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Russell takes pole as Mercedes lockout British GP front row



**FOOTBALL | Page 4**

End beckons again for Ronaldo after Portugal Euros KO

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# GULF TIMES SPORT



**TENNIS**

## World No.1 Swiatek knocked out of Wimbledon by Putintseva

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**EURO 2024**

# England into semis after shootout win over Switzerland

'Whatever it takes, no matter what, we win. And that's all that matters to us'

AFP  
Düsseldorf, Germany

England's quest for a first major tournament win in 58 years remained alive after another late fightback before beating Switzerland 5-3 on penalties to book their place in the Euro 2024 semi-finals.

After the 120 minutes finished level at 1-1, goalkeeper Jordan Pickford was the Three Lions' hero in the shoot-out as he saved Switzerland's first spot-kick from Manuel Akanji.

Cole Palmer, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, Ivan Toney and Trent Alexander-Arnold converted their penalties to send England into a semi-final meeting with Turkey or the Netherlands in Dortmund on Wednesday. "Whatever it takes, no matter what, we win. And that's all that matters to us," said Alexander-Arnold.

After needing Bellingham's 95th-minute equaliser before going on to beat Slovakia in extra time in the last 16, England were again staring at defeat with 10 minutes to go. A dreary encounter for the first 75 minutes came to life after Bree Embolo put Switzerland in front. Saka's fine strike from outside the box levelled with England's first shot on target five minutes later.

Manchester City defender Akanji was then the unfortunate penalty villain as Switzerland's horrible record in major tournament quarter-finals goes on.

They have now lost five without ever reaching a semi-final.

By contrast, England march on despite another in a string of underwhelming performances from Gareth Southgate's men. In



England's players celebrate at the end of the penalty shootout as they win the UEFA Euro 2024 quarter-final against Switzerland at the Duesseldorf Arena in Duesseldorf yesterday. (AFP)

his 100th match in charge of his country, Southgate again resisted calls for mass changes in personnel but did alter his system.

Ezri Konsa made his first ever competitive international start in place of the suspended Marc Guehi as England switched to a back three.

However, contrary to expectation, Saka remained on the right in what proved to be an inspired decision by Southgate. The Arsenal winger was by far the biggest threat of a first half in which neither side managed a shot on target.

Saka was skipping beyond Michel Aebischer at will and created the best chance of the first period when Kobbie Mainoo saw an effort deflected behind just before the half-time whistle.

The game continued at the same

laboured pace from both sides into the second half.

Embolo finally managed the first shot on goal when his weak effort was easily handled by Jordan Pickford. Southgate has been repeatedly criticised for being too slow to influence games with his substitutions.

Despite having one of the most richly-talented squads at the tournament, it took until they fell behind for Southgate to shake things up. England looked headed for a meek exit when Embolo pounced at the far post to turn in Dan Ndoye's deflected cross at the back post.

Southgate reacted immediately with Palmer, Eberechi Eze and Luke Shaw, making his first appearance since February, sent on. Within five minutes England

were level as Saka cut inside and fired low and hard in off the far post. Switzerland were indebted to a brilliant save from Yann Sommer to deny Declan Rice a second for England early in extra time.

Harry Kane was then forced off injured after a nasty fall into the England dugout.

And it was Switzerland who came closest in the second half of extra time as Xherdan Shaqiri's corner came back off the woodwork before Pickford parried Zeki Amdouni's powerful strike from distance. England won only one of five previous penalty shoot-outs at the Euros, including defeat by Italy in the final three years ago.

But they were perfect from the spot as Saka erased some of the pain from his decisive miss in the Euro 2020 final.

## Jordan National Rally: Qatar's Abdulaziz, Nasser emerge champions



Qatar's Abdulaziz al-Kuwari and his navigator Nasser Saadoun al-Kuwari won the third round of the Jordan National Rally in Al Maghtas on Friday. The Qatari duo dominated and won all the six stages in their Skoda Fabia RC 5 completing the gruelling 215.18km rally, including 77.28km of special stages, in 50:14.3 minutes. Local Jordanian driver Sheikh Bader al-Fayez and his Lebanese navigator Joseph Matar finished second in 3:13.9 minutes. Jordan's Issa Abu Jamous and Saqr Abu Jamous also took to the podium after completing the rally in 55:23.3 minutes in their Mitsubishi Evo 9.



## Don't expect an overhaul for Germany after Euro 2024 exit: Nagelsmann

Germany will not undergo any major overhaul after their Euro 2024 quarter-final exit but will be strengthened and improved, coach Julian Nagelsmann said yesterday. The Germans played their most exciting tournament in at least eight years, losing in extra time to title contenders Spain on Friday, after years of bad tournament performances under Nagelsmann's predecessors. "I have not been to another tournament but I was told that it was not always the case that every player left the camp with tears in their eyes after six weeks together," Nagelsmann, wiping away his own tears and with his voice breaking, told a press conference. "We will try to reinforce things now and not launch a completely new start. The Nations League matches (from September onwards) will be used so that we develop further." Germany have not won a major title in a decade and will have to wait at least two more years and the 2026 World Cup before launching another bid for a trophy. But their overall performances did trigger widespread support across the country, pushing their 2018 and 2022 World Cup first-round exits well into the background. Following their Euro exit, midfielder Toni Kroos is retiring while several others, including Thomas Mueller and Manuel Neuer, are widely expected to end their international careers. "We are still a work in progress and that is normal after the previous years," said Nagelsmann, who took over in September last year. "We have a squad of 26, 27, 28 players who can still play at the World Cup. "We will miss one pillar in Toni Kroos and let us see whether others will follow," Nagelsmann said. "There is no point in undergoing any major overhaul because we have a very good climate and that is a good foundation to build on. My job will continue the way it started." (AFP)

**FOCUS**

# Netherlands beat Turkiye to set up semi with England

AFP  
Berlin

The Netherlands struck two second-half goals in seven minutes to come from behind to beat Turkiye 2-1 yesterday and set up a Euro 2024 semi-final clash with England.

