

# Siamand Rahman Shortlisted for 2017 Laureus Award



Iranian powerlifter Siamand Rahman

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian powerlifter Siamand Rahman has been shortlisted for the prestigious 2017 Laureus Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award.

Rahman made history at Latin America's first Paralympics when he became the first athlete to lift over 300kg.

He produced arguably the best performance of Rio 2016 when he lifted a world record 310kg to take gold in the men's over 100kg powerlifting event. In becoming the first Paralympian to lift over 300kg, Rahman made global headlines for Paralympic sport. His final lift of 310kg was the equivalent of lifting a large Siberian tiger.

Earlier in the year, Rahman had broken his own world record by 1kg with a lift of 296kg at the 7th Fazza 2016 IPC Powerlifting World Cup.

The six shortlisted athletes are Siamand Rahman (IRI), Ihar Boki (BLR), Omara Durand (CUB), Marcel Hug (SUI), Sophie Pascoe (NZL), Beatrice Vio (ITA).

The winner will be announced on 14 February at a glittering awards ceremony in Monaco.

## Olympiakos Completes Signing of Iran's Karim Ansarifard



Olympiakos completed the signing of Panionios striker Karim Ansarifard

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Olympiakos completed the signing of Panionios striker Karim Ansarifard in the January transfer window on Thursday.

The Iranian international striker has joined the top Greek team with a contract is reportedly worth 400,000 euros.

Ansarifard had already caught the eye of Dutch professional football club Feyenoord Rotterdam,

Olympique de Marseille, PAOK and AEK.

The international striker joined Greek Superleague club Panionios from Osasuna in 2015.

The 26-year-old player started his playing career at Saipa in 2007 and joined Iranian popular team Persepolis after five years.

Ansarifard has made 54 appearances for Iran national football team and scored 14 times.

## Evans Reaches First ATP Final After Battling Past Kuznetsov

(eurosport) - The British number three will face Gilles Muller after beating 25-year-old Kuznetsov 6-2 3-6 6-3 in the semi-final.

Evans got off to a flyer against the Russian, breaking twice to go 3-0 up before the duo exchanged breaks of serve in the next two games.

Birmingham-born Evans maintained his advantage to take the first set, but Kuznetsov rallied in the second to take it to a decider.

Evans, ranked 67 in the world, then broke in the fourth game of the



Dan Evans has reached his first ever ATP final after battling past Andrey Kuznetsov in three sets at the Apia International in Sydney.

final set before going on to serve out for the match.

With the Australian Open starting on Monday, Evans will be buoyed by his performances so far in Sydney, having claimed his first top-10 scalp on Thursday when defeating Dominic Thiem.

Evans faces Argentine Facundo Bagnis in the first round of the Australian Open, and could face Marin Cilic in the second round should the Croat beat Jerzy Janowicz.

## China Face International Weightlifting Ban

BEIJING (Deutsche Welle) - Following re-tests of samples from the Beijing Olympics in 2008, three Chinese athletes have been stripped of their Olympic gold medals by the IOC. The decision casts serious doubt over the country's future in the sport. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced on

Thursday that it had disqualified weightlifting gold medalists Cao Lei (75kg), Chen Xiexia (48 kg, pictured top) and Liu Chunhong (69kg) from the Beijing Games after they tested positive for prohibited substances.

The organization also disqualified five more competitors from both the Beijing and London 2012 Olympics,

including Nadzeya Ostapchuk, of Belarus, third in the women's shot put competition in Beijing, whose sample was positive for anabolic steroids.

This comes after the International Weightlifting Federation said in 2016 that nations with three or more failed drug tests from the 2008 and

2012 Games would be banned from international competitions for a year.

Re-tests from the two Games have so far turned up 101 doping athletes. While Russia is the nation with the most cases, weightlifting is the sport with the most, racking up 38 separate cases.

## Australia Beat Pakistan by 92 Runs in First ODI at Brisbane

ISLAMABAD (DAWN) - Australia beat Pakistan by 92 runs in the first One Day International (ODI) at Brisbane's Gabba Stadium on Friday.

Australia set up a meaty total for Pakistan as former adversaries Matthew Wade and Glenn Maxwell combined for a vital sixth-wicket partnership of 82 runs to help Australia post 268/9.

Pakistan were hamstrung by Azhar Ali, who retired hurt after he lost his opening partner, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Pakistan's were still on course when Babar Azam and Umar Akmal were at the crease, but their game stagnated after the

partnership came to an end.

Wade was awarded Player of the Match. "It was challenging at the top, it was swinging and seaming around. Maxi took the pressure off me, and I was just looking to get him on strike. I was absolutely cooked (by the last over). They were taking the pace off, I was swinging way too hard. If the spinners bowled into the wicket it was hard to hit them down the ground," he said.

