

Al Sadd's focus now on Al Duhail semi-final: Mujica

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Fresh off Al Sadd's pulsating 6-4 win over Al Shamal in the Amir Cup quarter-final, Rafa Mujica said the Wolves have already turned their attention to Tuesday's semi-final against arch-rivals Al Duhail.

Al Sadd came through a dramatic contest on Friday in what was arguably one of the most entertaining matches of the season. David Prats' Al Shamal mounted a spirited comeback after trailing by four goals, but Al Sadd held firm in the closing stages to book their place in the last four.

Mujica, who struck a hat-trick in the ten-goal thriller, said he was pleased to play a decisive role, but stressed the team's priority has now shifted to the next challenge.

"Al Shamal delivered a great performance, which made the match both difficult and enjoyable at the same time. We are extremely happy with this important win against a strong opponent who never gave up until the final moments," said the Spaniard.

"We will quickly turn the page on this match and start preparing for our next game against Al Duhail. Our aim is to win and continue our journey towards the final."

Al Duhail advanced to the semi-finals in emphatic fashion, easing past Al Arabi 4-0. Their experienced forward Ismaeel Mohammad said the side is determined to go all the way.

"We are happy with the result and reaching the semi-finals," he said after the match.

"Our target is to go far in the tournament. We want to compete for the title, and we know it will require a lot of effort. Amir Cup matches are always tough, but our ambition is to reach the final stages."

In the other semi-final on Tuesday, defending champions Al Gharafa will face Al Wakrah.

Al Gharafa showed resilience after falling behind early to edge Umm Salal 2-1 and stay on course in their title defence.

"We are on track in our title defence," said Al Gharafa star Yacine Brahimi.

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> ***Rafa Mujica***

"We will now prepare for the big match against Al Wakrah and go into the semi-final fully ready."

Al Wakrah, meanwhile, impressed with a 3-0 victory over in-form Al Rayyan to seal their spot.

"It was an exceptional performance as we controlled the game from start to finish," said Al Wakrah coach Jose Sierra.

"We hope to carry this momentum into the semi-final."



Rafa Mujica celebrates after scoring a goal.

Amir Cup basketball tourney semis tomorrow

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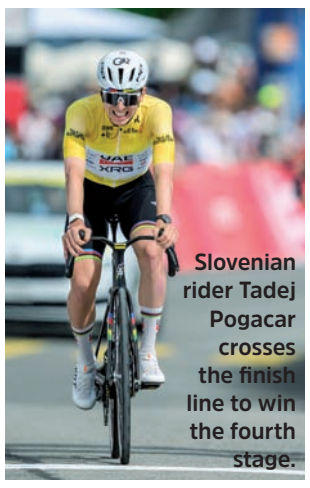
DOHA: The race for the Amir Cup basketball tournament title enters its decisive phase tomorrow, with the semi-finals set to unfold at the Al Gharafa Indoor Sports Hall.

In the first clash, Al Ahli meet last year's runners-up Al Arabi at 6:00pm. The second semi-final follows at 8:00pm, where defending champions Al Rayyan take on Al Sadd.

Al Rayyan arrive in strong form after a dominant 104-82 win over Al Gharafa in the quarter-finals. Al Arabi also sent a clear message, easing past Qatar SC 104-73. Al Ahli secured their place with an 85-72 victory against Al Wakrah, while Al Sadd advanced after beating Al Shamal 107-96.

Meanwhile, the Qatar Basketball Federation (QBF) has announced the release of tickets for the final, set to be held on May 6.

Prices start from QR15, while children under the age of five can enter free of charge. This initiative reflects the federation's commitment to encouraging family attendance and enhancing the fan experience at one of Qatar's premier basketball competitions. With the tournament's growing popularity and the closely matched teams competing for the title, the final is expected to attract a large crowd and deliver an exciting conclusion to the championship.


Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar crosses the finish line to win the fourth stage.

Pogacar wins again to pull clear in Tour of Romandie

CHARMEY: Tadej Pogacar soared away from his rivals yesterday on the final climb to win for the third time in four days on the Tour of Romandie.

At the end of the mountainous 'queen stage' of the week-long race, Pogacar attacked twice on the 8.3km final climb the Jaunpass.

The first time he went he shook off every other member of a group of more than 20 except second-placed Florian Lipowitz. But the Slovenian kicked again a kilometre from the top and dropped his German rival.

