson 54, 81, Walcott 79-og) Southampton 1 (Armstrong 41)

SPORT

MOTOGP

# Ducati's Bagnaia tops last-lap battle to win Spanish GP

## 'It was fantastic to finish the main race again today. The last two I messed up'

**AFP**
Jerez de la Frontera, Spain

Reigning world champion Francesco Bagnaia held off a frantic late counter-attack by Brad Binder in Jerez yesterday to win the Spanish Grand Prix and take the lead in the MotoGP standings.

Italian Bagnaia, on a factory Ducati, overtook South African Binder, on a KTM, with four laps to go and resisted a fightback.

Australian Jack Miller, who led for the first half of the race, was third on another KTM.

Bagnaia struggled in practice on Friday and had to go through the qualifying repechage to earn a chance to compete for a place on the first four rows on the starting grid.

"Very long weekend," he said. "I was a bit in trouble Friday. I needed time to be used to this bike on this track."

The race was quickly halted yesterday after Fabio Quartararo, Miguel Oliveira and pre-race championship leader Marco Bezzecchi all crashed on the opening lap.

It was also punctuated by penalties with both Bagnaia and Miller among those forced to give up a place mid-race.

Binder and Bagnaia were both attempting to bounce back after two bad results on the Americas and the South African edged the sprint the evening before.

Yesterday, Binder could not hold off the Italian. "It was fantastic to finish the main race again today. The last two I messed up," Binder said. "It was nice to be out front and lead. I kept seeing a little gap. I thought 'OK I've done the job. I just need to be sure I don't mess up the edge of my rear tyre' and I think I cooked it with three laps to go. Hats off to Pecco. He pushed me the whole way and got me in the end."



Winner Ducati's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia (centre), second-placed Red Bull KTM's South African rider Brad Binder (left) and third-placed KTM Australian rider Jack Miller celebrate after the MotoGP Spanish Grand Prix at the Jerez racetrack in Jerez de la Frontera yesterday. *(AFP)*

Bagnaia, who crashed out in the US and Argentina, overtook compatriot Bezzecchi in the standings. Miller said he was surprised by the pace over the final laps.

"I don't know why, but we started putting in really fast laps towards the end but we weren't closing. so the others were doing it too," he said.

Spaniard Jorge Martin (Ducati-Pramac) was fourth ahead of fellow Spaniard Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia), who was on pole but started badly and was never in a position to fight for victory.

In Moto2, Britain's Sam Lowes won from pole for a first victory since the 2021 Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix. Home favourite Pedro Acosta was second as the Spaniard drew level on points at the top of the championship with Tony Arbolino, who was fourth on Sunday. Alonso Lopez completed the podium.

Spain's Ivan Ortola claimed the Moto3 race to leap to third in the standings, nine points behind Daniel Holgado. David Alonso and Jaume Masia rounded out the podium.

FOCUS

# Russian athletes say IOC participation plan 'excessive and discriminatory'

**Reuters**
Lausanne

The International Olympic Committee's (IOC) recommendation to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to return to international competition as neutrals is "excessive and discriminatory", the Russian Olympic Committee's (ROC) athletes' commission said.

The IOC sanctioned Russia and its ally Belarus after Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022 but last month recommended that their athletes be allowed to return to international competition as neutrals.

The recommendations include that Russian and Belarusian athletes can compete with no flag or anthem, while athletes who support the war or are contracted to military or national security agencies are excluded.

In March, ROC head Stanislav Pozdnyakov denounced the recommendations, a position backed by the athletes commission chaired by former Olympic 800 metres champion Yuriy Borzakovskiy.

"The proposed reintegration and admission criteria are excessive and discriminatory - by nationality and by passport, by discipline and sport, and by affiliation to certain entities developing sports for decades in most post-Soviet states," the commission said in a statement.

"In our opinion, a dangerous precedent has been set when no athlete in the world can be sure that his or her human and civil rights will be duly respected from now on, that decisions are taken based on the Law and the Olympic Charter - without exemptions.

"Today we, athletes, are detained as hostages of political games that divide the international sports community and at the same time sow discord within the Olympic family - dictating the parameters of admission, defining who is eligible to perform and who is not."

Table tennis, pentathlon, fencing, judo and taekwondo are among the Olympic sports that have readmitted athletes from Russia and Belarus as neutrals.

The IOC is to decide separately on the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes at the 2024 Games at a later date, while Ukraine has threatened to boycott the Games if Russians are allowed to compete there.

