

SPORTS

MMA stars prepare for title showdown

Mineiro is set to defend the lightweight championship against Al Selwady at the Brave 18 main event

TDI | Manama

Supriya Reginald

Brave 18's main event headliners are willing to go to any length to be crowned as the undisputed champion of the lightweight division.

Brazilian Lucas Mineiro is set to defend his championship against Palestinian Abdul Kareem Al Selwady today.

Speaking to Tribune on the sidelines of the Brave 18 Public Weigh-Ins at the Khalifa Sports City, Al Selwady 'Pride of Palestine' expressed that he is set to fully commit to the win.

"I'm going to keep going for as long as I can breathe, I'm willing to go to lengths to get the championship. There's no giving up and there's so much on the line. For me it's either going in and walking out winning or in a wheelchair. I'm going to give



Lucas Mineiro and Abdul Kareem Al Selwady during the public weigh-ins at Khalifa Sports City

everything I have for this fight," said Al Selwady.

With an MMA record of 20

wins and 3 losses, Mineiro is beaming with confidence to go up against Al Selwady's 9 wins

and 1 loss record.

"This is going to be a great match and I am going to walk out retaining my championship. I'm going to give it my 100 per cent and I will retain my title," said Mineiro.

Both fighters have gained themselves an impressive reputation in the MMA world and therefore, are not strangers to the limelight of a main event.

"I've had my fair share of main events, this won't be any different, my confidence will be high," stated Mineiro.

Crowd favorite Al Selwady states the resounding cheers will be a world away once he begins his fight.

"I'm used to being in the main event a lot, most of my fights were main events. I've always been a crowd favorite; I'm going to let that get to my head," said Al Selwady.

"I'm going to have a positive energy around me because the crowd likes me but that doesn't change anything about the fight. It doesn't make me more confident but it's a good thing on the side because fight is a world on its own," he added.

The co-main event will feature the bout between Abdul Rakhman Dudaev from Russia and Joe Taimanglo from Guam. Magomedrasul Khasbulaev from Russia will face Robert Emerson from USA in a featherweight bout.

Stephen Loman from Philippines will defend his bantamweight championship against Felipe Efrain from Brazil. In the opening fight of the main card, the inaugural flyweight title will be contested between Marcel Adur from Brazil and Velimurad Alkhasov from Russia.

Thiem keeps ATP Finals hopes alive with Nishikori win

AFP | London

Dominic Thiem kept his ATP Finals hopes alive yesterday, beating Kei Nishikori in straight sets and pinning his hopes on a comprehensive win for Kevin Anderson over Roger Federer.

Thiem, who came into his final round-robin match at London's O2 Arena with two defeats -- against Anderson and Federer, beat Nishikori 6-1, 6-4 in the afternoon session.

The Austrian sixth seed broke his Japanese rival, who shocked Federer in his opening match, twice in the first set and a single break was enough for him to take the second set and seal the match.

Nishikori won just 56 per cent of points on his serve throughout the match, in the Lleyton Hewitt group, and hit a total of 41 unforced errors, compared to 21 for Thiem.

Second seed Federer, look-



Dominic Thiem celebrates victory against Kei Nishikori

ing to reach the semi-finals for the 15th time in 16 ATP Finals appearances, is 4-1 ahead in his head-to-head record against South Africa's Anderson but he lost to him in the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in a five-set classic.

Top seed Djokovic is already through to the semi-finals after beating Alexander Zverev in the Guga Kuerten group, with Zverev, Marin Cilic and John Isner battling for the other semi-final berth

Mendy sidelined after surgery

AFP | London

Manchester City defender Benjamin Mendy is set for a spell on the sidelines after undergoing surgery to repair cartilage in his left knee.

The 24-year-old, a World Cup winner with France last summer, confirmed the news in a post on Twitter yesterday. "Other knee was jealous but

the operation went well and it's all good now," said Mendy.

Mendy was due to join the France squad this week for games against Nations League opponents the Netherlands, and Uruguay in a friendly but withdrew and travelled to Barcelona for surgery.

He gave no indication of when he would return to action for either club or country.

Natural grappling talent makes Bahrainis gifted MMA fighters

TDI | Manama

Mohammed Zafran

Natural talent in wrestling makes Bahraini youth good candidates in pursuing MMA fighting careers, said Bahrain's MMA head coach Eldar Eldarov.

Bahrain is blessed with a lot of naturally talented grapplers which makes Bahraini youngsters have a high potential for success in MMA, according to Bahrain's Mixed Martial Arts head coach.

Eldarov who grew up in Russia, a country well known for the talented wrestlers there, said he sees a similar type of talent here and that the Bahraini youth just need the right coaching to achieve success.

In an interview with The Tribune, he explained his plans to mould champions out of Bahraini talents.

MMA fighting styles are divided into three main styles namely striking, wrestling and Jiu-Jitsu. Many MMA fighters often choose one of the fighting styles to specialize in, with one of the style being their 'base style'.