Samet Akaydin sent Turkiye ahead in the first half but Stefan de Vrij headed the Netherlands level and Murt Muldur turned into his own net under pressure from Cody Gakpo after 76 minutes to hand the Dutch victory.

The build-up to the quarter-final clash in Berlin was overshadowed by a diplomatic row between Turkiye and Germany after their last-16 hero Merih Demiral was banned for two matches for making a controversial salute.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended the match at the Olympiastadion as a result, along with tens of thousands of fans who greeted every sustained Dutch period of possession with a barrage of whistles.

Netherlands overcame the pressure from the stands and Turkiye's energetic style, as well



Netherlands players celebrate after their Euro 2024 quarter-final win against Turkiye in Berlin yesterday. (Reuters)

as a flurry of late chances, to reach the Euros semi-finals for the first time since 2004. Turkiye coach Vincenzo Montella deployed five at the back, hoping his young side could catch Netherlands on the counter-attack.

It was the 1988 Euros champions who carved out the first chance, with Gakpo and Memphis Depay linking up well before the latter blazed over.

Koeman captained the Netherlands to glory 36 years ago but until their convincing 3-0 win over Romania in the last 16, the Dutch

looked incapable of challenging for the trophy, sneaking through their group in third place.

They reverted to that weaker self in the first half after their early incursions, allowing Turkiye to firmly establish themselves in the game. Montella's side began to pin the Netherlands back with a string of set pieces, eventually capitalising after 35 minutes when Arda Guler recycled a corner which was only half-cleared.

The 19-year-old Real Madrid playmaker swirled in a cross dripping with temptation with his

weaker right foot, and Akaydin, who returned from suspension to replace the banned Demiral, powered home a far post header.

Turkish fans, unsurprisingly filling three-quarters of the stadium given their large diaspora in Germany, roared and ignited flares in celebration.

Koeman had to shake things up at the interval and brought on Wout Weghorst, the team's saviour against Poland in their opening fixture, for Steven Bergwijn.

The burly Burnley striker made a rapid impact, giving the Nether-

lands a target to hit up front, which they looked for with regularity.

Guler continued to probe at the other end and was scythed down by Nathan Ake as he threatened to break free.

The youngster took the resulting free-kick himself and crashed a low effort against Bart Verbruggen's post with the goalkeeper scrambling.

Netherlands captain Virgil van Dijk was booked for fouling the rapid Baris Alper Yilmaz as he flew past him on the right wing.

Turkiye, in their first quarter-

final at a major tournament since 2008, almost grabbed a second but Verbruggen saved well from Kenan Yildiz's stinging low effort from the edge of the box.

With 20 minutes to go, Weghorst forced a smart save from Mert Gunok, but the Turkish goalkeeper was eventually beaten by De Vrij after 70 minutes.

Memphis Depay swung in a cross after a short corner and Inter Milan defender De Vrij met it with a towering header to level the score.

Just six minutes later Netherlands went ahead when Denzel Dumfries swept in a dangerous low cross which Muldur bundled into his own net under heavy pressure from Euros joint-top scorer Gakpo. It was the 10th own goal of the tournament.

Although Weghorst was not directly involved in either goal, his presence in the box unsettled a Turkiye defence that largely kept the Netherlands at bay in the first half. Turkiye should have levelled but Zeki Celik and Kerem Akturkoglu had efforts blocked and the Netherlands lived to fight another day - against England on Wednesday in Dortmund.

FORMULA 1

# Gutsy Russell takes pole in British 1-2-3 at Silverstone

MERCEDES DRIVER AHEAD OF HAMILTON AND NORRIS, LEADER VERSTAPPEN SETTLES FOR FOURTH

Reuters  
Silverstone, England

**G**eorge Russell led Lewis Hamilton in a Mercedes front-row lockout in qualifying for the British Grand Prix yesterday with McLaren's Lando Norris completing a rare one-two-three of home drivers.

Red Bull's Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen qualified fourth, after damaging his car by bouncing across the gravel at Copse in the first phase.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri was fifth fastest on a drying track after light rain.

"What a feeling, what a feeling," said Russell, the winner in Austria last weekend, as the Silverstone crowd roared and the achievement of a first home pole – and only his fourth anywhere – sunk in.

"At the start of this year we (Mercedes) couldn't have even dreamt of being on pole here and one-two for us and Lando P3, it's just mega. This is definitely one of the best feelings I've ever had on a Saturday afternoon."

Russell had been on provisional pole by a knife-edge from Norris after the first flying laps but the Mercedes drivers made sure of the one-two with their final efforts while the McLaren man slipped up.

Hamilton went fastest of the three, Norris aborted his lap and Russell grabbed pole at the chequered flag in one minute 25.819



Mercedes' George Russell during qualifying for the British Grand Prix Silverstone Circuit, Silverstone, Britain, yesterday. (Reuters)



Mercedes' George Russell (centre) poses after qualifying in pole position with second-placed Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and third-placed McLaren's Lando Norris at Silverstone Circuit yesterday. (Reuters)

seconds. Seven-times world champion Hamilton, a record eight-times winner at Silverstone, set a time of 1:25.990 and Norris 1:26.030.

