



PHOTO: REUTERS

Clasico glory seals BARCA TITLE

AGENCIES

Barcelona sealed their LaLiga title in emphatic fashion with a 2-0 Clasico victory over Real Madrid at Camp Nou on Sunday night, moving 14 points clear with three games remaining. Goals from Marcus Rashford and Ferran Torres inside the opening 18 minutes secured back-to-back league crowns for Hansi Flick's side and condemned Madrid to another trophyless campaign. Despite disappointment in Europe after a Champions League exit to Atletico Madrid, Barca dominated domestically through attacking flair, squad depth and standout performances from teenage sensation Lamine Yamal and midfield maestro Pedri. Rashford's impact on loan, combined with contributions from Raphinha, Dani Olmo, and Ferran Torres, proved crucial throughout the season. Barcelona's return to Camp Nou further fueled their success, where they remain unbeaten in La Liga. Meanwhile, Real Madrid endured a chaotic campaign plagued by imbalance, injuries, and managerial uncertainty, leaving president Florentino Perez searching for answers to stop Barca's domestic dominance.

- Barcelona won the LaLiga title in El Clasico for the first time in club history. It also marks the first time either side has clinched the title in El Clasico since 1932, when Real Madrid secured their first league title after a 2-2 draw.
- This is Barcelona's third LaLiga title in the last four seasons and their 29th overall, the second-most in Spanish football history behind Real Madrid's 36.
- Barcelona are the first club to win back-to-back LaLiga titles since they achieved the feat in 2017-18 and 2018-19 under Ernesto Valverde.
- Barcelona have recorded 30 wins in their first 35 league matches this season, the most by any team through 35 games in LaLiga history.
- Barcelona have 91 points through 35 matches, tied for the most points ever by a team at this stage of a LaLiga season.
- Barcelona are currently on an 11-match winning streak, the longest active winning streak in Europe's top five leagues this season and the club's longest LaLiga winning run since 2024-25.
- With this victory, Barcelona level the all-time El Clasico head-to-head record with Real Madrid at 106 wins each. It is the first time the rivalry has been tied in total wins since 2020.



An emotional Hansi Flick guided Barcelona to their 29th La Liga title, just hours after the passing of his father overnight. Despite the personal tragedy, the German coach took his place on the touchline at a packed Camp Nou, leading Barça to a win that sealed the title. Flick's achievement further strengthens his growing legacy at Barcelona. By winning back-to-back La Liga titles in his first two seasons, he joins an elite group of Barça coaches to accomplish the feat, alongside Enrique Fernandez, Helenio Herrera, Louis van Gaal, Pep Guardiola, Luis Enrique, and Ernesto Valverde.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Amir already aiming 'common problem' fix

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh managed only six goals in their recent 2027 Men's Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign, half of them coming in a single home match against Hong Kong. While several arrivals of expatriate players have significantly strengthened the side, the lack of consistent goalscorers remains an unresolved issue.



The top-tier competition this season have also failed to throw up any standout local forward. In that context, the rise of players like 22-year-old Amir Ali offers at least a glimpse of possibility.

The forward from Gopalganj finished as the top scorer in the recently concluded Bangladesh Championship League (BCL), netting 12 goals in 15 matches for Shuktara Jubo Sangsad in the second-tier competition.

"This season I was determined to become the top scorer," Amir told The Daily Star.

Now he wants to take the next step -- earning a contract in the Bangladesh Football League and eventually breaking into the national team setup.

"I know the competition is very tough," he said. "I need to improve my finishing, which is a common problem for many Bangladeshi forwards."

However, performances in the BCL are often viewed with scepticism due to recurring allegations of betting, spot-fixing and match manipulation. This season too, social media was flooded with clips showing questionable defending during certain goals. Amir, though, insisted his side stayed away from such issues.

While Shuktara narrowly missed promotion, Amir felt the league "was very competitive", adding that matches played on "better grounds had improved the quality".

Amir's football journey began in Moksdepur, Gopalganj, inspired by local seniors and a schoolteacher. He represented the district side before moving to Dhaka.

His two-year spell at Bangladesh Police FC under Romanian coach Aristica Cioba proved particularly influential. "He even told me that one day I could become a great player."

Whether Amir eventually becomes the "great player" remains to be seen. But for a Bangladesh side still struggling to produce reliable local goalscorers, even the emergence of a dependable forward could prove a significant gain.



PSG all but confirm Ligue 1 title

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint-Germain effectively wrapped up another Ligue 1 title on Sunday as a 1-0 win over Brest left them six points clear of nearest rivals Lens with two games remaining, with Luis Enrique's side also boasting a superior goal difference.

Desire Doue was one of nine PSG players rested at kick-off following Wednesday's Champions League semi-final, second leg away to Bayern Munich, but the French international came off the bench in the second half and fired in the only goal of the game from the edge of the box in the 83rd minute.

PSG will be officially crowned

French champions for the fifth season running, and the 12th time in the last 14 years, if they avoid defeat away to Lens on Wednesday.

However, even if PSG lose their last two league matches, and Lens win theirs, the latter would still have to overturn a difference of 15 goals -- something which is almost certainly beyond Pierre Sage's team.

Arsenal keep title destiny in their own hands

AGENCIES

Arsenal moved a step closer to ending their 22-year wait for the Premier League title after grinding out a dramatic 1-0 victory over West Ham United on Sunday, restoring a five-point cushion over Manchester City at the top of the table.

Leandro Trossard struck in the 83rd minute at the London Stadium to hand Mikel Arteta's side a crucial win in a tense title race that continues to swing between the two contenders. Arsenal survived a late scare deep into stoppage time when West Ham thought they had snatched an equaliser, only for VAR to rule the goal out for a foul on goalkeeper David Raya.

City had briefly reduced the gap to two points with a commanding 3-0 win over Brentford on Saturday, bouncing back from their costly 3-3 draw at Everton earlier in the week. Omar Marmoush, Jeremy Doku and Erling Haaland were all on target for Pep Guardiola's men.

With two league matches remaining, Arsenal now hold destiny in their own hands. Victories over



relegated Burnley at the Emirates and Crystal Palace away would guarantee a first league crown since 2004, regardless of City's results.

The earliest Arsenal can be crowned champions is Monday, May 18, when they host Burnley. For that to happen, City must first fail to beat Crystal Palace on Wednesday. If Guardiola's side drop points and Arsenal then beat Burnley, the Gunners would move beyond City's reach with only two matches left for the defending champions.

If City overcome Palace, however,

the race will continue at least until their rearranged trip to Bournemouth on 19 May.

Despite the growing excitement around the Emirates, Arsenal youngster Myles Lewis-Skelly insisted the squad remain focused on the task ahead.

"We have to stay humble," the teenager said after Sunday's win. "We are buzzing, but we know that the job is not done. We have got two more finals left."

Arteta's side are also preparing for the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain on May 30, raising the possibility of a historic double-winning season.

The title race could yet go down to the finest margins. Arsenal currently hold a goal difference of +42, narrowly ahead of City's +40. If the teams finish level on points, goal difference and goals scored would determine the champions before head-to-head results come into play.

For now, though, Arsenal have the advantage and after years of near misses, the finish line is finally in sight.

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