

# CAFA Nations Cup: Iran survives early scare to beat Afghanistan



Sports Desk

Iran got off to a winning start at the CAFA Nations Cup, coming from behind to beat Afghanistan 3-1 in the Group B opener in Hisor, Tajikistan, on Friday. With star players Sardar Azmoun, Saeid Ezzatollahi, Mahdi Qayedi, and Alireza Beiranvand missing the eight-team tournament for various reasons, Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee fielded a second-string lineup of the domestic league players for the game against the world's 161st-ranked team. The Asian powerhouse, however, was stunned midway through the first half when Omid Musawi beat the offside trap before his tame effort went past Persepolis goalkeeper Payam Niazmamand. It took Sepahan striker Majid Aliyari just 26 minutes into his international debut to get on the scoresheet, as he headed in a point-blank finish from club teammate Omid Nourafkan's corner kick. Tractor forward Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh – the leading marksman in the Iranian top flight last season – put Iran in front with a low drive from inside the box in the 36th minute.

Aliyari bagged his second of the afternoon after the break, tapping in Hosseinzadeh's low cross from close range in the 64th minute. Next for Iran is a game against India on Monday, before Team Melli squares off against Tajikistan on the final day of the group phase on Thursday. India defeated Tajikistan 2-1 later on Friday to sit second to Iran in the table. Anwar Ali and Sandesh Jhingan gave India a two-goal lead inside 13 minutes before Shahrom Samiev pulled one back for the cohost in the 23rd minute. The winner of the group will advance to the final showpiece at Tashkent's Olympic City Stadium on Sept. 8, with the two runners-up squaring off in the third-place match. Group A features cohost Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Oman. Iran beat Uzbekistan 1-0 to win the first edition of the CAFA Nations Cup in 2023.

Iranian center-back Aref Agasi (20) is seen in action during a 3-1 win against Afghanistan at the CAFA Nations Cup in Hisor, Tajikistan, on August 29, 2025. ● MOHSEN DAVOUDI/FFIRI

## Asian Junior & U-23 Rowing Championships: Fakhri wins single sculls gold as Iran bags three medals

Sports Desk

Iranian girl Soha Fakhri claimed a gold as the country collected three medals on the second day of the Asian Junior & U-23 Rowing Championships in Shenyang, China. Representing the country in Saturday's junior women's single sculls event, Fakhri clocked 7:45.20 minutes in the final to walk away with the ultimate prize, with rowers from China and Kazakhstan settling for silver and

bronze respectively. Meanwhile, Saghi Maleki and Mohanna Haj-Hosseini teamed up to win a silver



● WANA

medal in the women's U-23 heavyweight double sculls, thanks to a second-best time of 7:14.30 minutes in the final. Vietnamese duo grabbed the gold, with Indonesia taking the bronze. A third medal for Iran on Saturday came in the men's U-23 heavyweight double sculls event, where Abolfazl Satvati and Amir Reza Abdali crossed the finish line in 6:31.05 minutes to win the bronze behind Vietnam and Uzbekistan.

## Asian Shooting Championships: Iranians finish with 17 medals

Sports Desk

Iranian men and women collected 17 medals across different age-group competitions at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. Former Olympic champion Javad Foroughi bagged his fourth medal at the seniors' event on Friday, settling for the bronze in the men's 25m center fire pistol contest with 579 points, with Indian Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu (583pts) and South Korea's Lee Jae-kyoon (580) grabbing the gold and silver medals. Foroughi then teamed up with Amir Joharikhou and Vahid Golkhandan to win the bronze in the team category, finishing behind India and Vietnam. This was the Iranian trio's third medal in the men's team competitions, following a gold-winning campaign in the 50m pistol contest, and a bronze in the 10m discipline. Foroughi and Joharikhou also completed an all-Iranian one-two in the

individual 50m pistol event as Iran finished with double golds, one silver, and five bronze medals in the seniors' competitions. There was further glory for the country in the youth class, as Mohammadreza Ahmadi, Amirhossein Gohari, and Mohammad-Mahdi Choobin teamed up to win the men's 10m air pistol gold. Ahmadi also picked up the individual bronze of the discipline, and combined with Parimah Amiri for a silver medal in the mixed event. Amiri was also part of the Iranian silver-winning trio – alongside Donya Arshadnia and Tara Abbaszadeh – in the women's 10m air pistol contest and then won the individual bronze. Mohammad-Mahdi Tahmasbi (men's 10m air pistol), Nazanin-Zahra Abdollahi (women's 10m air pistol), and Shayan Foroudi (men's trap) were the other Iranian silver winners as the country bagged nine medals in the youth competitions.



● The Iranian trio of Amir Joharikhou (L), Javad Foroughi (C), and Vahid Golkhandan won a team gold and double bronze medals at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. ● IRISSF

## Iranian boxers win four medals in Belt and Road tournament

Sports Desk

Iranians bagged four medals – including double silvers – at the 2025 Belt and Road International Youth Boxing Exchange Tournament in

Urumqi, China. In the 75kg category, Mehrshad Sharafatmand made an impressive run to the final showpiece of the 75kg class, only to settle for a silver after suffering defeat against an

opponent from Kazakhstan. Amirali Fatahian added a second silver to Iran's medal haul in the 80kg category – courtesy of a final defeat against an Indian boxer. Zobeir Isazehi (50kg) and

Matin Chamanpa (54kg), meanwhile, finished their campaigns with a bronze following last-four setbacks against Indian opponents. The competition featured 32 teams from 20 countries.

## Persepolis in advanced talks with Cameroon international Aboubakar: Report

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Persepolis is closing in on a deal with Cameroonian international striker and skipper Vincent Aboubakar, Varzesh3 reported on Friday. A former player of Porto and Besiktas, Aboubakar, 33, bagged eight goals and double assists in 28 appearances for Hattayspor last season before parting ways

with the Turkish Süper Lig club in June. New Persepolis head coach Vahid Hashemian is eager to strengthen his front-line, as Ali Alipour is the only established striker in the Tehran Reds squad following Serdar Dursun's departure earlier in August. Aboubakar enjoyed the most prolific part of his career with Besiktas, scoring 60 goals and providing 14 assists in 117

games across two spells, either side of a two-season stint at Saudi Pro League outfit Al Nassr. He also contributed with 58 goals and 16 assists in 125 appearances in four seasons with Porto, lifting the Primeira Liga trophies twice, after joining the Portuguese heavyweight from FC Lorient in 2014. Capped 104 times for the national team, Aboubakar has found the net on 44 occasions for Cameroon, steering the Indomitable Lions to the Africa Cup of Nations title in 2017, before finishing as the leading marksman of the competition when Cameroon finished third in the 2021 edition. Persepolis got off to a slow start in the new Iranian top-flight season, sharing the spoils with newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi in a 1-1 home draw, but went on to claim a first league victory in the 'Iranian Clasico' in four seasons, beating Sepahan 1-0 at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium last week.