## Stunning run takes Brecel into world snooker final against Selby

**London:** Luca Brecel staged one of the most astonishing comebacks in snooker history as he won 11 frames in a row against China's Si Jiahui to reach the World Championship final.
He will now face four-time world champion Mark Selby, who also won his semi-final 17-15 following a match with Mark Allen that went into the early hours of yesterday - the day of the final itself at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre. Selby was on the cusp of victory at 16-10 before Northern Ireland's Allen reeled off five frames in a row. The Englishman, however, held his nerve to reach his sixth world final. Brecel, who won seven straight frames when coming from behind to defeat seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan in the quarter-finals, fell 14-5 behind 20-year-old qualifier Si.
But he won the final five frames of Friday's evening session and carried on where he left off Saturday to end Si's bid to become the youngest Crucible finalist and the first debutant world champion since Wales' Terry Griffiths in 1979.
Brecel was the first player in Crucible history to overturn a nine-frame deficit. The 28-year-old has now reached his first world final, having never previously got past the first round.

CRICKET

# David's three explosive sixes in last over lift Mumbai Indians

**AFP**
Mumbai

Tim David smashed an unbeaten 45 to trump Yashasvi Jaiswal's century as Mumbai Indians stunned Rajasthan Royals by six wickets in the Indian Premier League's 1,000th match yesterday.

Chasing 213 for victory, Mumbai's Suryakumar Yadav hit 55 before David smashed a hat-trick of sixes in the last over from Jason Holder in his 14-ball blitz to steer the team home with three balls to spare.

David starred in an unbeaten 62-run stand with Tilak Varma, who hit 29, for a record chase at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium in the second match of the day that ended close to midnight.

On a day of big chases, Zimbabwe batsman Sikandar Raza helped Punjab Kings pull off a stunning last-ball win to edge out Chennai Super Kings by four wickets in the first match that also recorded over 400 runs.

But the fireworks were reserved for the second match of the day, which began with a ceremony to mark the 1,000-match landmark.

The left-handed Jaiswal turned on the heat with a six off Cameron Green and then Jofra Archer as he went on to score 124 off 62 balls.

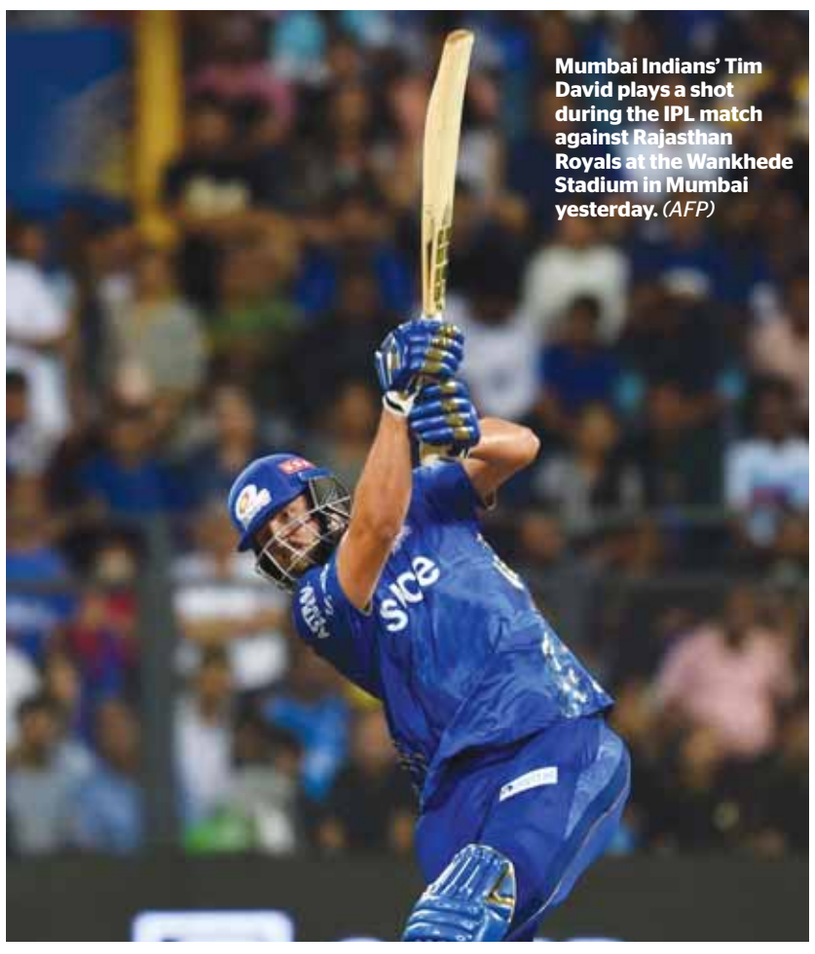
The 21-year-old Jaiswal, who sold street food and lived in tents to pursue his cricket dream, steered the inaugural IPL champions to 212-7 after he reached his 100 off 53 balls

The effort seemed a fitting knock for the special match until Suryakumar, a T20 sensation who has endured an ordinary tournament so far, came to life with his 50 off 24 balls.

The T20 sensation smashed eight fours and two sixes until a superb catch by Sandeep Sharma, who sprinted from short fine-leg to hang on to the ball, ended his innings.

But David and the left-handed Varma kept up the charge on a big-scoring day.

