

Halep eases through to Prague Open semi-finals



Simona Halep makes a serve

AFP | Prague

Top seed Simona Halep cruised to the WTA Prague Open semi-finals after seeing off Poland's qualifier Magdalena Frech in two sets on another scorching day yesterday.

The reigning Wimbledon champion needed only 59 minutes to beat the 22-year-old Pole 6-2, 6-0 in what was her first convincing win at tournament following two tight three-setters.

"It was a good one and I take it," the 28-year-old world number two told the public Czech Television.

"I hit the ball stronger and I opened the court better" than in the previous two matches, Halep added.

The tournament in Prague is Halep's first trip abroad since February as she spent the lockdown in her native Romania and then pulled out of the first post-lockdown WTA tournament in Palermo last week.

Muharraq go top as Hidd falter

Muharraq beat Ahli in 'El Clasico' as Hidd lose late to Najma

● **Defending champions Riffa fire in five goals past Busaiteen**

TDT | Manama

Muharraq rose to the top of the table in the Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League last night following a hard-earned 1-0 victory over arch-rivals Al Ahli, as former solo-leaders Hidd were dealt a stunning, late defeat against Al Najma.

Naturalised striker Thiago Augusto Fernandes scored the lone goal for Muharraq in their match, which was played at the Khalifa Sports City stadium in Isa Town.

Games between Muharraq and Ahli are dubbed as the King-



Muharraq players celebrating their goal in their win against Ahli

dom's version of "El Clasico" by local fans, referring to the clubs' long rivalry.

Fernandes found the net in the second minute of the contest to give his team a dream start.

He was on the receiving end of a precision cross off a curling Jamal Rashed free-kick from the right flank, and he made no mistake in firing the ball home right in the face of goal amidst



With the result, Muharraq registered their ninth victory in 13 matches and improved to 30 points on the 10-team league standings

some poor Ahli marking.

Muharraq continued to push and should have added two more goals within the first five minutes. However, Nigerian professional Prince Obus Agreh and Rashed both could not make the most of their sure-fire opportunities.

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registered their ninth victory in 13 matches and improved to 30 points on the 10-team league standings—just a single point ahead of Hidd—with only five matches to play. Ahli remained on 14 points in seventh place.

Hidd could not find the mark in their match against Najma and they gave up a goal in the closing minutes to opposing midfielder Ali Muneer, as they suffered only their second loss of the season. Hidd stayed on 29 points as Najma rose to 21 to move into fourth place overall.

In another match yesterday, defending champions Riffa stayed within striking distance of Muharraq and Hidd after beating Busaiteen 5-1.

Riffa clinched their eighth victory and went to 25 points in third position, while Busaiteen suffered their eighth loss and stayed in ninth place with nine points.

Pol Espargaro tops rain-hit Austrian MotoGP practice

AFP | London

Pol Espargaro on a KTM posted the quickest time in opening practice for this weekend's Austrian MotoGP with yesterday's second session all but wiped out by rain.

KTM are on a roll after Espargaro's South African teammate Brad Binder posted their breakthrough win in the elite

division at the Czech MotoGP last Sunday.

And the Austrian outfit are hoping to capitalise on home advantage for this fourth leg of the coronavirus-curtailed championship.

In overcast but dry conditions Espargaro topped the morning time sheets ahead of last year's winner Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati) and Takaaki Nakagami



KTM duo Espargaro (left) and Binder

(Honda-LCR).

Ducati have won all four Aus-

trian races since the championship returned to Spielberg in 2016.

Binder was down in 16th as he looks to double up after his maiden MotoGP success in only his third race in his rookie season.

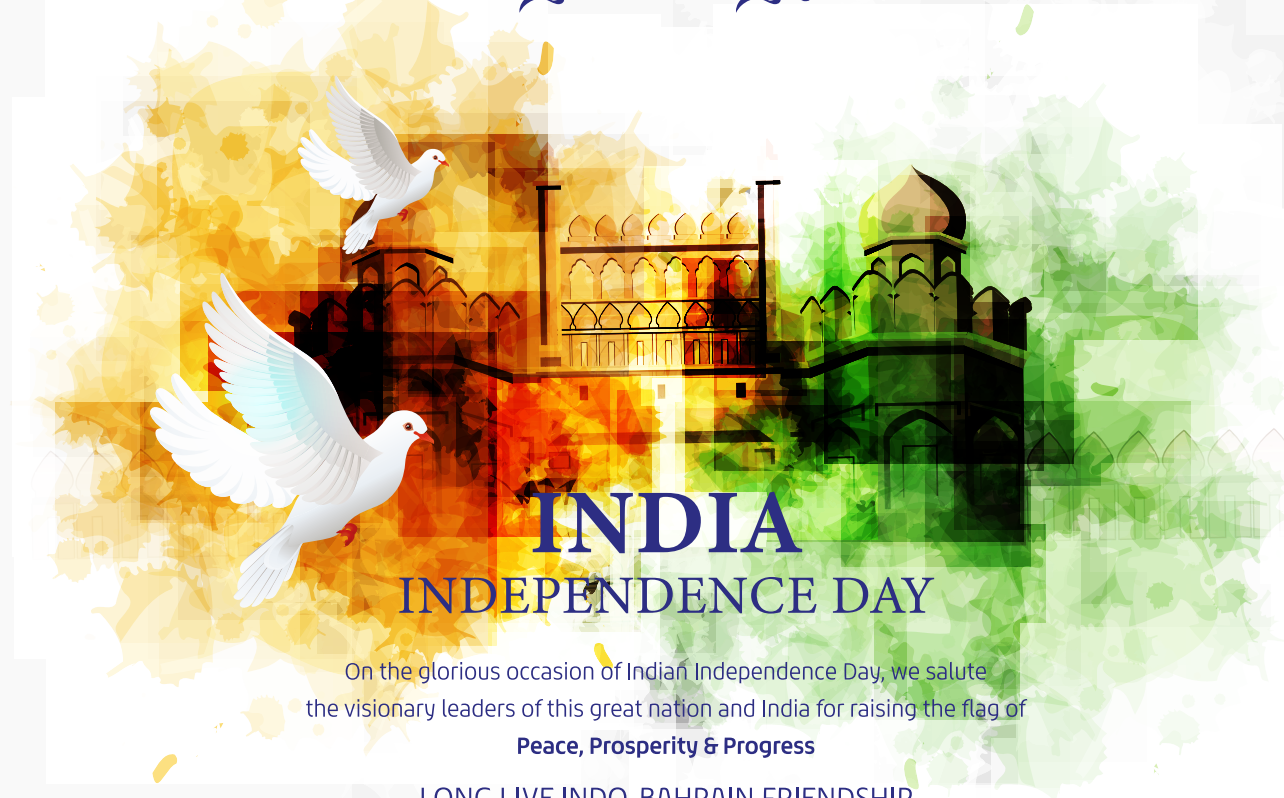
Fabio Quartararo, who leads the world championship standings after winning the first two races, came in 10th on his SRT

Yamaha satellite bike.

Defending six-time champion Marc Marquez has yet to score a point this season after crashing in the opening race at Jerez and missing the next two races after surgery on a broken arm.

He will be absent again on Sunday but hopes to return for the fifth leg of the season back at the same Spielberg circuit next week.

greetings



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