

Iran Claims Gold at Karate 1-Premier League Salzburg



SALZBURG, Austria (Dispatches) - Team Iran have finished the Karate-one Premier League in Austria after grabbing two gold medals.

In the men's Kumite minus 75kg category, Bahman Asgari snatched gold medal, after defeating his Ukrainian Opponent 3-nil in the final.

Asgari also managed to seal a spot in next summer Olympic Games. Meanwhile, in the Women plus 68kg category, Hamideh Abbas-Abadi also pocketed a

gold medal after beating her Italian rival to book a ticket for Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

She defeated Clio Ferracuti of Italy 2-1 at the Female Kumite +68kg.

Over 600 competitors from 88 countries competed at the 2020 Karate 1-Premier League Salzburg. This tally represents a considerable increase with the previous event since 513 competitors from 79 countries took part in the Karate 1-Premier League Dubai.

President Condolences Death of Iranian Paralympic Champion



Iranian Paralympic powerlifter Siamand Rahman passed away on Sunday due to a heart attack

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani offered his condolences to the people and sports community over the passing of two-time Paralympic champion powerlifter Siamand Rahman.

"The sudden and unfortunate demise of our country's glorious powerlifter, the late Siamand Rahman, caused great sadness," Rouhani said in a message released late on Sunday.

This national hero and "competent and good-tempered athlete", who holds the world record of powerlifting and several Paralympic and Para Asian championships, will always be remembered and his "iron will and sincere faith" will inspire next generations of Iran, the president said.

Rouhani further extended his condolences to the honorable

people of Iran, the sports community, and especially the National Paralympic Powerlifting Team, the honorable people of the West Azarbaijan province and his dear family.

Rahman passed away on Sunday due to a heart attack.

He was rushed to the Nabi-Akram Hospital in Oshnavieh, West Azarbaijan province, where he was pronounced dead.

Rahman claimed two gold medals in London 2012 and Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

He also won three gold medals at the Asian Para Games.

Rahman broke the 300kg barrier in the men's over 107kg at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, lifting an unprecedented 310kg.

He was going to win his third gold medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Global Sport Heavily Disrupted by Coronavirus

PARIS (AFP) - The coronavirus is disrupting sport around the world with the Moto Grand Prix in Qatar and Thailand postponed, a host of football matches put off to a later date and increasing concerns surrounding the Tokyo Olympics later this year.

The virus has already cast a long shadow over the start of the Moto GP season with this Sunday's curtain-raising Qatar MotoGP called off, followed by the March 22 race in Thailand.

"I don't say it's cancelled, I just say it is postponed until time allows us to do (the event)," Anutin Charnvirakul, chairman of the Thailand MotoGP organizing committee, told AFP.

One of the early races in the Formula One season, the Shanghai Grand Prix on April 19, has already been postponed although organisers say the season-opening race in Australia on March 15 will go ahead as planned.

Olympic chiefs are meeting on



Tuesday and Wednesday in Lausanne to discuss the impact of the virus on preparations for the summer Games in Tokyo, and to address the unthinkable -- scrapping world sports' global showpiece for the first time in peace time.

Other events are under immediate threat. The remaining matches in the 2020 Six Nations rugby union tournament hang in the bal-

ance -- an emergency meeting of the organizers has been called in Paris on Monday.

The virus has killed more than 3,000 people worldwide, mainly in China, and its effects are being felt across the global economy.

In Italy, the European country with the highest number of deaths at 34, the outbreak wreaked havoc with Serie A football matches at

the weekend.

Six games were postponed, including the clash between defending champions Juventus and title rivals Inter Milan in Turin, originally scheduled to be the showpiece match on Sunday evening.

The Italian government has signed a decree that stops sporting activity in the northern regions that have been worst hit by the virus until March 8, unless it is held behind closed doors.

That decision means another five matches next week can only go ahead if played in empty stadiums.

The Italian league has called an emergency meeting for Wednesday in which discussions will be held on how to manage the fixture chaos.

Football in Asia has been massively disrupted, with the start of Japan's J-League postponed till mid-March and a hugely rearranged fixture list for the continental competitions.

James Powers Lakers Past Pelicans 122-114



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - LeBron James and Giannis Antetokounmpo stepped up their MVP campaigns with dominant performances over a couple of teams battling for playoff spots.

James had a triple-double of 34 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the New Orleans Pelicans 122-114. The Bucks pushed their league-

leading record to 52-8 with their sixth straight win since the all-star break.

Antetokounmpo said that was all that mattered as the team's streak of 100-point regular-season games ended at 83.

