



Press Release

Fencer Taniksha Khatri credits international training for gritty show in Olympic Qualifiers

New Delhi, May 2: India's top women's Epee fencer Taniksha Khatri has not come to terms with the heartbreak of falling one step short of winning a maiden berth in Olympic Games competition in the Asia-Oceania Zonal Olympic Qualifier in Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates last weekend. The 20-year-old was the only Indian woman to reach a final.

After an amazing run by defeating Asian Games bronze medallist Dilnaz Murzataeva in the semifinals, the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) supported athlete fought valiantly but lost 13-15 to Singapore's Kiria T Rahman.

Recalling the heartbreak, Tanishka told Sports Authority of India (SAI) that the Qualifiers was a great experience and she had prepared well. "When I went there, the only thing in my mind was to qualify for the Olympics. It was really sad when I was so close but couldn't cross the line," she said.

While she has narrowly missed the Olympics berth, she gained confidence and experience from the competitions and is already started working towards her Olympic dream by focusing on the next event, "My plan is to qualify for the Asian Championships and do well there. I also would want to do well in the Grands Prix and World Cups. But my long-term goal remains the Olympic Games," she said.

Taniksha made history last year by reaching the Quarterfinals of the Hangzhou Asian Games, the best result for any Indian fencer. Along with other members of the Indian Fencing team, she has trained in Paris for 8 months, thanks to TOPS. They have competed in multiple World Cups, Junior Asian Championship and Grand Prix events among other competition.

She added that international exposure for the athletes has also made a huge difference. "We (Indian fencers) are more confident now to take on athletes from other countries. The exposure from the training stints abroad has also helped us a lot. Hopefully in the coming years we will get better and do even better," she said.

Though India will not be represented in Paris 2024 Olympic Games, it has progressed leaps and bounds in Fencing with three out of six members for the India team reaching the Semi-Finals of the Qualifying event, and two youngsters even progressing to the finals. "Confidence is the major change after Bhavani Devi qualified for the Tokyo Olympic Games,," Taniksha said.