



World Para Athletics Ch'ships: Iranians excel with 12 medals

Iran's Hajar Safarzadeh celebrates after winning the 400m T12 gold in the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan, on May 21, 2024.

● PAUL MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Sports Desk

Iranian girl Elham Salehi bagged a javelin throw bronze at the World Para Athletics Championships on Friday to take the country's medal count in the Japanese city of Kobe to 12 medals.

A shot put gold medalist in last year's Asian Para Games, Salehi registered 16.61m in her fourth throw in the F54 final to finish behind Uzbekistan's Nurkhon Kurbanova, who set a new world record of 20.73m for the ultimate prize, and Nigerian silver medalist Flora Ugwunwa (19.33m).

This was a third medal for Iranian women in Kobe, after Hajar Safarzadeh had walked away with a historic sprint gold while Hashemiyeh Mottaqian took the silver in the javelin throw F56 contest.

Safarzadeh made history in the 400m T12 final as she clocked an Asian record of 57.56 seconds to become the first Iranian girl to win a gold at the World Championships.

Meanwhile, Mottaqian enjoyed a season's best performance with 22.74m but still had to settle for the runner-up finish behind Brazilian Raissa Rocha Machado – a third world silver for the 38-year-old Iranian, who will be chasing a second successive Paralympic gold in Paris in the summer.

In the men's competitions, high-profile Iranian and reigning Paralympic champion Saeid Afrooz flexed muscles ahead of his title defense in the French capital by grabbing a javelin throw gold. Stepping into the event as the defend-

ing champion, Afrooz was in a league of his own in the F34 final as all his attempts – topped by the fifth of 40.14m – were enough to secure the gold, with Colombian duo Mauricio Valencia (37.07m) and Diego Fernando Meneses Medina (36.54m) standing next to the Iranian on the podium.

Amirhossein Alipour had won a first men's gold for Iran, thanks to a dominant performance in the shot put F11 final, which saw him shatter the two-decade standing championships record.

His third attempt travelled 14.61 meters, 99 centimeters further than neutral athlete Igor Baskakov's throw, while Alipour's fellow-Iranian Mahdi Olad – also a reigning Paralympic gold medalist – took the bronze with 13.28m.

Olad won his second medal in Kobe when tallied 42.36m for the discus throw silver – 40 centimeters adrift of Italian gold medalist Oney Tapia.

There were more javelin throw medals for the Iranian men in Thursday's F13 final, where Ali Pirouj (63.15m) and Sajjad Nikparast (62.30m) claimed the silver and bronze medals, with Team GB's Daniel Pembroke winning the gold with 66.96m.

Elsewhere on Thursday, Ali-Asghar Javanmardi won the men's shot put F35 silver, courtesy of a 16.06m throw in the final.

Saman Pakbaz had won a first medal for Iran in Kobe, finishing third in the men's shot put F12 event, and Alireza Mokhtari made it two for the country with a bronze in the F53 final.

Nadal handed tough draw against Zverev in French Open



● GETTY IMAGES

BBC – Rafael Nadal will start his French Open return – and expected farewell to the tournament he has dominated – with a first-round match against German fourth seed Alexander Zverev.

Spain's Nadal, who has won the men's title on a record 14 occasions, plans to retire later this year.

Zverev, 27, is one of the favorites for the title and tuned up by winning the Italian Open last week.

Britain's Andy Murray has also indicated he will call it a day in the coming months and starts against fellow veteran Stan Wawrinka.

Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic starts against French wildcard Pierre-Hugues Herbert, while Iga Swiatek begins her bid for a third women's title in a row against a qualifier or lucky loser.

The French Open, which is the second Grand Slam tournament of the season, starts on Sunday.

While world number one Swiatek is the overwhelming favourite for the women's singles, Aryna Sabalenka is expected to be the player who could end her clay-court dominance and faces 101st-ranked Erika Andreeva in her opening match. Swiatek and Sabalenka are separated in the two halves of the draw, meaning they could not play until the final on 8 June.

In the second round, Poland's Swiatek could face four-time major champion Naomi Osaka, who is back at Roland Garros for the first time since returning from maternity leave and starts against Italy's Lucia Bronzetti.

American third seed Coco Gauff has been drawn in the same half as Swiatek, meaning they could face in the semi-finals.

In the men's draw, Italian second seed Jannik Sinner plays American Chris Eubanks, while Spanish third seed Carlos Alcaraz takes on a qualifier or lucky loser.

Teenage Iranian Daneshvar wins Sharjah Masters

Sports Desk

Iran's teenage grand master Bardia Daneshvar came out on top in a neck-and-neck race to win the Sharjah Masters chess event in the United Arab Emirates, taking home the \$12,000 prize money.

Four players finished atop the standings with 6½ points but it was the 17-year-old Iranian who was declared the winner on tiebreak criteria.

Russian Volodar Murzin – participating as a neutral – and American Sam Shankland completed the podium, while Shamsiddin Vokhidov of Uzbekistan finished fourth after scoring a full point in Thursday's ninth round.

A 48-move draw against top seed Indian Arjun Erigaisi paved the way for Daneshvar to win the tournament on the final day with the highest tiebreak score in the leading pack.

The turning point for the Iranian was his round-seven triumph over former sole leader Chithambaram Aravindh In



● CHESSBASE

a double-edged game.

this was the biggest career success for Daneshvar, who had won the 2022 Iranian Championship and had knocked out elite GM Alexander Grischuk in the second round of the

2023 FIDE World Cup.

Eight players finished the tournament a half point behind the leading four, including second seed Iranian Parham Maqsoudlou, who settled for the ninth spot.



Vacancy Notice

The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to National Programme Associate, Sexual and Reproductive Health (FTA) at GS6 level for its office in Tehran, Iran.

Details of the Advertised vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link:
<https://iran.unfpa.org>

Please apply online by 11 June 2024, 12 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.

Important Note:

- There is no application, processing or other fees at any stage of the application process.
- UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status or disabilities.
- Women and people with disabilities are highly encouraged to apply.