

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Hassan Rangraz lauded "a historic day" for the country's Greco-Roman wrestling after his squad completed a clean sweep of 10 medals to claim the team title at the Asian Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Reigning world champions Mohammad-Hadi Saravi and Amin Mirzazadeh headlined Iran's medal haul by grabbing gold in the 97kg and 130kg weight classes, respectively, while Erfan Jarkani (63kg), Mohammad-Javad Rezaei (72kg), Ali Oskou (77kg), Mohammad-Amin Hosseini (82kg), and Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg) settled for silver in their respective categories.

Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi (55kg), Ali Ahmadi Vafa (60kg), and Ahmadrza Mohsennejad (67kg), meanwhile, added three bronze medals as Iran topped the team table with 195 points – 42 clear of second-placed Kyrgyzstan, with Uzbekistan finishing third on 136 points.

"Today is a historic day for our Greco-Roman wrestling," Rangraz wrote on Instagram, adding: "I am grateful to God that for the first time, we have

## Asian Wrestling Championships: Rangraz hails 'historic' Greco-Roman campaign for Iran



The Iranian Greco-Roman squad and coaching staff pose with the team trophy at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 8, 2026.  
● IAWFIR

become Asian champions for four consecutive years – an achievement born of the round-the-clock efforts of the technical staff, the wrestlers, and the federation's support, and dedicated to our beloved people.

"We had the most finalists in the history of the competition for three straight years. This shows that our team is not only champion but has also reached stability and strength in depth. "Most importantly, for the first time ever, all 10 of our national team members finished their campaign with a medal – meaning we are a complete, united, and fighting team.

"Another notable point is that



we secured the team title on the penultimate day of the com-

petition – a clear indication of our team's technical and psy-

chological superiority throughout the event," added Rangraz,

who also led the Iranian team to the Greco-Roman title at the World Championships last year in Zagreb.

What makes the latest achievement even more significant is that the Iranian squad's preparation for the event was hampered amid the country's military conflict with a U.S.-Israeli coalition that began on February 28, while the team also endured an exhausting road trip to reach the Kyrgyz capital.

"This title is more than just a sporting success," Rangraz wrote.

"We had to travel to the competition under circumstances where our country was facing immense hardships and pressures. Even the mere idea of sending a team to this event – in Kyrgyzstan, at a considerable distance – was no easy task.

"Moreover, the host nation entered the competition with strong championship ambitions. Yet our athletes proved that no obstacle can stand in the way of their will. Not only did we compete under these difficult conditions, but we won with dominance.

"I dedicate this crown to our dear people – the people who have always been our main source of support."

## No reunion for 'Golden Gen' as Piazza names provisional squad

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There will be no return to the national team for the veteran trio from the so-called 'Golden Generation' of the Iranian volleyball as head coach Roberto Piazza unveiled a provisional roster for the two major international events later in the year.

The Italian named a 42-man squad for the upcoming Volleyball Nations League and September's Asian Championship in Fukuoka, Japan, with none of outside-hitter Milad Ebadipour, middle-blocker Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi, and opposite-spiker Amir Ghafour receiving a call-up.

Both tournaments hold considerable weight for Iranian volleyball, impacting the team's global rankings and the qualification path to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Recent speculation had suggested a first interna-



Former Iran national team players Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi (L) and Milad Ebadipour have not been named in the provisional squad for the Volleyball Nations League and the Asian Championships.  
● FIVB

tional call-up for the trio under Piazza, but the Italian seems to be prioritizing the development and integration of younger talent in his second year in charge.

Piazza guided Iran to an eighth-place finish in the VNL 16-team pre-

liminary table last year with six wins from 12 matches, before his team progressed to the quarterfinals at the World Championship in the Philippines.

"I don't really expect Piazza to call me up," Ebadipour, who made his senior international debut in 2014, had said in February. "I think Piazza wants to continue with the same squad from 2025. The issue of confidence comes into play – he wouldn't want it to be perceived

that he doesn't trust his current team, nor would he want to appear to be turning back to more experienced players. That's why I believe he will stick with the same group from last year."

Iran will look to secure its first VNL quarterfinal berth in four years when it opens its campaign against South American powerhouse Brazil on June 10.

Piazza's men will also chase a fifth Asian title in eight editions from September 4. Beyond continental glory, additional incentive awaits in Fukuoka as the tournament winner will secure direct qualification to Los Angeles Games.

Another potential showdown between Iran and Japan could follow at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, which begin on September 19, where Piazza's side will be chasing a fourth consecutive men's gold medal.

## Iranian taekwondo teams arrive in Tashkent for World Junior Ch'ships



● taekwondo.ir

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Iranian boys' and girls' teams arrived in Tashkent on Friday ahead of the upcoming World Taekwondo Junior Championships. The 15th edition of the global showpiece will be held in the Uzbek capital from April 12 to 17. Named 'Caravan of Hormuz,' the Iranian squads had been conducting their preparatory camps in the north of the country amid the military conflict with the United States and Israel, which began on February 28, before embarking on their journey.

On Tuesday, they crossed the Turkish border by land and traveled to the city of Van. From there, the team flew to Tashkent, arriving on Friday morning.

The delegation has been named 'Hormuz' in honor of the bravery of Iran's armed forces in safeguarding the nation, particu-

larly the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The girls' national team includes Bahar Tahmasbi, Negar Mozaffari, Seyyede Zahra Mousavi, Helia Ebrahimian, Rozhan Heidari, Dina Babarrahim, Pinar Lotfizadeh, Aynaz Mikaeili, Asal Goltapeh, and Hana Zarrin Kamar.

The team is headed by head coach Niloufar Safarian, assisted by coaches Parvin Keshavarz, Fatemeh Khayyeri, and Zahra Kangarani.

Iran will also be represented by Amirarsalan Ahmadi, Taha Nazer, Ali Razmiyan, Erfan Khodaei, Amir Egbali, Parsa Houshiyar, Abolfazl Najafi, Benyamin Soltanian, Amirali Hazrati, and Mohammad-Javad Geryan in the boys' event.

They are led by head coach Feyzollah Najfam, with Kourosh Rajoli, Behrouz Khodadad, and Masoud Kazempour serving as assistants.



● volleyball.ir

## Mehregan Noor to represent Iran in AVC Women's Champions League

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Iran's Mehregan Noor volleyball team, composed of national team players, will represent the country in the AVC Women's Volleyball Champions League.

According to the communications department of the Iran Volleyball Federation, the tournament is scheduled to take place from

April 26 to 30 in Bangkok, Thailand. Following the withdrawal of Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan, and after extensive coordination by Seyyed Milad Taqavi, head of the federation, it was decided that Iran and Central Asia's representative would compete under the name of Mehregan Noor, fielding the lineup of the national women's team.

Given the current circumstances in the country and existing limitations, the team's preparation camp will begin on April 10 in the city of Sari, northern Iran. Lee Do-hee, the South Korean head coach of Mehregan Noor, has announced the names of 15 players called up for the training camp and the showpiece. Shabnam Alikhani, Hasti Vahedi,

Negar Hashemi, Negar Abbasi, Fatemeh Khalili, Elaheh Pour-Saleh, Masoumeh Qadami, Aida Valinejad, Zahra Salehi, Yosna Ahankoub, Zahra Karimi, Reyhaneh Karimi, Sepinoud Dastbarjan, Shaqayeq Farahani, and Mahsa Kadkhoda have been named in the squad.

The team's training camp gets underway today in Sari.