

APC President Thanks Iran's Leader for Supporting Paralympics



TEHRAN — Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) President Majid Rashed has thanked the Leader of the Islamic Revolution

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and other Iranian officials for supporting the paralympic movement.

Majid Rashed made the remarks in a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday, saying that on his Iran visit so far, he had good meetings with Iran's Minister of Sports, and the head of the National Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

He further said that he thinks that the celebration of National Paralympic Day was a message to other countries that Iran is a good role model for them.

"I thank the Leader of the

Islamic Republic of Iran, government officials and all the media for supporting the Paralympic movement. My first visit was on Iran's National Paralympic Day. The celebration was great and I enjoyed the participation of athletes and families in the event."

Rashed further said that Iran has achieved good results on the international stage at the Paralympic Games, and if Iran's officials are willing, they can apply for a seat in the Asian Paralympic Committee.

He also said that the APC brings the countries in Asia together as its main mission.

Benzema Wins Ballon d'Or, Putellas Retains Women's Trophy



Karim Benzema, 34, became the oldest winner of the Ballon d'Or since 1956.

PARIS (AFP) - Karim Benzema has won the men's Ballon d'Or, becoming just the second player outside of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to be awarded the prize in the past 15 years. Benzema won the trophy after leading Real Madrid to the LaLiga and Champions League double last season and scoring a remarkable 44 goals in 46 appearances for the Spanish club.

Benzema finished ahead of Sadio Mane and Kevin De Bruyne at the Paris ceremony to crown a sensational year for the France international, as he followed his Real Madrid team-mate Luka Modric by breaking through Messi and Ronaldo's dominance of football's greatest individual prize.

The 34-year-old is also the oldest winner of the Ballon d'Or since Stanley Matthews won the inaugural award in 1956, as well as the first French winner of the prize since Zinedine Zidane in 1998. Zidane, who managed Benzema across two spells at Real Madrid, was in Paris to present the striker with the award.

"This prize in front of me makes me proud of the work I did from a young age," Benzema said. "I had the motivation and I always had this dream in my mind that anything was possible. There were difficult periods where I wasn't in the French team but I kept working hard. I'm really proud of my journey here. It wasn't easy, it was difficult and it was hard for my family as well. But to be here today, I'm just really happy."

Earlier, Barcelona captain Alexia Putellas became the first two-time winner of the Ballon d'Or Feminin after taking back-to-back awards. England and

Arsenal forward Beth Mead, who was the top scorer at Euro 2020, finished second, ahead of the Chelsea striker Sam Kerr.

Barcelona midfielder Gavi won the Kopa Trophy for best young player while Thibaut Courtois won the Yashin Trophy for best goalkeeper, as Manchester City received the award for club of the year.

Putellas was ruled out of the Euro 2020 finals this summer due to injury and although her Barcelona team were defeated in the final of the Women's Champions League by Lyon, the midfielder's performances for the Spanish champions remained a level above the game during her side's run to the final. Putellas continues to be sidelined by a serious knee injury but declared that she hoped to return ahead of next summer's Women's World Cup.

Benzema's displays and goals in the Champions League knockout stages, where he scored 10 goals in seven appearances from the round of 16 onwards, were also complimented by dramatic winners in the comeback victories over Chelsea and Manchester City on the way to defeating Liverpool in the Paris final.

It also came as the striker also seized the stage for the first time in his career, after years of supporting Cristiano Ronaldo in attack during Real Madrid's previous Champions League winning campaigns. "He keeps getting better with age," Ancelotti said of his captain, as he claimed the individual prize that for large parts of his career had been difficult to imagine.

Austrian Pair Win 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Gold at ISSF Worlds

CAIRO (Reuters) - Veterans Richard Zechmeister and Sylvia Steiner won Austria's first gold medal at the 2022 ISSF World Shooting Championships after triumphing in the 10m air pistol mixed team.

Zechmeister, 47, and Steiner, 40, came back from 4-0 down in the gold medal match to beat Park Dae-hun and Yoo Hyun-young of South Korea 16-6.

This was the first world title for the two shooters. Zechmeister is making his world championships debut here, while Steiner's only previous appearance in

2018 ended up with a 34th place finish in the women's individual event.

Olympic gold medalist Jiang Ranxin, with partner Zhang Bowen, eased past newly-crowned men's individual world champion Liu Jingyao and Li Xue 16-6 in an all-Chinese bronze medal match.

In the other bronze medal match, Iran's Olympic men's individual champion Javad Foroughi and his partner Haniyeh Rostamiyan withstood a late scare to beat Latvia's Lauris Strautmanis and Agate Rasmane 16-14.



Earlier on Monday, Yang Haoran and Huang Yuting won the 10m air rifle mixed team gold for China.