After captain Steve Smith won the toss and decided to bat, Australia was 78-5 before being rescued by the pair. Wade was unbeaten on 100, bringing up his

maiden century with a single on the final ball, while all-rounder Maxwell scored 60.

Maxwell was making his return to the Australian side after he was dropped and fined last month for saying it was "painful" having to bat below Wade in Victoria state's Sheffield Shield first-class side. There didn't appear to be any residual problems or animosity between the pair on Friday, although Maxwell came in ahead of Wade.

A strong opening spell from Mohammad Amir (2-54) left Australia in trouble. Amir clean-bowled David Warner and then

handed Smith his first ODI golden duck in successive deliveries, meaning Chris Lynn would face a hat-trick ball on debut.

He survived, but not for much longer; two overs after sending a Hasan Ali delivery into the grandstand, he misread a slow ball and skied one behind to Mohammad Rizwan.

Lynn, making his 50-overs debut for Australia, has smashed 309 runs in five games for the Brisbane Heat in the Twenty20 Big Bash League.

Ali finished with figures of 3-58. The teams will play five ODIs. Australia won the three-test series 3-0.

## West Ham Set Payet Asking Price



Payet signed a new deal at the club last February

LONDON (Independent) - West Ham will demand between £35mn and £40mn for on-strike talisman Dimitri Payet.

Payet is on strike at the Hammers, refusing to play for the club or train, as he attempts to force through a move to former club Marseille this month.

Slaven Bilic said he felt betrayed by the 29-year-old for his attitude after the Hammers rejected a £20mn bid from the Ligue 1 side, with their manager Rudi Garcia saying: "Quite obviously I would take him any day of the week."

The Times say Payet will be fined two weeks wages – around £250,000 in total – after telling the club he is unable to train because of a back injury.

The midfielder signed a new contract with the Hammers last February and was made the best-paid player in their history to keep him at the club until 2021, with the option of a further year.

The newspaper also said that he requested a further wage hike after his Euro 2016 performances, which included three goals and two man-of-the-match displays, but West Ham refused, leading to his dismay with the club this season.

Marseille have been taken over by Frank McCourt, the former owner for Major League Baseball team LA Dodgers, and Payet is attracted by the plans he has in place for his former club.

## Real Madrid Set Spanish Record of 40 Unbeaten Games



Marco Asensio scored in Real Madrid's 3-3 draw with Sevilla in the Copa del Rey

MADRID (Indian Express) - With a remarkable injury time goal, Real Madrid salvaged a 3-3 draw against Sevilla in the Copa del Rey to set a Spanish record of 40 consecutive games unbeaten on Thursday.

Madrid had its spot in the Copa quarterfinals all-but-secured in the final minutes in Sevilla when Karim Benzema made a great run past several defenders and entered the area to fire in a low right-foot shot that allowed Madrid to surpass the unbeaten mark that it shared with rival Barcelona.

The dramatic equalizer started with consecutive back-heel passes between Benzema and left back Marcelo outside the area. Benzema's shot deflected off a defender's leg before crossing the line.

Madrid advanced 6-3 on aggregate following its 3-0 first-leg win at home last week.

"(Sevilla) played a great match and deserved more tonight," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "But if you look at both games, we deserved to advance."

Madrid kept alive an unbeaten streak that started nine months ago. Madrid has won 30 games and drawn 10 in a run that includes three titles.

"We are happy to have achieved our goal against a very difficult rival," defender Sergio Ramos said. "We didn't win but we kept our streak alive."

Cristiano Ronaldo and other regular starters were left out of the starting lineup to rest on Thursday.

Benzema scored the winner less than 20 minutes after coming off the bench at Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium.

The hosts got on the board with

an own goal by Madrid defender Danilo just 10 minutes in. But Marco Asensio dampened the crowd's hopes with a remarkable 70-meter run that culminated with an equalizer from inside the area just after halftime. He got the ball near his own area and made it all the way to the other side before finding the net.

At that point, Sevilla needed four goals to advance, and it added two through Stevan Jovetic and Vicente Iborra. But Madrid netted again near the end with a penalty kick converted "Panenka" style by Ramos, who was returning from injury. Ramos celebrated by provoking part of the crowd that had been insulting him during the game.

"I apologized to the fans who didn't disrespect me like those who have been tainting the image of Sevilla supporters," said Ramos, a native of Seville and a former Sevilla player. "In the end, this will always be home for me."

It was a matchup between the top two teams in the Spanish league, and a rematch of the Super Cup final that Madrid won in extra time five months ago.

"We were close," Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli said. "We played better the entire match."

The teams meet again in Seville in a league match on Sunday, when Madrid will defend its four-point lead. Zidane's team also has a game in hand.

Madrid is trying to win its first Copa since 2014. Last season, it was disqualified in the opening round for fielding an ineligible player.