

FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B:

Iran hammers Mongolia to stay top of group

Sports Desk

Irani claimed a second emphatic win in their FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B campaign, routing Mongolia 89-55 in Shenzhen, China, on Tuesday.

Both teams entered the contest on the back of first-day victories, but it was Iran's three-point shooting and defensive intensity that ultimately made the difference.

Iranian girls hit six triples in the first eight minutes to erect a 25-6 lead that they never relinquished. Mongolia battled valiantly, but Iran's Roxanna Barahman and Negin Rasoulipour controlled the tempo for much of the game to secure the win.

Having demolished the Cook Islands 82-32 in their opening game, Iran stayed atop the Group B table in the eight-team tournament, remaining on course for a maiden progress to the top division.

Rasoulipour led Iran with 20 points, including four three-pointers, while Barahman added 15.

Nahideh Asadi also finished in double figures for Iran, dropping 10, with Khulan Onolbaatar and Tsatsral Bayarmaa top-scoring for Mongolia with 10 points apiece.

Iran will take on Thailand, which was beaten 81-74 by Mongolia on Monday, today at the Shenzhen Sports Center.

Greek coach Eleni Kapogianni's side had defeated Syria (65-55) and Jordan (88-70) in April's qualifiers in Amman to book a place in the eight-team Division B finals.

The winner of the competition will be part of the qualification for next edition of the Asia Cup, Division A.

The Chinese Taipei and Kazakhstan are two former Div. A sides in Group A, also featuring Tahiti and India.



Iranian girls celebrate their victory over Mongolia at the FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B in Shenzhen, China, on July 15, 2025.



● FIBA

Portuguese Jesus takes charge of Al Nassr



● REUTERS

AFC – Jorge Jesus has been appointed head coach of Saudi Arabia side Al Nassr Club, taking over the reins from Stefano Pioli.

The Portuguese tactician was previously with Al Nassr's Saudi Pro League rivals Al Hilal SFC for two seasons in what was his second stint with the Riyadh-based club. At Al Nassr, Jesus will be working with Portuguese icon Cristiano Ronaldo, who recently extended his contract until 2027.

Besides their domestic commitments, Al Nassr will also compete

in the AFC Champions League Two™ 2025/26.

Jesus parted ways with Al Hilal following their AFC Champions League Elite™ 2024/25 semi-final exit but did enjoy success with the four-time Asian champions, guiding the club to a treble in the 2023/24 season where Al Hilal won the Saudi Pro League, King's Cup and Saudi Super Cup.

The 70-year-old had previously coached Benfica and Sporting CP in Portugal as well as Flamengo in Brazil.

Volleyball Nations League:

Iran to begin decisive Week 3 with Polish test

Sports Desk

Iran will kick off a decisive third week of action at the Volleyball Nations League today when taking on Poland in Gdansk.

Iran is 10th in the 18-team table of the preliminary phase with a 4-4 record, while the European powerhouse is second to Brazil, thanks to six wins in eighth outings.

The top seven of the preliminaries will join host China at the VNL Finals – starting with the quarterfinals in Ningbo on July 30.

Olsztyn on Saturday, with the home side coming out victorious in straight sets (26-24, 25-20, 25-21) before Iran won an addi-

tional fourth set 25-20.

The good news for Iran head coach Roberto Piazza is the return of Morteza Sharifi for team selection, after the prolific outside-hitter, who has chipped in 67 points in the preliminaries, missed the final two games of the second week against Germany and the Netherlands with an ankle injury.

A second game in Week 3 for Iran will come against China on Thursday, followed by an encounter against Olympic champion France on Saturday. Iran will hope to be in contention for a top-seven finish in the table and a place in the VNL Finals when squaring off against Bulgaria in the final round of the preliminaries on Sunday.

"We'll have to prepare differently for each game, as our first game against Poland will be played at 8:00 p.m. and the second one will come at 4:30 p.m. the following day – leaving us with little recovery time between the two games.

"So, we'll need to completely reset our mindset. We'll have one day to rest, then play again at 8:30 p.m. against France before the final match at 5:00 p.m. against Bulgaria the next day.

"Overall, we have a tough week ahead. We know exactly what we want. Our fate is in our hands – if we want it, we can achieve it. But we need to take it day by day, not think about the whole week at once. So,

our first challenge is the match against Poland," Piazza said. Looking to progress to the Finals for the first time since 2022, Iran got off to a slow start in the competition under the new Italian coach, suffering successive defeats against Brazil (3-0), USA (3-2), and Slovenia (3-2), before salvaging a five-set win against Ukraine in the final Week 1 game in Rio de Janeiro. The Asian powerhouse, however, delivered much-improved displays in the second week of action, defeating Serbia in four sets in Belgrade, before claiming victories against Argentina (3-1) and the Netherlands (3-2) either side of a 3-1 loss to Germany.



● volleyball.ir