Mumbai lost skipper Rohit Sharma for three on his 36th birthday, before Ishan Kishan (28) and Cameron Green (44) set up the chase in their partnership of 62.


**Mumbai Indians' Tim David plays a shot during the IPL match against Rajasthan Royals at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday.** *(AFP)*


Punjab Kings' Sikandar Raza celebrates his team's win at the end of the IPL match against Chennai Super Kings in Chennai yesterday. *(AFP)*

**BRIEF SCORES**
**Mumbai Indians 214 for 4** (Suryakumar 55, David 45*, Ashwin 2-27) **beat Rajasthan Royals 212 for 7** (Jaiswal 124, Arshad 3-39) **by six wickets**

**Raza helps Punjab down Chennai in last-ball IPL thriller**

Zimbabwe batsman Sikandar Raza helped Punjab Kings pull off a stunning chase to edge out Chennai Super Kings by four wickets in a last-ball Indian Premier League thriller yesterday.

Chasing 201 for victory, Liam Livingstone (40), Sam Curran (29) and Jitesh Sharma (21) played attacking cameos before Pakistan-born Raza sealed the win with his unbeaten 13 in Chennai.

Sri Lanka fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana was tasked with bowling the final over, with Punjab needing nine to win. Raza got three runs off the final ball, his arms outstretched in celebration.

Punjab moved to fifth in the 10-team table, one below Chennai. Holders Gujarat Titans top the standings.

Devon Conway's 92 off 52 balls proved to be in vain after the left-handed New Zealand opener steered Chennai to 200-4, having elected to bat first.

Livingstone and the left-handed Curran, who became the most expensive player in the tournament's history at $2.2mn, revived the chase after Punjab fell to 94-3.

They put on 57 off 33 balls before Livingstone departed and Curran was bowled by Pathirana, called "Baby Malinga" for a slinging action similar to that of countryman Lasith Malinga.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Jitesh took Punjab closer in his 10-ball blitz before he fell to Tushar Deshpande, who took three wickets, but Raza held firm.

Punjab skipper Shikhar Dhawan (28) and opening partner Prabhsimran Singh (42) got the chase going in a quickfire 50-run stand but the team wobbled once the two departed. Earlier, Conway laid the foundations of Chennai's total in an 86-run opening stand with Ruturaj Gaikwad. He reached his fifty - his fifth in the last six innings - in 30 balls with a boundary off Raza as he put up another attacking stand with Shivam Dube, who hit 28.

**BRIEF SCORES**
**Punjab Kings 201 for 6** (Prabhsimran 42, Livingstone 40, Deshpande 3-49, Jadeja 2-32) **beat Chennai Super Kings 200 for 4** (Conway 92*, Gaikwad 37) **by four wickets**

CYCLING

# Yates wins Tour of Romandie as Gaviria takes sprint



**FROM LEFT:** Second-placed US rider Matteo Jorgenson, winner of the Tour de Romandie Britain's Adam Yates and third-placed Italy's Damiano Caruso pose on the podium after the final stage of the Tour of Romandie UCI cycling World tour, 170.8 km from Vufflens-la-Ville to Geneva, yesterday. *(AFP)*

**AFP**
Geneva

British rider Adam Yates won the Tour of Romandie cycling race yesterday after a 170km run around the magnificent Lake Leman as the Team UAE man finished in the main bunch in the fifth and final stage.

The run from Vufflens-la-Ville to Geneva ended in a mass sprint which Colombian Fernando Gaviria of Movistar won ahead of German Nikias Arndt of Bahrain Victorious and Briton Ethan Hayter of Ineos, who clinched the jersey for best sprinter.

Yates, in his first season with Team UAE, took Saturday's mountainous 'Queen' stage, claiming the overall lead and the glory of the summit triumph. During yesterday's ride the 30-year-old Yates was untroubled as his team controlled a four-man break that was engulfed by a speeding peloton an agonising 2km from the finish line.

"We had it all under full control today, I have to thank the rest of the team," said Yates, who left Ineos to join UAE.

Yates's next major race is likely to be at the Tour de France where he will assist "the best rider in the world" Tadej Pogacar.

Matteo Jorgenson of Movistar was second overall at 19sec thanks to his performance in Friday's time trial. Italian veteran Damiano Caruso of Bahrain Victorious was third at 27sec as he gets ready for another tilt at the Giro d'Italia.

FORMULA ONE

# 'King of the streets' Perez leads Red Bull 1-2 in Baku

## Max Verstappen finishes in second place while Charles Leclerc is third-fastest

**AFP**
Baku

Sergio Perez won yesterday's Azerbaijan Grand Prix with teammate Max Verstappen in second to ram home Red Bull's supremacy over the rest of the Formula One grid.

Ferrari's pole-sitter Charles Leclerc completed the podium, a respectable third.

"Vamos!" exclaimed the Mexican on the team radio after making it a hugely profitable weekend in Baku where he also claimed Saturday's sprint race.

