

Iranian roller skater Ahmadi eyeing World Games gold

Sports Desk

Iranian roller-skating sensation Taraneh Ahmadi says she will settle for nothing less than the gold medal at the upcoming World Games.

The 12th edition of the World Games will kick off in Chengdu, China, on Thursday, featuring 34 sports and 60 disciplines that are not contested at the Olympic Games.

Ahmadi, 23, will enter the multi-sport event fresh off winning a speed slalom silver medal in inline freestyle at the 20th Asian Roller Skating Championship in Jecheon, South Korea, in late July, courtesy of a final defeat against Chinese Taipei's Liu Chiao-his.

This was a second setback for Ahmadi against her familiar foe in a major event, following the final loss at the Hangzhou Asian Games two years ago.

"The competition featured Asia's top-notch skaters. All top global contenders in the sport are from East Asia, which is why the event in Jecheon essentially carried the same weight as the World Championship," Ahmadi told IRNA.

"The gold medal at the Asian Championship was the only outcome I had envisioned before the event. I even recorded a better time in the final showpiece, but I was penalized for a last-second error, which eventually cost me the ultimate prize," added the Iranian girl, who also won a precious bronze medal at the



● IRNA

high-profile Hero Battle Cup in Milan in June.

"I'm a bit exhausted, but with little time left before the World

Games, I had to resume round-the-clock training just days after returning from South Korea.

"I'm determined to learn from my mistake at the Asian Championship to deliver a flawless performance in Chengdu. My goal is to reclaim the gold I lost to the

Chinese Taipei opponent, and I'll do everything to make that happen.

"Inline freestyle skating will make its World Games debut this year, and I'm working hard to reach peak form before heading to China. Since my national team debut in 2016, I've pursued nothing but the ultimate prize in every competition.

"I have notched up some historic firsts for Iranian skating – including our nation's breakthrough world gold in 2017. The gold medal is all that has ever mattered to me – worth fighting for with everything I've got throughout these years. Nothing short of a top-podium finish will fulfil my ambition in Chengdu," added the Iranian girl.

Joining Ahmadi in representing the country in the women's Inline freestyle event at the World Games is 20-year-old Romina Salek – a former world speed slalom record holder, who won the gold medal at the Hero Battle Cup but was unlucky to miss out on the podium at the Asian Championship, finishing fourth.

Amirmohammad Savari and Reza Lesani, meanwhile, will vie for success in the men's competitions.

Savari and Lesani secured an all-Iranian 1-2 finish in Milan, before the latter went on to win a bronze in Jecheon.

Iran goalkeeper Beiranvand hit with four-month ban over Persepolis contract row

Sports Desk

Tractor and Iran international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand was handed a four-month ban from international and club action by the Iranian Football Federation's Appeal Committee over a year-long contract dispute with his former club Persepolis, the national governing body of the sport confirmed on Saturday.

Beiranvand, 32, walked out of his contract with Persepolis in June last year – citing delayed wages – to join fellow-Iranian top-flight club Tractor.

His move was deemed illegal by Persepolis, which lodged a complaint to the Status Committee

of the Iranian federation.

Beiranvand initially received a four-month suspension, but Persepolis appealed the decision, demanding a definitive ban for the Iranian goalkeeper.

"According to submitted documents and expert assessment, Persepolis fulfilled all its financial obligations under the 2023-2024 season contract," read the verdict by the Appeal Committee.

"Beiranvand terminated his contract on June 20, whereas the contract explicitly permitted termination only after a 15-day waiting period following the last competitive match of the season (June 21)," added the verdict, concluding what was

arguably the most controversial legal case in Iranian football history.

A six-time champion in the Iranian league with Persepolis, Beiranvand kept 19 clean sheets in 37 appearances for Tractor across all competitions, helping the club lift a maiden Persian Gulf Pro League trophy in May.

His ban is a major setback for Tractor ahead of its league title defense – starting with a home game against Esteghlal on August 19 – as well as the early stages of the upcoming AFC Champions League Elite, which will kick off with the first matchday of the league phase in the West region on September 15.



● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

Dariush Mostafavi, ex-Iran Football Federation chief, dies at 81

Sports Desk

Dariush Mostafavi, the former president of the Iranian Football Federation, passed away at the age of 81 on Friday after a long battle with illness.

A decisive figure throughout decades in the Iranian football history, Mostafavi played for both Tehran archrivals Esteghlal (then-named Taj) and Persepolis in the 60s and was a member of the national team at the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Mostafavi served as the secretary-general at the Iranian Football Federation in the 1980s. He then took up the presidency role in 1994, and



was in charge of the national governing body when Team Melli secured a memorable

qualification for the 1998 World Cup, thanks to an aggregate 3-3 victory over Australia.

Spurs captain Son to leave club after 10 years

REUTERS – Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min will bring his 10-year spell with the Premier League club to an end this summer, the 33-year-old South Korean said on Saturday.

Son, who is under contract until 2026, led Spurs to their first trophy in 17 years with their win over Manchester United in the Europa League final in May, having joined the North London club from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015.

While Son did not disclose his next destination, British media have linked him with a move to Major League Soccer club Los Angeles FC. "I have decided to leave the team this summer," Son said at a press conference ahead of Spurs' pre-season friendly against New-



● REUTERS

castle United in Seoul on Sunday. "I think it was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever made in my football career. Playing football and being with one team for 10 years is something I am very proud of, but

I think I gave my all to the team every single day.

"I did my best on the field and off the field, and by winning the Europa League, I thought I'd done everything I could and achieved."

Son has made 454 appearances for Spurs and scored 173 goals. He won the Premier League Golden Boot in the 2021-22 season.

"It was the place where I grew a lot as a football player and a person, so I have a very grateful heart." Manager Thomas Frank said Son was "truly Spurs legend in every aspect".

"I like that the club has been open to it because it is never, never easy to find that perfect timing ... I think it is probably the perfect timing going out on a high," he added.