

Moqanlou steps down as Iran taekwondo coach



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Sports Desk

Bijan Moqanlou announced his resignation as the head coach of the Iranian men's national taekwondo team on Saturday.

Appointed to the job in April 2022, Moqanlou said he made the decision due to "lack of common approach" with the Iranian Taekwondo Federation.

The 54-year-old coach had been under pressure after recent blow-par runs at the World Championships and the Asian Games.

The country's male squad managed only a couple of bronze medals – courtesy of Matin Rezaei (-68kg) and Arian Salimi (-87kg) – across eight weight classes in June's world event in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Iran also failed to bag a single gold at the recently-finished Hangzhou Asian Games, as Salimi, Mahdi Hajimousaei (-58kg), Alireza Hosseinpour (-63kg) settled for the silver medals of their respective classes, while Rezaei and Mehran Barkhordari (-80kg) grabbed two bronze medals.

The Iranian seven-man team then left the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Taiyuan, China, empty-handed.

Majid Aflaki, an assistant coach to Moqanlou during his second spell in charge, will be the interim coach of the Iranian team for December's final series of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Manchester.

Iran's Ahmadi bags wushu silver at World Combat Games



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The first day of the World Combat Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, saw Iran's Saman Ahmadi grab a silver medal at the wushu contests.

Representing the country in the men's taolu, the Iranian tallied 9.583 points for a runner-up place in the changquan event.

Bijay Sinjali of Nepal scored 9.723 points to walk away with the ultimate prize, with the Brazilian Filipe da Silva finishing third.

Wrestling U23 World Championships: Iranians ruled out after Albania visa refusal

Sports Desk

Iranian Greco-Roman and freestyle squads missed out on the Wrestling U23 World Championships – starting Monday in Tirana – after host Albania refused to issue entry visas for them.

This was a second visa setback in as many days for the Iranian athletes as several members of country's karate team were also ruled out of the upcoming World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, for the same reason.

"The Iranian Wrestling Federation had provided the Albanian Wrestling Federation and the United World Wrestling with all required documents regarding participation at the event a month ago," the Iranian governing body of the sport wrote in a statement late on Friday, adding: "However, despite repeated follow-ups, Albania refused to grant visas to the Iranian youths, who were the favorites to win the titles at the competitions, for political reasons."

The two Iranian teams were hoping to complete a clean sweep of six world age-group titles for the country in 2023 – following under-17 and under-20 crowns earlier in the summer.

The Iranians' absence



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means the tournament will take place without the reigning Greco-Roman champion and last year's freestyle runner-up.

Denouncing the decision as "unconventional", the Iranian

federation said it would lodge a complaint to the related governing bodies.

"It is clear to everyone that Albania, which has proved its animosity towards the Iranian people in the past,

made the decision against the international norms and out of support for a certain group," the statement added.

For nearly a decade, the European country has

accommodated several thousand members of the anti-Iran terrorist cult Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), who reside in Camp Ashraf 3 near the Albanian capital.

The MKO has carried out numerous terrorist attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in the country, killing nearly 17,000.

Vlahovic ready but Chiesa a doubt as Juventus take on Milan



Juventus' Dusan Vlahovic celebrates scoring against Lazio in Turin, Italy, on September 16, 2023.

● MASSIMO PINCA/REUTERS

REUTERS – Juventus's Dusan Vlahovic is back from injury and ready to play against Serie A leaders AC Milan today, while Federico Chiesa is still a doubt, manager Massimiliano Allegri said.

Vlahovic was unavailable for the Serbia squad during the international break having missed

Juve's last two games with a back injury.

"Vlahovic has been working with the team all week and is fine," Allegri told a press conference on Saturday.

"From the start? We'll see, he certainly doesn't have the full 90 minutes in his legs having been out of action."

Chiesa, meanwhile, did join up with the Italy squad even though he missed Juve's 2-0 win over Torino with a muscle

injury, but returned to his club before Italy's games with Malta and England.

"Chiesa completed half the training session on Friday, today we will evaluate whether he will be available and whether to call him up or not," said Allegri.

"I hope to have him available, tomorrow (Sunday) will be a game where substitutions can be decisive and therefore the more players we have, the better it will be."

One player who won't be a part of the manager's plans is Nicolo Fagioli, who began a seven-month ban on Thursday for breaching rules on betting on games.

"I spoke with Fagioli, because it was right to do so, given that it won't be an easy period for him," Allegri said.

Morocco to build new stadium, upgrade six others before 2030 World Cup



REUTERS

REUTERS – Morocco plans to build a large stadium in Benslimane, near Casablanca, and upgrade six others in preparation for co-hosting the 2030 World Cup, the prime minister's office said on Friday.

A deal was signed the same day between the government and state-owned fund CDG to finance the new stadium to be ready by 2028 for a total cost of 5 billion dirhams (\$500 million), the office said in a statement.

The six stadiums – to be renovated to host the African Cup of Nations in 2025 and the 2030 World Cup – are in the cities of Agadir, Casablanca Fez, Marrakech, Rabat and Tangier, it said.

Earlier this month, FIFA allocated the 2030 World Cup to Morocco, Spain and Portugal but also said Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay would host three matches to mark the tournament's centenary.

Morocco will be the second African country to host the World Cup after South Africa in 2010.