After two sprint victories earlier in the six-day race, followed by a defeat at the finish on Friday by French sprinter Dorian Godon, the four-time Tour de France winner this time battled a headwind on the final descent and run to the line before raising his arms in solo victory. — ***AFP***

Arsenal hit stride to go six points clear; West Ham loss offers Tottenham hope

LONDON: Arsenal stormed six points clear at the top of the Premier League as Bukayo Saka and Viktor Gyokeres put Fulham to the sword in a 3-0 win, while West Ham's defeat at Brentford offered Tottenham a lifeline in the battle for survival.

The Gunners have stumbled towards the finish line in their quest for a first league title in 22 years, blowing a sizeable lead over Manchester City in a series of nervous displays.

But the return of Saka, making his first start in six weeks, freed up Mikel Arteta's men in a dominant performance that shrugged off fears of fatigue in between two legs of a Champions League semi-final against Atletico Madrid.

Gyokeres also silenced his critics with two predatory finishes to take his tally to 21 in his first season since a £64m ($87m) move from Sporting Lisbon.

The Swede was perfectly positioned to tap in Saka's cross after just nine minutes to ease any Arsenal tension.

Riccardo Calafiori had a second goal ruled out by VAR for offside before Gyokeres and Saka combined again to double the home side's lead.

This time Gyokeres fed the England international, who blasted in at Bernd Leno's near post.

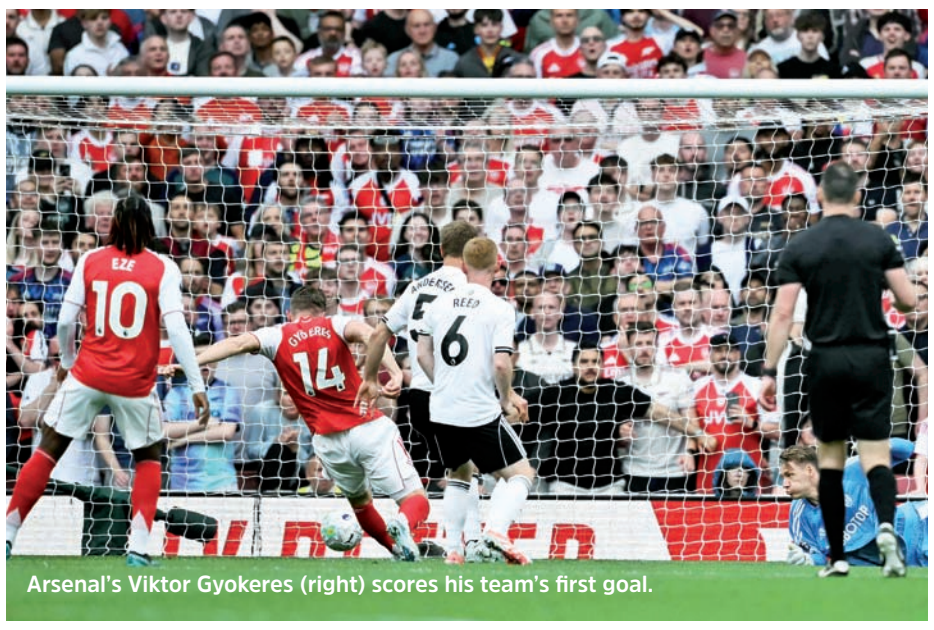
City can eradicate Arsenal's lead with two games in hand before the Gunners next play in the Premier League.

But goal difference could prove decisive in the destiny of the title.

Arsenal stretched their goal difference advantage to four when Gyokeres rose highest to head in Leandro Trossard's cross just before half-time.

Arteta was then able to look ahead to the second leg against Atletico, with the tie finely poised at 1-1, as Saka made way at half-time, before Gyokeres, Declan Rice and Eberechi Eze were also rested for the closing stages.

Defeat was a major blow to Fulham's ambitions of European football next season as they remain in 10th.


Arsenal's Viktor Gyokeres (right) scores his team's first goal.

Spurs survival boost

Brentford took control of the battle for sixth, which could be enough for Champions League qualification, by inflicting a damaging 3-0 defeat on West Ham.

Tottenham remain in the relegation zone, two points from safety, but can move out of the bottom three with victory at Aston Villa on Sunday after the Hammers succumbed to just their third defeat in 11 league games.

Konstantinos Mavropanos was left to rue his luck in two key first-half incidents.

The Greek defender was unfortunate not to be awarded a free-kick as he turned the ball into his own net to open the scoring.