"I think ultimately there was still time left on the table, which George was able to find," said Hamilton, now out-qualified by his teammate 10 times in 12 races in his last season before moving to Ferrari.

"But I feel really confident about the car tomorrow and I think with the conditions we have, we can work together to keep Lando behind."

The trio had already fired up the

crowd, undeterred by cold conditions and occasional summer showers that could return during today's race, with the same order in final practice.

It was the first time three Britons had qualified in the top three since Jim Clark, Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart at the 1968 South African Grand Prix. Lotus duo Clark and Hill went on to finish one-two.

The last home one-two-three on the British Grand Prix grid was at Aintree in 1962 with Clark, John Surtees and Innes Ireland.

"I'm happy with P3. Three Brits lock out the top three, so pretty

cool," said Norris, who is Verstappen's closest rival but 81 points behind. "A little mistake on my part at the end but P3 is still good."

While Mercedes and McLaren battled, Red Bull stumbled.

Verstappen said the slippery track had caught him out: "I had to go through the dirt...skating through the gravel, trying to not hit the wall. But I destroyed the floor," he said.

"From there onwards, it was trying to survive...I was happy to get into Q3 because the car was a massive step down. To be P4, I'm quite happy with that."

Verstappen's under-performing

teammate Sergio Perez spun off at Copse and beached his car in the gravel in the first session.

The Mexican qualified 19th, ahead of only Alpine's Pierre Gasly who knew he would be starting last due to engine penalties.

Perez has scored only 15 points in his last five races, a meagre haul at a time when Red Bull are fighting a resurgent McLaren, and is under pressure despite having his contract extended last month.

"I got caught out with the conditions. I was trying to warm up the tyres into turn nine but as I downshifted, I locked up the rear tyre

and it went off the track," he said. "It hurts to let your team down that way, it hurts a lot because I think the weekend was strong up to now."

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc provided the shock of the second phase, ending up 11th while Williams's Alex Albon and Haas's Nico Hulkenberg qualified ninth and sixth respectively.

Spaniard Carlos Sainz will start seventh at the circuit where he took his first win in 2022 with Aston Martin's Lance Stroll eighth. The Canadian's Spanish teammate Fernando Alonso qualified 10th.

CRICKET

# World Cup winners India slump to Zimbabwe loss

AFP  
Harare

**I**ndia captain Shubman Gill said his much-changed team let themselves down in the field and with the bat when they crashed to a shock 13-run defeat to Zimbabwe yesterday in their first T20 international since winning the World Cup just a week ago.

The hosts struggled to 115 for nine after being sent in to bat at the Harare Sports Club, with leg-spin and googly bowler Ravi Bishnoi taking a career-best four for 13.

But India, fielding a youthful team that did not include any of the side that won the World Cup in Barbados last Saturday, were bowled out for 102 in reply.

The loss ended a streak of 12 successive T20I wins by India.

"We bowled pretty well but we let ourselves down in the field. Everyone looked a bit rusty," said Gill at the post-match presentation.

"We spoke about taking time and enjoying our batting but it didn't pan out that way," he added.

India lost their first four wickets for 22 runs inside the first four overs, with new caps Abhishek Sharma (0) and Rryan Parag (2) among the failures.

It became 43 for five when Dhruv Jarell was caught at cover and India's hopes effectively ended when Gill was sixth out, bowled by opposite number Sikandar Raza hitting across the



Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza (right) celebrates after a dismissal during the first T20I against India at Harare Sports Club in Harare yesterday. (AFP)

line for 31 with the total on 47.

"It would have been best for us if I stayed to the end," said Gill. "I was very disappointed with the way I got out."

Off-spinner Raza, who took three for 25 and was named man of the match, said he was happy with the win but disappointed about his team's batting.

"This isn't a wicket where you get bowled out for 115.

"Credit to the bowlers of both sides but clearly an indication we

need to up our skills. Our catching and ground fielding was amazing."

In a low-scoring match, an unbeaten last wicket stand of 25 between Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Clive Madande (29 not out) and Tendai Chatara, who faced nine balls but did not score a run, proved crucial.

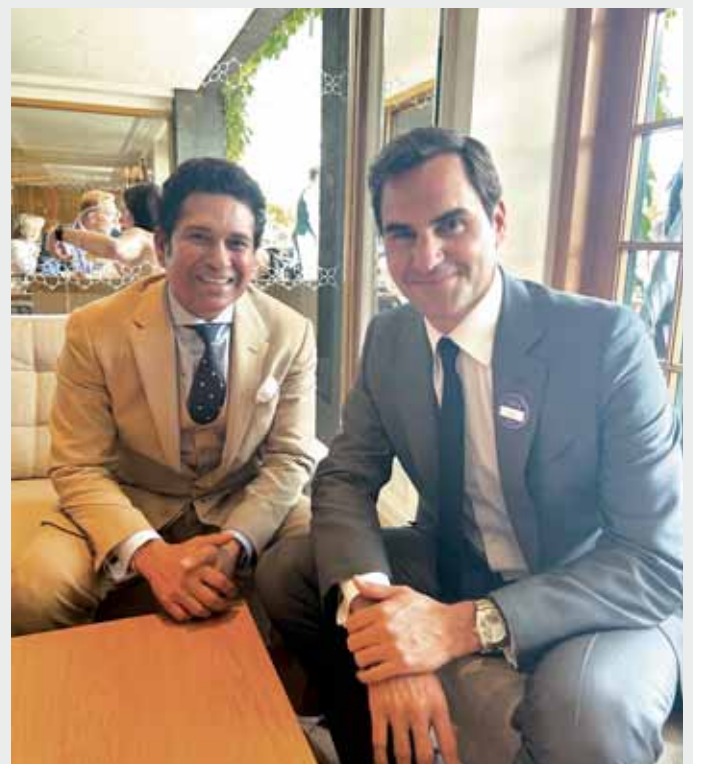
Chatara then played a key role with his fast bowling, taking three for 16, including two of the four wickets that fell in the first five

overs of India's innings. Washington Sundar gave India hope after they lost their ninth wicket with the total on 86.

