

# Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Wrestling, para powerlifting heroics round out Iran's 29-gold haul



Iranian freestyle wrestler Younes Emami (blue) reaches for the leg of Azerbaijan's Aghanazar Novruzov during the 74kg final at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 21, 2025.  
● KADIR CALISKAN/UWW



Iranian para powerlifter Ruhollah Rostami is seen ahead of an attempt at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 21, 2025.  
● ISG

## Sports Desk

The final day of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh saw Iranian athletes claim four gold medals in wrestling and para powerlifting, as the country capped the multi-sport event with 89 medals, including 29 golds. Amirhossein Zare', Amirali Azarpira, and Younes Emami captured the ultimate prize in their respective freestyle classes, while Kamran Qasempour settled for the 86kg bronze on Friday, steering Iran to a clean sweep of 12 wrestling medals in Riyadh. Zare', who won the third senior world gold of his career in September, dominated the 125kg division, outscoring his opponents 28-0 across three bouts. Standing between Zare' and the

gold in the final was Bahrain's Russian-born Shamil Sharipov, who was desperate to avenge his 7-3 semifinal loss to the Iranian at the World Championships, having earlier defeated world silver medalist Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan 7-6 in the semifinals. The Iranian superheavyweight, however, had other ideas, as he built on his trademark stepouts to win by technical superiority (10-0) and deliver the country's final gold medal in Riyadh. In the 97kg event, a rematch of the world semifinal between Azarpira and Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov was denied by Kazakhstani former world champion Rizabek Aitmukhan, who pulled off a sensational 14-3 victory over the Bahraini to set up a final showdown with the Iranian.

Azarpira was clearly the better wrestler in the final, blanking Aitmukhan 5-0 with a masterclass in defense to claim the gold, having secured three technical superiority wins without conceding a single point en route to the final. Emami enjoyed his best tournament in some time, as the two-time world bronze medalist came from behind to edge 2024 world champion Nurkozha Kaipanov of Kazakhstan 6-5 in a thrilling last-four clash, before coming out on top against Azerbaijan's Aghanazar Novruzov in the 74kg final. Emami scored a takedown to take a 2-0 lead against Novruzov and then pushed the Azerbaijani wrestler out of bounds twice before the break. Emami began the second period aggressively, and Novruzov was called passive. He failed to

score in the 30-second period, and Emami added another point to lead 5-0, a scoreline that held until the final whistle. Two-time world champion Qasempour was the clear favorite for the 86kg gold, but the Iranian suffered a first-round heartbreak against Azerbaijan's Arsenii Dzhioev, who went on to defeat Bahrain's Khidir Saipudinov 5-1 in the final. Qasempour relinquished a 3-0 lead as Dzhioev responded with two takedowns and an additional point for the Iranian's passivity to win the bout 5-3. Qasempour still managed to bounce back from the setback, marching past Algeria's Fateh Benferdjallah (11-0) and Tajikistan's Magomet Evloev (8-0) to claim the consolation prize, adding it to the world bronze

he won in September.

## Rostami on top

Rostami said he had to step up his training efforts to secure the gold in a tight men's para powerlifting event, which featured 10 contestants across six different weight categories. Having registered 225kg and 230kg in his first two attempts, the Iranian lifted 235kg on his final try to total 151.297 points, edging out Iraq's Rasool Mohsin (150.303) for the top spot. "It was a really tough competition because it came less than a month after the World Championships, and I didn't have enough time to recover and reach the fitness level I had in mind," Rostami said, adding, "I had to train through a lot of pain and could not exceed 230kg over the past

month, but I'm grateful that I managed it today to win this precious medal."

"This competition followed a new format that wasn't based on weight classes. It was a points-based system where your body weight and the record you lifted were calculated into a score, which decided the final outcome. It was an interesting experience," added the former world champion. Elsewhere in the Games, Yassamin Nazari won the final Iranian women's medal, claiming an impressive bronze in ju-jitsu. After finishing second in the -52kg Pool B, Nazari fell in the last-four clash against Jordan's Asma Alhossani but bounced back to defeat Algeria's Hammoumi Maissaa and secure a podium finish in her international debut.

## 25th Summer Deaflympics: Greco-Roman glory as Iran claims nine medals on Day 7

### Sports Desk

Greco-Roman wrestlers Abuzar Rabizadeh and Meysam Qabshah-Dezfuli headlined Iran's medal hunt on Day 7 of the Tokyo Summer Deaflympics by capturing gold in their respective events on Saturday. Having defeated Azerbaijan's Islam Rzayev by technical superiority in the semifinals, Rabizadeh was awarded the 97kg gold after Ukraine's Andrii Kosov withdrew from the final

due to injury. Earlier in the day, Qabshah-Dezfuli overcame Russian and Ukrainian opponents to reach the 87kg showdown, before outmuscling Armenia's Narek Hamlet Nikoghosyan 10-2 for the ultimate prize. Mahdi Bakhshi, meanwhile, had to settle for silver in the 67kg category following an 11-1 defeat against Kazakhstan's Andrey

Samarin in the final. Iran added more Greco-Roman medals as Sadeq Abolvafaei (60kg), Mohammad Zaratpisheh (77kg), and Mohammadreza Sha'bani (130kg) all secured a consolation bronze. Elsewhere at the multi-sport event, Morteza Rezasefat claimed silver in the men's poomsae in taekwondo, with Maryam Khodabandeh matching the feat in the women's competition.

The individual silvers

marked the second medal for the two Iranians, after they had teamed up to win bronze in the mixed event earlier on Saturday. Saturday's results took Iran's medal count to 15 in Tokyo. Ali Salahshour (-66kg), Hossein Allahkarimi (-90kg), and Masoud Rastegar (+100kg) secured a third-place finish in the men's judo team event, thanks to a 2-0 victory over Türkiye, having also claimed bronze in their respective weight classes. Iranian shooter Mahla Samiei finished third in the women's 10m air pistol competition and was also part of the duo – alongside Bijan Ghaffari – that settled for bronze in the mixed pair event. 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.

## Women's Kabaddi World Cup 2025: Iran beats Nepal to set up last-four clash with India

### Sports Desk

Iran progressed to the Women's Kabaddi World Cup semifinals with a 39-11 victory over Nepal in its final Group B outing in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Saturday. Standing between the Iranian women and a place in the final will be kabaddi powerhouse India, with the two teams meeting today in a rematch of the inaugural 2012 final, which India won. India defeated Uganda 51-16 on

Friday to complete a clean sweep of four victories in Group A. Iran began its campaign with a 55-11 win against Poland, followed by victories over Kenya (42-10) and Zanzibar (51-15), before suffering a 31-21 setback to Chinese Taipei in its penultimate group game on Thursday. The other semifinal will see Chinese Taipei face Bangladesh for a spot in Sunday's showdown at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium.



Greco-Roman wrestler Abuzar Rabizadeh celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the 97kg gold at the 25th Summer Deaflympics in Tokyo, Japan, on November 22, 2025.  
● MNA