Mavropanos thought he had made amends moments later with a bullet header, but was ruled marginally offside by a VAR review.

Brentford had another call go in their favour early in the second half when Dango Ouattara won a penalty and Igor Thiago coolly converted his 22nd Premier League goal of the season. Mikkel Damsgaard's strike rounded off a bad day for West Ham, who face Arsenal next weekend.

Newcastle eased any lingering fears of being drawn into the relegation battle with a 3-1 win over Brighton to end a five-game losing streak.

William Osula and Dan Burn scored in the opening 24 minutes as Newcastle edged up to 13th.

Jack Hinshelwood pulled a goal back, but defeat could prove costly to Brighton's European hopes as having started the weekend in sixth, they could end it outside the top half.

Harvey Barnes rounded off the scoring in stoppage time to bring some relief to the under-fire Eddie Howe.

Sunderland's bid for Europe was also dented by a 1-1 draw at bottom-of-the-table Wolves.

Nordi Mukiele put the Black Cats in front early on, but Sunderland played for over an hour a man down after Dan Ballard was sent-off for a hair pull. — ***AFP***

Ipswich seal Premier League promotion

LONDON: Ipswich secured an immediate return to the Premier League as they beat QPR 3-0 yesterday to hold off the challenge of Millwall.

The Tractor Boys had the destiny of second place in the Championship in their own hands and two goals in the opening 10 minutes from George Hirst and Jaden Philogene allowed the party to start early at Portman Road.

Kasey McAteer rounded off victory five minutes from time as Ipswich join Coventry in the top flight next season.

Ipswich struggled last season on their return to the Premier League for the first time in 22 years, but will hope that experience serves them better for the challenge ahead. — ***AFP***

Al Eid tops Diamond Tour at Hathab

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DOHA: Khalid Al Eid stole the spotlight in the Diamond Tour as the 12th round of the Longines Hathab – Qatar Equestrian Tour wrapped up at the Qatar Equestrian Federation's main arena yesterday.

Riding Raker, Al Eid clinched the 150cm class with a sharp round in 40.68 seconds, edging out Cyrine Cherif, who clocked 41.26 seconds on Easy Boy. Mohammed Saeed Haidan settled for third after posting 42.55 seconds aboard Wathnan Stand, as the top riders delivered a tight contest at the highest level.

In the Bronze Tour (120cm), Anaz Al-Anaz claimed top honours with a winning time of 56.45 seconds on Be Bop de Lyons. Faris Saad Al-Qahtani followed in 57.86 seconds on Foudre du Banney, while Hussein Saeed Haidan placed third in 60.87 seconds on Gringo.


Salha Khalid Al Obaidli (centre) won the Future Riders Class, followed by Alqaqaa bin Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (left) and Salman Faisal Al Marri in second and third places respectively.

The team event saw Marwan Al Shaqab take first place with a combined time of 144.78 seconds. Al Adeed Al Shaqab finished second, while Al Shaqab team secured third.

Earlier, Salha Khalid Al Obaidli impressed in the Future Riders class (90cm), winning in 24.79 seconds on Violet Van Het Koetshuis. Alqaqaa bin Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani finished second on Bon Suela, with Salman Faisal Al Marri third on Suol Rebel.

Speaking after the round, Ali Yousef Al Rumaihi, Vice Chairman of the Organising Committee, said the tour continues to grow in stature and quality.

"We saw strong competition, which highlights the riders' readiness and determination to perform at their best. With only two rounds remaining, attention now turns to the race for points and the overall standings as riders push to secure the title. The intensity also reflects the championship's success in attracting elite international riders while continuing to support and develop local talent, strengthening Qatar's presence on the showjumping stage."


Deputy Director of the Championship Saeed Al Rashdi crowned the podium winners of Diamond Tour.

Winter Sports Development Program kicks off under Years of Culture Initiative

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DOHA: The Winter Sports Development Program was launched at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena as part of the Years of Culture Initiative (Qatar – Canada & Mexico 2026), in a strategic collaboration between the Qatar Winter Sports Committee and Qatar Museums' flagship cultural program.

Designed as a unique platform bridging sport and culture, the initiative aims to expand awareness of winter sports in Qatar while promoting international exchange, particularly with Canada and Mexico. It combines hands-on sporting experiences, interactive learning, and cultural engagement activities.

