



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games

Iran wraps up campaign in sixth place with 19-gold haul

Sports Desk

Iranian athletes collected seven medals, including four golds, on the penultimate day of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan, helping the country secure a sixth-place finish in the overall standings at the continental multi-sport event. Saturday's medals, which also featured one silver and two bronze medals, took the Iranian delegation's haul to 19 golds, 18 silvers, and 15 bronzes. The national volleyball team brought the curtain down on the Iranian delegation's 14-day quest for glory by claiming the top prize in the men's event on Sunday, thanks to a

tion-packed four months, after head coach Roberto Piazza's side suffered nine defeats, including a five-set setback against Japan, in 12 outings in the preliminary round of the Volleyball Nations League in June, and again fell short against Japan in the Asian Championship final last month to miss out on direct qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

"I am really happy for the Iranian people, from whom I have received a lot of support and encouragement," Piazza said after the final. "I know the process of winning this medal was not easy. We dropped two sets against Indonesia and lost two to South



the host's wrestler 9-5 for a second successive Asian Games gold of his career.

"It was a truly demanding competition for me. Few people thought I could win the gold medal, but, by God's grace, I was able to achieve this success," Emami said.

"The level of competition was really high. There were world champions and renowned wrestlers in my weight class, and I wrestled against all of them."

When asked about his win over Olympic champion Jamalov, Emami said: "To be honest, few people fancied my chances against him. Even before the competition, some were worried that

league of his own, claiming three straight-round victories to add the gold medal to the silver he won at the previous edition in Hangzhou 2022. Salimi opened with a 2-0 win (19-10, 14-4) against Asian Championships bronze medalist Tang Hao of China, followed by a comfortable straight-round triumph (15-2, 13-2) against Jordanian Mohammad Aladarbi in the final.

In a repeat of his +87kg final victory over Marat Mavlonov at May's Asian Championships, Salimi was ruthless against the Uzbek opponent, winning 26-4 and 20-8.

Hajimousaei, meanwhile, enjoyed a decent run to the final but fell short



Iranian opposite Amin Esmailnejad hits a spike during a victory over Japan in the men's volleyball final at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on October 3, 2026.

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3-1 victory (28-26, 19-25, 25-21, 26-24) over the host in the final.

Prolific opposite Amin Esmailnejad led Iran with 22 points, with outside hitters Ali Haqqarast and Morteza Sharifi also reaching double figures, contributing 15 and 13 points, respectively, as Iran secured a fourth successive men's volleyball gold at the Asian Games. Outside hitter Tatsunori Otsuka, meanwhile, chipped in a game-high 24 points for the depleted Japanese side, which omitted the high-profile trio of Yuji Nishida, Yuki Ishikawa, and Ran Takahashi from its squad for the Games.

The final victory provided a bit of relief for the Iranian men's volleyball team at the end of an ac-

Korea during the tournament, but we have to bear in mind that it was not an easy tournament. The players were alert and had come determined to do something special for the people of Iran. I am truly happy, more for the people of Iran than for myself."

"In my dreams, I am thinking about another medal, which I believe could be more important than this one.

"I am getting older and my time is becoming more limited, so I hope I can achieve this dream. There is a lot of talent in Iran, but we have to know how to put these talents on the right path. If we can do that properly, I can keep that dream in my mind," added the Italian. Wrestling glory

The wrestling event, as expected, proved to be the most prolific for Iran, yielding six golds and one bronze medal across 12 freestyle and Greco-Roman categories.

Amirali Azarpira rounded out the glorious campaign by grabbing gold in

the freestyle 97kg class on Saturday, defeating Uzbekistan's Sherzod Poyonov 10-0 in the final – a third superiority win in four bouts for the Iranian at the Nagoya City Inae Sports Center.

The pinnacle of Azarpira's campaign came in

Younes Emami celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the freestyle wrestling 74kg gold medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on October 3, 2026.