Red Bull boss Christian Horner acknowledged Perez's "sensational weekend". He added: "He's always been outstanding on this track, I don't know what it is about Azerbaijan, but he absolutely excels here."

Red Bull's roll through 2023 after four races now reads four wins plus Saturday's sprint, three poles, and three 1-2s.

Verstappen leads the drivers' championship by just six points ahead of the fifth round of the record 23-race season in Miami.

Perez' engineer told him on the team radio he was the "king of the streets" and with justification as five of his six F1 wins - not counting Saturday's sprint - have come on street circuits, twice in Baku alongside victories in Saudi Arabia, Monaco and Singapore.

The popular Perez, who believes he can really challenge Verstappen for the title, said: "It really worked out today for us (me), we managed to keep the pressure on Max. I think it was very close between us, we pushed to the maximum, we both hit the wall a few times but we (I) managed to keep him under control."

Leclerc conceded that for the time being at any rate Red Bull were in "another league once it comes to the race".

"Over 51 laps it was not possible, they have so much more pace than we do. Everyone is working flat out to understand what we can do in the races to close the gap."

The warmest day of a frenetic sprint weekend had the drivers arriving onto the grid, umbrellas perched on their cars.



Red Bull's Sergio Perez celebrates after winning the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in Baku yesterday. *(Reuters)*

After a resounding rendition of the national anthem the covers came off the tyres and the lights went out with pole-sitter Leclerc holding off Verstappen to the 90 degree turn one.

The Dutch ace had the Ferrari in his cross hairs though, waiting to pounce.

The inevitable happened on lap four as the Red Bull star nipped past, leaving Leclerc sandwiching the Red Bulls.

Perez inched closer to the slower red rival and duly coasted past on lap six.

Verstappen pitted on lap 10 leaving Perez in control but then the safety car intervened to clear Nyck De Vries's stricken Alpha Tauri after hitting a wall.

All the leaders used the safety interlude to take a free pit stop with racing resuming under a safety car restart on lap 13.

Perez managed that slickly as Verstappen got the better of Leclerc to leave the Red Bulls in front.

At the midway point Perez led from Verstappen with Leclerc a forlorn 13sec behind, and that's as it ended up in a race that will not figure on most fans top five of the season.

Fernando Alonso only narrowly missed out on a fourth consecutive podium, the 41-year-old Spaniard finishing fourth in the Aston Martin ahead of Carlos Sainz in the other Ferrari.

Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton was in sixth ahead of Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin.

George Russell, who secured the point for the fastest lap, was ninth for Mercedes with Yuki Tsunoda's Alpha Tauri rounding out the top 10.

Verstappen was relaxed at his teammate taking the limelight.

"We know it's a very long season, you keep learning - it can never be perfect all the time."

TENNIS

# Swiatek into Madrid last 16 after 'tricky' clash against Pera

**AFP**
Madrid

World number one Iga Swiatek claimed she had endured a "tricky" afternoon despite easing to a straight-sets win over American left-hander Bernarda Pera to reach the Madrid Open last 16 yesterday.

Swiatek, warming up for the defence of her French Open title, claimed a 6-3, 6-2 win over 29th seed Pera for a sixth consecutive victory on clay this season.

"I wouldn't say it was easy. Every match is tricky here," Swiatek said after her 75-minute outing.

"I'm happy that I'm getting my rhythm. Playing against a lefty is never easy ... but I'm pretty happy that I was disciplined and focused."

Swiatek next faces either Chinese 22nd seed Zheng Qinwen, who was the only player to take a set off her at Roland Garros last year, or 16th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Also progressing to the fourth round yesterday was world number three Jessica Pegula who clinched a gruelling 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) victory over Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic.

Pegula, 29, made the final in Madrid in 2022 where she lost to Ons Jabeur. She will now tackle Italy's Martina Trevisan on Monday for a quarter-final spot.

Two-time champion Alexander Zverev of Germany needed just 56 minutes to dispose of France's Hugo Grenier 6-1, 6-0 on the back of six breaks of serve and 26 winners.

He will face either Carlos Alcaraz or Grigor Dimitrov for a quarter-final place.

"Both are great players," said Zverev. "It's going to be difficult no matter who it is against. Of course with Carlos that would be a matchup people would look forward to.

"We played in the final here last year, played a massive match at Roland Garros before I got injured."

Zverev holds a 3-1 record against Alcaraz with their last meeting coming in that quarter-final clash at the 2022 French Open.

Meanwhile, world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas landed 39 straight first serves en route to claiming a 3-6 6-1 7-6(5) comeback win over Dominic Thiem at the Madrid Open, with the Greek crediting his focus and relaxation for his near-perfect serving performance.


Poland's Iga Swiatek in action during her round of 32 match against Bernarda Pera of the US at the Madrid Open yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Tsitsipas looked in danger of falling in his first match of the tournament on Saturday, but he found a way back into it by dominating the second set and then clinching the tie-break in the decider.

