

Iran's Kish Island to Host Asian Beach Volleyball Championship



KISH, Iran (Dispatches) – The head of Iran's Kish Island sports institutions Azizollah Farzipour has said that the island had been chosen for the Asian Men's Beach volleyball championship and the qualification games of Beach Olympics 2021.

Farzipour said that Kish Island volunteered to host the competitions after China took back its proposal for hosting the event.

The official said that if it is finalized and the necessary agreements are signed, Kish will host the event with the participation of 23 countries in late spring.

He added that it is likely that the island will host the qualifications of the Olympics with eight countries.

FIFA Suspends Pakistan, Chad Football Federations

ZURICH (Reuters) - FIFA has suspended the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) due to third-party interference and also the Chadian Football Association (FTFA) with immediate effect due to government interference, soccer's global governing body said on Wednesday.

A group of football officials led by Ashfaq Hussain, which was elected by the Supreme Court in 2018 to run the PFF but was not recognized by FIFA, took over the headquarters last month and seized control from the FIFA Normalization Committee headed by Haroon



This file photo shows the FIFA Headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland.

Malik, local media reported. FIFA said in Wednesday's

statement that its decision to suspend the PFF was prompted

by the "hostile takeover" which constituted a serious violation of its statutes.

"FIFA issued a letter warning that, should the illegitimate occupation of the PFF headquarters not be lifted and the office bearers recognized by FIFA not be permitted free access to the building to carry out their mandate, the matter would be immediately submitted to the Bureau of the Council for decision," FIFA said.

"As the situation remains unchanged, the Bureau of the Council has decided to suspend the PFF."

Sara Bahmanyar Ranks 3rd Among Top World Women Karate Fighters



RASHT (Dispatches) – World Karate Federation in its latest ranking has ranked Iranian acclaimed female karate fighter Sara Bahmanyar third in her weight category. Bahmanyar collected 5677

points to place third in the – 50 weight class following two other athletes from Turkey and Japan.

She is one of Iran's hopes for winning a medal at Tokyo Olympic Games.

Clippers Rout Trail Blazers 133-116



Los Angeles Clippers guard Paul George (13) holds the ball as Ivica Zubac (40) sets a screen on Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, center, during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, April 6, 2021, in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Paul George scored 36 points and the Los Angeles Clippers rode a franchise-best 47-point first quarter to a 133-116 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Tuesday night.

Kawhi Leonard added 29 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists as the Clippers followed an 18-point rout of the defending champion Lakers two days ago with another impressive performance at both ends.

George shot 11 of 18, made six 3-pointers and hit all eight of his free throws. He finished three points off his season high of 39. Reggie Jackson added 23 points off the bench.

Norman Powell scored 32 points and CJ McCollum added 24 points for the Blazers, who had their four-game road winning streak snapped.

The Clippers harassed Damian Lillard into 2-of-14 shooting for 11 points, well under his team-leading 29.6 average. A frustrated Lillard earned a technical foul in the third. He had just four points in the second half.

The Clippers scored 47 points in the first quarter, the most in that quarter in franchise history, while shooting 64%. George's 22 points were the most by a Clipper in the first since Blake Griffin had the

same on March 10, 2014, against Phoenix.

Portland coach Terry Stotts called his team's defensive effort in the first "embarrassing."

George keyed a 24-6 run over the end of the first and start of the second that extended the Clippers' lead to 26 points, their largest of the game. He scored seven points. Leonard, Nicolas Batum and Jackson hit consecutive 3-pointers and new addition DeMarcus Cousins capped the spurt by scoring on his offensive rebound.

Trailing 62-36, the Blazers worked hard at getting back in the game. They outscored the Clippers 30-11 to close within seven at halftime. Powell scored nine, punctuated by a one-handed slam. McCollum added eight, and Robert Covington closed out the half with a 3-pointer that beat the shot clock.

The Clippers extended their lead to 14 points early in the third. Portland ran off 12 in a row, getting 3-pointers from Powell and Covington, to close to 84-82. That's the closest the Blazers came the rest of the way.

Los Angeles closed with an 18-7 spurt to lead 101-89 going into the fourth. Leonard and Jackson scored eight apiece and Rajon Rondo added a basket.

Ruthless Real Madrid Turn to Barca After Liverpool Rout



Real Madrid overpowered Liverpool in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinal on Tuesday.

MADRID (AFP) - Real Madrid have made a habit of saving their best for the biggest moments of the season and their 3-1 win over Liverpool in the Champions League suggested they could be ready to do it again.

Madrid rolled back the years with a performance reminiscent

of their most ruthless days under Zinedine Zidane, when they powered through the knock-out stages to win three European titles in a row, or motored to 10 consecutive victories at the end of last season to win La Liga.

A pivotal eight days that pitched two quarterfinal legs

against Liverpool either side of Saturday's Clasico against Barcelona got off to the perfect start, Vinicius Junior's double and a Toni Kroos masterclass at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium putting Madrid in sight of another Champions League semi-final.

Mohamed Salah's away goal early in the second half, and Liverpool's comeback from a more desperate situation against Barcelona in 2019, should serve as warnings against complacency.

But an imperious and authoritative display enhances the growing sense of a Madrid team now plugged in, its eyes narrowing again just as the trophies come into view.

"It is the character that this team has, that all the players go through difficult times but I know they have this character to

turn things around," said Zidane on Tuesday night.

"Madrid erased Liverpool in the first half, the Reds were baffled," wrote Madrid newspaper AS on Wednesday. "It was a complete performance," said Jorge Valdano on Spanish television.

In Spain, many wondered if Barcelona and Atletico would enjoy an advantage in the final stretch, their own early exits in the Champions League allowing them to focus fully on what has now become a neck-and-neck battle for the title.

Barca might still feel the benefits of an extra day's rest in the Clasico this weekend, their tight victory over Real Valladolid on Monday night possibly less demanding as well than Madrid's demolition at Valdebebas.

Rio Backs Off Plan to Rename Maracana Stadium for Pele

BRASILIA (AFP) -The Rio de Janeiro state legislature has backed down from plans to rename Brazil's iconic Maracana stadium for football legend Pele, after the proposal triggered controversy.

In an unusual move, legislative speaker Andre Ceciliano, who sponsored the bill, asked interim governor Claudio Castro to veto rather than sign it.

After lawmakers voted on March 9 to change the stadium's official name to "Edson Arantes do Nascimento - Rei Pele" to honor the three-time world champion, critics questioned why they were spending their time on such matters in the middle of a raging health crisis in Brazil, hit hard by the coronavi-

rus pandemic.

"My intention was to pay tribute to the king of football, the best player of all time. But the Maracana will always be called the Maracana," said Ceciliano, of the left-wing Workers' Party (PT).

There was also a squabble over the fate of the stadium's current official name, "Jornalista Mario Filho," for a beloved Brazilian journalist and sportswriter credited with helping give football the near-religious devotion it enjoys in the country today.

The bill retained Filho's name for the sports complex surrounding the stadium, which also includes gymnastics and athletics venues.

But Filho's family and admirers resented the change.



Brazil's legendary Maracana stadium will no longer be renamed for Pele, its most celebrated football player

The Maracana, which takes its unofficial name from the surrounding neighborhood, has been the scene of historic matches including the 1950 and 2014 World Cup finals, as well as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2016

Olympics.

It is the home stadium for two local football clubs, Fluminense and reigning champions Flamengo.

But the giant 78,000-seat stadium's history is also loaded with trauma for Brazilians.