



IOA Shocked as 'Indian Team' Reaches Pakistan to Take Part in Kabaddi World Cup

NEW DELHI: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has been left shell shocked after a Kabaddi team from India reached Pakistan to take part in the World Championship. Speaking to IANS, IOA chief Narinder Batra said on Monday that the team, which reached Lahore on Saturday, is not an official one from the country and hence, they cannot use the word "India" under their banner as they have not been approved by the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI). "The IOA has not approved and it has also not been approved by the federation so I don't know who has gone. Whether 60 or 100 have gone, I have no idea. The kabaddi federation, which is a member of IOA, has confirmed that they have not sent anyone. I have seen statements from the (sports)

go and play there as India, that is not how sports are run. But then, I can never predict anything about Pakistan, that's beyond my control. They can do whatever they want," Batra said.

According to the procedure, for participation at overseas events, the national federation needs to communicate to the sports ministry which in turn writes to the ministry of external affairs for political clearance and home ministry for security clearance, irrespective of whether the government is funding the contingent or not.

The administrator of AKFI Justice (Retd) SP Garg also said that they have no information about any team to have gone to Pakistan.

"No permission was ever granted by AKFI to any team to go to Pakistan and play any kabaddi



ministry which confirm they have not approved anyone. So I don't know who they are and what the story is," Batra said. "It has got nothing to do with Indian sports," he added.

The team reached Lahore through the Wagah Border to take part in the championship, which is being hosted for the first time in Pakistan.

All the six previous editions of the championship were held in India between 2010 and 2019 where the hosts emerged victorious on all occasions.

"As long as our member unit has not cleared it, they cannot use the word 'India.' It has to come through IOA and the government, only then you can use that word. Some individuals with Indian passport

match there. We came to know about it only after information was sought," he said in a statement.

"AKFI does not support any such activity. Legal action may be taken against the defaulters," he added.

According to the organisers of the World Championship, teams from 10 nations are taking part in the event being organised in three cities.

A total of 24 matches are scheduled to be played in the tournament with the winners getting a prize money of Rs10 million, while the runner-ups will bag Rs7.5 million.

Players from 10 countries -- Pakistan, India, Canada, the United States, Australia, England, Iran, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Azerbaijan are taking part in the event.

Argentine game abandoned as armed fans battle on terraces



REUTERS INDIA: An Argentine second division match between Independiente Rivadavia and Atlanta was abandoned on Sunday after police said they were unable to guarantee safety as armed fans fought on the terraces.

The referee took the players off the pitch shortly after kick-off and halted the game for 20 minutes as the fighting broke out before eventually deciding to call the match off with the score at 0-0.

Television pictures showed fans armed with knives and burning

flags behind one of the goals in the Mendoza stadium.

Both clubs said on Twitter the game had been abandoned as police were unable to ensure safety. Argentine media group TyC Sports reported two people had been injured.

The incident is the latest in a long line of violent clashes in and around Argentine football grounds with much of the violence related to the barras bravas, the hooligan 'firms' attached to many of the clubs.



Pakistan Crush Bangladesh By Innings In 1st Test

RAWALPANDI: Pakistan completed a crushing innings-and-44-run victory over Bangladesh on the fourth morning on Monday, taking a 1-0 lead in the two-Test series.

Bangladesh were bowled out for 168 in their second innings after resuming the day on 126-6 as Pakistan's pace and spin attack was too hot to handle despite a

flat Rawalpindi stadium pitch.

Fast bowler Naseem Shah, who at 16 years and 359 days became the youngest bowler to take a Test hat-trick on Sunday, finished with 4-26 and was declared man of the match. Despite Naseem being unavailable to bowl on Monday with rib pain, Pakistan mopped up the last four wickets in 90 minutes, inflicting their

10th defeat on Bangladesh in 11 matches with one draw. Pakistan skipper Azhar Ali said home wins -- only possible in recent months, after the resumption of Test cricket in Pakistan following a decade's isolation over security concerns -- were important to boost confidence. "It's an important win and home wins always increase confidence within the team,"

said Azhar. "We have to play important away series including one in England (July-August this year) so we will carry this confidence. "Naseem and other bowlers bowled superbly and it was an outstanding batting display, so all in all it was a complete team effort." Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque started the day by square-driving paceman Shaheen

Shah Afridi for his fifth boundary in the first over, but then fell leg-before in the same over for 41.

Liton Das (29) and tail-ender Rubel Hossain kept Pakistan at bay for 11.5 overs before Mohammad Abbas trapped Rubel leg-before for five. Leg-spinner Yasir Shah dismissed Das lbw and had Abu Jayed for three to finish with 4-58 and complete the win.

MESSI leads thrilling Barca at Betis

LONDON: Lionel Messi produced a hat-trick of assists as Barcelona pulled off a gutsy 3-2 win at Real Betis after trailing twice in an enthralling match in La Liga on Sunday, finally giving the Catalans something to celebrate after a week of upheaval.

Clement Lenglet headed home the decisive goal in the 72nd minute from a Messi free kick, earning second-placed Barca a first away win in the league in four matches and cutting the deficit behind leaders Real Madrid back to three points.

French defender Lenglet was then sent off for two bookings, moments after Betis' Nabil Fekir had been dismissed for earning two yellow cards in the space of a minute.

Barca coach Quique Setien was making his first appearance back at Betis since being sacked by the Seville club last May and desperately needed a victory after Real had beaten Osasuna 4-1 earlier in the day.

But the visitors got off to a terrible start when Sergio Canales gave Betis the lead in the sixth minute from the penalty spot after a VAR review showed Lenglet had handled the ball. Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong promptly equalised with the help of a lofted pass from Messi but Barca soon found themselves on the back foot again when Betis restored their lead with a strike

from World Cup-winning forward Fekir in the 26th minute. Messi proved pivotal in the Catalans levelling right before halftime, delivering a free kick into the path of Sergio Busquets who converted from close range.

The Argentine was also able to pick out Lenglet for the winning strike, setting up a goal for the fifth time in three games.

The topsy-turvy encounter was a fitting end to a dramatic week for Barca in which Ousmane Dembele sustained a serious injury, Messi lashed out at sporting director Eric Abidal and the team lost 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao to exit the Copa del Rey. "This is a hugely significant win for us because Betis are a great team and were being roared on by their fans at home," Barca coach Setien told a news conference.

"This is a very important victory because it keeps us near the top of the table and it will give us a huge psychological boost."

Barca, who hired Setien last month after sacking Ernesto Valverde, had not won away from home in the league since beating Atletico Madrid on Dec. 1 and were smarting from a recent defeat at Valencia as well as the last-gasp loss in the Cup to Bilbao.



TOTTENHAM'S ALLI APOLOGISES FOR CORONAVIRUS VIDEO



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Dele Alli has apologised for a video posted on his Snapchat account in which he appeared to mock an Asian man in relation to the coronavirus outbreak.

The newly identified coronavirus outbreak in China has killed over 900 people, with more than 40,000 infected.

Alli, who has been on holiday while Spurs are on their winter break, posted the video of him wearing a face mask in an airport lounge with the message, "Corona whattt, please listen with

volume." He then zooms the camera towards a man of Asian appearance before panning to a bottle of antiseptic hand wash with the video caption reading: "This virus gunna have to be quicker than that to catch me."

The post was subsequently removed and Alli later apologised on Chinese social media platform Weibo.

"It wasn't funny. I realised that immediately and took it down," he said. "I let myself down and the club. I don't want you guys to have that impression of me."