

Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial:

Hedayati stuns Kayaalp as Iran captures four GR medals



Sports Desk

Superheavyweight wrestler Fardin Hedayati stole the show on the first day of the Greco-Roman contests at the Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial in Budapest as Iran grabbed four medals across three weight classes. The 20-year-old prodigy enjoyed an emphatic run toward the 130kg glory, defeating two of the prominent stars of the class in the process. The reigning world junior champion began the day with a 4-0 victory over Turkish great Riza Kayaalp – a winner of 13 world and Olympic medals – and then outmuscled former world bronze winner Alin Alexuc-Ciurariu of Romania by technical superiority in the semifinals. Awaiting Hedayati in the final showpiece was high-profile Georgian Iakobi Kajaia, who won the silver at the Tokyo Olympics, but the Iranian rounded off his campaign in dominant fashion, cruising to a 5-0 triumph – a second gold medal for the young Iranian in this year's UWW Ranking Series. Elsewhere on Saturday, Mahdi Mohsennejad eased into the 60kg final with victories over refuge team's Jamal Valizadeh (11-0) and South Korean Kim Dahyun (8-0), though he had to settle for the silver after a 6-5 loss to Pridon Abuladze of Georgia. The result was still enough for Mohsennejad, who had won the Olympic quota for the country in last year's World

Championships, to secure his place in the Iranian six-man squad for the Games in July as his domestic rival Amir-Reza Dehbozorgi finished behind him on the third podium. Dehbozorgi was beaten 4-0 by Abuladze in his first bout but came out on top against Algerian Abdelkarim Fergat (7-0) for the bronze medal. Meysam Dalkhani was the other Iranian bronze winner in Budapest, sharing the third podium with Venezuelan with Raiber Jose Orozco in the 63kg event. A world champion in 2021, Dalkhani bounced back from a 10-1 defeat against Azerbaijan's Murad Mammadov – last year's world silver winner – in the quarterfinals to outclass the host's Levente Toth 11-0 in the third-place bout. Saturday's results came a day after the Iranian freestyle team had collected a gold through Hassan Yazdani in the 86kg contests, as well as a couple of silvers and bronzes apiece to finish as the runner-up in the team table with 117 points. Abbas Ebrahimzadeh (65kg) and Adel Panahian (79kg) left the Hungarian capital with a final defeat, while Shahdad Khosravi (61kg) and Ali Rezaei (74kg) bagged two consolation bronzes.



Fardin Hedayati, pictured in last year's World U20 Championships in Amman, won his second 130kg gold in this season's UWW Ranking Series in Budapest.

● UWW

Iranian girls finish Asian kurash runner-up

Sports Desk

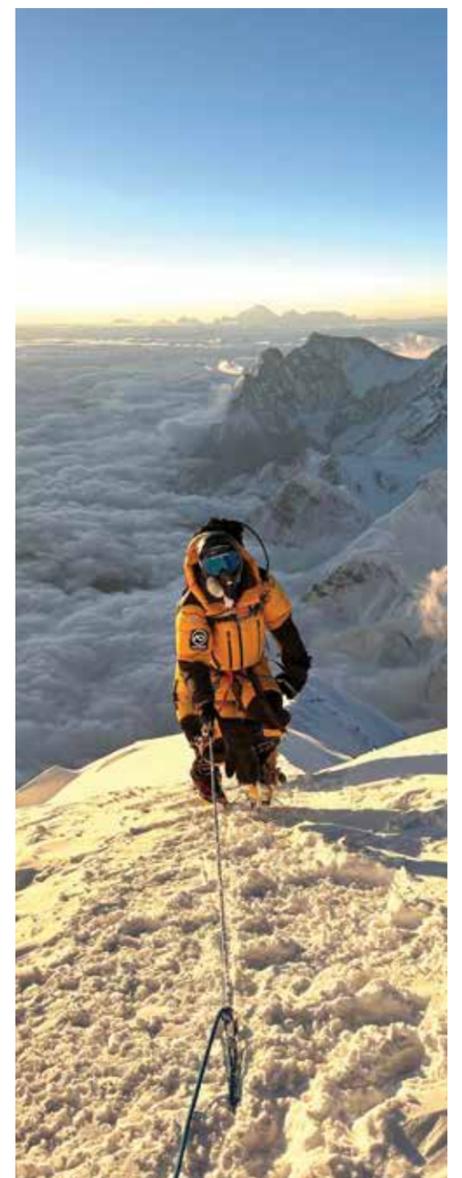
The Iranian women's team captured eight medals, including a couple of golds, to finish as the runner-up at the 13th Asian Senior Kurash Championship in Tehran. Uzbekistan won the team title with three golds and four silvers, with the Chinese Taipei in third, thanks to double golds and three bronze medals. Tahereh Azarpeivand and Fatemeh Barmaki finished their campaigns on a high note, grabbing the golds in the -57kg and +87kg contests respectively. Arezou Salimi (-52kg), Riehaneh Gilani (-72kg), and Hanieh Vahdani (-87kg) settled for silver medals in their respective weight classes, with Faezeh Ebrahimi (-48kg), Pardis Edivandi (-63kg), and Saba Karam-Ali (-78kg) adding three bronzes to Iran's medal haul.



Iranian Danaei heads toward 'Savage Mountain'

Sports Desk

Iranian mountaineer Amir Danaei left for Pakistan this week to embark on a three-month journey toward the K2 Summit in the Karakoram range. Danaei, 23, wrote his name into history books when he became the youngest-ever Iranian to conquer Mount Everest – the highest altitude on the face of the earth – in May last year. "The sweetest moment through my entire life was when I took the one last step toward the Everest peak," said the Iranian, who will be looking to repeat the feat as the country's youngest mountaineer to have ever peaked K2. At 8,611 meters, K2 is the second highest peak in the world, known to be one of the most dangerous and difficult treks due to avalanches, steepness and unpredictable weather. Nicknamed the 'Savage Mountain', K2 boasts the second highest fatality rate – following Annapurna in Nepal – with 23 deaths per 100 successful summits. "I will be joined by a group of the world's best mountaineers in the journey, including high-profile Briton Nirmal Purja," Danaei said of his newest ascent. "Given its unique conditions, K2 is a dream, yet challenging, destination for all mountaineers, which makes the trek an equivalent of a world gold medal in the sport," added the Iranian.



Jacobs sees room for improvement after retaining European title

REUTERS – Olympic sprint champion Lamont Marcell Jacobs said he is aiming to improve his time and technique ahead of the Paris Games after electrifying the home crowd in Rome by retaining the men's 100m title at the European Athletics Championships on Saturday. The Italian, who claimed two gold medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (100m and 4x100m relay), had a slow start but showcased his signature strength in the final third of the race to clock a season-best 10.02 and clinch gold. The 29-year-old has failed to dip under the 10-second mark in nearly two years and endured a series of injury issues since his Tokyo Games triumph in 2021. "I thought I could run 9.95. I didn't

manage it but the important thing was to win," Jacobs said after the race on Saturday. "I made a big bet on myself because I came to Rome not in the best shape, but it was one of my goals of the season to win. I am the European Champion again. It is really incredible the people here scream my name every second. "I'm really happy about that (but) not really happy about the time. But here in this competition what counts is the medals. Now we can work, work, work more to improve the time and the technique for the Olympics of course." The athletics competition at the Paris Olympics will take place from Aug. 1-11 at the Stade de France.

● AFP