

Taremi set for Inter medical ahead of summer move: *Fabrizio Romano*

Sports Desk

Porto striker Mahdi Taremi is set to undergo medical tests at Internazionale in the coming days ahead of a free transfer to the Serie A giant in the summer, according to Italian journalist Fabrizio Romano.

Best known for his transfer news and predictions, Romano wrote on X that the verbal agreement between the Nerazzurri and the 31-year-old Iranian has been in place for a month.

The contract will be "valid until June 2026" with the option to be extended for an additional season, Romano added.

When asked about the club's approach for Taremi and Napoli's Polish midfielder Piotr Zielinski, Inter sporting director Piero Ausilio said last week: "There's no point in hiding, these are situations we are working on. We don't like to give times, dates or ultimatums, we have informed the respective clubs that we are

negotiating, there have been contacts and let's see if this will lead to something definitive."

Taremi came close to joining Inter archrival Milan last summer, only to see the deal fall through on the deadline day after the striker's camp and the Rossoneri failed to reach agreement on personal terms. La Gazzetta dello Sport journalist Nicolo Schira had reported that Taremi, who will replace Chilean Alexis Sanchez at Inter, will earn €3.5 million per season.

Having joined Porto from fellow-Portuguese club Rio Ave in 2020, Taremi finished as the leading marksman in the Primeira Liga last season with 22 strikes, but has had a below-par run in the ongoing campaign, by his own standards, managing only three goals in 16 league appearances, plus a couple of strikes in the Champions League group stage.

Taremi made a cameo appear-

ance for Porto in the 3-2 away defeat against Arouca on Monday after spending four weeks on international duty in the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, where he bagged three goals before Iran suffered a last-four 3-2 defeat against the host and eventual champion.

Sitting third in the domestic league table, Porto will host Arsenal in the Champions League last-16 first leg next week, with Inter, seven points clear of Juventus on top of the Serie A table, taking on Atletico Madrid in Milan's Stadio Giuseppe Meazza.

Taremi will become the fourth Iranian in the history of the Italian top flight, following former Perugia players Rahman Rezaei and Ali Samereh in the early 2000s, as well as international teammate Sardar Azmoun, who signed for AS Roma on a season-long loan from Leverkusen last June.



● MOHAMMADREZA ALIMADADI/IRNA

AFC Champions League: Sepahan looking to build on home turf return in Al Hilal test



● FARHAD KHIABANI/mashregnews.ir

Sports Desk

Sepahan supporters will get to see their team in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium for the first time in the AFC Champions League this season as the Persian Gulf Pro League club will be back in action after six weeks on Thursday.

Awaiting the Iranian side in the last-16 round of the Asian elite clubs' event is the Saudi powerhouse Al Hilal – the most decorated side in the competition with four trophies, which settled for a runner-up spot behind Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan last season.

Sepahan had a first home game in the group phase against Al Ittihad called off by the Asian Football Confederation and was handed a 3-0 loss for what the continent's governing body of the sport described as the club's failure to "comply with and implement existing safety rules [of the competition]."

The Isfahan-based club was then forced to play its next two home fix-

tures against AGMK and Air Force Club in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. Sepahan manager Jose Morais will hope to have his five Iranian players in top form after they spent four weeks on international duty at the Asian Cup in Qatar, where Iran suffered a last-four setback against the host last Wednesday.

International fullback Ramin Rezaeian, who started five of Iran's six outings in Qatar, will be the player to watch in the Sepahan shirt as he bagged four goals and an assist to help Sepahan progress as one of the three best runners-up across the five West Zone groups.

Shahriar Moghanlou and Reza Asadi, the top two leading marksmen in the Iranian top flight with nine and eight goals respectively, are also expected to lead the line for Sepahan despite making cameo contributions to Iran's Asian Cup campaign.

Sepahan will be without young midfield prodigy Mohammad-Javad Hosseini and center-back Hadi Mohammadi for Thursday's encoun-

ter following red cards against Air Force Club in the penultimate round of group fixtures.

Having won Group D with five victories in six matches – including a double against Iranian minnow side Nasaji Mazandaran – Al Hilal will head into Thursday's game fresh from a 2-0 victory over domestic archrival Al Nassr in the Riyadh Season Cup last Thursday.

Nine Al Hilal players, including AFC Player of the Year Salem Al Dawsari, were involved in the Asian Cup but returned to club training following the Green Falcons' last-16 defeat against South Korea a fortnight ago. Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic – one of Al Hilal's marquee signings during a summer of spending spree – has been in dazzling form this season, scoring 17 goals in as many Saudi Pro League appearances, plus five strikes in the continental tournament.

The second leg of the tie will be staged in Riyadh's Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium in eight days.

Iranian girls dominate Day 1 of Taekwondo Fajr Open

Sports Desk

Iranian contestants stole the show on the first day of the Taekwondo Fajr Open in Tehran, collecting 15 of the 16 medals – including a clean sweep of golds – up for grabs across the four women's weight classes.

Ma'soumeh Ranjbar came out on top against fellow-Iranian Bahareh Fereydooni to walk away with the ultimate prize in the -46kg contests on Monday, with Parnia Salmani and reigning world and Asian junior champion Sogand Shiri sharing the third podium.

The -53kg final showpiece saw Ghazal Soltani – a 2017 world cadet gold medalist – defeat Saba Beigi, while Niki Yousefi claimed a consolation bronze alongside Kazakhstan's Aidana

Sundetbay.

Asma Sedaqat, meanwhile, came out victorious against Hasti Mohammadi for the -62kg gold with Hadis Ammareh and Sheida Mohammadi completing yet another all-Iranian podium.

Elham Haqiqi took Iran's gold tally to four thanks to a victory over Sara Soufi in the -73kg final.

Arezou Bahrami and Asal Saberi took the bronze medals of the class.

More than 340 participants from 12 countries, as well as a refugees team, will be taking part at the 33rd edition of the four-day event.

The competition will be followed by the 6th World Taekwondo President's Cup and the 12th Asian Taekwondo Clubs Championships in the Iranian capital's Taekwondo House until February 22.



● taekwondo.ir