

Sports Desk

Iranian athletes enjoyed a prolific run on the first two days of action at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan, tasting glory across athletics, swimming, taekwondo, shooting, cycling, judo, and table tennis.

The medal-laden campaign has seen the Iranian delegation engaged in a tight race for the runner-up spot in the overall standings alongside the host country, South Korea and Uzbekistan, while China has already pulled clear of the chasing pack at the top of the table.

Para athletics

The para-athletics contests accounted for the biggest share of success for the Iranians, producing 10 medals, including five golds. Erfan Bondori claimed the top prize in the men's javelin throw F53 event on Tuesday, setting a new Games record of 30.24m in the process.

Amirhossein Alipour and Mahdi Olad secured an all-Iranian one-two in the men's shot put F11, with the former posting 14.99m with his final attempt to shatter his own Asian record on his way to the gold medal.

There were further shot put golds for the Iranians in the men's events, as Saman Pakbaz triumphed in the F12 class with a best throw of 13.52m, while Mohammad Saber won the F33 final with a new Games record of 10.95m. Elham Salehi had opened Iran's gold account in para athletics on Monday, registering 16.44m for the top spot in the women's javelin throw F54, with her compatriot Masoumeh Tourani settling for silver with 14.99m.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games: Athletics glory headlines Iran's medal-laden start



Iran's Saman Pakbaz competes in the men's shot put F12 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

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Ali Olfatinia (men's long jump T37/T38) contributed a silver to Iran's medal haul, while Parastoo Habibi and Farzaneh Sohrabi took silver and bronze, respectively, in the women's club throw F32/F51 event.

Shooting one-two

Elsewhere at the multi-sport event on Tuesday, Faezeh Ahmadi and shooting sensation Sareh Javanmardi were involved in a closely contested final in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event, with Ah-



Iran's Faezeh Ahmadi celebrates after winning gold in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

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madi – a gold medalist at September's World Championships – ultimately grabbing gold with a score of 237.3.

Four-time Paralympic champion Javanmardi, meanwhile, posted 237.0 for silver – the fourth Asian Para Games medal of her illustrious career.

In para taekwondo, Ailar Jami claimed the gold medal in the women's K44

-47kg category on Monday, thanks to an impressive 2-0 victory (6-0, 6-2) over two-time Paralympic bronze medalist Khwansuda Phuangkittha of Thailand, who failed to defend her title.

Mohammad-Taha Hassanpour, meanwhile, finished with a consolation

Iran's Amirhossein Alipour (L) and Mahdi Olad celebrate with the national flag after winning gold and silver, respectively, in the men's shot put F11 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

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bronze in the men's K44 -58kg division. Having suffered a last-four setback against Chinese Taipei's Xiao Xiang-wen, the Iranian fought back to defeat South Korea's Lee Pyeong-gang 2-1 (4-10, 14-10, 18-8) in the third-place bout.

In para swimming, Sina Zeighaminejad clocked 56.68 seconds in the final to win gold in the men's 100m freestyle S10 event, with fellow Iranian Shahin Izadyar sharing silver with Kazakhstan's Dias Kenzhe-

bek after both swimmers finished in 59.10 seconds. There were more medals for Iran in men's para cycling, as Behrouz Farzad settled for silver in the C4 4000m individual pursuit and Mohammad Dalir won bronze in the B 1000m time trial.

Iranian judokas Mahdi Borchlou (men's J1 -81kg) and Mousa Gholami (men's J1 -95kg), meanwhile, added two bronze medals to Iran's tally.

Hassan Janfeshan, 60, was Iran's medalist in para table tennis, collecting bronze in the men's singles class 2 after falling to a 3-2 defeat against South Korea's Kim Kyung-hyun in the semifinals.

In team sports, Iran's men's sitting volleyball team opened its bid for a fifth gold medal in as many editions with a straight-set victory (25-15, 25-17, 25-13) over Thailand in Pool B.

In blind football, Iran's men's team hammered India 5-0 for its third successive victory in the single round-robin group.

