Asian Cup postponed until December 2027, AFC confirms



AFC

ESPN – The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed that the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which was scheduled to be held from Jan. 7 to Feb. 5 in Saudi Arabia, will be postponed until December next year due to regional security concerns.

The quadrennial tournament will now take place from next Dec. 23 to Jan. 21, 2028.

In a press release issued on Tuesday afternoon, it was announced: "The Organizing Committee for AFC Asian Cup approved to reschedule the flagship national team tournament in light of the current exceptional circumstances arising from developments in the region, including substantial logistical complexities and travel disruptions. The new dates of the tournament will be presented to FIFA for approval.

"Exceptional circumstances have been created for the organization and delivery of the competition as originally scheduled, making the postponement necessary in the interest of all participating teams, officials, spectators and other stakeholders."

Just last month, AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa had stated that preparations were still going ahead for the continent's premier international tournament to be held as originally planned. This came in spite of an escalation in conflict between a Saudi Arabia-led coalition and Yemen's Ansarullah.

Multiple sites in Saudi Arabia came under Ansarullah's missile and drone attacks, with King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh sustaining at least 20 strikes over an 11-day period which reportedly led to 17 dead and more than 300 injured.

Just last week, 2015 Asian Cup champions Australia confirmed they were still committed to their upcoming friendlies in the region, where they will face Qatar in Doha on Nov. 11 before taking on Jordan in Amman six days later, while stressing that they were "closely monitoring the situation."

On Monday, Cristiano Ronaldo was a notable absentee in Saudi Pro League giants Al Nassr's 6-2 away win over Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the AFC Champions League Elite – although the official stance was that he was rested. It came a week after their previous AFC Champions League Elite match had to be postponed after Emirati opponents Al Wasl declined to travel to Riyadh for the game.

Riyadh, which boasts five of the eight stadiums to be used for the Asian Cup, is set to host 30 of the tournament's 51 matches – including the final at King Fahd Sports City Stadium.

Saudi Arabia is hosting the Asian Cup for the first time ever, and will also be the venue for the FIFA World Cup in 2034.

AFC Champions League Elite:

10-man Tractor leaves it late to salvage point against Neftchi

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor came from behind twice to share the spoils with Uzbekistan's PFC Neftchi in a 2-2 draw in the AFC Champions League Elite in Muscat, Oman, on Monday.

Both sides scored dramatically in second-half stoppage time as the Iranian top-flight side extended its winless start to the league stage to four games, leaving it 13th in the 16-team West Zone table with two points.

Neftchi started on the front foot at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex, which served as the Iranian side's home venue, and went close to finding the net as early as the fifth minute, only to see Tractor goalkeeper Parsa Jafari pull off a heroic double save to deny Asilbek Jumaev and Markus Forss.

Neftchi kept knocking on the door to no avail as the first half ended goalless, before the Uzbek club found a deserved breakthrough 10 minutes after the break, when substitute Stipe Perica tapped home Abrorbek Ismoilov's low cross from close range.

Things went from bad to worse for Tractor six minutes later, with Farshad Faraji sent off for a high-foot challenge that struck Bojan Ciger in the face.

Neftchi went looking for a second goal to kill off the contest, but it was the Iranian club that found an equalizer against the run of play with eight minutes remaining, as Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh broke away from two markers before laying the ball off for Tomislav Strkalj to dink over goalkeeper Botirali Ergashev.

Neftchi retook the lead in the fourth minute of stoppage time through a Vladimir Jovovic screamer from range, but Tractor refused to concede defeat, with Masoud Zaerkazemayn restoring parity five minutes later to bring a dramatic end to an absorbing contest.

"We didn't have a good start to the match, so we quickly changed our system and managed to take control of the game," said Tractor head coach Javad Nekounam. "We finished the first half in a good position, and we knew that our team would definitely improve in the second half, and we did.

"Unfortunately, just as we were playing better, we conceded a rather bizarre goal. It was really difficult for us and for the team to deal with. We had been playing well, but unfortunately, we conceded. Shortly afterwards, we also lost one of our players to a sending-off.

"Nevertheless, both the players and I believed that we could achieve a positive result today. We came back into the game twice, despite playing with 10 men under difficult circumstances. It was a tough match, and we had fallen behind, but we managed to fight our way back," added the Iranian coach.

Tractor will look to end its winless run when it takes on the UAE's Al Wasl in Muscat on November 23.



Tomislav Strkalj (19) scores Tractor's first equalizer during a 2-2 draw against PFC Neftchi in the AFC Champions League Elite in Muscat, Oman, on November 2, 2026.
AFC

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics:

Iran's Hakimi settles for silver in men's judo

Sports Desk



ISNA

Iranian judoka Sobhan Hakimi settled for a silver medal in the men's -81kg category at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics on Monday.

A gold medalist at July's Asian Cadet Judo Championships, the young Iranian opened his campaign with a victory over Shaku Kargbo of Sierra Leone, followed by a semifinal win against Egypt's Aly Ealramly, before being denied gold by Slovenia's Maks Cebulj in the final.

This was Iran's second medal at the multi-sport event, after Parsa Shahshahani had also claimed silver in swimming on the preceding day.

The 17-year-old Iranian clocked 2:02.74 to finish runner-up in the men's 200m backstroke. New Zealand's Ariel Muchirahondo won the gold medal in 1:59.15, with Greece's Nikolaos Papatheodorou taking bronze in 2:03.23.

The Summer Youth Olympics, staged in Africa for the first time, kicked off with the opening ceremony at the 55,000-seat Abdoulaye Wade Stadium in Diamniadio, 30km from the Senegalese capital, on Saturday.

Iran is represented by 29 athletes across two team events – men's beach volleyball and women's futsal – and 12 individual sports at this year's edition.

The girls' futsal team makes up the largest contingent, with 10 athletes. Beach wrestling features four Iranian competitors, while taekwondo has two participants – one girl and one boy. Badminton also has two representatives, one of each gender.

The showpiece in the Senegalese capital marks Iran's fourth participation in as many editions since the event was first introduced at Singapore 2010, where the country secured two gold, two silver and one bronze medal.

At Nanjing 2014, Iran collected three gold and three bronze medals before achieving its best performance to date with seven gold, three silver and four bronze medals at Buenos Aires 2018.

World Weightlifting Championships:

Iranian duo finishes empty-handed in men's 85kg

Sports Desk



IWFIR

Iran's campaign at the IWF World Weightlifting Championships in Ningbo, China, got off to a disappointing start after former world champion Mirmostafa Javadi and Abdollah Beiranvand missed out on the podium in the men's 85kg division on Monday.

Beiranvand posted a combined total of 363kg, finishing fifth in the snatch with 170kg and 18th in the clean and jerk with 193kg.

The Iranian successfully lifted 164kg on his opening snatch attempt before missing 169kg on his second. He recovered to clear 170kg in his final attempt.

In the clean and jerk, Beiranvand successfully lifted 193kg but failed to register 199kg and 200kg in his remaining attempts, finishing ninth in the overall standings.

Javadi, meanwhile, finished 13th overall with a total of 360kg. He lifted 160kg in the snatch to place 15th and managed 200kg in the clean and jerk for 10th place.

Javadi successfully lifted 155kg and 160kg in his first two snatch attempts but failed to clear 164kg in his third.

In the clean and jerk, he opened with a successful 200kg lift before missing his attempts at 203kg and 204kg.