

WT World Cup Team Championships:

Iran women defeat Thailand to claim bronze

Sports Desk

Iran's women's national taekwondo team secured the bronze medal at the World Taekwondo World Cup Team Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, after a commanding 2-0 victory over Thailand in the third-place playoff on Wednesday.

Iran bounced back from a semifinal defeat to Russia after opening its campaign with a victory over India, producing a dominant display to finish on the podium.

Coached by Mehrouz Saei, the Iranian squad featured Yalda Valinejad, Baran Nemati, Hasti Mohammadi, with Fatemeh Ahmadi serving as the reserve athlete.

Iran controlled the contest from the outset against Thailand, dictating the pace with aggressive attacks in

the opening round. The Thai team struggled to cope with Iran's relentless pressure as the Iranian women took the first round comfortably. The second round followed a similar pattern, with Iran establishing an early lead and maintaining complete control throughout. Thailand failed to mount a comeback, and Iran wrapped up the round with a convincing 100-45 victory.

Wednesday's medal came after Iran men – the most decorated team in the history of the competition with six titles – had been stunned by Thailand in the first round, suffering a 2-0 loss to miss out on the semifinals.

The three-day event will continue with the mixed team competition today, before the Korea Open G1 event gets underway in the South Korean city on Saturday.



● taekwondo.ir

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games: Golshadnejad, Atrachali named Iran's flag bearers for opening ceremony



World karate champion Atousa Golshadnejad (L) and men's national kabaddi captain Fazel Atrachali will be Iran's flag bearers for the opening ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

● IRNA

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Reigning world karate champion Atousa Golshadnejad and men's national kabaddi captain Fazel Atrachali have been named Iran's flag bearers for the opening ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, the National Olympic Committee (NOC) announced on Wednesday.

The 20th edition of the continental multi-sport event will get underway with the opening ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya on September 19.

Golshadnejad will be aiming to add an Asian Games gold medal to her already impressive list of achievements following a gold-laden international campaign last year.

The 23-year-old won the second Asian Championships gold medal of her career before claiming the women's kumite -61kg title at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh.

The pinnacle of her season, however, came at the WKF World Championships in Cairo in November, where she etched her name into the history books by becoming the first Iranian woman to win a world karate title in the tour-

nament's 27 editions.

"It is a great honor to carry my country's flag at an event as prestigious as the Asian Games. At the same time, it makes my responsibility even greater," Golshadnejad told IRNA.

"I hope not only our karate team but the entire Iranian delegation achieves outstanding results at the Asian Games," she said.

Golshadnejad also provided a positive update on the injury that ruled her out of defending her title at last month's Asian Championships in Bali, Indonesia.

"Fortunately, my condition is good and I have returned to training. I am highly motivated to succeed in Nagoya and complete my collection of gold medals," she said.

She also praised the unity within Iran's national karate program, saying the athletes and coaching staff work together as one family with the shared goal of raising the Iranian flag on the international stage.

Atrachali, meanwhile, is set to compete at the Asian Games for a fifth consecutive time, having helped Iran win the gold medal in 2018 after previously collecting three silver medals with the national team.

The 34-year-old, who plays for Dabang Delhi in the Indian Pro Kabaddi League, was also a member of the Iran side that finished runner-up at the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup.

The Iranian delegation – named "Angels of Minab" in memory of the 168 victims, including 120 schoolchildren, killed in a U.S.-Israeli airstrike on Shajarah Tayyebah Elementary School in Minab, southern Iran, on February 28 – will comprise 308 athletes (214 men and 94 women) competing across 36 sports. At the previous Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, Iran fielded 289 athletes and finished seventh in the medal standings with 13 gold, 21 silver, and 20 bronze medals – its lowest placing in the past five editions of the Games.

Iran's most successful Asian Games campaign came on home soil at Tehran 1974, where it won a record 81 medals, including an all-time high of 36 golds, to finish second behind Japan in the overall standings.

In more recent editions, Iran's best performance came at Guangzhou 2010, where it placed fourth with a haul of 20 gold, 15 silver, and 24 bronze medals.

Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship: Iran beats powerhouse Kuwait for flying start

Sports Desk

Iran got off to a flying start at the Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship in Chuzhou, China, defeating Kuwait 29-27 in its Group B opener on Wednesday. Omid Enayatiyoo topped the scoring for Iran with a game-high 12 goals to claim the Player of the Match award, while Amirhossein Karami added four. Mahdi Teimouri, Saleh Abbasi, and Mohammadjavad Mirzaei also contributed to the victory with three goals apiece.

Abdullatif Salmin led Kuwait with 10 goals, followed by Yusef Madwah with six. Coached by Keyvan Sadeqi, the Iranian side produced a composed and disciplined performance against the Asian powerhouse—the most successful team in the history of the competition with five titles—taking control from the opening minutes through strong teamwork and defensive organization to build a 15-13 halftime lead. Iran maintained its momentum after the break, combining indi-

vidual brilliance with the effective execution of the coaching staff's tactical plans to keep Kuwait at bay. Holding on to its advantage until the final whistle, the Iranians sealed a hard-fought victory.

still to come before concluding the preliminary round against India on Tuesday.

The top four teams from each of the two groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

The championship also serves



● IRIHF

The win gave Iran a major confidence boost ahead of Thursday's clash with three-time champion South Korea, the runner-up to Japan in the previous edition, which edged Qatar 28-27 earlier on Wednesday.

Iran faces a demanding schedule in Group B, with matches against the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and defending champion Japan

as the Asian qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men's Junior (U21) World Championship in North Macedonia, with the four semi-finalists securing places at the global showpiece.

Iran finished fifth in the 2024 edition, while its best-ever result came in 2008, when it claimed the silver medal after losing to Kuwait in the final.

Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group III: Iran rallies past host Malaysia in opener

Sports Desk

Iran opened its campaign at the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group III tournament with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over host Malaysia on Wednesday.

Malaysia struck first in the opening singles rubber, where Darrshan Suresh Kumar defeated Sina Moqimi 2-0 (6-3, 7-5) to give the home side an early advantage.

Iran leveled the tie through Ali Yazdani, who produced a composed display to beat Koay Haosheng in straight sets (7-5, 6-2), sending the contest into the decisive doubles rubber.

Iranian captain Hamid Naddaf paired Yazdani with Samyar Elyasi for the doubles, and the duo delivered under pressure, defeating the Malaysian pair 2-0 (6-4, 7-6) to seal the tie and hand

Iran its first victory of the tournament.

Iran will return to action at the National Tennis Centre in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday against Vietnam, which was beaten 2-1 by Saudi Arabia earlier in the day. The Asia/Oceania Group III competition features eight teams divided into two pools. Pool A consists of Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Jordan, and Singapore, while Pool B comprises Iran, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

The teams finishing first in each pool will earn automatic promotion to next year's World Group II Play-offs. They will be joined by one of the two second-placed teams, with the remaining promotion place to be decided in a playoff between the runners-up on the final day.

Meanwhile, the teams finishing third and fourth in each pool will contest relegation playoffs, with the two losing teams dropping to Group IV.

Iran is one of the more experienced Davis Cup nations at this level, having made its debut in 1962 and contested more than 130 ties. In recent years, it has oscillated between Groups III and IV, although it did not compete in the tournament last year. Last May, Yazdani made history by becoming the first Iranian to win a World Tennis Tour singles title at the M15 Tehran event. Despite not turning 23 until September, he has already played 20 Davis Cup matches and is expected to play a pivotal role in Iran's bid for promotion on its return to the competition.