

Sepahan Coach Morais converts to Islam



● IRNA

Sepahan Portuguese coach Jose Manuel Ferreira de Morais converted to Islam on Friday.

He announced his conversion to Islam in the post-match press conference of the Hazfi Cup match in Ahvaz, where Sepahan defeated Abipooshan Jonoub 2-1, wrote Tasnim News Agency.

The 59-year-old took charge of the Iranian top-flight side Sepahan in June 2022.

Several celebrities and renowned people have converted to Islam in recent years.

Islam is currently the second-largest religion in the world with two billion adherents. According to the World Population Review, Islam is projected to overtake Christianity as the world's largest religion by 2050.

Iranian athletes win medals at Asian U-20 Athletics Championships



● TASNIM

Iran's Nazanin Fate-meh Eidiyan and Mahdi Haftcheshmeh won two medals at the 21st Asian U-20 Athletics Championships.

Asian U-20 Athletics Championships Yecheon 2023 silver medalist Eidiyan put on an improved display to win the junior women's race in 58.86 secs, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Indian Harshit Kumar sent the ball and chain to 66.70m for the gold in the men's hammer throw, while Iran's Haftcheshmeh claimed his second successive silver medal in this event as he did in Yecheon after missing the gold by just 6 cm.

The Asian U-20 Athletics Championships is also a qualifying event for the World U-20 Athletics Championships which will be held in Lima, Peru from August 27 to 31.

The competition is being held in Dubai, the UAE from April 24 to 27.

Iran stay on course for 13th AFC futsal title

Goalkeeper Baqer Mohammadi was the star as Islamic Republic of Iran defeated Uzbekistan 5-4 on penalties after their AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024 semi-final ended 3-3 after extra-time on Friday.

Mohammadi saved two spot-kicks as Iran advanced to Sunday's final against hosts Thailand, with the Central Asian side seeking a record-extending 13th AFC Futsal Asian Cup title, the-afc.com reported.

Iran earned a free-kick in a dangerous position just seconds into the tie but Uzbekistan were quick to snuff out the attempt, with Ikhtiyor Ropiev playing the ball on for the overlapping Khusniddin Nishonov, who dragged his effort just inches off the right post.

It was a tense opening minutes with neither side giving an inch of space with Iran's Salar Aqapour seeing his effort from distance saved by Uzbekistan keeper Abbos Elmurodov, while at the other end Aqapour needed to step in to foil Ilkhomjon Khamroev's challenge.

Iran, however, struck in the third minute when Aghapour weaved his way down the left flank before unleashing his shot which took a deflection off Uzbekistan's Mashrab Adilov before settling in the back of the net.

Uzbekistan, however, fought back and drew level in the ninth minute with Sunatulla Juraev's free-kick from distance beating a diving Bagher Mohammadi.

It was end to end action with Iran keeping Elmurodov busy with an



● the-afc.com

array of shots from Saeid Ahmad Abbasi, while Mohammadi was also tested when he had to keep out Khamroev's effort.

It was Uzbekistan who scored next, Abror Akhmetzyanov initially deflecting Mohammadhossein Derakhshani's pass, with Khamroev then laying the ball for Nishonov to set up Akhmetzyanov for a simple tap-in.

Iran turned up the tempo in the

second half and drew level in the 24th minute when the unfortunate Akhmetzyanov turned in Moslem Oladqobad's free-kick from the left flank.

Uzbekistan suffered another blow in the 27th minute when Adilov received his marching orders after picking up his second yellow card leaving the door open for Iran, who retook the lead two minutes later. Aqapour sent a delightful cross to

an unmarked Behrooz Azimihe-matabadi, who had the simplest of touches to put the ball into the back of the net from close range leaving Elmurodov stunned.

Iran, however, suffered a lapse in concentration in the 35th minute when Juraev dispossessed Mahdi Karimi on the right flank before supplying the cross for Akhmetzyanov to slot home the equaliser in an unattended goal.

