

# Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Athletics glory headlines Iran's medal-laden run on Day 13



▲ L-R: Ali Amirian (men's 800m), Fatemeh Mohitzaadeh (women's heptathlon), and Hashemiyeh Mottaqian (women's para javelin throw) celebrate with the Iranian flag after winning gold at the athletics/para athletics event of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 20, 2025. ● ISG

## Sports Desk

The penultimate day of action at the Islamic Solidarity Games yielded 11 medals for Iran, including three golds in athletics. Hashemiyeh Mottaqian gave Iran a flying start to Day 13 in Riyadh, capturing gold in the women's para javelin throw F55/56 event. The Tokyo Paralympic champion produced a best throw of 22.45m to secure the title, with Zeinab Moradi's 21.98m effort sealing an all-Iranian one-two. Meanwhile, Ali Amirian grabbed gold in the men's 800m, crossing the finish line in 1:46.18, while

Fatemeh Mohitzaadeh scored 5,562 points to take gold in the women's heptathlon.

## Amouzad marches to gold

Rahman Amouzad was in his familiar ruthless form, inspiring Iran to a gold and a bronze in freestyle wrestling on Thursday. The reigning world champion capped his dominant 65kg campaign with a 12-2 superiority win over Tajikistan's Russian-born Abdulmazhid Kudiev in the final. Kudiev gave the Iranian an early scare when he scored a take-down to lead 2-0, but Amouzad bounced back to score three

stepouts before the break. Kudiev then tried a double-leg attack, but Amouzad countered with a magnificent chest-wrap throw for four points, making it 7-2 in the second period. Tajikistan challenged, asking for two points, but at no point in the exchange did Kudiev manage to expose or control Amouzad, who now led 8-2 for the lost challenge. Two stepouts and a take-down later, Amouzad secured his second major gold in two months following his success at September's Worlds in Zagreb. Earlier in the night, Ali Mo'meni recovered from a quarterfinal setback against Azerbaijan's Is-

lam Bazarganov to make quick work of Afghanistan's Sayed Omar Zazai (11-0) for a consolation bronze in the 57kg event.

## Handball history

The Iranian women's handball team capped off their impressive run with a historic bronze, defeating Uzbekistan 29-25 in the third-place match. With star player Setareh Rahmanian sidelined by injury, Fatemeh Merrikhi led the scoring with 11 goals, helping Iran secure its first-ever senior international medal in women's handball. "It was a physically and mentally

tough match, but we stayed focused on the small details, and my players implemented the game plan perfectly. I'm truly proud of them," said Iran head coach Ana Seabra. "This result was really important for us, but we can't afford to get carried away by this medal. To genuinely progress, we need to compete in more events so we can improve step by step," added the French coach. There were further bronze medals in fencing, as the country settled for third place in the men's saber and épée competitions. The Iranian épée team – comprising Mohammad Esmaeili,

Amirhossein Movashahi, Behnam Beik, and Mohammadali Khakzar – defeated Indonesia and Uzbekistan but fell 45-36 to Saudi Arabia in the semifinals. In the saber event, the Iranian quartet of Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Fotouhi, Nima Zahedi, and Taha Kargarpour suffered a 45-44 loss to Uzbekistan in the semifinal, though Iranian fencing chief Alireza Poursalman blamed controversial refereeing decisions for the defeat. Elsewhere, Ali Akbarpour (men's -85kg) and Hasti Hamoodi (women's -70kg) added two jiu-jitsu bronzes to Iran's medal tally.

