

Wrestling U15 Asian Championships:

Iran wins six medals, settles for FS third place



● FARSHAD BANDANI/LAWF

Sports Desk

The freestyle event of the U15 Asian Championships in Sriracha, Thailand, was one to forget for Iran as the wrestling powerhouse finished third in the team table with six medals, including three golds.

Japan collected a remarkable six gold medals across 10 weight classes to lift the team trophy with 197 points, followed by India, which failed to win a single gold – claiming four silvers and five bronzes – but still managed to beat Iran to the runner-up place with 163 points.

The Iranian squad also bagged a silver and two bronze medals to tally 161 points.

Representing Iran in the 48kg contests, Arman Elahi came out on top against Japanese Ibuki Kamikawa 6-3 in the final showdown, while Hooman Kalhori finished his campaign with the ultimate prize of the 62kg class, thanks to a 6-0 victory over Tajikistan's Idris Bakhromov.

Sam Daneshvar won a third gold medal for Iran when he defeated Indian Ronak Ronak 5-3 in the 85kg final.

Elsewhere, Sadra Fooladzadeh

had to settle for the silver medal of the 75kg class after a 4-3 loss to Adilbek Yerbolatov in the final. Meanwhile, Benjamin Ashofteh (38kg) and Amir-Ali Farasati (68kg) left the competitions with a couple of consolation bronzes in their respective weight classes. The freestyle contests came after Iran had pipped Uzbekistan to the Greco-Roman crown earlier in the Thai city.

Iranian boys notched up triple golds as well as double silver and bronze medals apiece to stand atop the team podium with 170 points, with Uzbekistan finishing on 169.

Amir Kazemi (48kg), Mahdi Gholamian (62kg), and Esmail Nabavi (68kg) were the Iranian gold medalists, with Abolfazl Zahiri and Amirhossein Bakhtiarnejad taking the silvers at the 57kg and 85kg contests respectively.

Benyamin Rastgar (44kg) and Amirhossein Alvani (75kg) added two bronzes to Iran's Greco-Roman medal haul.

The Asian age-group championships will continue with the under-20 competitions starting today, with Iran putting double team titles on the line.

Alipour aiming high after reunion with Reds

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Ali Alipour said he will be looking to repeat his good old days in the Persepolis shirt and receive an international call-up after signing a two-year contract with the Persian Gulf Pro League champion as a free agent.

Alipour, 28, left the Thera Reds in 2020 to join C.S. Marítimo but his time in the Portuguese top flight was hit by a couple of sidelining injuries as he only managed 17 goals across four seasons – including two in 19 appearances for Gil Vicente last term. Alipour bagged 72 strikes –

56 of which makes him the Reds' all-time top scorer in the Iranian Pro League – and 33 assists in 212 games for Persepolis, winning four league titles and a domestic cup trophy, while he was part of the team that reached a first AFC Champions League final in 2018.

"Thank God I'm back in Persepolis. The club has always been like a home to me and I have fond memories of my previous spell here," Alipour said upon signing the contract.

Persepolis archrival Esteghlal, as well as a couple of Turkish clubs, reportedly approached the Iranian in recent weeks but Ali-

pour said it was "hard for me to turn down the offer from the team that I had won all my trophies and top-scorer awards with."

on his future aspirations, Alipour said: "I just hope the teammates and supporters will help me convince [Iran head coach] Amir Qalenoee to give me an opportunity in the national team."

Despite an impressive goal-scoring record in club football, Alipour only has three international caps under his belt – the last of which came as a cameo under Belgian Marc Wilmots in a friendly against South Korea back in 2019.

Alipour is the third sum-

mer signing for Persepolis under new Spanish manager Juan Carlos Garrido – following ex-Sepahan winger Farshad Ahmadzadeh and Moroccan fullback Ayoub El Amloud, who joined from Wydad AC. Persepolis, however, has had to part ways with three instrumental figures of its back-to-back title winning squad as Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand and his international teammate Mahdi Torabi, as well as right-back Danial Esmailifar all left the Reds to join Tractor as free agents.



● PAXAM PARSAEI/TJC

Lloris says Fernández video is 'attack on French people' as Argentinian minister sacked



● KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

THE GUARDIAN – Argentina's undersecretary of sport has been sacked after calling for Lionel Messi to apologise for the racist and transphobic song about France's players that the former captain Hugo Lloris has described as "an attack on French people".

Chelsea said on Wednesday they had "instigated an internal disciplinary procedure" against Enzo Fernández after the midfielder posted a video on Instagram that showed him and some of his Argentina teammates involved in the chants as they celebrated their victory against Colombia in the Copa América final. He later apologised, saying the video did not "reflect my beliefs or my character", and is expected to be fined by his club.

Fifa has confirmed it is investigating the incident, which Julio Garro had also urged Messi – who captained Argentina at the Copa América – and the Argentinian Football Association (AFA) president, Claudio Tapia, to apologise for.

But the office of Argentina's president, Javier Milei, issued a strongly worded statement on X confirming that Garro had been dismissed. "The president's office says that no government can tell the Argentina national team – world champion and two-time Copa América champion – what to comment, what to think or what to do, or to any other citizen," it said. "For this reason, Julio Garro is no longer undersecretary of sports of the nation."

The vice-president, Victoria Villarruel, also hit back at the country's critics on social media. "No country with a colonial history is going to put us down for a song sung on a field nor for speaking a truth that nobody wants to admit," she wrote. "Enough of pretending to be offended, hypocrites. Enzo I am with you, Messi thanks for everything! Argentines always keep your heads high! Long live Argentina!"

Villarruel said Argentina's history had been forged by people of all races: "We never forced our way of life on anyone, nor will we tolerate that someone tries to do the same to us."

Lloris, who captained France at the past two World Cups – includ-

ing their run to the final at Qatar 2022 when the chant was first sung by Argentina fans – said the players involved should have shown "more responsibility".

"They deserve a lot of credit for what they have done on the field for the last four or five years," Lloris said. "But when you win, you are an example for others, especially kids. It was a proper attack about the French people, especially for the French people who have African origin and family."

Demba Ba, the former Chelsea and Senegal striker, wrote on X: "Argentina, land of asylum for former Nazis on the run. From 1945, [Juan] Perón hosted war criminals. And it surprises you ..."