

Persian Gulf Pro League: Sepahan held at Malavan as Tractor is back on top

Sports Desk

Sepahan was held to a 1-1 stalemate at Malavan FC in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Friday. A second successive draw away from home saw the Isfahan-based club drop to second in the Iranian top-flight table with 40 points.

Reza Shekari put the visitors in front with three minutes in to the game on a rain-soaked pitch at the Sirous Qayeqran Stadium, before Amirreza Afsordeh drew Malavan level on the hour mark as the home side's winless run in the league extended to nine games.

Sepahan is now one point adrift of Tractor, which walked away with a massive 1-0 over Zob Ahan in Isfahan on the preceding night.

Croatian Domagoj Drozdek, who joined Tractor in January, came off the bench in the second half to find the net in the 89th minute and help Dragan Skocic's side move back atop the table. Elsewhere, third-place Foolad Khuzestan blew the chance to close the gap on Sepahan after a 2-0 defeat at Khaybar on Friday.

Faraz Emam-Ali headed home in the 14th minute and new signing Mohammad-Javad Mohammadi bagged his second goal in as many games for the home side to lift Khaybar to 12th in the table with 20 points – four clear of the relegation zone.

Nassaji Mazandaran remained second from bottom after sharing the spoils with Chadormalou in a goalless game at home.

There were also no goals between Mes and Esteghlal in Rafsanjan, which helped the former move above Shams Azar into 13th on goal difference, while Esteghlal remained ninth with 23 points.

Shams Azar suffered a first defeat in four games under new head coach Mahdi Rahmati on Thursday, losing 1-0 to Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ahvaz, courtesy of Mahmoud Motalaqzadeh's 56th minute strike.



Sepahan fullback Arya Yousefi (14) is challenged by Malavan's Alireza Ramezani during a Persian Gulf Pro League game in Bandar Anzali, Iran, on Feb. 7, 2025.

● FFIRI



Ex-Iran setter Mahdavi named new Shadab coach

Sports Desk

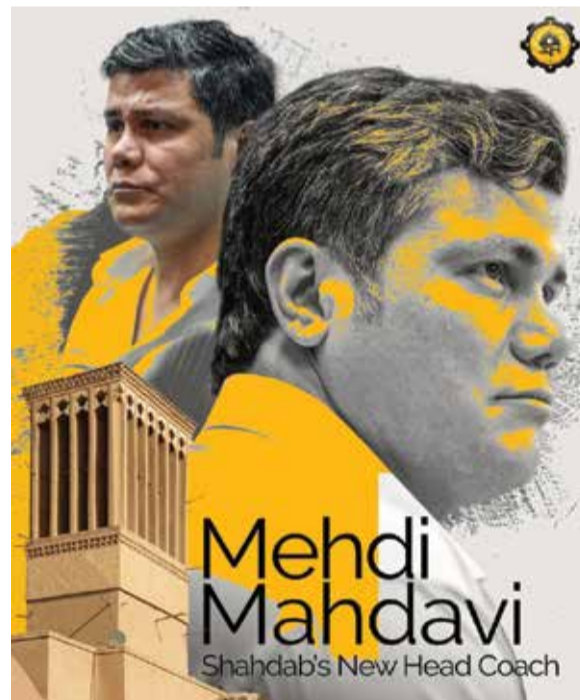
Mehdi Mahdavi, a former setter of the Iranian national volleyball team, was appointed as the head coach of top-flight club Shahdab Yazd on Saturday.

New Shahdab coach replaces Rahman Mohammadi-Rad, to whom Mahdavi worked as a number two before he was sacked following a five-set defeat against Tabi'at Eslamshahr in the Iranian Super League on Wednesday.

Mahdavi's first game in charge will come away to Chadormalou on Wednesday.

Mohammadi-Rad led Shahdab to a runner-up finish in the AVC Asian Club Championship on home soil last year, and fifth place at the FIVB Men's Club World Championship in Brazil last December.

Shahdab is second in the Iranian league table, trailing Shahrdari Orumiye by five points.



Man City's charges outcome 'in a month', Guardiola says

BBC – Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola says the club expects to learn the outcome of the hearing into its 115 charges of alleged Premier League financial rule breaches "in one month".

The hearing took place in front of an independent commission between September and December.

If City – who strongly deny the charges – are found guilty, the commission has unlimited powers, which include a massive points deduction or relegation.

In September, Guardiola, who earlier this season signed a two-year con-



tract extension to 2027, said City's critics wanted the Premier League champions "wiped from the face of the Earth". No-one has stated when a

decision will be reached, although it was widely expected to be in the first quarter of 2025. Guardiola confirmed this as he responded to a

question about whether City's record £180m investment in the transfer market during the winter window was triggered by the possibility of City being hit by a transfer ban. "In one month, I think there will be a verdict and a sentence," he said. "After that, we will see my opinion of what happened so far."

He also stressed it was made possible by City making a profit for the past three seasons, partly due to the sales of players such as Cole Palmer to Chelsea and Liam Delap to Ipswich for a combined £57.5m.

UWW Ranking Series: Keshtkar settles for Greco-Roman silver in Zagreb Open

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestler Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar won a first Greco-Roman medal for the country at the Zagreb Open, taking a silver medal in the 63kg contests.

A gold medalist in last December's National Championships, the 23-year-old Iranian overcame Uzbek opponents Aytjan Khalmakhanov (5-4) and Islomjon Bakhrarov (10-1) to reach the final showpiece, before suffering a 10-0 defeat against Russian Dinislam Bamatov, who won a world under-23 silver last year in Tirana, Albania.

Keshtkar's fellow-Iranian Erfan Jarkani, a world junior and U23 bronze medalist last year, finished his 63kg campaign empty-handed after a 3-1 loss to Bakhrarov in the quarter-finals. Elsewhere in the first UWW Ranking Series event of the international season, Iranian duo Ahmadreza Mohsennejad and

Mohammadreza Gholami missed out on the podium in the 67kg event following defeats in the third-place bouts.

Mohsennejad was beaten 5-0 by Romanian Razvan Arnaut, while Gholami fell to a 10-1 loss to home-favorite Dominik Etlinger.

Haavard Joergensen of Norway grabbed the 67kg gold, thanks to a superiority win (9-1) against Moldovan Valentin Petic in the final. Friday's Greco-Roman results came after the Iranian 16-man squad had collected four golds and silvers apiece to finish runner-up to the United States in the freestyle competitions earlier in the Arena Zagreb.

Abbas Ebrahimzadeh (65kg), Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg), and Amirreza Ma'soumi (125kg) walked away with the ultimate prize of their respective weight classes, while Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan came out on top against Ebrahim Khari in an all-Iranian 61kg final.

Abolfazl Babalou was beaten by American great Kyle Snyder in the 97kg final, with young prodigies Sina Khalili (70kg) and Mahdi Yousefi (79kg) adding a couple of silvers to Iran's haul.



● IAWF