

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games:

Iran claims wushu, taekwondo success; closes gap on Uzbekistan



L-R: Wushu contestants Amirhossein Hemmati, Sara Shafiei, Erfan Moharrami, and Soheila Mansourian, and taekwondo practitioner Ali-Asghar Alimoradian won five gold medals for Iran on Day 9 at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
● ISNA

Sports Desk

The ninth day of the Islamic Solidarity Games proved to be Iran's most productive yet, yielding a remarkable 10 medals – including five golds – across wushu and taekwondo, as the country closed the gap on second-placed Uzbekistan in the overall standings in Riyadh. Having bagged 42 medals over the first eight days, Iran added five golds, three silvers, and two bronzes on Sunday to draw level with Uzbekistan on 16 golds, though still trailing by four fewer silvers (15). Iranians dominated in wushu,

capturing four gold medals across six sanda classes. Farbod Taleshi, meanwhile, settled for silver in the men's -85kg division on his senior international debut after a final defeat to Egypt's Alhussein Wahdan. In the women's -70kg category, an untimely leg injury on the eve of the Games ultimately cost Shahrbanoo Mansourian dearly in the semifinal against Egypt's Mennatallah Aly, with the six-time world champion finishing with a consolation bronze. Mansourian's younger sister, Soheila, however, finished on a high note by defeating Egypt's Habiba Abouomar in the -60kg

final, adding ISG gold to the world title she claimed in September. The other women's final featuring Iranian and Egyptian contestants saw Sara Shafiei beat Shahd Abdelsadek for the ultimate prize in the -56kg category. In the men's competition, Amirhossein Hemmati emerged victorious against Youssif Hamoda – also from Egypt – in the -60kg final, while reigning world champion Erfan Moharrami captured the gold medal in the -70kg class, thanks to a final victory over Kyrgyzstan's Abror Khakimov. In taekwondo, the Iranians

picked up where they left off on the opening day, with all four contestants medaling in their respective events. Ali-Asghar Alimoradian spearheaded Iran's haul on Sunday, rallying past 2021 Asian champion Mohsen Rezaei of Afghanistan (0-1, 15-0, 6-3) in the men's -60kg final. Amirreza Sadeqian overcame high-profile Jordanian Saleh Elsharabaty – a silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics – to reach the men's -82kg final, only to suffer a straight-round defeat (6-2, 9-8) against Morocco's Haitam Zarhouthi and settle for silver. A win over Ozoda Sobirjonova

would have seen Yalda Valinejad propel Iran past Uzbekistan in the medals table, but the Iranian suffered a narrow 2-1 defeat (9-4, 7-8, 8-7) in a thrilling women's -70kg showdown. "Taekwondo is a sport of moments and narrow margins. In the last 10 seconds, I took a kick to the face and lost the match," Valinejad said after the final setback. Regarding her emotions after the loss, Valinejad said: "I came here for the gold medal and was determined to win it. Losing the match in the final 10 seconds was devastating – it still hurts – but that's part of the game, and I've learned

from this experience." Rozhan Goodarzi, meanwhile, ensured the young Iranian women's squad stayed on course for a clean sweep of medals, bouncing back from a semifinal loss to world silver medalist Elif Sude Akgül of Türkiye to beat Uzbekistan's Laylo Khasanova 2-0 (2-0, 8-2) for the -51kg bronze. Elsewhere, the Iranian men's handball team recovered from a first-day defeat against Qatar to rout the Maldives 57-14 in Group A. Saber Heidari and Arman Rahmani led Iran's scoring chart with 12 goals apiece, with Milad Qalandari adding 10.

Iran, Poland share spoils in futsal friendly ahead of Women's World Cup

Sports Desk

Iran and Poland, two of the teams set to compete at the upcoming FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, played to a 1-1 draw in a friendly ahead of the inaugural tournament in the Philippines. Maral Torkaman, the top scorer at May's Asian Cup with six goals, was on target for Shahrzad Mozaffar's side at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig on Sunday.

"Poland finished in the top four in the European qualifiers and possess a cohesive, physically robust, and well-organized squad, having begun their World Cup preparations months ago. They had played Canada in a warm-up match before today's game and were already in a competitive rhythm," Mozaffar said of the European opponent. "Their high technical and physical quality provided us with exactly the

kind of test we needed before our World Cup opener, and I'm glad that we made the most of every second of the game," added the Iranian coach, who replaced Forouzan Soleimani after a mediocre Asian Cup campaign in which the two-time champion settled for a third-place finish.

"The players were a bit fatigued, which was normal given the jet lag and the intense training sessions they've had in recent months. They still fought with all their might and worked hard to execute the tactics precisely. This game and Monday's match against New Zealand are a crucial part of our preparation for the World Cup," said Mozaffar, who gave game time to every member of the squad.

Iran is drawn in Group D of the World Cup alongside Brazil, Italy, and Panama. The Iranian girls will get their campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion Brazil – the top team in the latest FIFA World Ranking – on Sunday, before taking on Panama three days later. Mozaffar's team will hope to be in contention for a top-two finish in the group and a place in the round of 16, when it squares off against world No. 7 Italy on November 29.



● FFIRI

AFC Women's Champions League: Bam Khatoon beaten by East Bengal in Group B opener

Sports Desk

Iranian champion Bam Khatoon got off to a losing start at the AFC Women's Champions League, suffering a 3-1 setback against India's East Bengal in Group B in Wuhan, China, on Monday.

East Bengal hit the ground running and took the lead four minutes into the game after two blocked attempts by Fazila Ikwaput saw the ball fall kindly to Shilky Hemam, who struck a low shot into the bottom-right corner from just outside the box.

The early strike set the tone for the remainder of the half, as the Indian side dictated the tempo, limiting Khatoon – a quarterfinalist in the previous edition – to long-range efforts, with Sara Didar and Fatemeh Geraeili both trying their luck. The Indian side doubled its advantage in the 32nd minute following a slick buildup in which Amnah Nababi threaded a perfectly timed through ball to Ikwaput, who showed good control before slotting past Raha Yazdani.

Playing without integral winger Negin Zandi, who is out with an ACL injury, Khatoon was given a lifeline in first-half stoppage time after Jyoti Chouhan was



● AFC

penalized for handball in the box, allowing Mona Hamoudi to reduce the deficit from the spot. Khatoon desperately pushed forward for an equalizer after the break, with Fatemeh Pasandideh and Geraeili coming close. However, East Bengal turned up the intensity in the closing stages, and any hope of a Khatoon fightback was extinguished in the 87th minute when Resty Nanziri launched

a spectacular long-range effort that curled over Yazdani before settling into the back of the net to seal the win. Khatoon will be back in action against Uzbekistan's Nasaf on Thursday, before taking on defending champion Wuhan Jiangda on Sunday. The top two teams in the group table will progress to the quarterfinals, with the third-placed team hoping to advance as one of the two best third-placed sides across the three groups.