"For myself, my base is in wrestling rather than striking and I have been coaching here for 3 years and I am impressed with what I see. They are improving their wrestling rapidly. By now everyone knows that Bahrain is a wrestling team, everyone knows this that Bahrainis know how to wrestle," he told Tribune.



Khabib congratulates Eldarov (right) for his victory in a BRAVE fight

MMA has seen renewed interest from the gulf region and the Islamic world as Khabib Nurmagomedov, a devoted Muslim fighter recorded a dominant victory against Connor McGregor in what is said to be the biggest ever and most watched fight in UFC history.

The fight was also a clash of two fighting styles as Connor, an elite striker, faced Khabib who is a wrestling specialist. Khabib drew fanfare from the region for not only his dominance in the octagon and Muslim identity but also his humble nature and extreme loyalty to his friends and sparring partners which has made many

headlines.

Eldarov was a sambo champion, just like Khabib and his only defeat in his professional MMA career was against Khabib who has never lost a professional fight in his career. As the head coach of Bahrain, he said, he is confident of moulding champions, "Bahrain has a lot of natural talent, we can mould them into champions. We have seen more and more youngsters getting interested in MMA and this time we had more talents to work with."

He said the goal during IMMAF is for Bahrain to finish as one of the top 3 countries in terms of medals.

2018 IMMAF-WMAA Unified World Championships Results - Day 3 (Nov 14)

Junior Championships:

Bout 1: Jr Strawweight 52.2 kg (115 lbs) Ebrahim Darwish (Bahrain) d e f Radostin Angelov (Bulgaria) via Unanimous Decision Round 3 (30-27, 30-27, 30-27)

Bout 2: Jr Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) Ismael Zamora (Mexico) d e f Jack Corr (Northern Ireland) via Submission (Triangle Choke) Round 1, 2:36

Bout 3: Jr Flyweight 56.7 kg (125 lbs) Fariz Abdalov (Kazakhstan) d e f Khayal Gahramanli (Azerbaijan) via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-27)

Bout 5: Jr Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) Muhammad Mokaev (United Kingdom) d e f Nurbolat Oteuov (Kazakhstan) via Unanimous Decision (29-28, 30-27, 30-27)

Bout 5: Jr Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) Ali Yaqoob (Bahrain) d e f DIAR SHULIANOV (Russia) via Unanimous Decision Round 3 (30-27, 29-28, 29-28)

Senior Championships:

CAGE 1

Bout 1: Women's Strawweight 52.2 kg (115 lbs) Nadia Vera (Mexico) d e f Hend Rezk (Bahrain) via Submission (Armbar) Round 1, 1:58 (10-9, 10-9, 10-9)

Bout 2: Women's Atomweight 47.6 kg (105 lbs) Raluca Dinescu (Romania) d e f akshata subhash (India) via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-27)

Bout 3: Women's Flyweight 56.7 kg (125 lbs) Alexandra Kovacs (Hungary) d e f ABIDI MARIEM (Tunisia) via TKO Round 2, 2:10

Bout 4: Women's Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) Lucie Vacova (Czech Republic) d e f Frida Vastamäki (Sweden) via Submission (Rear Naked Choke) Round 1, 2:37

CAGE 2

Bout 1: Women's Strawweight 52.2 kg (115 lbs) Nina Back (Sweden) d e f Daniella Duque (Colombia) via Submission (Rear Naked Choke) Round 1, 1:49

Bout 2: Women's Atomweight 47.6 kg (105 lbs) Jenna Horto (Finland) d e f Elizabeth Avila (Mexico) via Split Decision (30-27, 28-29, 30-27)

Bout 3: Women's Flyweight 56.7 kg (125 lbs) Ilaria Norcia (Italy) d e f Marie Spencer (United Kingdom) via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-27)

Bout 4: Women's Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) Bulgaru Daniela Mihaela (Romania) d e f Charlotte Brown (United Kingdom) via TKO Round 2, 0:36 (10-9, 10-9, 10-9)

CAGE 3

Bout 1: Strawweight 52.2 kg (115 lbs) Nurzhamal Sadykova (Kazakhstan) d e f Ingibjorg Helga Arnþórsdóttir (Iceland) via Split Decision Round 3 (30-27, 27-30, 30-27)

Bout 2: Atomweight 47.6 kg (105 lbs) Oksana Pashkova (Ukraine) d e f Qiuying Liu (China) via Unanimous Decision (29-28, 29-28, 29-28)

Bout 3: Flyweight 56.7 kg (125 lbs) Janika Antinmaa Antinmaa (Finland) d e f Alish Smith (Australia) via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 29-28)

Bout 4: Bantamweight 61.2 kg (135 lbs) LaNeisha Vinson (United States) d e f Amber Thompson (Australia) via TKO Round 3, 0:25 (20-18, 18-20, 20-18)