



The most-decorated Iranian in the Olympic history with double golds and a bronze, Hadi Saei played a significant part in the latest success as the head of the sport's national governing body. Taekwondo girls Nahid Kiani and Mobina Ne'matzadeh made history earlier in Paris as the former became the first Iranian woman to reach the final showpiece in any Olympic event before taking the -57kg silver, while the latter's -49kg bronze meant this year's Games were the most prolific for the Iranian female athletes in 30 editions.

Sensational Salimi grabs gold, caps off taekwondo heroics

Sports Desk

Iran's taekwondo campaign at the Paris Olympics will be one for the ages after all four members of the squad finished on the podium in their respective events.

Representing the country in the men's +80kg contests, young prodigy Arian Salimi came out victorious against British fourth-seed Caden Cunningham 2-1 to walk away with the coveted gold on Saturday night – a fitting finale to a thrilling, action-packed four days for the Iranians in the French capital's Grand Palais.

The Briton drew first blood with a 6-3 win in the opening round, but the 20-year-old Iranian bounced back in the second, starting with a round kick to the head and never looked behind to win 9-1.

Both fighters went all out in a nail-biting third round, with Salimi sealing the victory in the closing seconds with another spectacular three-pointer as it finished 6-2.

It was the final episode of a sensational 14 months for the Iranian young gun, who won the world bronze last year before claiming the gold at the Asian Championships in May.

Salimi began the day with a comfortable win against

Uzbekistan's two-time world silver medalist Nikita Rafalovich in straight rounds.

He then came from behind twice to beat Mexican second-seed Carlos Sansores and Croatian Ivan Šapina, who share five world medals between them, en route to the ultimate prize – Iran's first taekwondo gold in the Games since legendary Hadi Saei's triumph in Beijing 2008.

The most-decorated Iranian in the Olympic history with double golds and a bronze, Saei played a significant part in the latest success as the head of the sport's national governing body.

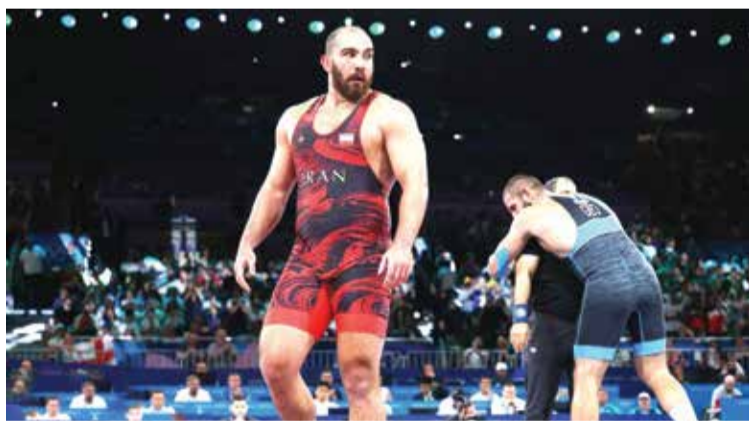
Taekwondo girls Nahid Kiani and Mobina Ne'matzadeh made history earlier in Paris as the former became the first Iranian woman to reach the final showpiece in any Olympic event before taking the -57kg silver, while the latter's -49kg bronze meant this year's Games were the most prolific for the Iranian female athletes in 30 editions.

Mehran Barkhordari, meanwhile, ended Iran's wait for a first men's final spot in 12 years when he made it to the -80kg showdown, though he was unlucky to finish his impressive run with a silver.



Iran's Arian Salimi celebrates after the victory over Britain's Caden Cunningham in the men's taekwondo +80kg final at the Paris Olympics on August 10, 2024.

● ANDREW MEDICHINI/AP



Iranian wrestler Amirhossein Zare' (red) reacts after the defeat in the freestyle 125kg final at the Paris Olympics on August 10, 2024.

