

Sports Desk

A prolific campaign at the Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, yielded 56 medals for Iran's boys and girls, as the country secured four podium finishes, including two historic ones in the women's competitions, in the team standings.

Farhad Qolizadeh capped the medal-laden campaign with a clean sweep of three golds, thanks to a 172kg snatch, 210kg clean & jerk and 382kg total in the men's junior 110kg category on Friday.

Taha Nemati-Moghaddam added three medals in the +110kg category later in the day as Iran finished third in a tight men's junior team race with 543 points, collecting nine golds, five silvers and three bronzes.

A triple-silver medalist at May's World Junior Championships, Nemati settled for bronze in the snatch with 173kg before posting a best lift of 219kg in the clean & jerk to claim two more silver medals.

Kazakhstan was crowned men's junior champions with 553 points, four clear of runners-up Uzbekistan.

Iran also finished third in the women's junior competition – a best-ever result for the country in the history of the championships – collecting four golds, two silvers and six bronzes for 470 points. The host nation won the team title with 558 points, with Kazakhstan runners-up on 522. Mahsa Beheshti spearheaded Iran's medal haul, winning three golds in the women's youth +77kg category on Thursday with a 113kg snatch, 148kg

Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships: Medals galore as Iran claims four team podiums



Iran's Taha Nemati makes a successful lift in the men's junior +110kg competition at the Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Aug. 14, 2026. ● IWFIR

clean & jerk and 261kg total. The 17-year-old also struck gold in the junior 86kg category, completing a remarkable four-gold campaign. Hasti Seddiqi was Iran's other female gold medalist in the junior age group, topping the clean & jerk standings in the 69kg category with a best effort of 126kg.

Youth glory

Iran also enjoyed a highly successful campaign in the youth competitions, winning 15 golds, seven silvers and five bronzes to top the overall medal table while claiming two runner-up finishes in the team standings. Represented by 15 lifters across the men's and women's divisions,

Iran finished second in the combined team standings with 1,064 points – just three behind the host's 16-member squad – while Kazakhstan took third place with 1,057 points.

Another historic campaign for the Iranian girls saw them finish with six golds, three silvers and three bronzes.

Apart from Beheshti, Anahita Zarei and Nasim Qassemi accounted for Iran's other three gold medals in the youth women's competition, winning six medals between them in the 77kg category.

Zarei settled for bronze in the snatch but went on to win gold in the clean & jerk and total with lifts

of 126kg and 218kg, respectively. Qassemi claimed snatch gold with a successful 91kg lift before finishing runner-up to her compatriot in the clean & jerk and total with 117kg and 208kg, respectively.

In the men's division, meanwhile, Iran won nine golds, four silvers and two bronzes – the country's best medal haul in the tournament – but had to settle for second place in the team standings with 530 points, 23 behind the host nation. Kazakhstan finished third with 506 points.

Mohammad-Javad Beiranvand was in a league of his own in the 75kg category, collecting a remarkable nine gold medals, including three in the Central Asian category, across the two age groups.

The Iranian lifted 145kg in the snatch to set a new world youth record and was equally impressive in the clean & jerk, successfully lifting 180kg in his second attempt to set new Asian and world records in the clean & jerk and total.

Beiranvand capped his campaign with a 325kg total to add three more gold medals to his individual haul in Tashkent, underlining his status as one of Iran's most promising young weightlifters.

Iran's Taha Nojavan delivered further record-breaking performances, sweeping the gold medals in the youth +95kg category.

Nojavan shattered Asian and world youth records with a 176kg snatch before dominating the clean & jerk with a successful 215kg lift, which was also a new world youth record. Iran accounted for 16 of the 33 world and continental records broken during eight days of competition in the Uzbek capital.

Iran to face Russia in familiar friendly



● FFIRI

Sports Desk

Russia will host Iran in a friendly in Kazan on September 29, the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) announced Friday. The match will mark the third meeting between the two national teams since Amir Qalenoee was appointed to the Iran job for a second spell in March 2023. The two sides played out a 1-1 draw at Volgograd Arena in October last year. The Russian national team has been banned from all FIFA and UEFA competitions for the past four years after Russia launched its

military operation in Ukraine in February 2022.

The upcoming match will be part of Iran's preparations for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which kicks off on January 7 in Saudi Arabia.

