

World Cup Asian qualifiers:

Iran names squad for Uzbekistan, Qatar games



FFIRI

Sports Desk

Head coach Amir Qalenoiei named Iran's 27-man squad for the upcoming matches against Uzbekistan and Qatar in the World Cup Asian qualifiers.

Iran will play away to Uzbekistan in Tashkent's Bunyodkor Stadium on Thursday before hosting Qatar at the Imam Reza Stadium in Mashhad five days later.

Uzbekistan and Iran are the top two in Group A of the qualifiers with six points after two rounds of matches – separated by the number of goals scored – with Asian champion Qatar in fifth place of the six-team table with one point.

Mahdi Taremi's first-half strike saw Iran edge out Kyrgyzstan 1-0 at home in September before Mahdi Qayedi scored the only goal of the game as Qalenoiei's side defeated the United Arab Emirates in Al Ain.

The top two of each of the three groups will qualify for the 2026 World Cup – co-hosted by Mexico, the United States, and Canada – with the third and fourth teams heading into the fourth round of the qualifiers – featuring two three-team groups.

Persepolis center-back Hossein Kan'anizadegan will miss the double-header due to a knee injury he suffered during the 1-0 win against Chadormalou in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Saturday.

Tractor winger Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, the leading marksman in the Iranian top flight with four goals, has been named in the squad and will be hoping to make a first international appearance in two years.

Golgozar defender Mohammad-Mahdi Zare' has received a first international call-up after helping his team register five clean sheets in six domestic league outings, while Alireza Jahanbakhsh, who has been without a team since leaving Feyenoord in July, is also in the list.

The following is Iran's full squad:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Niazmand (Sepahan), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal)

Defenders: Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan), Mohammad Daneshgar (Sepahan), Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Mohammad-Mahdi Zare' (Golgozar Sirjan), Saleh Hardani (Sepahan), Abolfazl Jalali (Esteghlal)

Midfielders: Saeed Ezzatollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Mohammad Karimi (Sepahan), Mohammad Qorbani (FC Orenburg), Mohammad-Javad Hosseini (Dinamo Makhachkala), Saman Qoddous (Ittihad Kalba), Omid Nourafkan (Malavan), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (-), Mohammad Mohebbi (FC Rostov), Mahdi Qayedi (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Torabi (Tractor), Ali Qolizadeh (Lech Poznan), Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor)

Strikers: Mahdi Taremi (Internazionale), Sardar Azmoun (Shabab Al Ahli), Shahriar Moghanlou (Ittihad Kalba).

LeBron and Bronny James make NBA history

BBC – LeBron James and Bronny James made NBA history by becoming the first father-son duo to play together on the same team during the Los Angeles Lakers' pre-season game against the Phoenix Suns.

Bronny, on his 20th birthday, entered the court during the second quarter in a 118-114 defeat by the Suns.

Never before had a father and son played in an NBA game of any type – including pre-season – at the same time.

"Wow that was surreal," LeBron wrote on X following the match. Speaking to reporters, he added: "We came out of a timeout and

we kind of stood next to each other. I kind of looked at him.

"It was like being in The Matrix or something. It just didn't feel real. But it was great to have those moments."

LeBron scored 19 points on the night, with four assists and five rebounds. Bronny went scoreless during his 13-minute run, finishing with two rebounds and four turnovers.

Bronny joined the Lakers as a second-round draft pick from the University of Southern California in June.

LeBron, 39, is the NBA's all-time record point-scorer and a four-time NBA winner.

The veteran is entering his 22nd season in the NBA.

He signed a new two-year deal with the Lakers following Bronny's arrival at the franchise.

The 2024-25 NBA season begins on 22 October, with the Lakers in action against the Minnesota Timberwolves after champions the Boston Celtics face the New York Knicks.



Bronny James (9) steps onto the court with father and Lakers team-mate LeBron James during the first half of a pre-season NBA game in Palm Desert, CA, US, on October 6, 2024.

WILLIAM LIANG/AP



India's Mohun Bagan withdrawn from ACL Two after skipping Tractor game



AFC

Sports Desk

Indian Super League club Mohun Bagan Super Giant has been withdrawn from the AFC Champions League Two after refusing to travel to Tabriz for the Group A match against Iranian top-flight side Tractor, the Asian Football Confederation announced on Monday.

The two sides were to meet in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Imam Stadium on October 2, but the Indian team failed to show up for the game, citing "security concerns"

amid political unrest in the Middle East following the assassination of Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon on September 27.

All matches played by the Indian club are now "cancelled and considered null and void in accordance with Article 5.6 of the Competition Regulations," read the AFC statement.

"For the avoidance of doubt, no points and goals in the club's matches shall be taken into consideration when

determining the final rankings in Group A pursuant to Article 8.3," add the governing body of the sport in the continent.

"The matter will now be referred to the relevant AFC Committee(s) as appropriate for their decision(s)."

Mohun Bagan SG had played to goalless stalemate against FC Ravshan of Tajikistan at home in their group opener, while Tractor walked away with a 3-0 victory at Al Wakrah.

Tractor will next play FC Ravshan in Tabriz on Oct. 23.