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THE FAMILY OFFICE COMPANY B.S.C. (CLOSED) has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAD OF DIVISION, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17578000 or a.cledera@tfoco.com

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MILLENNUM STUDIO has a vacancy for the occupation of CASHIER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33161039 or sss.abdul-ala6@gmai.com

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# Sabalenka fires Australian Open warning with Brisbane domination

World No.1 crushes Marta Kostyuk to claim back-to-back Brisbane titles

● Sabalenka beats Kostyuk 6-4, 6-3

● Straight-sets final victory

AFP | Brisbane

**W**orld number one Aryna Sabalenka warmed up for a tilt at a third Australian open title in four years in ominous fashion by winning her second successive Brisbane International crown yesterday.

Sabalenka scored a dominant 6-4, 6-3 win over Marta Kostyuk in just 78 minutes.

"Every day you go out there and prove your level, and I think this week I did it really well," said Sabalenka after a tournament in which she powered to the title without dropping a set.

Looking ahead to the Australian Open, which begins next yesterday, Sabalenka said: "The only thing I know is that I'll be there, I'll be fighting."

Sabalenka lost in the Melbourne Park final last year to Madison Keys, having been Australian Open champion in 2023 and 2024.

"I'll do my best to go as far as possible," said Sabalenka. "And do a little bit better than last year. That's my focus."

Kostyuk, the world number 26, had enjoyed a spectacular week, beating three top 10 play-



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus celebrates with the trophy

ers on the way to the final.

But she had no answer to the power of Sabalenka and the Ukrainian's serve, so reliable in the early rounds, also went off the boil.

Sabalenka was rarely troubled on her own delivery and faced only three break points.

The 27-year-old Belarusian said she had tried to introduce new elements to her game so she wasn't relying just on power, and that had paid off this week.

## Ukraine spotlight

"I finally found the touch game," she said.

**Every day you go out there and prove your level, and I think this week I did it really well**

ARYNA SABALENKA

"I figured something and kind of changed my game style -- now I'm not only the aggressive player, I can play at the net, I can be in defence, I can use my slice, I have a good touch."

"I'm super happy to see that things are clicking together."

There has been animosity between the two players in the past.

Like many Ukraine players, Kostyuk refuses to shake hands with Russians or Belarusians because of the war in her homeland.

There was no handshake at the end of the Brisbane final and in her speech at the trophy presentation, Kostyuk brought up the situation in Ukraine.

"I play every day with a pain in my heart and there are thousands of people who are without light and warm water right now," she said.

"It's minus 20 degrees outside and it's very painful to live this reality every day."

Sabalenka said she wasn't concerned by Kostyuk's attitude towards her.

"It's their position, what can I do?" she asked.

"When I go out there, I think about my tennis and the things I have to do to get the win."

"It doesn't matter if it's Marta Kostyuk or Jessica Pegula there. I have nothing to prove. I go there and I just compete as an athlete."

Kostyuk told reporters she was determined to keep what is happening in Ukraine in the public eye.

"I think it's important for me to use my platform in the right way, and my platform is Ukraine, because I represent Ukraine," she said.

"So I think it's really important to talk about that."

## Arsenal villain Martinelli turns FA Cup hat-trick hero



Arsenal's Brazilian midfielder #11 Gabriel Martinelli headers the ball to score a goal

AFP | London

side that drew 0-0 with Liverpool on Thursday.

Martinelli drew stinging criticism for trying to push Bradley off the pitch in the closing stages after the Northern Irishman hit the ground with a serious knee injury.

Liverpool confirmed yesterday the right-back will need surgery and will miss the rest of the season.

The Brazilian apologised to Bradley after the game and did not seem affected by the furore at Fratton Park.

Arsenal could rely on their

threat from set-pieces to turn the tie around.

The Pompey lead lasted only two minutes as Christian Norgaard bundled in from close range before Martinelli flicked in the first of his three goals.

Noni Madueke missed the chance to make it 3-1 from the penalty spot when the England international fired wide.

Martinelli did kill the tie off early in the second period from Gabriel Jesus' cross before completing his hat-trick from another Arsenal corner.

## Svitolina powers to Auckland title in Australian Open warm-up

AFP | Auckland

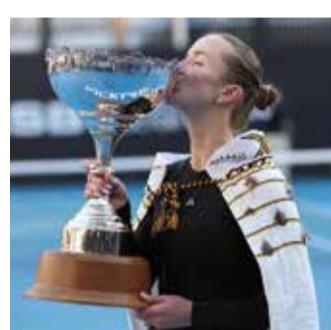
**T**op seed Elena Svitolina powered to a straight-sets victory over China's Wang Xinyu in the Auckland Classic final yesterday in an impressive display just a week before the Australian Open.

Ukraine's Svitolina won 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) for a 19th career title in a battle between two baseline specialists which featured only one service break.

The world number 13 reached the quarter-finals at Melbourne a year ago, the third time she had made the Australian Open last eight.

Svitolina, 31, was playing her first tournament in four months after choosing to finish the 2025 season early for mental health reasons.

"It definitely feels amazing to win another title and especially after not a very pleasant



Ukraine's Elina Svitolina celebrates with the trophy

end of year for me," Svitolina said.

"That break really helped me to regroup and come back with new energy."

The former world number three's has a remarkable record in WTA finals, having won 19 times in her 23 appearances.

It was just the second time for 24-year-old seventh seed Wang had reached a final.

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