Sundar, who earlier took two for 11 in four overs of off-spin bowling, made 27 before he was last man out.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**Zimbabwe 115 for 9** (Madande 29\*, Bishnoi 4-13) **beat India 102** (Gill 31, Chatara 3-16, Raza 3-25) **by 13 runs**

## MAESTROS AT WIMBLEDON



Retired Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar is pictured with global tennis icon Roger Federer of Switzerland on the sixth day of Wimbledon Championships in London yesterday. (@Wimbledon)

## Russian wrestlers refuse to participate in Games

**Laussane:** Russian wrestlers invited to compete at the Paris Olympics as neutral athletes will not take part after some of the leading wrestlers were left off the invitation list, the Russian Wrestling Federation (RWF) said yesterday. Russian and Belarusian athletes can participate only as neutrals – without flags, anthems or any role in the opening parade – because of the war in Ukraine, which Russia calls a 'special military operation'. Two-time gold medalist Abdulrashid Sadulaev and 2023 world

champion Zaurbek Sidakov were among the leading Russian wrestlers not named in the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) list of invited neutral athletes in June, the RWF said in a statement. The RWF said its executive committee, the national teams' coaching staff and the invited athletes had unanimously decided to refuse to participate in the Olympics after a meeting. The wrestlers' withdrawal comes after Russian cyclist Aleksandr Vlasov also pulled out of the Olympics last month.

## GOLOVKIN WOULD ENTERTAIN SAUDI OFFERS TO RETURN TO THE RING

**New York:** Former-middleweight world champion **Gennady Golovkin** said he remains in peak form and would entertain offers to return to the ring from a newly proposed Saudi-backed boxing league. Once recognised as the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, Golovkin (42 wins, 37 by KO, two losses and a draw) has never officially retired and despite having not fought since a loss to Canelo Alvarez in 2022, he told Reuters he is ready.

"Would I be interested in an interesting offer, yeah we have a lot of interest here," Golovkin told Reuters through an inter-

preter. "I would say, never say never. We shall see. I am very comfortable in my position I feel great, I am at the peak of my form and I would say if something comes up we will look into that." Reuters reported in June that Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is in discussions with multiple boxing stakeholders to create a league, potentially reshaping the competitive landscape of the sport. A handful of leading promoters including Matchroom Boxing and Golden Boy Promotions are involved in the discussions that could result in a deal valuing

the new entity between \$4-5bn, a source told Reuters. Boxing is the latest sport to attract possible investment from the PIF, which is chaired by the crown prince, after deals across golf, Formula 1, and football. If the league were to get off the ground Golovkin would be a prize signing. The 42-year-old Kazakhstani's trilogy of fights with Alvarez grew into one of boxing's storied rivalries. Having recently been appointed president of the Kazakhstan Olympic Committee, Golovkin's biggest fight right now is helping ensure boxing remains on

the Olympic programme for the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games. The International Boxing Association (IBA) having failed to complete reforms on governance, finance and ethical issues was last June stripped of its recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The boxing tournaments at the Paris Olympics this summer are being organised by the IOC but it has said it will not be doing so at the Los Angeles Games in 2028. It has urged national federations to decide on a successor to the IBA by next year at the latest or risk seeing boxing miss out on the 2028 Games.



WIMBLEDON

# Putintseva stuns Swiatek, Shelton sets up Sinner date

'Feels great, I was just so focused on just playing fast and not giving her any time and that's pretty much it'

AFP  
London

**W**orld number one Iga Swiatek was dumped out of Wimbledon by Yulia Putintseva in a thrilling game of tennis. On a dramatic, if cold and wet day at the All England Club, Andy Murray's Wimbledon career ended with a whimper when Emma Raducanu pulled the plug on their mixed doubles plans. Also yesterday, Novak Djokovic reached the Wimbledon fourth round for the 16th time with a battling 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) win over Australia's Alexei Popyrin. Djokovic, chasing a record-equalling eighth title at the All England Club and 25th Grand Slam, has now made the last 16 at the majors for a 65th time.



Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva celebrates winning against Poland's Iga Swiatek during their singles match on the sixth day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships in London yesterday. (AFP)

It was also the 37-year-old's 95th win at the tournament. World number two Djokovic will face Holger Rune, the 15th seed from Denmark, for a place in the quarter-finals. Top seed Swiatek, who won a fourth French Open and fifth Grand Slam title last month, was stunned 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 in the third round by Putintseva, the Russian-born Kazakh. The upset ended Swiatek's 21-match win streak while the diminutive Putintseva goes on to face the equally fiery Jelena Ostapenko for a quarter-final place. "Feels great, I was just so focused on just playing fast and not giving her any time and that's pretty much it," said 29-year-old Putintseva after her win on Court One. "I was thinking during the match that I had already beaten a world number one on grass so I think it was meant to be," she added, recalling her win over Naomi Osaka in Birmingham in 2019. After winning the first set, it appeared business as usual for Swiatek, who went into yesterday's match

with a 4-0 head-to-head record over the 35th ranked Putintseva. However, Putintseva, who stands at just 1.63m (5ft 4ins) stormed back in the second set on the back of breaks in the fourth and sixth games. She held her nerve to cruise to a double break and a 4-0 lead in the decider. Swiatek saved two match points but was defeated on the third when she buried a forehand return into the net. **'Cow on ice'** The Pole, who has never got past the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, committed 38 unforced errors to Putintseva's 15. The Kazakh saved seven of eight break points. Putintseva, a three-time Grand Slam quarter-finalist, extended her grass-court streak this year to eight wins after clinching the Birmingham title last month. World number four Alexander Zverev put on another serving masterclass to reach the last 16 for the third time, seeing off Britain's Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-4, 7-6

