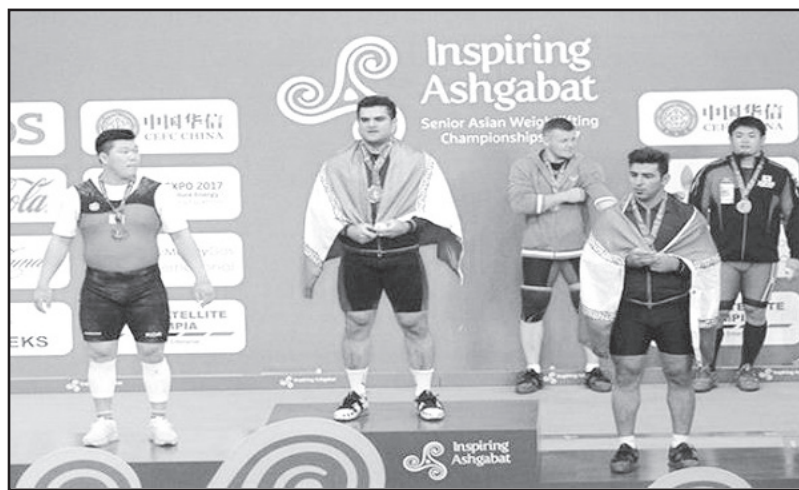


# Iran Crowned Asian Weightlifting Champion



Iranian weightlifters Mohammad Reza Barari (C) and Ali Hashemi (R) pose for a photograph at the end of the 105-kilogram competitions of the 2017 Asian Weightlifting Championships in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on April 29, 2017.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iranian men's national weightlifting team has collected 562 points at the 2017 Asian Weightlifting Championships in Turkmenistan, and clinched the victory to snap a five-year title drought at the prestigious continental sports event.

Iran stood first with a total of elev-

en (five gold, three silver and three bronze) medals. China finished as vice champion with 547 points and Uzbekistan took the third place, having racked up 511 points.

Iranian weightlifter Mohammad Reza Barari made a clean sweep of all the available gold medals in the 105-kilogram weight category at

the multi-purpose Saparmurat Turkmenbashi Olympic Stadium in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat on Saturday.

Barari snatched the snatch gold with 177 kilograms; and his Uzbek opponent raised 175 kilograms overhead to pocket the silver. A representative from Japan got the bronze medal, having lifted up 172 kilograms.

Barari raised 221 kilograms in the clean and jerk contests, and claimed the podium. His South Korean rival hoisted 220 kilograms and took the second spot, while Iran's Ali Hashemi took away the bronze with a lift of 213 kilograms.

Barari edged the South Korean contestant to receive the gold medal with an aggregate of 398 kilograms. The South Korean weightlifter's overall register marked 390 kilograms and finished in the second place, while Hashemi secured the aggregate bronze medal with 384 kilograms. Barari dedicated his three gold medals to the families of the 10 Iranian border guards, who were killed in an ambush attack near the

town of Mirjaveh in the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan-and-Baluchestan on Wednesday.

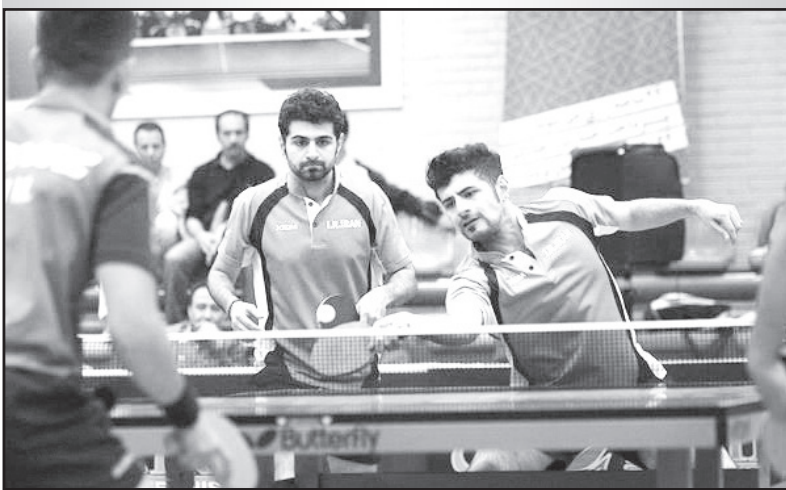
Also on Saturday, Iran's Ramin Rabiei lifted 195 kilograms to strike the bronze medal in the snatch event of the over 105-kilogram class.