The 24-year-old ended with a first serve percentage of 79%, significantly higher than the 57% he managed in his straight sets defeat to Carlos Alcaraz in last week's Barcelona Open final.

"That's fantastic, 39 is a lot," Tsitsipas said of his streak. "That's a positive mark for me. I think I just owe it all to fluidity and just being relaxed on my serve... I think it's just pure relaxation and focus."

Tsitsipas also praised former US Open champion Thiem for turning the two-hour, 19-minute encounter into a physically demanding contest.

"I'm in a way happy that we were able to show that kind of tennis... Today sort of showed what kind of intensity two guys that play single-hand backhands can bring to tennis," Tsitsipas said.

"I'm happy I got away with a win. Things weren't easy at the very end but I just kept fighting... The third set it was just pure fight. He's not someone that's going to give up and he hates even giving the slightest to you in terms of free points."

Tsitsipas will next meet Argentine Sebastian Baez, who beat American Marcos Giron 3-6 6-3 6-4.

GOLF

# Gooch wins another LIV title, takes home $4mn paycheck

**Reuters**
Singapore

Talor Gooch birdied the first playoff hole yesterday to defeat Sergio Garcia and become the young tour's first back-to-back winner at the LIV Golf Singapore event at Sentosa Golf Club.

Gooch and Spain's Garcia both shot 4-under-par 67 in the final round and weathered a one-hour storm delay to finish at 17 under through 54 holes. Both birdied the par-5 18th to set up the playoff, also at No. 18.

Gooch, who won last week's LIV title at Adelaide, Australia, took an aggressive line and nearly put his tee shot in the water before finding the green on his second shot and two-putting for birdie.

After his second shot landed in a greenside bunker, Garcia found the rough on his difficult third shot and then was unable to hole out the birdie chip to extend the match.

"It's one of those days that I'll remember," Gooch said. "I grew up watching Sergio. He's one of the greatest golfers of this generation. To go and battle with him and come out on top is something I'll never forget."

Brooks Koepka also shot a 67 on Sunday to finish in solo third at 16 under. Zimbabwe's Scott Vincent (67) placed fourth at 15 under, with Chile's Mito Pereira (66) another shot back in fifth place. Gooch, 31, joined Koepka as the circuit's only two-time winners. With his $4mn payday yesterday, Gooch has now earned $19.6mn in 13 LIV starts.

Gooch also lifted the team trophy as his RangeGoats GC earned their first team title at 37 under, beating Garcia's Fireballs GC by three strokes. "We've been talking about being up there on the podium," Gooch said. "I've been telling them how much I'm going to spray 'em in the face with champagne for a long time now. We knew it was coming and it was only a matter of time."

The RangeGoats became the seventh different team to win an LIV Golf event, and the fifth in as many events this season. Gooch's teammates were captain Bubba Watson, Harold Varner III and Thomas Pieters of Belgium.

"Thank you for stepping up and wanting to be part of the Goats," Watson said as he stood with his teammates. "This is an honor and a privilege to be here and be alongside these guys. It's special. They wanted to be on the team. They wanted to be on my team."

When severe weather halted play for an hour with four holes to play, the RangeGoats trailed the Fireballs by one stroke. Once play resumed, Varner provided two key birdies as part of his 6-under 65. One of those birdies was a chip-in on his restart hole.

### Spain's Larrazabal claims DP Tour win in South Korea

Spain's Pablo Larrazabal won the DP World Tour's Korea Championship yesterday, overcoming interruptions in play due to rain and fog at the tournament.

Larrazabal was among a handful of players who were forced to play the final few holes of the third round early yesterday, after bad weather at Jack Nicklaus Golf Club Korea in Incheon caused delays of more than two hours the previous day.

The 39-year-old was able to clinch victory by two shots in a tight battle at the tournament, which saw the DP World Tour return to Korea for the first time in 10 years.

"Only probably my family and my team knows how tough the last 10 months have been," Larrazabal said after his win.

Larrazabal roared back after dropping his first shot of the day at the tenth, making four birdies in the next five holes to open up a three-shot lead.

He then safely parred to complete a closing 67, finishing the tournament on 12 under par and claiming an eighth DP World Tour title. The Spaniard went into the final round one shot off the lead, having bogeyed the 17th when he returned to complete his third round yesterday morning. "Yesterday was a battle," he said. "I actually didn't look at the leaderboard too much yesterday because I knew it was a long road."

He took advantage of both of the front nine's par fives - the third and seventh - in round four to share the lead at the turn.

Denmark's Marcus Helligkilde finished alone in second on 10-under, one clear of home favourite Park Sang-hyun, Spain's Jorge Campillo, Dutchman Joost Luiten and Scotland's Scott Jamieson.



