Sports Athletics

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a decade ago.

viral on social media.

Alipour told Iran Daily.

five years.

and the Asian Games in 2018, the 29-year-old Ira-

Khodabakhshi takes silver in world karate meet



Sports Desk

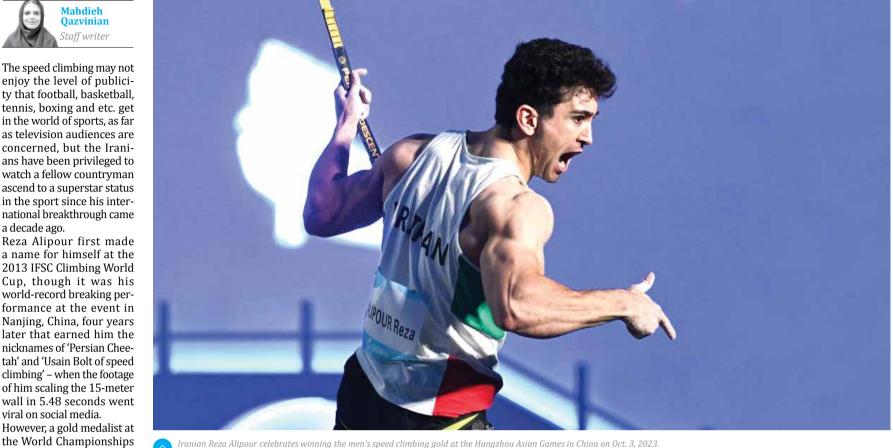
Iranian Mahdi Khodabakhshi won a second medal for the country in the World Karate Championships in Budapest, grabbing a kumite silver in the men's -84kg weight class. Khodabakhshi overcame opponents from Qatar, Libya, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Jordan before a last-four victory over Iapan's Rikito Shimada but fell to a 9-2 defeat against defending champion Youssef Badawy of Egypt

in the final showdown. Reigning Olympic champion Sajjad Ganjzadeh got Iran off the mark in the event with a bronze in the +84kg contests on Saturday, thanks to a 1-0 win against Croatian Andelo Kvesic.

Meanwhile, Fatemeh Sa'adati was unlucky to miss out on a podium finish in the women's -55kg event after an injury ruled her out of the third-place bout against Ukrainian Anzhelika Terliuga.

Iran had to send a depleted squad to the Hungarian capital after the host country refused to issue entry visas for the male kata representative Ali Zand as well as the country's female kata trio and the whole para karate team.

Iran's Alipour eyeing Paris podium after reaching Hangzhou heights



Iranian Reza Alipour celebrates winning the men's speed climbing gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games in China on Oct. 3, 2023. • YANG GUANYU/XINHUA

nian gradually faded away competing for the top prize. Current world-record holdfrom the international stage over the course of the past er Veddrig Leonardo and his fellow Indonesian Kiromal "I guess the lack of climbing Katibin, who shattered Aliinfrastructure and required pour's four-year record. as facilities in the country well as the host's duo Long made me lose my ambitions Jinbao – a reigning World Championships runner-up for further achievements," and Wu Peng - a winner When Alipour stepped into in September's IFSC World Cup – were clearly the fathe climbing competitions at the recently-finished vorites for the gold but the Hangzhou Asian Games in Iranian showed resilience to China he was regarded as beat the odds and become an underdog as there were one of the 13 Iranians in some high-profile names the 285-athlete delegation of the sport in recent years to leave the Games with the

coveted prize. "Climbing at the Asian Games is always considered among the top-notch events of the sport. It was really tough for my opponents to compete with me in Hangzhou and I'm so thrilled to have bettered my personal record for the gold," Alipour said.

Having finished fourth in the qualification round with 5.184 seconds, the Iranian stunned Leonardo, who slipped on the wall, in the semifinal before taking advantage of Long's fall in the final showdown to defend his title, clocking 5.302 seconds.

