



Panghal qualifies for Olympics, Kaushik in contention despite loss at Asian Qualifiers

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AMMAN (JORDAN): World number one Amit Panghal (52kg) qualified for his maiden Olympic Games, while Manish Kaushik (63kg) remained in the hunt for a Tokyo ticket despite losing his quarterfinal bout in the Asia/Oceania Qualifiers here on Monday.

World silver-medallist and top seed Panghal edged out familiar foe Carlo Paalam of Philippines in a 4-1 split quarterfinal verdict, while world bronze-winner Kaushik lost 2-3 to third seed Chinzorig Baatarsukh of Mongolia after another intense battle.

"I dedicate my Olympic quota to my uncle Raj Narayan, it's his birth-

day and he is someone who gives me a lot of courage," said Panghal after his bout.

Next up for Panghal is China's Jianguan Hu, who stunned world bronze-medallist and fourth seed Kazakh Saken Bibossinov 5-0. "I have beaten him in the Asian Championships and I know how to get the better of him," Panghal said of his next opponent.

The Haryana lad didn't exactly look at his best during the bout but his trademark counter-attacking game fetched him the desired result against a rival, who is challenging him more with every fresh encounter.

Kaushik, who was up against an Asian Games silver-medallist, started well but lost steam in the face of



relentless body shots by Baatarsukh, a two-time podium finisher at the Asian Championships.

Baatarsukh had lost to Kaushik in the second round of the world championships last year and he extracted revenge with an aggressive takedown of the Indian, especially in the final three minutes.

However, former junior world champion Sakshi Chaudhary (57kg) failed to secure an Olympic berth after going down to Korea's Im Aeji in the quarterfinals.

The 19-year-old Chaudhary lost 0-5 to Im, who is also a former world youth champion. Only the semifinalists are entitled to an Olympic berth in the women's 57kg category of the ongoing event.

day and he is someone who gives me a lot of courage," said Panghal after his bout.

Kaushik also remains in contention for an Olympic berth if he can win the box-off between losing quarterfinalists as the top six boxers will claim Tokyo tickets in the 63kg category.

The 23-year-old Panghal, who is the reigning Asian Games and Asian Championships gold-medallist, had earlier beaten the Filipino in the semifinals of the 2018 Asian Games and the quarterfinals of the 2019 world championships, which were also split decisions.

"I followed the instructions given by my coaches. I ensured that he didn't get on top of me. I think I

No Olympic spot for Sakshi Chaudhary, loses in QFs of Asian Qualifiers

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AMMAN (JORDAN): Former junior world champion Sakshi Chaudhary (57kg) failed to secure an Olympic berth after going down to Korea's Im Aeji in the quarterfinals of the Asian Qualifiers here on Monday.

The 19-year-old Chaudhary lost 0-5 to Im, who is also a former world youth champion. Only

the semifinalists are entitled to an Olympic berth in the women's 57kg category.

Im will face Japan's 19-year-old Irie Sena, who upstaged world champion and top seed Nesthy Petecio of Philippines in a split decision. Petecio was docked a point for holding in the second round which ultimately played a decisive role in her 2-3 loss.



I-League East Bengal Scrape Past Real Kashmir In Ill-Tempered Clash

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SRINAGAR: East Bengal scraped past Real Kashmir 1-0 in an ill-tempered I-League clash in which two home team players and one from the visiting side were sent off on Monday. The lone goal was scored by Spaniard Victor Perez from a penalty in the fifth minute of added time, which secured vital three points for the Kolkata giants. Unhappy with the overall refereeing during the match, the RKFC team management later lodged a complaint with the All India Football Federation.

The match played at the TRC ground in front of 10,000 spectators saw three red and several yellow cards. RKFC's Danish Farooq, the local hero, and Kallum Higginbotham were sent off while Edmund Lalrindika was given the marching orders from the East Bengal team.

Expressing his disappointment, Real Kashmir FC co-owner Sandeep Chattoo said, "It is one of most unfortunate losses

for RKFC, where umpires failed us. The bias of the referee was clearly visible." "We will be appealing against decisions of the referee to the AIFF. Match video is there for anyone to see how partial the referee was," he said in a release issued by the club.

With the win, East Bengal rose to the second spot in the standings with 23 points from 16 matches, while fourth-placed Kashmir have 22 points from 15 games. The win for the Red and Gold brigade means Mohun Bagan now only need two points to seal the league title, a feat that they can achieve on Tuesday with a victory against Aizawl FC.

The first half was majorly played in the centre. The half saw many heated moments, two yellow cards and a red card, all of them awarded to Real Kashmir. Danish saw a second yellow in the 38th minute for diving simulation inside the opposition box. East Bengal, with a man advantage for more than half of the game,

dominated possession with 63 per cent of the ball.