The opening ceremony carried a strong diplomatic and sporting tone, featuring the ceremonial puck drop by Ambassador of Canada to Qatar H E Karim Morcos, Ambassador of Mexico to Qatar H E José Guillermo Ordorica Robles and President of the Qatar Winter Sports Committee Majid Rashid Al-Sulaiti, marking the start of an exhibition ice hockey game between amateur players from Qatar and Canadian residents.



Ambassador of Canada to Qatar H E Karim Morcos, Ambassador of Mexico to Qatar H E José Guillermo Ordorica Robles and President of the Qatar Winter Sports Committee Majid Rashid Al-Sulaiti were among the attendees at the opening ceremony.

The program also featured curling demonstrations and public participation sessions led by expert coaches, alongside skating workshops open to all age groups. Families enjoyed a full cultural experience, complemented by Qatari, Canadian, and Mexican culinary offerings, celebrating diversity and cultural exchange.



The initiative aims to expand awareness of winter sports in Qatar while promoting international exchange, particularly with Canada and Mexico.

Al-Sulaiti expressed his delight at the strong public turnout, which exceeded expectations, highlighting the success of the collaboration with the Years of Culture initiative under Qatar Museums, chaired by H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani.

He stressed the importance of such initiatives in strengthening cultural ties between nations and confirmed that further events will continue at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena in the coming period.

Champion Norris leads Piastri home in sprint 1-2 triumph for McLaren

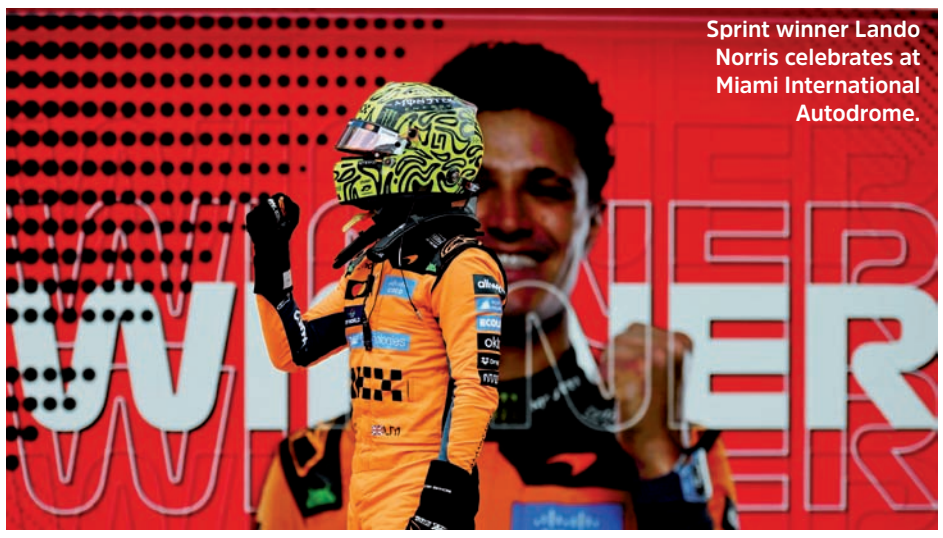
MIAMI: World champion Lando Norris won yesterday's sprint race at the Miami Grand Prix, leading home team-mate Oscar Piastri in a convincing 1-2 triumph that confirmed McLaren were back in top form.

The 26-year-old Briton finished the 19-lap race at Miami International Autodrome 3.766 seconds clear of Piastri with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finishing third ahead of George Russell of Mercedes and four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull.

Championship-leading Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli, the youngest man to lead the title race in F1 history, finished sixth after being given a five-second penalty that cost him a place for exceeding track limits excessively.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was seventh for Ferrari ahead of Alpine's Pierre Gasly, who took the final single point in eighth.

It was Norris's fourth sprint win and McLaren's second consecutive 1-2 in Miami, a triumph that team chief Andrea Stella dedicated to the memory of former F1 driver Alex Zanardi. The win also marked the first race this year not won by Mercedes.



Sprint winner Lando Norris celebrates at Miami International Autodrome.

"Let's do it all again," said a confident Norris on team radio, adding, "It was a good race -- and nice to be back on the top step," after climbing from his car.

On a day of sizzling heat, the race was preceded by a minute's silence in memory of Italian former F1 driver and Paralympic handcycling champion Alex Zanardi, who died Friday at 59.

Only 18 drivers formed the grid with Arvid Lindblad starting from the pit lane for Racing Bulls and Nico Hulkenberg absent after his Audi suffered a blazing engine failure on a pre-grid lap.