The Iranian Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs praised Iranian weightlifters for their outstanding performance during the 2017 Asian Weightlifting Championships.

"The glorious victories of the valiant members of the national weightlifting team during Asian championship competitions, and their winning of the title filled the hearts of the Iranian nation with joy. We felicitate national weightlifters, the technical team, their esteemed families and the Iranian weightlifting society on this prideful championship, which came in light of five gold, three silver and three bronze medals," the ministry said in a statement.

"We hope Iranian athletes continue to take honors, and dominate the podium in the Islamic Solidarity Games," the statement added.

## Alamian Brothers Win Bronze in 2017 ITTF Challenge Slovenian Open



Iranian table tennis players Noshad (L) and Nima Alamian

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iranian men's national table tennis team has exhibited convincing performances at the 2017 International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Challenge Slovenian Open, and collected a bronze medal.

On Saturday, the Iranian squad, comprised of brothers Noshad and Nima Alamian, put an end to its campaign at the international sporting event in the southeastern Slovenian city of Otocec, and sank Japan 3-1 in the third-place showdown.

The 2017 ITTF Challenge Slovenia Open started on April 26, and will conclude on April 30.

The Iranian men's national table tennis team is preparing for the forthcoming 4th edition of Islamic Solidarity Games in Azerbaijan.

The Games are scheduled to open in Baku, Azerbaijan, on

May 8 and will run through May 22, 2017. A total of 24 disciplines from 20 sports will be contested in the event.

The Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) is responsible for the direction and control of the tournament.

The President of the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NOCIRI), Shahrokh Shahnazi, has said the committee will dispatch a 300-strong sports delegation to the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games.

He added that the Iranian sportsmen and sportswomen will vie for top honors in 16 sports.

Iranian female sports shooter Mahlagha Jamborzog has been named as the flag-bearer of the Iranian sports delegation at the opening ceremony of the Games.

## Asia Olympic Chief Quits FIFA Role Over Bribery Scandal

LONDON (Reuters) - Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, the FIFA Council member who also runs the Olympic Council of Asia, said on Sunday he was resigning all his posts in football after being drawn into the latest bribery scandal to hit the game's governing body.

The Kuwaiti issued a statement on Saturday "strongly" denying that he was one of the Asian Football Confederation officials described in U.S. Court documents as allegedly bribing a member of FIFA's audit and compliance committee, Richard Lai.

Lai, also president of the Guam Football Association (GFA), pleaded guilty on Thursday to wire fraud conspiracy charges before U.S. District Judge



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah

Pamela Chen in Brooklyn, according to U.S. prosecutors, who said he had taken close to \$1 million in bribes.

"With regards to alleged illegal payments to Richard Lai,

I can only refer to my previous statement and vigorously deny any wrongdoing," Sheikh Ahmad said in a statement released by the OCA on Sunday.

"I intend to work with all rel-

evant authorities to disprove these for me totally surprising allegations. "However, I do not want these allegations to create divisions or distract attention from the upcoming AFC and FIFA Congresses.

"Therefore, after careful consideration, I have decided it is in the best interests of FIFA and the AFC (Asian Football Confederation), for me to withdraw my candidacy for the FIFA Council and resign from my current football positions."

The FIFA Council replaced the largely discredited Executive Committee as FIFA's decision-making body under reforms instituted in the wake of the 2015 corruption scandal. The AFC will elect four members, one a woman, to the FIFA Council at a congress in Bahrain in May.

## Anthony Joshua Defeats Wladimir Klitschko in Epic Wembley Battle



Wladimir Klitschko suffered the fifth defeat of his career

LONDON (Dispatches) - Anthony Joshua produced the performance of his career to add the WBA world heavyweight title to his IBF crown with an enthralling knockout win over Wladimir Klitschko at Wembley Stadium.

A post-war record 90,000 fans at the national stadium were treated to a see-saw contest, Joshua dropping the former unified world champion in the fifth round, before being put down - for the first time in his 19-fight career - in the sixth.