Alipour was also a part of the Iranian trio in the speed relay contest, which, despite a third best qualification time, was unfortunate to finish its campaign empty-handed after a false start against Singapore in the last-eight round.

"That's what speed climbing is all about. Milliseconds can cost you dearly," added Alipour.

And now the Iranian says he will be looking to build on the recent success in pursuit of the prize missing in his illustrious career: The Olympic gold.

"I'll participate in a tournament in Indonesia next month, where the winner will be granted a berth at the Paris Olympics. Six more quotas will be decided through three qualification events before the Games. I'm confident I will secure a place for Paris. My ultimate goal is to win the gold in next year. I'll give it my best shot and I'm sure God will help me toward that suc-

cess," added the Iranian. Alipour has headlined the Iranians' campaigns in the international events over the years but he believes

there are plenty more of his compatriots, who could star on the global stage.

"Iran is among the top speed climbing countries in the world, pretty much owing to my achievements, but other Iranians - namely Elnaz Rekabi - are also capable of succeeding in boulder and lead competitions, should they be provided with the world-class facilities."

Ancelotti praises 'stupendous' **Bellingham after Clasico double**

Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham celebrates after a 2-1 victory over Barcelona in Estadi Olimpic Lluis ompanys, Barcelona, Spain, on ctober 28. 2023 ALBERT GEA/REUTERS

REUTERS – Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti hailed Jude Bellingham as 'stupendous' after the midfielder scored twice to earn his side a 2-1 fightback win at Barcelona in Saturday's LaLiga 'El Clasico'.

Ancelotti said the 20-year-old Englishman kept surprising him with his maturity and that he gave Real the spark they needed to recover against a Barcelona side who dominated proceedings before succumbing due to two late stunners. "(Bellingham) looks like a veteran out there because of his attitude. His first goal changed the dynamic completely of what was a difficult game for us," Ancelotti told a press conference. "I can't deny that we are all surprised with his vein of form, especially with his

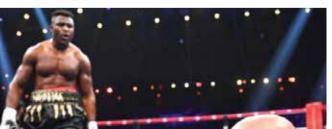
level and his effectiveness. He is everywhere on the field. "Today he was stupendous

and shocked everyone with his wonderful goal from the edge of the area.

Bellingham, LaLiga's top scorer with 10 goals, has made a smooth transition to Spanish soccer since his arrival from Borussia Dortmund in June. "Bellingham's ceiling is easily scoring 20 or 25 goals this season," Ancelotti said. "Even though we don't think of him as a goal scorer, at the moment he is scoring a lot of goals but we are expecting goals from the strikers as well." Midfielder Luka Modric. who provided the assist to Bellingham's winner, also praised his team mate after another masterful performance. "It seems like he's been here a long time, not three months. As they say in Spain, he landed on his feet. He exudes personality, character. It's no coincidence that he has adapted so well," Modric told DANZ. "He's a top boy, with an extraordinary talent. I don't think even he can believe he's scoring so many goals... I congratulate him and I hope he keeps going, he can't slow down!"

Fury survives knockdown in controversial win over Ngannou

WBC heavyweight champion Tyson Fury (R) is knocked down by Francis Ngannou during round three of a non-title fight in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on October 28, 2023. *GETTY IMAGES*



BBC - WBC heavyweight champion Tyson Fury claimed a controversial split decision victory over former UFC fighter Francis Ngannou in Saudi Arabia.

Ngannou, 37, put Fury on the canvas in round three after connecting with a left hook. But while one judge scored it

95-94 in favour of Ngannou, two gave it to Fury at 96-93 and 95-94

Fury's WBC heavyweight belt was not on the line.

"That definitely wasn't in the script," Fury told TNT Sports. "I got caught round the back of the head [for the knockdown]. I wasn't hurt. I got up and got back to my boxing.

"He's an awkward man and a good puncher and I respect him a lot. He's given me one of my toughest fights of the last 10 vears."



An undisputed heavyweight contest, the first in the four-belt era, has been mooted for 23 December, but a cut and bruised Fury might struggle to recover so quickly.