A semifinalist at the previous two editions, Iran will begin its bid for a fourth Asian Cup title – and its first since 1976 – against China in Group C, which also features Kyrgyzstan and Syria, at Riyadh's Kingdom Arena on January 9.

Iraqi media reported earlier this month that Iran will also take part in a four-team tournament alongside Iraq and Uzbekistan in Basra during the November FIFA international window, although the Iranian gov-

erning body has yet to confirm the report.

Despite FFIRI chairman Mahdi Tajiri backing Qalenoee on several occasions to remain in charge for the Asian Cup, the head coach has yet to be offered a new contract after his previous deal expired following Team Melli's mixed campaign at the FIFA World Cup in June.

Iran enjoyed a historic unbeaten run in the group stage of the expanded 48-team tournament in North America, playing out three draws against New Zealand (2-2), Belgium (0-0) and Egypt (1-1). However, Iran finished third in Group G and missed out on a first-ever spot in the knockout phase in seven World Cup appearances.

Persian Gulf Premier League: Heavyweight trio off to flying starts

Sports Desk

Three of the so-called "Big Four" in the Persian Gulf Premier League delivered statement victories on the opening day of the new Iranian top-flight season.

Esteghlal showed little sign of being affected by a FIFA transfer ban, routing newly promoted Mes Shahr-e Babak 4-0 at home.

Young striker Saied Saharkhizan got the Capital Blues off the mark right before halftime and then doubled his tally nine minutes after the break, before substitute Mohammad-Hossein Eslami and 20-year-old midfielder Esmail Qolizadeh added late strikes in the 88th and 92nd minutes, respectively, as Esteghlal celebrated the biggest opening-day victory in the history of the competition.

In Tabriz, Tractor gave head coach Javad Nekounam, who only replaced Mohammad Rabiei last week, a fitting



Esteghlal striker Saied Saharkhizan (11) celebrates his goal during a 4-0 victory over Mes Shahr-e Babak in the Persian Gulf Premier League in Tehran, Iran, on Aug. 14, 2026. ● FFIRI

start to life on the bench by defeating 10-man Paykan 2-0.

Having joined from Emirati club Ittihad Kalba in the summer, Iranian international striker Shahrir Moghanlou marked his debut in style, scoring twice in the first half.

The visitors were reduced to 10 men deep into first-half stoppage time after fullback

Nima Ahmadi was adjudged to have denied the opposition a clear goalscoring opportunity.

Tractor's victory, however, was overshadowed by an injury to prolific winger Mahdi Torabi, who was forced off just six minutes into the contest and will be a doubt for the upcoming crucial games against Sepahan and Persepolis.

Sepahan, meanwhile, secured a hard-fought 2-0 away victory at Chadormalou. Ehsan Hajsafi broke the deadlock from the spot with 14 minutes remaining, before Alireza Arta's own goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time secured all three points for Moharram Navidkia's side.

Elsewhere, new head coach Mahdi Rahmati celebrated a winning debut with Golgozar Sirjan, which defeated Nassaji Mazandaran 1-0 at home thanks to Milad Kor's 89th-minute strike.

Pirouz Qorbani also enjoyed a victorious start to his reign on the Iralco bench, as his side claimed a 2-0 win at Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Bahran Goudarzi put the visitors in front in the 11th minute, before Abbas Kahrizi found the net in the fourth minute of stoppage time. In Khorramabad, Hossein Shanai scored an 81st-minute equalizer to cancel out his teammate Masoud Mohebi's own goal midway through the first half, as Khaybar salvaged a point at home in a 1-1 draw against Fajr Sepasi.

FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League 2026: Iran men beat Japan to win Stop 4



● FIBA

Sports Desk

Iran's men's team capped off the fourth stop of the FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League 2026 in style, securing three successive victories in the Asia Central/East division in Cangzhou, China, on Friday. Comprising Mohammad-Mahdi Rahimi, Seyyed

Mohammad Ghaffari, Mohammad-Basir Mo'meni, Sarem Jafari and Argen Minasians, the Iranian team began the day with a 21-15 victory over Mongolia before beating Kazakhstan 21-13 to finish atop Pool A and set up a final against Japan.

An emphatic 21-10 victory over Japan in the final completed a perfect run for Iran, which had settled for a runner-up finish behind South Korea at Stop 1 before finishing third at Stop 3 on Thursday.