(17/15). Zverev needed six match points to seal the deal in a third-set tiebreak which stretched to over 20 minutes. The 27-year-old German didn't face a single break point and clubbed 15 aces in his 52 winners. He has only faced four break points in three matches and saved them all. "I do feel like a cow on ice sometimes," he said of his grass-court movement. France's Giovanni Petrangola dropped serve for the first time in the tournament, but still clinched a 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 victory against Emil Ruusuvuori. Mpetshi Perricard, who turns 21 on Monday, is the first lucky loser to make the last 16 since Dick Norman in 1995. **'Big dog'** American 14th seed Ben Shelton beat Denis Shapovalov in five sets and will face world number one Jannik Sinner in the last 16. Shelton followed in the footsteps of his father Bryan who made the fourth round in 1994. "We're back, big dog," Shelton

told his father on court. Meanwhile, Andy Murray's 19-year Wimbledon career finished on a low. Former world number one Murray, who will retire after the Paris Olympics, didn't play singles after failing to recover from surgery to remove a cyst from his spine. On Thursday, he and brother Jamie were defeated in the first round of men's doubles. Murray, the 2013 and 2016 Wimbledon champion, was scheduled to partner Raducanu in yesterday's last match on Court One. "Unfortunately I woke up with some stiffness in my right wrist so therefore I have decided to make the very tough decision to withdraw from the mixed doubles tonight," said Raducanu. Raducanu, the 2021 US Open champion, faces New Zealand's Lulu Sun today for a place in the women's singles quarter-finals. Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, the runner-up in the last two years, was defeated 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) by Ukrainian 21st seed Elina Svitolina, a semi-finalist in 2023.

## Come back to Bayern Munich, Zverev tells Guardiola



Manchester City's Spanish coach Pep Guardiola (left) reacts as Germany's Alexander Zverev gives a speech after winning his third round match against Britain's Cameron Norrie. (Reuters)

**London:** Germany's Alexander Zverev asked Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola to come back to Bayern Munich yesterday after the Spaniard watched him reach the fourth round of Wimbledon. Fourth seed Zverev was watched by a Royal Box full of sporting greats including Guardiola as he battled past Cameron Norrie, winning the first two sets 6-4 and then surviving a 32-point third-set tiebreak to triumph. Speaking on Centre Court, Zverev said the sight of the former Bayern Munich manager in the front row of the Royal Box had made him nervous, although his play was dazzling. "For me and for all tennis players it's an honour to play on this beautiful Centre Court and in front of the Royal Box, we had so many sporting legends today," Zverev said. "For me Pep Guardiola - when I saw Pep I got so nervous for a few games. Thanks a lot for coming, it's a privilege to play. Last thing - Bayern Munich needs

a coach. If you're tired of football you can coach me on a tennis court any time." Guardiola, who led Manchester City to an unprecedented fourth successive Premier League title last season, was joined by the likes of Indian cricket maestro Sachin Tendulkar, British cycling great Chris Hoy and Olympic heptathlon gold medalist Jessica Ennis-Hill. Middle Saturday is the traditional day at Wimbledon for sports stars past and present to attend the Royal Box. Zverev, a soccer fan and diehard Bayern Munich supporter, got to meet Guardiola immediately after the match with the City manager asking him about the knee injury he sustained in the second set against Norrie. Bayern Munich recently hired Vincent Kompany, Guardiola's old captain at Manchester City, as coach after their 11-year reign as Bundesliga champions was ended by Bayer Leverkusen. Guardiola coached Bayern from 2013-16.

CYCLING

# Girmay wins eighth stage of the Tour de France

AFP  
Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, France

**E**ritrean sprinter Biniam Girmay won stage eight of the Tour de France yesterday at a finish line in the village where former French president Charles de Gaulle lived and is buried. Girmay became the first black African to win a stage on the Tour de France on stage 8. "One win on the Tour is amazing but to win a second on a stage like this, that suits me, I feel just amazing," said the smiley Girmay. Overnight leader Tadej Pogacar retained his 33-second lead over Remco Evenepoel in the general standings while defending champion Jonas Vingegaard is third. Girmay's second stage win after his historic triumph at Turin on Monday extended his lead atop the best sprinter standings in the green jersey. The final sprint was raced up an incline that favoured the more slightly built sprinters even though Jasper Philipsen, the 2023 green jersey, came second while Belgian 22-year-old Arnaud de Lie was third. Girmay is the first rider to win



Eritrean rider Biniam Girmay wearing the sprinter's green jersey cycles to the finish line to win the 8th stage of the 111th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 183.5km between Semur-en-Auxois and Colombey-les-deux-Eglises, yesterday. (AFP)

two stages so far with rival sprinters Dylan Groenewegen and Mark Cavendish having won previous sprint stages but who were outside the top 10 yesterday. "We had a good plan," said Inter-marche rider Girmay. "I stayed near the front on the way up the hill and it was easy because I followed two Covidis riders up the hill. It was like teamwork." Norwegian rider Jonas Abra-

hamsen of Uno-X raced ahead of the peloton for most of the afternoon staying ahead for 170km and extending his lead in the king of the mountains polka dot jersey race for at least two more stages. The stage ended in Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, home of de Gaulle and his wife Yvonne. De Gaulle led the Free French during WWII and was later president and architect of the Fifth French

