THE tribune

Al Najma set for Asian clubs handball

GROUP «A»	GROUP +B+
AL ARABI - QAT	AL WEHDA - KSA
SHAHID KAZEROON - IRI	UZBEK - UZB
AL SALMIYA - KUW	AL QATEN - YEM
MUDHAR - KSA	MES KERMAN - IRI
AL NAJMAH - BRN	AL DUHAIL - QAT

TDT | Manama

been drawn in a tough Group A side. They are the only club for the 23rd Asian Men's Club from the Kingdom to have won League Handball Champion- the championship in the past, ship 2021

division are defending cham- Hyderabad, India. Najma have pions Al Arabi of Qatar, Sha- also won the silver and bronze hid Kazeroon Club of Iran, Al medals once each. Salmiya of Kuwait and Mudhar of Saudi Arabia.

Mes Kerman of Iran, Al Duhail have each one third place once. of Qatar and Al Kuwait Club of Kuwait.

preliminary round of the competition, which is scheduled to take place from June 12 to 21.

 $B^{ack-to-back\,Bahrain\,league}_{champions\,Al\,Najma\,have}$ Najma head into the tournament as the only Bahraini having taken the 2017 title The other teams in their when the event was played in

Other Bahraini teams to taste success in the compe-Group B consists of Al Weh- tition are Al Hilal Club, who da of Saudi, Uzbek Club of Uz- have won bronze twice before; bekistan, Al Qaten of Yemen, and Al Ahli and Barbar, who

The clubs championship was supposed to be played last The draw was held at King year, but was postponed by Abdullah Sports City in Jed- the Asian Handball Federation dah, setting the stage for the due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IPL suspended over Covid-19

IPL 2021 postponed after several players tested positive for COVID-19

Members of three franchises have been confirmed to have tested positive

AFP | New Delhi

he Indian Premier League, the world's richest Twenty20 cricket tournament, was suspended yesterday and its players sent home as India battles a massive surge in coronavirus cases.

growing controversy over the competition, comes a day after two players -- Varun Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier -- tested positive, forcing a match to be postponed.

The Chennai Super Kings added in a statement vesterday that its bowling coach L. Balaji and a member of the side's travel support staff tested positive after undergoing tests in India's capital New Delhi on Sunday.

'The Indian Premier League Governing Council and Board of Control for Cricket in India in an emergency meeting has



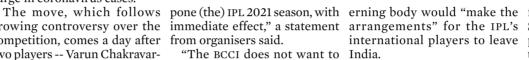
The Indian Premier League trophy is seen at a stadium

from organisers said.

"The BCCI does not want to compromise on the safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organising the IPL," it added. The high-paying IPL, which

"bubble" conditions, attracts many of the world's top cricketers, including players from Australia, England and South Africa.

'Difficult times'



"About the foreign players, as we have said, we will try and ensure all of them get to their homes," he said.

Cricket Australia said in a with the BCCI to "ensure the safe accommodation and repatriation of Australian players, coaches, match officials and commentators back home".

The governing body added that it was not seeking exemp-BCCI Vice-President Rajiv tions from the Australian govunanimously decided to post- Shukla told AFP that the gov- ernment's move to ban travel- both badly hit by the pandemic.

You WILL get through this! You WILL be stronger coming out of this! Your kindness & generosity NEVER goes unnoticed even during this crisis! #IncredibleIndia

KEVIN PIETERSEN

lers from India from entering the country until at least May 15.

Cricket South Africa said it was in touch with franchises for the "expedited travel of all South African players and support staff" back home, where they will undergo home quarantine.

The IPL has been running since early April, even as India's health care system has been overwhelmed by a vicious second wave of virus cases.

This prompted criticism from some who said it was inappropriate, given the suffering in the country, while others defended it as a welcome distraction.

Eight teams have been playing behind closed doors in six cities including Delhi and Mumbai,



UEFA allows 26-player squads for Euro 2020

AFP | London

 $U_{
m allow\ expanded\ 26-man}^{
m EFA\ said\ yesterday\ it\ would}$ squads at Euro 2020, meeting a demand from coaches who feared they could lose players due to coronavirus.

European football's governing body said it had agreed the increase from 23 players "to The trophy of the UEFA Euro 2020 is mitigate the risks of teams fac- pictured on Sant'Angelo bridge in Rome ing a shortage of available play- 1 up until their first match in tine measures".

France coach Didier De- contacts" of a positive Covid-19 schamps and Belgium boss tested person. Roberto Martinez were among The new regulations will those who had called for the also allow goalkeepers to be squads of 23 players at the change while England manag- replaced before each match World Cup and European er Gareth Southgate had been during the tournament in case Championship ever since the opposed. limited to 23 players. UEFA clarified that the curafter the cut-off point of June competition.



ers for certain matches due to the case of "serious injury or possible positive Covid-19 test illness" will include players results and subsequent quaran- who test positive for Covid-19 or who are declared as "close



UEFA had already decided that teams would be allowed to make up to five substitutions in games at the delayed Euro 2020 instead of the usual three, in line with current rules across many club competitions.

National teams have named

was taking place in biosecure statement that it was in touch

C 🖗 VID-19 ANTIBODY (SARS-CoV-2 IgG & IgM)



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of physical incapacity even if 2002 World Cup in Japan and Matchday squads will still be one or two goalkeepers from South Korea. the player list are still available.

A player that has been re- last year because of the panrent regulations that allow placed on the player list will not demic but is due to take place coaches to change their squads later be allowed to return to the at venues across the continent,

Euro 2020 was postponed from June 11 to July 11.

Halep knocked out of Madrid Open by Mertens

Halep, a two-time Grand

AFP | Madrid

 $\mathrm{W}^{\mathrm{orld\,number\,three\,Simo-}}_{\mathrm{na\,Halep\,\,was\,\,dumped}}$ out of the Madrid Open yesterday, losing 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 in the round of 16 to the Belgian Elise Mertens.

Halep had sailed through the first two rounds on the Spanish clay without dropping a set but she ended up second best in a Simona Halep match which yielded 15 breaks

of serve.

faults in the match, Mertens nine.

and 4-3 but finally succumbed after just over two and a half hours of play.

In the quarter-finals 13th seed Mertens will meet the Belarusian seventh seed Aryna Sabalenka, who dispatched American Jessica Pegula 6-1, 6-2 in just 52 minutes.

Two other quarter-final lineups are also settled with world number one Ashleigh Barty set to meet ninth seed Petra Kvitova while eighth seed Belinda Halep produced 10 double Slam champion and former Bencic is up against unseeded world number one, was twice Spaniard Paula Badosa, ranked a break up in the final set at 3-1 62 in the world.

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