Talor Gooch of the RangeGoats GC lifts the trophy after winning the final round of the LIV golf tournament at Sentosa Golf Course in Singapore yesterday. *(AFP)*

## World shot put champs Crouser, Ealey take Drake titles

**Washington:** Reigning world shot put champions Ryan Crouser and Chase Ealey of the US captured Drake Relays titles Saturday as two classic American meets produced solid efforts despite bad weather.

The 113th Drake event at Des Moines, Iowa, and the 127th Penn Relays in Philadelphia both saw athletes hampered by cool, rainy conditions.

Crouser, who captured Olympic gold at Rio and Tokyo, won the men's crown with a meet record of 22.38 meters, besting compatriot and 2015 world youth champion Tripp Piperi by 0.89m.

"It felt wet," Crouser said. "It was a cold and rainy one today but it was good. I threw really well today considering the conditions."

The ring was nearly swamped by the showers.

"This is one of the wettest meets I've ever done," Crouser said. "The ring behind me is about a 20-foot puddle right now. That's about as wet a meet as you will ever see.

"The guys were joking I should have brought my fishing rod with me, I might have caught something out there."

Ealey took the women's title with a top effort of 19.12, this year's best by an American and fifth in the world overall for 2023.

Tia Jones ran the second-fastest time in the world this year to win the women's 100 hurdles in 12.44 seconds, defeating runner-up Tonea Marshall by .17 of a second with Nia Ali third in 12.67 on an all-US podium.

Jones's time trails only the 12.36 run of American Masai Russell earlier this month while Marshall shaved .01 off her season best.

American Paul Ryan won the Drake 1,500 men's crown in 3:40.23, edging Britain's Charlie Grice by .44 of a second.

GOLF

# Alafnan, McNeill emerge Qatar Senior Open champs

**By Sports Reporter**
Doha

Hamad Mubarak Alafnan and Ranald Ranald McNeill walked away with the winners' prizes in the men's section at the Qatar Senior Open 2023 at the Doha Golf Club yesterday.

Uzma Mir and Nichapa Wichaidit claimed the honours in the ladies' section.

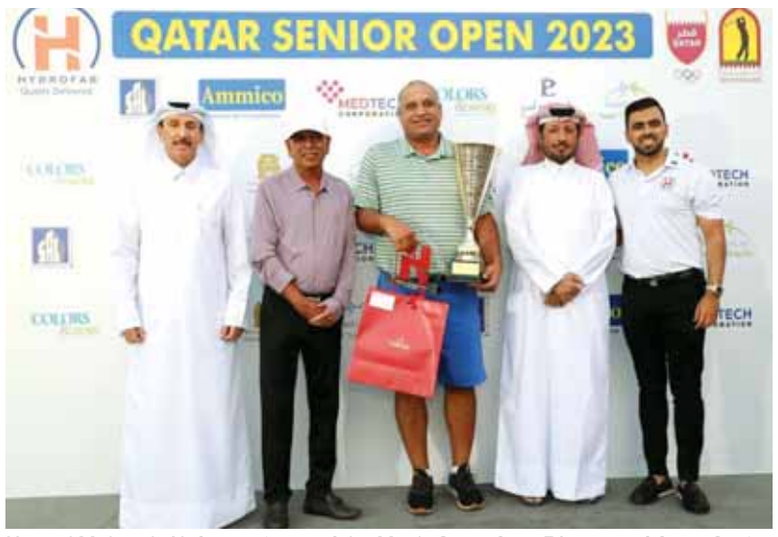
The two-day event, organised by Doha Golf Club and Qatar Golf Association, saw a record number of participants and the podium finishers walked away with valuable gifts and vouchers for their sterling efforts on the golf course.

Alafnan finished with a gross total of 152 in the men's gross over 50 to walk away with the top prize. Kittisak Sangorn finished runners-up while Claes Byberg, Naser Yaqoob Saleh and Theo Scheepers came third, fourth and fifth respectively.

In the men's nett McNeill took the top position followed by Winston Agcon, Mubarak Essa al-Kuwari, Andrew Napier and Fazal Abdul Kazi.

In the women's section, Uzma finished on top in the ladies gross over 50's category while Nichapa took the top spot in the ladies nett. Francesco di Marco won the men's gross for over 75 years of age while Yohann Pedder won the Nearest the pin for the first day and Adam Thornecroft won it for the second day.

A raffle draw was also held on the occasion in which the players took part.



Hamad Mubarak Alafnan, winner of the Men's Gross Over 50 event of Qatar Senior Open 2023 poses with officials of Qatar Golf Association at the Doha Golf Club.



Winners and runners-up of the various categories of Qatar Senior Open 2023 with their prizes along with officials of Qatar Golf Association.

FOOTBALL

# Napoli's title party put on hold after Salernitana draw

'We represent their dreams and that means it's right that their dreams are realised by us'

**AFP**
Naples

Napoli will have to wait a little longer to seal their first Serie A title in 33 years after being held to a 1-1 draw by Salernitana yesterday.

