

Teenage sensation Daneshvar heralds 'new era' for Iranian chess



Iran's Bardia Daneshvar (c) poses on the podium with the men's gold medal at the Asian Individual Chess Championships in Al Ain, UAE, on May 16, 2025.

Sports Desk

Bardia Daneshvar's historic crown at the Asian Individual Chess Championships marked the beginning of a "new era" for the sport in Iran, Shadi Paridar, the head of the Iranian Chess Federation, said.

"This is an unprecedented achievement in the past hundred years – one that even the golden generation of the Iranian chess couldn't accomplish," Paridar, a FIDE woman grandmaster, told IRNA.

Daneshvar, 19, collected seven points to finish atop the men's Open standings of the nine-round Swiss tournament in Al Ain, the United Arab Emirates, last week.

"The tournament was called off last year, so all of the top contenders in Asian took part at the event to secure qualification for this year's Chess World Cup. Chess in Asia is now at an elite level, and China, India, and Uzbekistan are among the global powerhouses of the sport," added Paridar. "Bardia needs more sup-

port and his great achievement deserves recognition, as it brought Iran's century-long drought at the Asian competitions to an end."

It was a tight race until Round 6, when 12th-seed Daneshvar seized the lead and never looked back. After a crucial victory over Abhimanyu Puranik of India in the penultimate round, he entered the final round with a score of 7/8, a full point ahead of his nearest rivals in the table.

Despite losing in the final round to top seed Indian Nihal Sarin, finished level on seven points with Daneshvar, the Iranian grandmaster walked away with the ultimate prize thanks to the superior average rating of his opponents. Sarin settled for the silver, while Shamsiddin Vokhidov of Uzbekistan secured the bronze, edging out five players (all with 6.5/9) on tie-breaks.

The event in Al Ain bringing together over 250 male and female players from 38 countries.

FIBA West Asia Super League:

Tabiat runner-up as Al Riyadi secures back-to-back titles

Sports Desk

Iran's Tabiat Eslamshahr settled for a runner-up finish at the FIBA West Asia Super League after suffering a 104-77 defeat against Al Riyadi Club Beirut in Sunday's final showpiece in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon. Already the reigning three-time West Asia League champion, the Lebanese powerhouse refused to stop there and went on to secure the pan-regional competition's ultimate prize for the second year in a row. No other team in this league had been able to accomplish what it has done and the Lebanese club made it look so easy as Al Riyadi went on a 13-game unbeaten run to lift the trophy, including a five-game sweep of the Final 8.

"This is a great achievement for Lebanese basketball," said Al Riyadi head coach Ahmad Faran. "Back-to-back champions. We are proud. And we are still

hungry. We're looking forward to achieving more."

Wael Arakji, who went on to pick up the Most Valuable Player prize of the tournament, led the way in the victory with 28 points and six assists, scoring 12 of his output in the opening frame alone to help his side overcome a tepid start and seize control of the contest.

Riyadi was staring at a one-point deficit but the lefty guard swished in one of his six three-pointers for the go-ahead bucket, which ignited what would be a 15-0 run toward a 26-12 lead at the end of the period.

His solid start seemingly rubbed off on his teammates, with Amir Saoud and Thon Maker taking turns in leading their second-quarter surge that saw the squad inflate the lead to 53-32 with 1:25 left before the break. There was hardly any let-up from then on, and the game would become a one-sided show

in Riyadi's favor – much to the joy of Lebanese supporters that trooped to the venue to witness a coronation at home.

Marcus Georges-Hunt also played a crucial part in the win with 24 points and five rebounds, while Last year's MVP Thon Maker finished with 20 points, and nine rebounds, with Saoud supplying 13 points and six assists off the bench.

Tabiat, on the other hand, was led by Croatian center Ivan Buva, who registered 15 points and five rebounds as the Iranian club achieved a highest finish for the country in the WASL history. Sina Vahedi had 14 points. Amir Qolizadeh scored 12, while Perry Petty and Arman Zangeneh added 11 each.

Al Riyadi and Tabiat will now turn their attention to the Basketball Champions League Asia in June 9, with the former defending its title at the flagship club competition in the continent.



Al Riyadi's Wael Arakji (R) goes up for a basket during a victory over Tabiat in the FIBA West Asia Super League final in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, on May 18, 2025.

● FIBA



● IWF

Iranian weightlifter Yousefi set to miss World Championships

Sports Desk

Iranian superheavyweight prodigy Alireza Yousefi will be facing a race against time to return to full fitness for the upcoming World Weightlifting Championships – starting October 1 in Førde, Norway – as well as November's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh.

Two-time world junior champion Yousefi, 21, has been sidelined since

undergoing a surgery in late January for a torn ligament and meniscus in his right knee.

"Alireza hasn't started his weightlifting training yet, and is only doing general strength and conditioning work for now. We'll have to see how his situation develops. With the world event just four months away, there's a real chance he might miss the competition in Norway," Ali Jabbari, a member of the Iranian coaching staff

said this week.

Yousefi made his World Championships debut in style last year in Manama, Bahrain, where he grabbed a gold and a bronze medal.

The Iranian set a new Asian record of 262kg to beat fellow-Iranian Ali Davoudi to the clean & jerk gold in the +109kg contests, before a total tally of 456kg saw him finish behind Armenian Varazdat Lalayan and Davoudi.