The game resumed and Real Kashmir showed great resilience. The Red and Golds had a good opportunity from a free-kick that was awarded to them just outside the Real Kashmir box. However, the free-kick was saved by keeper Lachenpa. Soon after, it was Bidyashagar Singh who came up with a left-footed drive from a distance but the Real Kashmir keeper was able to deflect it out for a corner kick.

In the very last minute of regulation time, second-half substitute Lalrindika had a go from a distance but to the away team's disappointment, the shot went straight into the hands of the goalkeeper. The labour of the Red and Gold brigade finally paid off in the injury time as Juan Mera was fouled in the box by Loveday Enyinnaya, which resulted in a penalty. Perez walked up to take the spot-kick and made no mistake as he smashed the ball into the back of the net to give his team

the much needed goal. After the goal, there was drama on the pitch with the players of both sides involved in a scuffle and the referee flashed two red cards in the final minutes. Higginbotham and Lalrindika were sent off in a rather dramatic ending.

RKFC's complaint included a statement of driver Riyaz Ahmed who had referred the referees from a local hotel. The driver alleged that the referees had a "conversation to teach RKFC a lesson" in Monday's match. Former minister and senior politician Usman Majid, who witnessed the match, expressed his disappointment with the refereeing.

"The people of Kashmir love sports but they cannot stand cheating which was blatant in today's match. I have not seen sportsmanship stooping to such a low.

"I call upon the authorities to take strict action against the referees who have brought a bad name to the game and the league," he said.



Coronavirus impact: Tokyo 2020 Olympics torchlighting ceremony to be held without spectators

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics torch lighting ceremony in ancient Olympia will be the first in more than 35 years to be held without spectators after organisers on Monday introduced tighter measures to protect against the coronavirus. Greece's Olympic Committee said spectators would be excluded from both the dress rehearsal at the ancient site on Wednesday and the widely broadcast ceremony on Thursday.

This is the first time since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics that the ceremony will be held without any spectators lounging on the grassy

slopes of the ancient stadium in the tiny Peloponnesian hamlet. The ceremony — held both for summer and winter Games — usually attracts several thousand spectators, including Greeks and foreign visitors.

"The lighting ceremony of the Olympic flame will be done without the presence of spectators and only 100 invited and accredited guests," the Greek Olympic Committee said in a statement. "The dress rehearsal on March 11 will be closed to spectators and media." The Olympic torch will be lit in Olympia at a scaled-down

ceremony on March 12 before a seven-day relay that culminates with a handover ceremony in Greece on March 19. The number of people inside the ancient stadium will also be reduced with only a few dozen representatives of the Tokyo Games from a group of about 150 allowed access to the ceremony.

Organisers will also shut the press centre following the ceremony to avoid the gathering of many people in an indoor area and will stage Wednesday's dress rehearsal without the presence of media.

Coronavirus: SA players likely to avoid customary handshakes, says coach Boucher

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NEW DELHI: The South African cricketers could avoid the customary handshakes during their stay in India, head coach Mark Boucher has said as the number of reported positive coronavirus cases in the country crossed 40 on Monday.

The number of positive cases in India stands at 43 at the moment and the South African team that landed in the national capital for three ODIs in the wee hours of Monday, will "strictly adhere" to the health-care protocols.

"With regards to handshakes and type of stuff that's concern, so it will probably be fine if we do the same if it comes to that. I think it's a way to stop anything from happening to our guys," Boucher told the media during his pre-departure press conference when asked about shaking hands with the opposition team's players.

"I think it's out of respect for players around you and not to pass on something that you might have," the former Proteas stumper added.



South Africa went ahead with the tour only after their medical and security team gave a go-ahead after doing a risk assessment.

"Look we have a security staff and if we have medical concerns, we give it to them and they come up with recommendations. If they think it's too dangerous, they will pull us out and they are no different," he said.

Covid19 is a concern and that's what they have been briefed, said Boucher.

"We had a nice brief last night from medical staff about the virus going around is that it's a major concern.

Sri Lanka Name 16-Man Squad For England Test Series

Agencies

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka Monday named a 16-member squad, including two injured players, for the two-match Test series against England starting next week.

Sri Lanka Cricket said Kusal Perera was included in the squad even though the injury-hit wicketkeeper may only be fit to play in about two weeks.

Another injured player, Wanidu Hasaranga, was also included in the squad despite never having played at that level before.

A replacement for Hasaranga will be named before the first Test against England on March 19 in Galle, the board said. The second Test is due to start on March 27 in Colombo.

The squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (captain), Oshada Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya de Silva, Niroshan Dickwella, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Dilruwan Perera, Lasith Embuldeniya, Lakshan Sandakan and Wanindu Hasaranga.