Abbasi came close to scoring in the closing stages of the first period when his angled overhead kick sailed above the bar, while Ropiev forced a fine fingertip save from Mohammadi with the Iranian custodian saved Nishonov's effort from distance.

Mohammadi then saved the first and sixth Uzbekistan spot-kicks as Iran moved within a match of yet another AFC Futsal Asian Cup title.

Iran too strong for Tajikistan at 2024 CAFA U-18 Women's C'ship

Iran defeated Tajikistan 5-0 at the 2024 CAFA U-18 Women's Championship on Friday.

Maryam Dini (two goals), Somayeh Esmaeili (two goals) and Tania Jahanshahi scored for the Iranian team.

Iran had defeated Uzbekistan 4-2 and Turkmen-

istan 7-0 in its first two matches.

Maryam Jahan Nejati's girls will face Kyrgyzstan on Sunday.

The tournament is being held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from April 19 to 28.

A total of five teams compete in an exciting single round-robin format.



2023-24 Knockout Cup: Aluminum knocks out Persepolis



● IRNA

Persepolis lost to Aluminum 6-5 in a penalty shootout and failed to qualify for the quarterfinal round of Iran's 2023-24 Hazfi (knockout) Cup on Friday evening. The match ended 4-4 in Arak but Aluminum emerged victorious on penalties.

Oston Urunov gave Persepolis a lead in the 11th minute and Issa

Alekasir scored the second goal in the 25th minute.

Mehdi Limoochi pulled a goal back in the 85th minute and Shervin Bozorg equalized the match in the added time.

Substitute Sina Asadbeigi made it 3-2 for Persepolis in the first extra time and Alekasir scored Persepolis' fourth

goal in the second extra time but Bozorg and Alireza Naghizadeh scored two late goals for Aluminum to equalize the match.

Aluminum defeated Persepolis 6-5 on penalties.

Round of 16's results:

*Mes Kerman 1(3)-1(5) Chadormalu

*Havadar 3-1 Mes Sungun

*Malavan 2-1 Saipa

*Aluminum 4(6)-4(5) Persepolis

*Abipooshan Jonoub 1-2 Sepahan

*Fajr Sepasi 0-3 Gol Gohar

*Tractor 1(3)-1 (1) Zob Ahan

Hazfi Cup is an Iranian knockout football cup competition held annually by the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran. The competition was founded in 1975 and Esteghal and Persepolis are the most successful clubs with seven titles each.

Paris 2024 Olympics flame sets sail for France in final relay leg

The Paris 2024 Olympic flame sailed for France on Saturday on board a three-masted ship to mark the final sprint of preparations ahead of the Olympic Games opening ceremony on July 26.

The "Belem" left the port of Piraeus in the morning for an 11-day voyage and will arrive in the southern city of Marseille, founded by the Greek settlers of Phocaea around 600 BC, on May 8, Reuters reported.

Paris Games organisers had received the flame on Friday in a ceremony at Athens' Panathenaic stadium, site of the first modern Olympics in 1896, following last week's lighting in ancient Olympia that kicked off an 11-day Greek relay leg.

After a brief ceremony in Piraeus on Saturday the vessel set sail for

France.

An estimated 150,000 spectators are expected to attend the ceremony at the Old Port of Marseille, which will host the Olympic sailing competitions and be the start of a 68-day French torch relay across the country.

The last torch bearer in Marseille will climb on the roof of the Velodrome stadium on May 9 and the relay will end in Paris on July 26 with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron during the Games' opening ceremony along the Seine river.

Organisers hope the opening ceremony, in which 160 boats carrying athletes from around the world will travel a six kilometre route towards the Eiffel Tower, will deliver a jaw-dropping spectacle.



● The sailing ship Belem departs with the Olympic flame from Greece for the 2024 Paris Games, from the port of Piraeus, Greece, April 27, 2024. ● REUTERS