● BORNA NEWS

Amouzad, Zare' fall short in freestyle finals

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers Rahman Amouzad and Amirhossein Zare' fell to defeats in their respective finals as the country's freestyle squad failed to win a gold across the five weight classes at the Paris Olympics.

Having enjoyed an emphatic run toward Sunday's final, Amouzad was stunned by Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka in

the 65kg showdown, suffering a 10-3 defeat.

The setback came after Zare' had also come short against familiar foe Geno Petriashvili of Georgia in a thrilling 125kg final on the preceding night at the Grand Palais Éphémère.

Trailing 10-1 at the break, the Iranian fought back to cut the deficit to a single point in the second round but it proved too little too late as

Zare' added a second Olympic medal to his three world medals, including double golds, as well as the bronze in the Tokyo Games three years ago.

Meanwhile, Amir-Ali Azarpira bounced back from a loss to eventual gold winner Akhmed Tazhudinov to round off his 97kg campaign with a consolation bronze, thanks to a 4-1 victory over American great Kyle Snyder.

Earlier in the freestyle competitions, Hassan Yazdani, struggling with a recurring shoulder injury in the final, had to settle for a second successive 86kg silver in the Olympics after a 7-1 defeat against Bulgaria's Russian-born Magomed Ramazanov. Younes Emami missed out on the 74kg podium following a technical-fall defeat against American Kyle Dake in the quarterfinals.

Davoudi misses out on podium as Talakhadze retains superheavyweight crown

Sports Desk

Ali Davoudi's quest for a second Olympic medal ended in vain as the Iranian weightlifter finished fourth in the men's +102kg event on Saturday.

Georgian great Lasha Talakhadze made history by becoming the first super-heavyweight weightlifter to

win three successive Olympic gold, with Armenian Varazdat Lalayan and Bahrain's Gor Minasyan taking the silver and bronze medals respectively.

A silver medalist at the Tokyo Games three years ago, Davoudi registered 205kg in the snatch event, and then began his favorite clean & jerk contest with a 242kg lift.

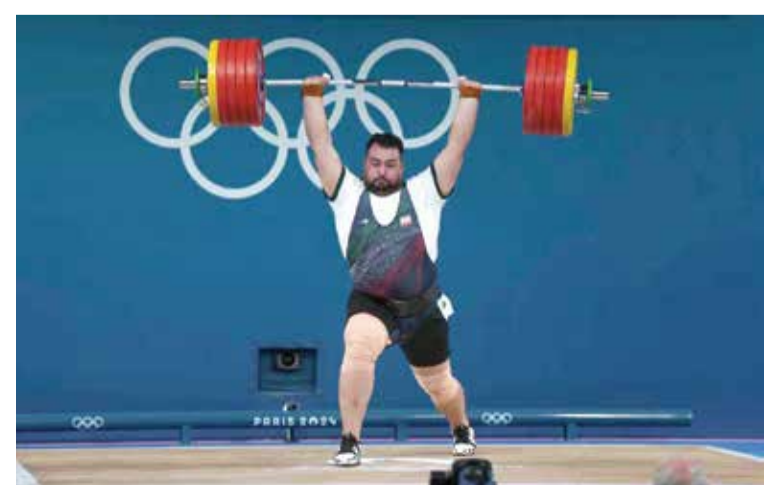
A successful 257kg would

have seen the Iranian stand win the bronze, but two failed attempts saw Davoudi settle for 447kg in total.

It was always going to be a three-horse race featuring Lalayan, Minasyan, and Davoudi for the silver and bronze medals as the Talakhadze was the hot favorite for a landmark triumph in the French capital.

The Georgian, however, was far from his dominant form, finishing second to Minasyan in the snatch contest, while he just did enough with 255kg in the clean & jerk to secure the gold with 470kg in total – 22 kilograms shy of his world record.

Lalayan finished with 467kg for the runner-up spot, with Minasyan recording 461kg.



● PRESS TV