Norris made a clean start from pole, but Antonelli once again made a poor start and was passed by Piastri with Leclerc squeezing into third ahead of the Italian teenager, Russell and Hamilton, who fought past Verstappen for sixth.

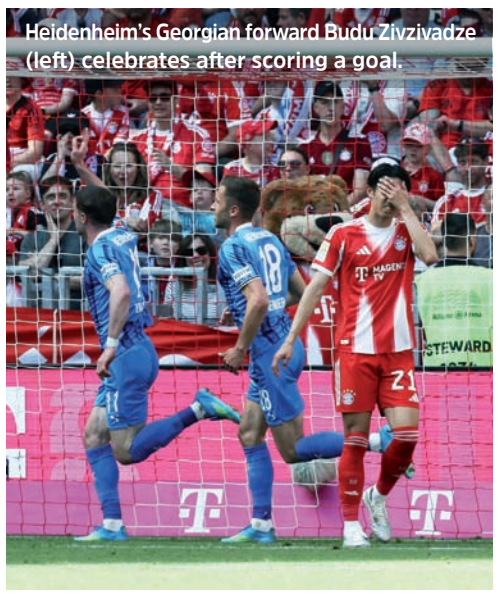
The champion looked dominant in the early laps and eased 1.9 seconds clear of McLaren team-mate Piastri by lap five with Leclerc a further 1.6 adrift for Ferrari.

In a classic skirmish, Verstappen then lunged at Hamilton on Turn 11 and went off track as he took sixth place before being ordered to give the place back. He responded with a more routine pass at Turn 17 as Hamilton, like Leclerc, began to lose grip due to overheating tyres.

For Ferrari, it was proving to be a disappointing race despite their extensive upgrades, as the high temperatures took a toll, while McLaren appeared to have gained decisively with their new package.

Mercedes, expecting to take their upgrades package to Canada at the end of May, were unable to match Norris and Piastri's pace, or match Leclerc, and the race settled into a high-speed procession with few real incidents.

One did break the sequence on the penultimate lap when Hadjar surged past Colapinto to take ninth and then defended stoutly, but he needed another pass to score a point. — *AFP*



Heidenheim's Georgian forward Budu Zivzivadze (left) celebrates after scoring a goal.

Second-string Bayern held by Heidenheim before PSG clash

BERLIN: A heavily-rotated Bayern Munich were held to a 3-3 draw at home by last-placed Heidenheim yesterday, days out from their return Champions League semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain.

Bayern made seven changes to the side who lost 5-4 in a wild first leg in the French capital on Tuesday and were down 2-0 in the first half to goals from Budu Zivzivadze and Eren Dinkci.

Bayern roared back from a 3-0 deficit to win 4-3 last week at Mainz and this time round Leon Goretzka scored twice to level things up with half an hour remaining.

Zivzivadze scored again to put Heidenheim back in front but substitute Michael Olise scored in the 10th minute of stoppage time to snatch a point for the hosts.

Coach Vincent Kompany once again named a heavily changed line-up, leaving seven starters from Tuesday's match including Harry Kane, Olise, Joshua Kimmich and Luis Diaz on the bench.

With Heidenheim needing a win to have any chance of beating the drop, the visitors started frantically, pinning Bayern back with a series of corners. Heidenheim broke through after 22 minutes when Zivzivadze turned the ball off the post and in from a corner.

Dinkci added another nine minutes later, storming into the box and taking a touch on a Marnon Busch pass to round Bayern goalkeeper Jonas Urbig and tap home.

Bayern were below their best but pulled a goal back before half-time from a set-piece. With dead ball specialists Kimmich and Olise cooling their heels on the bench, Goretzka unleashed a dipping shot into the top right corner.

The goal was Goretzka's first from a free-kick since 2017 when he played for Schalke. Goretzka scored from a corner to have Bayern level but Zivzivadze's goal with 14 minutes remaining put the visitors back in front.

Olise had the last word however, scoring deep into stoppage time to make sure Bayern avoided a second league defeat of the season. — *AFP*

Chennai down Mumbai to keep playoff hopes alive

CHENNAI: Ruturaj Gaikwad led from the front with an unbeaten 67 as Chennai Super Kings hammered fellow IPL giants Mumbai Indians by eight wickets to stay in the hunt for the playoffs.