## AFC Women's Champions League: Khatoon edges Nasaf, stays in contention for knockout spot

## Sports Desk

Bam Khatoon defeated Uzbekistan's PFC Nasaf 1-0 to revive its hopes of reaching the AFC Women's Champions League quarter-finals. Iran international Sara Didar scored 14 minutes into the game at Wuhan's Hankou Culture Sports Centre, helping the Iranian champions bounce back from a 3-1 opening-day setback against India's East Bengal. The victory took Khatoon's tally to three points in Group B, placing the club second among the best third-place teams across the three groups ahead of Sunday's meeting with group host and defending champion Wuhan Jiangda, which had defeated the Indian champions 2-0 earlier on Thursday. A draw – or even a one-goal defeat – will be enough to send Khatoon into the last eight of Asia's elite club competition for a second consecutive season. Nasaf had the first sight at goal through Maftuna Shoyimova's free-kick in the 10th minute which Diyorakhon Khabibullaeva headed wide as the side from Uzbekistan controlled the early proceedings. Against the run of play, Khatoon struck the opener four minutes later after Fatemeh Geraeli played a perfect pass behind Nasaf's backline with Didar's pace taking her away from Grace Adams to



▲ Bam Khatoon's Sara Didar (18) celebrates after scoring the winner in a 1-0 victory over PFC Nasaf in the AFC Women's Champions League in Wuhan, China, on November 20, 2025. ● AFC

easily slot home. Nasaf pushed hard for the equalizer but found a major stumbling block in Raha Yazdani who was in inspired form, saving two powerfully struck attempts from Khabibullaeva. Yazdani produced arguably her best save in the 40th minute, showing great athleticism to make a one-handed stop to deny Natalia Simakina's point-blank header. After the interval, Nasaf camped inside Bam Khatoon's half but despite its dominance in possession, all it had were two Shoyimova shots from distance which were easily dealt with by Yazdani. Seeing his side create so little, Nasaf head coach Khan Vladislav withdrew center-back Adams for attacker Mehrbon Egamberdieva.

The persistent pressure from Nasaf, however, was without its rewards as Khatoon defended resiliently to hold out for the win. Asian women's coach of the year Marziyeh Jafari was pleased to see a resilient performance from her team. "It was a pretty challenging and difficult match for us," said Jafari. "Since we lost in the previous match, we didn't have anything to lose so we gave it our all. "We had many injured players and even during the match, we had to make two substitutions due to injuries. We had analyzed Nasaf and we knew what their strengths and weaknesses are. "I'm very happy with my players that we could control the match and win the game."

## Iranian outside-hitter Poursaleh joins Sepahan

## Sports Desk

Iranian international Elahesh Poursaleh has joined Sepahan for the upcoming Iranian Women's Volleyball Premier League. A former player for Odbojkarski Klub Formis in the Slovenian top division, the 22-year-old outside hitter recently claimed a bronze medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh with the national team. Iran suffered straight-set losses against Azerbaijan and Türkiye but came out victorious against Afghanistan and Tajikistan to finish third in the five-team round-robin format, before defeating Tajikistan 3-0 in



● KIMIA QASSEMZADEH/volleyball.ir

the third-place match. Poursaleh was also part of the squad when Iran won a historic title at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship in Uzbekistan in October – the first international

gold for Iranian women's volleyball. Sepahan will begin the new Iranian top-flight season with a home game against Malavan Tehran in Group B next Saturday.

## FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers: Iran heads to Lebanon for Iraq double-header

## Sports Desk

The Iranian men's basketball team departed for Lebanon on Thursday ahead of their upcoming double-header against Iraq in the first round of the FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers. The two teams will kick off their campaign in Group C –

which also features Jordan and Syria – on Thursday, before facing each other again in Zouk Mikael three days later. Arsalan Kazemi, Arman Zanganeh, Navid Rezaeifar, Sina Vahedi, Mobin Sheikhi, Matin Aqajpour, Mahdi Jafari, Jalal Aqamiri, Mohammad-Mahdi Heidari, Hassan Aliakbari, Amirhossein

Azari, Behnam Yakhchali, Salar Monji, and Mohammad Amini have been named to the Iranian 14-man roster by Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos. Iran will enter the qualifiers fresh off an impressive third-place finish at the 2025 FIBA Asian Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in August.