Both men looked in danger of being stopped over two rounds which will live long in the memory, before Joshua delivered the clinical blows in the 11th. The Briton landed a brutal uppercut which gave him the platform to send Klitschko down with an immediate flurry.

The Ukrainian stood, was dropped by a left hook again

moments later, then stood again, only for referee David Fields to save him when pinned against the ropes.

Joshua threw his arms into the air as roars rolled down the Wembley tiers. He had come through his stiffest test to date, while Klitschko too had answered questions, showing he remains competitive at world level, even at 41.

He will rue not finishing the job when he floored Joshua and appeared tantalizingly close to reclaiming two of the titles he lost in his last fight against Tyson Fury in 2015.

At the time of the stoppage, Joshua was up 96-93 and 95-93 on two cards, with Klitschko leading 95-93 on the other.

After lengthy ring walks, fireworks, deafening noise and a rousing British national anthem, an opening six minutes of skill

over power played out.

Klitschko flicked his jab, his left hand waving in front of Joshua's face. Feints from both men stood out as they hunted openings.

A solid right hand early in the fourth caught Joshua, who responded with the same shot later in the round, nodding at his rival on the bell.

And then came the power punching in a pulsating fifth round. Joshua shook his man before sending him down face first with a flurry of punches.

The crowd sensed blood, urging the Briton forward, only for Klitschko - cut above his left eye - to show the heart which has made him the most dominant heavyweight of the 21st century.

He pinned Joshua to the ropes, turning the round on its head, and then came out in the sixth to administer an overhand right which crumpled the champion. In uncharted waters, Joshua answered the count and faced a stiff examination before the bell.

This was now an epic, living up to the hype, heavyweight boxing at its most captivating.

The pace dropped, it had to, though any fear of Joshua's career-high weight slowing him down was unceremoniously put to bed in the 11th as his power unified the titles.

The sweat flew from Klitschko's head as the telling uppercut

landed crushingly, before Joshua hunted down his opponent to seal a historic win.

Less than three years ago, Joshua fought here low down the Froch-Groves undercard, but 13 fights later he stood centre stage, seeking a win promoter Eddie Hearn said would make him "the biggest star in British sport".

Hearn, a bevy of global sponsors and a sizeable entourage have backed and built the Joshua brand - investment which looks stunningly astute on a night when his reputation was further enhanced.

Through his litany of knockout wins there have been question marks. Could he withstand punishment? Did he have the skills to match a world-level fighter?

He answered emphatically, complementing solid technique early on with resistance when troubled and brutal power down the stretch.

This bout was televised by two networks in the US, only the third time in history such a deal has been struck, and the Las Vegas fight nights enjoyed by Lennox Lewis - the last undisputed heavyweight champion - look to be on the cards.

The wild celebrations of those closest to him underlined just what this meant. A man carrying a huge weight of expectation had delivered.

## Bayern Munich Thrash Wolfsburg to Win Fifth Straight Bundesliga Title



Bayern celebrate their fifth successive title win

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich secured a record-extending fifth consecutive Bundesliga title after beating Wolfsburg 6-0 to open up an unassailable 10-point lead with three matches remaining. The Bavarians, who have won 27 German championships, are on 73 points, with RB Leipzig in second place on 63 after they were held to a goalless draw by Ingolstadt.

"It is amazing what this team did again this season in the Bundesliga," said the retiring Bayern captain, Philipp Lahm. "It is not a given we will always march through the league like we did this season."

The Bundesliga's leading scorer Robert Lewandowski scored twice to take his league goal tally to 28 and David Alaba, Thomas Müller, Arjen Robben and Joshua Kimmich were also on target as Bayern rode roughshod over the hosts.

Bayern finished off the relega-

tion-threatened Wolves with three more goals in the second half, and the hosts were also reduced to 10 men following the dismissal of former Bayern player Luiz Gustavo.

Bayern had promised to bounce back following their midweek German Cup semi-final defeat to Borussia Dortmund and the Champions League exit to Real Madrid.

They had also failed to win either of their last two league matches, going five games without a win in all competitions. There was not a hint of self-doubt on Saturday as they scored three times before half-time.

"The league is the most honest of titles," said Bayern's chief executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. "And now we have won it for the fifth straight time. That is something unusual and amazing. We will have a good party tonight and then on the last matchday with the fans."