

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Triumphant teens inspire Iran to triple taekwondo medals



Sayna Karimi celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the -46kg gold in the taekwondo event of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 15, 2025.
● VARZESH3



Iran's Hasti Mohammadi (L) is seen in action during her victory over Uzbekistan's Madina Mirabzalova in the -57kg bronze bout in the taekwondo event of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 15, 2025.
● VARZESH3

Sports Desk

Teenage girls Sayna Karimi and Hasti Mohammadi made their senior international breakthrough in style as Iran collected three medals on the opening day of the taekwondo event at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh on Saturday. While Mohammadi recovered from a last-eight setback to secure an impressive bronze in the -57kg class, Karimi stunned taekwondo fans at the Malaz Combat Hall by going all the way to capture the ultimate prize in the -46kg category.

Ali Khoshravesh gave Iran something to cheer about in the men's competition, earning a consolation bronze in the -74kg event. Karimi defeated Azerbaijan's Minaya Akbarova in back-to-back rounds (2-1, 7-6) in the final to cap off her emphatic run in Riyadh, during which the 19-year-old Iranian did not concede a single round across four bouts. The pinnacle of Karimi's campaign came in the quarterfinals, where the Iranian prodigy emerged victorious (4-1, 9-5) against Türkiye's Emine Gögebakan, who stepped onto the mat

fresh off a gold medal at October's World Championships in Wuxi, China. "I faced tough, well-prepared opponents today, but my goal was always to win the gold here. My preparation for the event was key, and by sticking to the coach's gameplan, I secured this precious medal," said Karimi, who dedicated her gold to Iranian head coach Mahrouz Saei. "This was my first appearance at an event of this magnitude, which fortunately ended with a gold medal. I will certainly continue on my path with even more deter-

mination, hard work, and focus, aiming to achieve even greater successes," added the Iranian. Earlier in the day, Mohammadi – also 19 – put in a brave performance against her high-profile Turkish opponent Hatice K. İlgün in the quarterfinals but was unfortunate to lose 2-1 (15-2, 5-7, 6-3) to the former Olympic bronze medalist. Mohammadi then came from behind to beat Uzbekistan's Madina Mirabzalova (1-9, 11-5, 17-2) in the third-place bout. "My Turkish opponent has won several world and Olympic medals. She is also about 12 years

older than me and was already in the sport when I was born. I gave away the bout in the closing seconds of the third round, and she capitalized on her experience to beat me," Mohammadi said, before throwing down the gauntlet to İlgün, adding: "There will be time to make amends for today's setback, as we will meet again in future tournaments." Khosravesh, meanwhile, bounced back from a 2-1 (11-1, 4-5, 8-6) defeat against reigning world champion Najmiddin Kosimkhoev of Uzbekistan in the quarterfinals to beat Azerbaijan's former world

and European bronze medallist Javad Aghayev in straight rounds (4-1, 10-0) to claim the joint-bronze medal. Amirmohammad Nasirahmadi was the Iranian in the men's action on Saturday, but finished his -54kg campaign empty-handed after successive defeats against the host's Abdullah Almushraf and Turkish Deniz Dağdelen. Saturday's success saw Iran rise to third in the medals table by the end of the eighth day of the Games, level on 11 golds and 12 silvers with fourth-placed Kazakhstan.

25th Summer Deaflympics: Salahshour gets Iran off the mark with judo bronze



Iranian judoka Ali Salahshour (blue) is seen in action against Japan's Masaki Sato in the -66kg bronze-medal bout at the Summer Deaflympics in Tokyo, Japan, on November 16, 2025.
● MNA

Sports Desk

Ali Salahshour bagged Iran's first medal at the 2025 Summer Deaflympics in Tokyo, securing a judo bronze on the second day of the multi-sport event. Representing the country in the men's -66kg class, Salahshour began his campaign with a victory over Turkish judoka Mehmet Emin Budak and then emerged victorious against South Korean Lee Juho to progress to the

semifinals. Salahshour suffered a last-four setback to Algeria's Abderrahmane Bouhidel but recovered to defeat the host's Masaki Sato for a consolation bronze medal. Amirmohammad Daftari (-73kg) and 17-year-old Ali Sheikh (-60kg) were the other Iranian judokas in the men's action on Sunday but finished outside the medals following third-place defeats in their respective weight classes. Iran is represented by 83

athletes – including 19 female contestants – competing in football, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, athletics, karate, taekwondo, shooting, judo, bowling, badminton, table tennis, swimming, and beach volleyball at the 25th edition of the Summer Deaflympics. Iran achieved its best finish in the medals table at the previous edition in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, coming fourth with 14 golds, 12 silvers, and 14 bronzes.

Late drama sinks 10-man Iran U23 against Kyrgyzstan at Manas Cup

Sports Desk

The Iranian under-23 side conceded twice deep into stoppage time to suffer a 2-1 defeat against Kyrgyzstan at the Manas Cup football tournament in Manas, Kyrgyzstan, on Saturday. Iran went ahead in the 58th minute thanks to Mahdi Jafari's sublime finish from the edge of the box, but was reduced to 10 men when substitute Mohammad-Javad Hosseinnejad was sent off for a harsh challenge with 14 minutes remaining. Backed by the home support, Kyrgyzstan capitalized on the one-man advantage and found the equalizer through Marlen Murzakhmatov in the first



● FFIRI

minute of added time. The home side completed the comeback in the 98th minute, thanks to Iranian goalkeeper Mohammad Khalifeh's howler, as he failed to deal with Said Datsiev's tame effort from distance, with the ball slip-

ping through his hands and finding the back of the net. This was the second consecutive defeat for Omid Ravankhah's side at the four-team tournament, following a 2-0 setback against Russia on the opening day. Iran will take on Bahrain in

its final outing at the event on Tuesday. The tournament is part of Iran's preparation for the 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup, which will start on January 6 in Saudi Arabia. On his debut on Iran's bench, Ravankhah guided his team to an impressive first-place finish in Group I of the Asian Cup qualifiers in September, thanks to a clean sweep of three victories against Hong Kong (4-0), Guam (6-0), and the United Arab Emirates (3-2) in Abu Dhabi. Iran has been drawn in Group C of the finals alongside Uzbekistan – last year's runner-up – 2020 champion South Korea, and Lebanon.

Iran learns fate at Women's Kabaddi World Cup

Sports Desk



● TASNIM

Iran has been pitted against Chinese Taipei, Nepal, Poland, and Kenya in Group B of the Women's Kabaddi World Cup, which starts today in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The host country will be joined by India, Thailand, Uganda, and Germany in Group A of the 11-team tournament. The top two teams from each group advance to the semifinals, with the final showpiece scheduled for November 24

at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur. This will be the second edition of the Women's Kabaddi World Cup as the tournament returns after 13 years. India defeated Iran in the final to win the inaugural edition at home, after 16 teams battled it out for the title. While India and Iran are the traditional powerhouses in kabaddi, Chinese Taipei created waves at the Asian Games in 2023 as it almost upset India for in the final.