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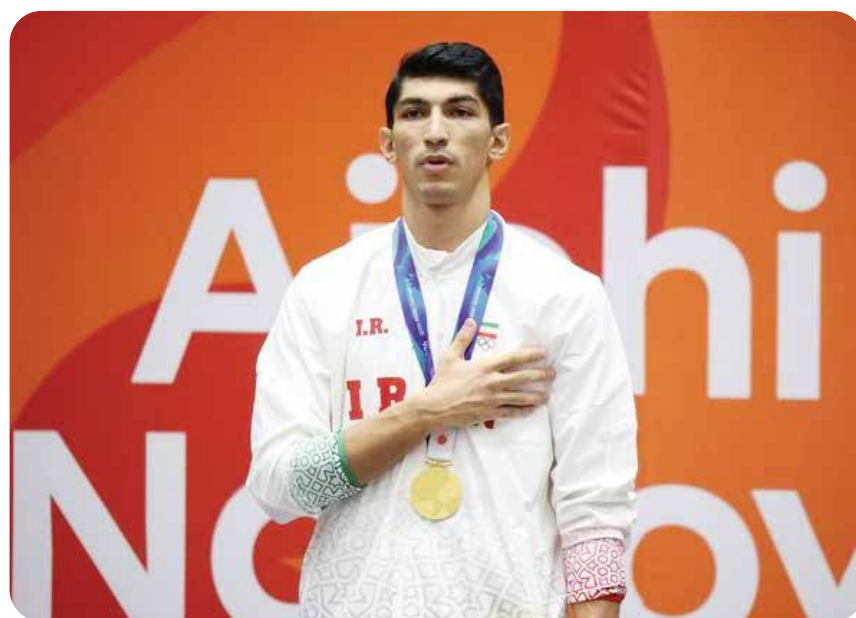
4-3, making amends for his final defeat against the Japanese wrestler, who is of Iranian descent, at April's Asian Championships in Bishkek.

Younes Emami, meanwhile, secured an impressive gold medal in the 74kg division, defeating three prominent opponents in the process.

A two-time world bronze medalist, the Iranian began the day with a 7-6 victory over reigning Olympic champion Ra-

Iran's Arian Salimi poses with the men's taekwondo +80kg gold at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on October 3, 2026.

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the semifinals, where the Olympic bronze medalist defeated Arash Yoshida

zambek Jamalov, before outmuscling India's Sagar Jaglan by technical supe-



Amirali Azarpira (R) salutes the Iranian flag after winning the freestyle wrestling 97kg gold at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on October 3, 2026.

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riority (10-0) to reach the last four.

Emami then defeated Kazakhstan's Nurkozha Kaipanov – a 2024 world champion at 70kg – 4-2 to set up a final clash with Japan's 2025 world champion Yoshinosuke Aoyagi.

I might struggle in my opening bouts, but, thank God, I was able to manage the competition well from the very beginning and eventually win the gold medal."

Mohammad Nokhodi (86kg) and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) had also won gold in their respective freestyle events on the previous day, while Alireza Abdevali (77kg) and Amin Mirzazadeh (130kg) triumphed in Greco-Roman, with Mahdi Bali finishing with a consolation bronze in the 97kg category.

Taekwondo triple On the final day of the taekwondo event, Iranians collected three medals.

Arian Salimi spearheaded the medal hunt by winning the ultimate prize in the men's +80kg class, with Mahdi Hajimousaei settling for silver in the -68kg event, while in the women's competition, Fatemeh Ahmadi took bronze in the +67kg category.

Reigning Olympic champion Salimi was in a

against world champion Banlung Tubtimdang of Thailand, losing 6-5 and 3-2.

Ahmadi finished her campaign in the semifinals against South Korea's Song Dabin, suffering 7-1 and 2-0 defeats in straight rounds to collect a second women's medal for the Iranian taekwondo squad, after Saghar Moradi had won a historic gold on the preceding day.

Elsewhere, Iran also celebrated a historic success in the padel event, winning a first-ever Asian Games medal after Farshad Shahi and Amirmohammad Jamshidi teamed up to defeat Hani Golestani and Arya Roghani 2-0 (6-3, 6-4) in an all-Iranian bronze contest in the men's pairs category.