Republic. In a much remembered race incident in 1960 De Gaulle and his wife came out to see the Tour de France pass by their village and, seeing him there, the peloton stopped briefly to greet him. Olympic medal hope and 2019 world road race champion Mads Pedersen pulled out of the Tour "to focus on other goals" ahead of stage eight having failed to shake off a shoulder injury. Today's circuit around Troyes region features 14 gravel sections in a Tour de France first, opening up to the growing popularity to gravel racing. "There's no favourite for tomorrow (Sunday). Maybe someone on a breakaway, Whoever wins will have to be good," said the yellow jersey. Aiming for a Giro d'Italia and Tour de France double that was last achieved in 1998 by Marco Pantani. Pogacar dismissed any idea he might be tired. "The Giro is already a long time ago, I don't feel it has hurt me racing both because I have honestly never felt better. We'll see later though, who knows," said the 2020 and 2021 champion who races for UAE.

SPOTLIGHT

## Drege, 25, dies after Tour of Austria crash

Reuters  
Oslo

**N**orwegian professional cyclist Andre Drege has died after a crash during the Tour of Austria, the International Cycling Union (UCI) said yesterday. The 25-year-old Team Coop-Repsol rider fell during a mountain descent after losing control of his bike. "The UCI is devastated to learn of the death of professional cyclist Andre Drege at the Tour of Austria," the UCI said on X. "Our thoughts are with his family, friends and teammates." "It was an accident, and he died due to the injuries he sustained. We are investigating the cause," The local police told Norwegian TV 2. The post-race presentations were cancelled. As the Tour de France riders reached the podium area or rode onto the buses yesterday, the participants were quietly told about Drege's tragic death. "We have a pretty cool job, but it's really dangerous most of the time," Tadej Pogacar said post-stage, reflecting the feeling of many riders in the peloton, cyclingnews.com reported. "Professional riders are acutely

aware of the risks they take everyday as they race on wet roads, gravel sectors and mountain descents but race on. Every rider's death is a moment of deep reflection. "Sometimes we don't appreciate enough what we have. It's always like this in life," Pogacar added. "My thoughts go out to his family and friends and to the organisers of the Tour of Austria and all the riders there. "In the cycling world, we need to look around each other and take care of each other," he added. Cycling has mourned several deaths in the past year. Spaniard Juan Pujalte, 18, died in March after being involved in a fatal accident during training. In August, Belgian rider Tijl De Decker, 22, passed away due to severe injuries sustained in a training crash. US Junior Men's National Team member Magnus White died aged 17 after being hit by a car while training in his home city Boulder, Colorado days after Italian Jacopo Venzo, also 17, died following a crash during a race in Austria. In mid-June 2023, Swiss rider Gino Mader died at the age of 26 after crashing into a ravine during stage five of the Tour de Suisse, on the descent towards the finish line.

ATHLETICS

# Duplantis headlines Paris Diamond League with all eyes on the Olympics

AFP  
Paris

**P**ole vault star Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis headlines a host of global track and field stars who will get a taste of elite competition in Paris at today's Diamond League, just three weeks out from the Olympic Games in the French capital. The Olympic athletics programme starts on August 1 at the Stade de France, once used for Diamond League meets during

the Usain Bolt era. The Diamond League is now held at the Stade Charlety in the south of the city, with a near sell-out crowd of 20,000 expected today. Duplantis is one of five Olympic champions, six world champions and 12 reigning European champions set to test their mettle in Paris. "I've been jumping for a very long time. I've got good at it and figured out how to jump high," said Duplantis, who this season alone has already won a second world indoor title and a third European gold, as well as bettering his own world record to

6.24 metres. Those triumphs have all added to the US-born Swede's vast medal haul including Olympic gold from Tokyo and two world outdoor titles. Pressure to perform, however, was not something that overly bothered Duplantis, with today's competition his last before the July 26-August 11 Olympics. "It's something you get used to, in a way. I focus on myself and try to get the best out of me." Turning to today's meet, he added: "I definitely want to make sure that everything's where I want it to be, to try to gath-

er as much information as I possibly can because I want everything to be as perfect as it can be. "I hope to jump high tomorrow and show myself I'm in world record shape going into the Olympics. I want to make sure that everything's where it should be. I'm going to give it 110 per cent like I always do. We do have a really great field. It's basically the Olympic final." Kenya's Faith Kipyegon, a double Olympic champion and four-time world gold medalist, will also be competing, a year after shattering the world 5,000m record

at the same stadium. Kipyegon, however, will be racing the 1500m, an event in which she also holds the world record and will use to hone her speed in the run-in to the Olympics. Other Olympic champions in the French capital are German long jumper Malaika Mihambo and Polish hammer thrower Wojciech Nowicki, who both won European titles in Rome in June, and American discus thrower Valarie Allman. Nine other newly-crowned European champions are set to hit the track in Paris with an eye on the Olympics.

## FOOTBALL

## End beckons again for Ronaldo after Portugal KO

AFP  
Berlin

Time is up – again – for Portugal's ageing superstar Cristiano Ronaldo after an inglorious Euro 2024 exit.

France ousted the 2016 winners 5-3 on penalties after a goalless quarter-final in Hamburg on Friday and Ronaldo was ineffectual at best, damaging to his own side's aspirations at worst.