In a clash of two teams sharing 10 titles between them, Chennai kept Mumbai, who elected to bat first, down to 159-7 at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

Captain Gaikwad and Kartik Sharma then put on an unbeaten stand of 98 to steer the team home with 11 balls to spare and bounce back from a big defeat in their previous outing.

Gaikwad anchored the chase and Sharma hit the winning four in his 54 as five-time champions Chennai moved to sixth place in the 10-team table.

Mumbai, who have also won the IPL five times and lost their second match to Chennai this season, languish in the ninth spot.

In Jaipur, an opening partnership of 110 from 57 balls by Pathum Nissanka and KL Rahul paved the way for Delhi Capitals to record their highest successful chase in the IPL, beating Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets.

The Delhi openers laid the foundations for a turnaround win after three consecutive losses, as they chased down Rajasthan's imposing 225-6 which was buoyed by Riyan Parag's 90 from 50 balls.

Delhi's previous highest successful run-chase was 210 against Lucknow Super Giants in 2025. — *AFP*

PSG rotate squad, held by Lorient

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain warmed up for the second leg of their Champions League semi-final against Bayern Munich by fielding a second-string line-up and throwing away the lead twice in a 2-2 draw with Lorient in Ligue 1 yesterday.

Ibrahim Mbaye's fortuitous early goal to put PSG in front at the Parc des Princes was soon cancelled out by Pablo Pagis for mid-table Lorient, but Warren Zaire-Emery gave the hosts the lead for the second time when he scored moments after coming on as a second-half substitute.



PSG's Pierre Mounguengue (centre) attempts to score during the match.

However, a mistake by teenage debutant Pierre Mounguengue allowed Aiyegun Tosin to run through and score a second equaliser for Lorient, and PSG could not find a winner -- even being awarded a penalty in stoppage time for a non-existent handball which was eventually overturned after a VAR intervention.

The result means the outcome of the Ligue 1 title race remains a live issue, with PSG seven points clear of Lens who have four games remaining, including a trip to struggling Nice.

Lens also still have to play PSG at home on May 13, and Luis Enrique's side are clearly focused principally on the defence of their European title as they head to Munich for Wednesday's semi-final second leg with a 5-4 lead from the remarkable first meeting of the sides.

The PSG coach made nine changes to his starting XI here, with Ecuador centre-back Willian Pacho and France forward Desire Doue the only players to retain their places from midweek.

Ousmane Dembele and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, who both scored twice against Bayern, were unused substitutes against Lorient while Vitinha was among the players not even in their matchday squad.

Renato Marin, aged 19, made just his second first-team appearance for PSG in goal, and fellow teenager Mbaye was handed a first start in three months. Mounguengue, an 18-year-old forward, came off the bench in the second half as the Parisians were held to a draw by Lorient for the second time this season.

The Brittany outfit have now lost just one of their last five meetings with PSG, who are aiming to win a fifth straight Ligue 1 title and a 12th in 14 seasons. — *AFP*

Kostyuk defeats Andreeva to claim first Madrid Open title



Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk celebrates on the podium.

MADRID: Marta Kostyuk defeated Mirra Andreeva 6-3, 7-5 to win the Madrid Open for the first time yesterday.

It was world number 23 Kostyuk's first trophy at WTA 1000 level and her second title of the season.

She became only the second player outside of the top 20 to win the Madrid Open, in her third final of an impressive 2026 thus far.

Kostyuk won when she met Andreeva in Brisbane earlier this year in their only prior meeting.

The Ukrainian secured the first break to take a 4-2 lead in the opening set, with world number eight Andreeva struggling to handle her opponent's superior power.

The 23-year-old Rouen Open winner spurned her first set point with a double fault but captured the second when Andreeva went long.

The Russian, who became favourite to win the tournament after Aryna Sabalenka was eliminated, made too many mistakes in the first set and Kostyuk was only too happy to take advantage of them.

Playing in her first WTA 1000 final, Kostyuk broke in the first game of the second set with Andreeva volleying into the net.

However, the 19-year-old broke back with a fizzing return down-the-line to tie at 1-1.

The players exchanged breaks again in the fourth and fifth games, before Kostyuk showed great resilience to save two set points and hold for 5-5. Andreeva double faulted to give her opponent a 6-5 lead and the chance to serve for the title.

Kostyuk opened up three championship points and spurned the first two but triumphed when Andreeva sent a backhand long, collapsing to the floor in joy. — *AFP*