Runaway league leaders Napoli needed to win to secure their third league crown with six games remaining in the season after Inter Milan beat closest challengers Lazio 3-1 earlier in the day. And Naples thought a generation of frustration was set to come to an end when Mathias Olivera headed the hosts into the lead just after the hour mark.

But the long-awaited Scudetto party will have to be put on hold for at least a few more days after Boulaye Dia's stunning strike six minutes from time ensured Salernitana escaped with a point. "The players are obviously disappointed at not having made our brilliant fans happy tonight. But you've seen for a while that these points are the hardest ones to get," coach Luciano Spalletti told DAZN.

"We represent their dreams and that means it's right that their dreams are realised by us."

The coming midweek round of matches could still finally end Napoli's long wait for glory.

Spalletti's team are 18 points ahead of Lazio but Juve can close that gap to 17 by winning at Bologna in Sunday's late match and moving into second place.

Depending how that match and Juve and Lazio's games on Wednesday go Napoli could be crowned champions before they take the field at Udinese on Thursday night.

Regardless, a win in Udine will ensure Napoli's current stars emulate Diego Maradona, who led southern Italy's biggest club to their only previous league titles in 1987 and 1990.

Pushed by a feverish crowd, decked out in blue and white, Napoli started on the front foot and almost went ahead seconds after kick-off when Victor Osimhen headed Hirving Lozano's cross just wide.

However Serie A's leading scorer Osimhen was the hosts' only threat in a what turned out to be a frustrating first half in which Salernitana defended deep and largely kept Napoli at bay. The best chance of the opening period fell to Osimhen in the 23rd minute, the Nigeria forward meeting Piotr Zielinski's deep free-kick with a powerful header which was brilliantly pushed away by Guillermo Ochoa. Ochoa then batted aside Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa's long-range drive three minutes before the break as Napoli struggled to create any opportunities against a Salernitana side not yet sure of Serie A safety but now unbeaten in nine matches.

The crowd was increasingly apprehensive until Olivera headed home the opener, causing an eruption of joy inside and outside the stadium. Blue smoke engulfed the stands while fireworks audibly blasted outside the stadium, the acrid smell of spent firecrackers wafting through the ground.

Those fans in the stadium had begun queueing outside the stadium nearly five hours before the 1300GMT kick-off, with flags, flares and horns creating a colourful, cacophonous atmosphere. Bars and restaurants around the stadium heaved with people as cars, scooters and police vehicles tried to weave their way through a sea of fans and vendors who spilled out onto the road.

The city centre was closed to traffic shortly before kick-off, and more than 5,000 police officers had been deployed to maintain security, according to local newspaper *Il Mattino*.

But it was all to be in vain as Dia stunned the whole city into silence when he bundled past Osimhen and then lashed home an unsavable shot past Alex Meret. That strike, Dia's 12th of the Serie A season, meant that Inter's win over Lazio was only good to move Simone Inzaghi's team into the Champions League positions. A Lautaro Martinez brace and another strike from Robin Gosens, which all came in the final 13 minutes, moved Inter into the top four ahead of AC Milan and Roma on goal difference.


Napoli's Mathias Olivera celebrates with teammate Giovanni di Lorenzo after opening the scoring during the Italian Serie A match against Salernitana in Naples yesterday. *(AFP)*

BUNDESLIGA

# Gnabry, Coman sink Hertha to return Bayern to summit

**AFP**
Berlin

Second-half goals from Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman have sent Bayern top of the Bundesliga table with four matches remaining with a 2-0 home win over rock-bottom Hertha Berlin.

Lowly Hertha defended astutely against a Bayern side still struggling to find the fluency they displayed earlier in the season and with 25 minutes to go it appeared the match was heading for a 0-0 draw.

Gnabry had other ideas however, heading in a Kimmich chip in the 69th minute, his first league goal since early February. The goal broke Hertha's stubborn resistance, Coman scoring ten minutes later, again assisted by Kimmich.

The win puts Bayern one point clear of Dortmund and on course for a record 11th straight Bundesliga title.

Bayern came into the game knowing a win would return them to the top of the ladder past Dortmund, who were controversially held 1-1 at lowly Bochum on Friday.

Dortmund were denied a late penalty against Bochum which the referee Sascha Stegemann and the German FA later admitted was an error.

Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke issued a statement on Sunday saying "threats and hostility would not be tolerated", after it emerged Stegemann was under police protection due to the error. The visitors started the match stranded in last place, five points behind 17th-placed Schalke, who beat Werder Bremen 2-1 late on Saturday. Bayern started brightly, Man City loanee Joao Cancelo forcing a save from Hertha goalkeeper Oliver Christensen after 90 seconds.

Bayern's next chance came through another defender, France centre-back Benjamin Pavard, who blasted a powerful, lifting drive inches over the bar from well outside the box. With the clock winding down in the first half, Gnabry forced another reflex save from Christensen, allowing Hertha to hold the scores at 0-0 at the break.