Sadeh Rahimqasr opened the scoring for Iran in the 10th minute, and the team went into halftime with a 1-0 lead. Mohammadamin Rahimzadeh doubled the advantage in the 27th minute before Morteza Karimi stole the show in the closing stages with a remarkable hat-trick in the space of three minutes at the Terraspo Tsuruma venue. The top two teams in the six-team group will meet again in the final, while the next two will face off for the bronze medal.

Iran also celebrated a second consecutive win in its third outing in the men's goalball, defeating Thailand 12-9 in the preliminary round.

World Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championships:

Iran women's coach Torkaman rues bad luck in modest campaign

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Iran's women's U21 karate head coach, Faezeh Torkaman, said her team deserved more than the two bronze medals it won at the World Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships, blaming bad luck for missed opportunities. The recently concluded event in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, was hardly a prolific one for Iranian karate, as the country had to settle for just three bronze medals across the three age groups. Fatemeh Jafarnejad took bronze in the women's U21 kumite -55kg class, thanks to a 2-0 victory over Ukraine's Veronika Hudym in the third-place bout, while Ghazal Fat'hi outclassed Polish karateka Adela Sawicka 9-0 to replicate her compatriot's success in the -50kg division. Hamidreza Rezayati was the only Iranian



Iranian bronze medalists Ghazal Fat'hi (R) and Fatemeh Jafarnejad (L) pose for photo with head coach Faezeh Torkaman at the World Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championships in Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

● IKF

male medalist across the three age categories, winning bronze in the cadet -70kg class after a 2-0 victory over Spain's Pablo Perez Iniesta. Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Torkaman said the tournament had placed considerable pressure on her athletes, who lacked experience at the international level. "We tried hard to reduce their stress, but ultimately, it had an impact, and naturally, it affected their

performance," she said. "We knew our team had the ability to win more prestigious medals, and everyone saw that we lost some decisive bouts on hantei [a judges' decision

following a tie]. Rest assured that if our athletes had competed more frequently in major events and were better known to the judges, it would have had a direct impact on those decisions." Torkaman added that winning bronze could be more difficult than reaching a final, as athletes contesting the repechage or classification bouts also risk leaving the competition without a medal.

"After winning the Asian title, I was very hopeful about my athletes' chances at the World Championships, and I believed in their abilities. Their efforts were outstanding, but we were very unlucky. Perhaps it has never happened before that so many hantei decisions went against an Iranian team," she said. The coach said the competition had provided valuable lessons and experience for the team, adding that every athlete had the potential to contribute to the future of Iranian women's karate if given sufficient support and opportunities to compete.

Torkaman also praised her athletes' technical performances, saying she was pleased with their displays and confident they had bright futures ahead of them. "At a young age, they are highly motivated, hard-working and well-mannered. Every competition brings important lessons, and from now on, we are already looking ahead to our next events," she said.

Rezaei backs Iran women's tennis to make strides with greater ambition

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Iran women's national tennis team head coach Arghavan Rezaei believes a bright future awaits her players, urging them to train with greater commitment and set clear goals despite her short time in charge.



Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Rezaei reflected on her brief stint in Iran and the team's experience at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, where she said competing against some of the continent's leading players had posed a major challenge for the Iranian representatives. "It was difficult for our players because some of the prominent names in Asian tennis were competing and demonstrated a much higher level," she said. Rezaei added that Iran's players had faced opponents ranked among the world's top 100, describing the experience as beneficial for the development of

tennis in the country. "Success in elite sport is a continuous process that requires steady progress. However, we have already conveyed to the players that they need to work harder and set clear, specific goals for themselves. "From what I have seen of wom-

en's tennis in Iran, I believe the players can succeed if they work harder. Another important point is that Iranian women's tennis players need to compete abroad and face Asian and international opponents," she added. Turning her attention to the upcoming Billie Jean King Cup competition in Islamabad, Pakistan, Rezaei said Iran would be aiming to win the title. Iran are currently the top seeds in their group and will face Pakistan, the Maldives, Guam, Qatar, Macau, Bahrain, Jordan, Bhutan and Kuwait in Group II, with matches scheduled to take place in Islamabad from October 19 to 24.