In the 2022 World Cup when former coach Fernando Santos dropped Ronaldo to the bench for the team's 6-1 demolition of Switzerland, a bright Portugal future shimmered on the horizon.

However his successor Roberto Martinez has backed the 39-year-old, now playing in Saudi Arabia at Al Nassr, to the hilt and beyond.

Maintaining the former Real Madrid and Manchester United forward as their figurehead, Portugal swept through Euros qualification with a 100 percent record and were among the favourites in Germany.

However they have badly underperformed with Ronaldo failing to find the net in five appearances this summer. The

striker is without a goal in his last nine major tournament matches. Despite boasting strong options to replace him, including Liverpool's Diogo Jota and Paris Saint-Germain's Goncalo Ramos, Martinez refused to take Ronaldo off against France.

Didier Deschamps substituted Les Bleus icon Kylian Mbappe as he struggled to make an impact but Ronaldo remained even as the game passed him by.

In the last 16 win over Slovenia Ronaldo missed a penalty in extra-time and burst into tears, a distracting sideshow, but Martinez praised the forward's emotional reaction after the game as a sign of his passion.

However many suspect those tears were not for Portugal but for himself, as he failed to break the record for the oldest player ever to score at a European Championship. Ronaldo also ended his run of scoring at every major international tournament he has competed in, and could not extend his record of 14 Euros goals.

He took 23 shots without success in Germany, and perhaps the most damning was a glittering opportunity in extra-time against France. Spritely winger Francisco Conceicao cut the ball back to the forward, a few yards out from goal, but somehow he

fired his team's clearest chance high over the bar.

It was the kind of chance that Ronaldo has dispatched a hundred times in his career.

Ronaldo's presence heavily conditions the way Portugal plays.

His teammates, including creative geniuses Bruno Fernandes and Bernardo Silva, often resort to crosses to try and find him.

Ronaldo no longer has the pace to consistently break in behind the defence, limiting the passing options of the team's playmakers.

Martinez not only did not seem powerful enough to leave Ronaldo out of his plans altogether but could not even bring himself to substitute the forward at the tournament, except for in the shock 2-0 defeat by Georgia.

Ronaldo started that match even though Portugal were guaranteed to win the group, while virtually every other regular was rested.

The coach said after elimination by France that no decision had been made

over Ronaldo's future at international level.

"We just finished the game, everything is still too raw, we're suffering a defeat as a team, there's no individual decisions at this point," Martinez told reporters.

One of the reasons the Spanish coach may not feel powerful enough to cut the cord is the 'cult of Cristiano' which is evident among the team's supporters.

Adults stalked the streets of Frankfurt, Leipzig and Berlin this summer relentlessly yelling Ronaldo's "Siuuuuuuu" celebration, for hours on end.

To attend a Portugal match is to swim in a sea of maroon Ronaldo '7' shirts, with some fans wearing masks of their talisman's face.

Even opposition fans come to watch the Ro-

naldo circus, though there is more sulking and pouting than goals now.

"(Our fans) mostly wanted to see Ronaldo, that's why they flocked to the match," noted Slovenia midfielder Adam Gnezda Cerin of a March friendly in which they beat Ronaldo and Portugal 2-0.

Although at the Euros they were eventually eliminated by Portugal on penalties, they exposed Ronaldo's inadequacies once more at this level and France finished the job.

Ronaldo admitted these will be his last Euros, but as Portugal now turn their attention to the 2026 World Cup, their chances will surely be magnified without the preening, past-it hitman.



Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo reacts after the UEFA Euro 2024 quarter-final match against France in Hamburg yesterday. (AFP)

## COPA AMERICA

## Debutants Canada stun Venezuela on penalties

AFP  
Arlington, United States

Canada reached the semi-finals of the Copa America on Friday after beating Venezuela 4-3 on penalties after the 90-minute game finished 1-1.

Jacob Shaffelburg fired Canada into the lead in the 13th minute but Salomon Rondon equalised in the 64th, before Canada triumphed in the shoot-out to set up a last-four meeting with world champions Argentina.

The Canadians, under American coach Jesse Marsch, who only took over the team in mid-May, are playing in the Copa America for the first time and produced a relentless display of pressing in what was a frantic game.

Both teams failed to score from the spot twice in the shoot-out, leaving it at 3-3 after five penalties each and sending the contest into sudden death.

Canada keeper Max Crepeau, who had made a major error for Venezuela's equaliser, made amends as he saved Wilker Angel's kick. That left Ismael Kone with the chance to win the game. He converted with an ice-cool penalty to set off the celebrations in front of a crowd of 51,080 mostly Venezuela supporting fans.

Canada played Argentina in the opening game of the group stage, losing 2-0 to the defending champions and will start as huge underdogs again in the semi-final.

But after a performance of remarkable energy and determination against a Venezuela team that won all three of their group stage games, Marsch will believe his team could pull off another upset and reach the final in Miami on July 14.

Canada roared out of the blocks, giving Venezuela no time on the ball and getting forward in numbers in the early stages.

"Vinotinto" keeper Rafael Romo had to race out of his area to stop Cyle Larin as he raced on to a ball over the top, but there was nothing he could do minutes later when the Canadians took the lead.

Jonathan David bustled in from



Canada's forward Jonathan David celebrates alongside teammates their victory after a penalty shoot-out during the Conmebol 2024 Copa America quarter-final against Venezuela at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, yesterday. (AFP)

the right and winger Shaffelburg arrived right on time to slot the ball into the bottom corner.