After defending deep for the opening 25 minutes of the second half, Hertha went on a rare incursion into Bayern territory but the hosts won the ball back to go on the attack against the off form visitors.

Bayern captain Joshua Kimmich dinked the ball over the retreating visitors, finding Gnabry who headed past Christensen.

The goal was just the second strike from a Bayern forward in the club's past six matches. Coman, arguably Bayern's form forward during their recent lean run, followed Gnabry's initiative, calmly slotting a ball from Kimmich between Christensen's legs.

Later on Sunday, seventh-placed Wolfsburg host eighth-placed Mainz, with both seeking a win to stay in touch with the European places.


Bayern Munich's Serge Gnabry (left) celebrates with teammate Matthijs de Ligt after scoring against Hertha Berlin in Munich yesterday. *(AFP)*

LA LIGA

# Barca beat Betis to stay ahead of Real

**AFP**
Barcelona

Barcelona thrashed 10-man Real Betis 4-0 yesterday to move a step closer to winning La Liga for the first time since 2019.

Real Madrid beat Almeria 4-2 to cut the gap to eight points earlier on but Barcelona triumphed to restore their 11 point advantage. Andreas Christensen, Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha struck for Barca at Camp Nou with Guido Rodriguez netting a late own goal to round off the rout. Edgar Gonzalez's early dismissal made it an easy night for Xavi Hernandez's side to protect their lead with six games remaining.

With his side comfortably winning, Xavi brought on 15-year-old forward Lamine Yamal to become the club's youngest ever player to debut in La Liga. Betis also brought on veteran Joaquin Sanchez, 41, for his final appearance at Camp Nou before he retires at the end of the season, and he was afforded a standing ovation by Barcelona supporters.

The Catalans bounced back from a 2-1 defeat by Rayo Vallecano in midweek. "We generated a reaction," said Xavi. "We improved a lot, it was a very good reaction from the whole team.

"We went 1-0 up and after the red card, it was in our favour."

Xavi brought Christensen into the starting line-up after injury and he made a quick impact on his return. Raphinha whipped in a vicious ball which Ronald Araujo narrowly missed but Christensen followed in behind to power a header home.

Betis were set back further when defender Edgar was dismissed for two bookings after half-an-hour. Lewandowski pounced soon after to net his 19th league goal of the season after Jules Kounde set him up with a low cross. The Pole, La Liga's top scorer, reacted after Real Madrid's Karim Benzema earlier netted a hat-trick to move within one of his tally. Three minutes later Raphinha struck the third, making a clever run in behind the defence and finishing from Sergio Busquets' chipped pass. Xavi brought on Ousmane Dembele with little over 15 minutes to go, with Camp Nou delighted to see the winger back. Rodriguez deflected in Ansu Fati's cross as Barcelona added a fourth goal in the 82nd minute.

Almost 90,000 home supporters were also treated to 15-year-old Yamal's debut in the final stages, and the winger came close to scoring with a shot repelled by Rui Silva. "We were talking about this on the bench, when I was at 15 I think I was playing for my neighbourhood team," added Raphinha. "And seeing him come on in this stadium, with all these people, is incredible."

Benzema climbed to 17 goals in La Liga this season with his treble, now two behind Lewandowski. Benzema netted his treble in the first half and Rodrygo added the fourth early in the second for Madrid, while Lazaro and Lucas Robertone struck for the visitors, 15th.


Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates scoring their second goal against Real Betis. *(Reuters)*

## PSG slump to new defeat after Hakimi red card

Paris Saint-Germain's poor second half of the season continued yesterday as the Ligue 1 leaders slumped to a 3-1 defeat at home to mid-table Lorient after having Achraf Hakimi sent off in the first half.

Lorient were already ahead through Enzo Le Fee's early goal at the Parc des Princes before Hakimi was dismissed for a second yellow card inside the opening 20 minutes.

Kylian Mbappe equalised for the home side in opportunistic fashion, pouncing to score after Lorient goalkeeper Yvon Mvogo had thrown the ball to the ground wrongly thinking the referee had blown for a free-kick.

Yet Lorient deservedly retook the lead before half-time when Darlin Yongwa converted from close range, and they made sure of the win late on.

Bamba Dieng had a goal disallowed for offside moments before he ran half the length of the pitch unchallenged to score at the second attempt after Gianluigi Donnarumma had stopped his shot.

The final whistle was met with loud jeers from the home fans in a stadium where one end was closed as a punishment after fans let off flares during a defeat by Lyon earlier in April.

Despite their sixth Ligue 1 loss of 2023, PSG remain eight points clear at the top of the table from Marseille and on course to seal a French record 11th league title.

However, Marseille can cut that gap to five points with a win at home to Auxerre later and Lens will be six points off the top if they beat Toulouse away in midweek.