In this "old-school" victory, the Bucks never trailed in the second half, although their 15 turnovers in the first three quarters helped the

Hornets keep it close and Charlotte trailed by just two entering the final quarter. Charlotte is in 10th place in the Eastern Conference two spots back of a playoff position.

Antetokounmpo seized control in the waning minutes, putting the Bucks up 88-83 with a turnaround jump shot.

He then pulled down an offensive rebound, drew a foul and made two free throws drove for another layup and added another free throw as he scored the Bucks' last seven points to seal the game.

Antetokounmpo, who handed out six assists, became the first Bucks player with a 40-20-5 stat line since Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1974.

Remarkably, Antetokounmpo amassed the numbers in just 35 minutes on the court.

Elsewhere, the Western Conference leading Lakers bounced back

from a loss to the Memphis Grizzlies by beating rising star Zion Williamson and the Pelicans in New Orleans.

James carried the team on his back as the Lakers overcame the absence of forward Anthony Davis, who missed out on facing his former team because of a sore knee.

James, who had 40 points in a 118-109 home victory against the Pelicans on Tuesday, is the clear MVP winner in some people's eyes.

"He is just amazing," said Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry. "I am not sure what defines an MVP, but he makes everybody on his team better."

Williamson scored a career-high 35 points, marking his 11th consecutive game with 20-plus points for the Pelicans, who are in nine place in the Western Conference one spot out of a playoff spot.

Germany, Netherlands Dominate Track Cycling Worlds

BERLIN (AP) -- Emma Hinze of Germany and Harrie Lavreysen of the Netherlands put a fitting bow on the final day of the track cycling world championships, the last major event for their sport ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

Hinze won her third gold medal by holding off the field from the front in the keirin, making it a clean sweep for the host nation

in the women's sprinting events at the Berlin Velodrome. And Lavreysen won his third gold in the sprint to give the Dutch team a table-leading six gold medals and nine total over the course of the five-day event.

In the other two events Sunday, Elinor Barker of Britain gained a lap on the field in the women's points race to easily win her fifth

career world championships gold medal. And in the men's Madison, which returns to the Olympic program this year, Danish riders Lasse Norman Hansen and Michael Morkov gained an early lap and cruised to the victory.

The story of the world championships, though, where the German women sprinters and the strength of the Dutch team.

Hinze had already won gold in the sprint and teamed with Lea Friedrich - also the gold medalist in the 500 meters - and Pauline Grabosch to win the team sprint. So she took the starting line for the keirin already pleased with her week, and in some ways hardly expecting to find her way to the front of the mass-sprinting event.

'Clásico' Puts Madrid at Ease Again



Mariano's goal sparked wild celebrations at the Bernabeu

MADRID (AP) — Real Madrid beat Barcelona in a captivating El Clásico to move above their rivals at the top of La Liga.

Vinicius Junior drove in via a deflection in a second half packed with chances after Isco saw a shot saved and an effort cleared off the goal line.

Karim Benzema volleyed over for Real and substitute Martin Braithwaite went close for Barca moments before Vinicius sparked celebrations at the Bernabeu.

Substitute Mariano struck in added time as Real moved a point clear of Barca.

Mariano had not played a single minute in La Liga for Zinedine Zidane's side this season until being brought off the bench in injury time to seal a memorable win.

Los Blancos finished third last season - 19 points behind champions Barca - but the tight nature of the title race this time around placed added significance on the fixture in the Spanish capital.

Zidane had said his side were in a "delicate moment" as a result of picking up one point from their last two league matches and having suffered a home defeat to Manchester City in the Champions League in midweek.

And Real's task looked ominous given they had not beaten Barca in the league in their last seven attempts.

Quique Setien's side also arrived

having won four league games in a row at the Bernabeu but they will rue missed opportunities in the first half.

Antoine Griezmann fired over from a Jordi Alba cut-back, Arthur was denied by Thibaut Courtois after breaking through on goal and the Madrid keeper parried a Messi effort when the Barca talisman broke the offside trap.

Going into the break, Courtois had saved 30 of the last 36 shots he had faced in La Liga and his interventions were built upon as Zidane's side carried more threat in the second period.

Isco curled an effort at the top corner to force a fine save from Marc-Andre ter Stegen before heading low past the keeper, only for Pique to intervene.

Karim Benzema could not end a five-game goal drought when he volleyed over when unmarked before former Middlesbrough forward Martin Braithwaite had a chance to win it, only for his shot to be saved.

Vinicius then pounced, firing in from a narrow angle, the 19-year-old Brazilian becoming the youngest scorer in a league game between the sides this century as he surpassed Lionel Messi's record set in 2007.

His side never looked back and Mariano put the finishing touches on a win which gives them real hope of landing a first league title since 2016-17.