Shaffelburg, a speedy left-winger who plays in Major League Soccer for Nashville, then forced Romo into a diving save and then delivered a low cross which David was unable to finish. Canada were going for the jugular and Richie Laryea zipped a ball across the face of the box but the stretching David was unable to reach it.

Larin wasted a big chance just after the interval when he found the ball in space in the box but leaned back and fired his shot well over the bar. Marsch's high-energy tactics were starting to take a toll on his players and as they tired Venezuela grew into the game.

Jose Martinez should have done better when a poor clearance landed at his feet in the box but he stabbed his shot wide.

But then a long ball forward was won by Rondon, who spotted Crepeau far off his line and from 35-yards out the veteran striker produced a perfect lob to beat the stranded keeper and make it 1-1.

There were late chances for Canada to win the game in regulation time, but neither Liam Millar nor Tami Oluwaseyi, both on as substitutes could provide a composed finish.

With no extra-time in Copa America, it was straight to penalties and after Rondon and David both converted, Yangel Herrera hit the post for Venezuela.

Millar then put his effort over the bar and after Tomas Rincon scored for Venezuela, Moise Bombito levelled for Canada.

But Jefferson Savarino hit the post and Canada's Stephen Eustaquio saw his soft effort saved by Romo before both teams scored to make it 3-3.

Then in sudden death, Crepeau dove to deny Angel leaving Kone with the pressure shot to win which he handled with aplomb.

"Everybody needs to realize the respect this country deserves and these footballers deserve," Crepeau told Fox Sports.

"Everybody says 'these Canadians, well these Canadians are in the semi-finals of Copa America'."

## MOTORSPORT

## Martin wins German MotoGP sprint race to stem Bagnaia run

AFP  
Sachsenring, Germany

Series leader Jorge Martin won the German MotoGP sprint race yesterday to extend his lead in the championship and end a run of five successive victories by main rival Francesco Bagnaia.

Martin, who earlier took pole, slipped to third on the first of the 15 laps but soon regained the lead and the Spanish Ducati-Pramac rider was untroubled from then on to repeat his win from last year.

Portugal's Miguel Oliveira finished second and Bagnaia – who had won the previous two sprints and three MotoGPs – third. Martin now leads Italy's double world champion Bagnaia by 15 points going into today's main event, one of the rare races conducted on an anti-clockwise circuits.

Martin, who moves to Aprilia next year, wore a beaming smile, as he got off his bike, something which has been rare over the past few weeks.

"That was an amazing race for sure," said Martin, who did the double last year.

"It was very difficult as one knows it is really strange here.

"We had to manage the wind as well. However, I was confident today even if we were so close at times.

"I am really really happy and

hopefully tomorrow we can win again," added the 26-year-old.

Bagnaia, 25, was satisfied with his podium finish as the team engineers had had to work on his Ducati factory bike overnight having struggled on Friday.

"After yesterday I am very happy now and I hope it will be even better for tomorrow," said Bagnaia, who starts from the second row today.

For Oliveira yesterday was a rare bright moment in a tough season as he finished second in qualifying and then celebrated his first ever sprint race podium on his Aprilia.

"This is a very very good feeling," said the 29-year-old.

"After qualifying I felt I had a good possibility to finish on the podium in the sprint.

"It is not easy when you are usually in midfield to fight with the big boys.

"However, I hung on in there and did not put a foot wrong, hopefully tomorrow I will have another good result."

The race for the honours may have been dull but it was anything but further down the field.

The six-time world champion Marc Marquez produced a superb performance to storm from 13th to sixth.

Marquez, who has won a record eight German MotoGPs, managed this despite a broken left index finger and a bruised ribcage following a heavy fall on Friday.



Prima Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin clenches his fist after winning during the sprint race of the German Motorcycle Grand Prix at the Sachsenring racetrack in Hohenstein-Ernstthal, Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

## Spain's Pedri to miss rest of Euro 2024 due to knee injury

Donauessingen: Spain midfielder Pedri is set to miss the rest of Euro 2024 after suffering a knee ligament sprain in Friday's quarter-final victory over Germany. The Barcelona playmaker had to be substituted after just eight minutes in the clash in Stuttgart, which Spain won 2-1 after extra-time.

In a statement yesterday the Spanish football federation said the 21-year-old had suffered a "grade two ligament sprain" but

will remain in Germany to support his teammates for the rest of the tournament. According to Spanish media reports he will be sidelined for a month.

Pedri was injured after a robust challenge early on from Toni Kroos in what turned out to be the final match of the Germany midfielder's career. Former Real Madrid star Kroos sent his best wishes as he penned an emotional letter to Germany fans yesterday.

"Get better soon Pedri. Obviously, it was not my intention to cause any damage," Kroos posted on Instagram. "Wishing you a speedy recovery and all the best. You are a great player."

Spain face France in the last four in Munich on Tuesday. Dani Olmo is expected to replace Pedri in Luis de la Fuente's starting line-up after scoring the opening goal and then assisting Mikel Merino's late winner against the hosts.



Spain's midfielder Pedri leaves the pitch after being injured during the Euro 2024 quarter-final against Germany in Stuttgart yesterday. (AFP)

## Team Qatar off to Cambodia for Davis Cup

DOHA: The Qatar's tennis team delegation left Doha yesterday to participate in 2024 Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group IV Playoff Event, which will run from 10th to 14th of July in Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh. Team Qatar's delegation to Phnom Pen consists of players, Mossa Shanan, Mubarak Shanan, Ghanem al-Sulaiti, Rashid Nawaf, Mishari Nawaf and coach Moneer al-Araaj. The five-day tournament will bring together eight Asian

teams, including Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and hosts Cambodia.