Indonesia to Demolish Soccer Stadium Where Stampede Killed Over 130



JAKARTA (Reuters) - Indonesia will demolish and rebuild a football stadium where a stampede killed more than 130 people this month, President Joko Widodo said on Tuesday as he vowed to "thoroughly transform" the sport in the soccer-mad nation.

The president, popularly known as Jokowi, was speaking to reporters at the state palace after meeting Gianni Infantino, head of world soccer governing body FIFA.

"Kanjuruhan stadium in Malang...we will demolish it and rebuild according to FIFA stan-

dards," he said.

The deadly stampede after a league match in the city of Malang on Oct 1 has been blamed on police firing tear gas in the stadium, a crowd control measure banned by FIFA.

The president said he had agreed with Infantino on significant changes to how the sport was managed in Indonesia.

"We agreed to thoroughly transform Indonesian soccer," he said. "Every aspect of preparation... needs to be based on FIFA standards."

The meeting between Jokowi and Infantino comes after Indonesia and FIFA agreed to form a joint task-force in the wake of the stadium tragedy, and as the country prepares to host the Under-20 World Cup next year.

Speaking alongside Jokowi, Infantino said FIFA's first priority was to ensure the safety of both players and fans in the Southeast Asian nation.

"This is a football country, a country where football is a passion for over 100 million people," he said. "We owe it to them that when they see a match they are safe and secure."

Infantino, who presented the president with a red FIFA jersey with his name printed across it, said the global soccer body would work closely with the government to ensure all stadiums met safety requirements, and that the Under-20 World Cup ran smoothly next year.

Under pressure to explain what caused one of the world's deadliest stadium disasters, a fact-finding

team formed by the government released a report last week which concluded that the "excessive" and "indiscriminate" use of tear gas was the leading cause of death.

As fans attempted to exit the stadium after the defeat of the home side Arema FC by Persebaya Surabaya, they were caught in a deadly crush, with many, including more than 40 minors, dying from asphyxiation.

The report also identified other contributing factors, including the stadium being filled beyond capacity, locked exit doors, and a push by league officials to hold the game at night to secure better ratings for a local broadcaster, despite a request by police to hold a match between fierce rivals during the day.

The fact-finding team also said that more than three hours of CCTV footage about an hour after the match had been deleted. The team has requested that police provide this footage.

The team also called on the head of the Indonesian Football Association to resign.

Keepers Being Overlooked for Ballon d'Or Award, Says Courtois



Real Madrid's Thibaut Courtois after winning the Yashin Trophy as Borussia Dortmund's Sebastien Haller looks on

PARIS (Reuters) - Thibaut Courtois was named man of the match in last season's Champions League final, but the Belgian goalkeeper came seventh in the Ballon d'Or rankings on Monday, which drew frustration at how the trophy for the world's best player is awarded.

Courtois, whose brilliant saves helped Real keep Liverpool at bay before Vinicius Junior scored the only goal in Paris in May, collected the Lev Yashin trophy for best keeper but it felt too little.

"I couldn't have had a better season, especially with the saves in the Champions League," Courtois told Reuters after the ceremony before the main award went to his Real team mate Karim Benzema.

"As a keeper you can't do more,

winning the league and the Champions League the way we did."

Last year, goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma finished 10th in the Ballon d'Or rankings after being named man of the match in Italy's victory against England after a penalty shootout in the European Championship final.

"Naturally being in the top 10, it's fantastic, but unfortunately when voting comes keepers are being overlooked with strikers being favoured," said Courtois.

"It's not such a big deal but keepers are being underestimated although we've been participating in the game much more, sometimes almost as playmakers."

Yashin of the then USSR is the last - and only - keeper to win the Ballon d'Or award, in 1963.

Australian Sports Stars Revolt Over Mining, Fossil Fuel Sponsorships

CANBERRA (AFP) - Stars from two of Australia's favorite sporting codes are pushing back against lucrative energy and mining sponsorship deals, with cricket captain Pat Cummins leading the charge on Tuesday.

Cummins, whose role as Test captain makes him one of Australia's most prominent public figures, told local media he would no longer appear in adverts for sponsor Alinta Energy.

The 29-year-old fast bowler is a vocal proponent of action on climate change, an urgent issue in fire, drought and flood-prone Australia.

Cricket Australia on Tuesday abruptly announced its four-year-old sponsorship deal with Alinta would end in 2023, citing a change in the firm's "brand strategy".

Cricket administrators denied the parting had anything to do

with Cummins, despite reports of changing-room disquiet.

The player said the relationship with sponsors was "a balance".

"We've seen certain players make decisions based on certain religions or certain foods, they won't partner with specific partners," Cummins said.

Australia's economy is heavily dependent on coal, gas and mineral exports and the companies involved are among the country's

more profitable.

Energy and mining firms channel a small percentage of their earnings into sports from cricket to rugby and netball, sparking a clash of cultures with increasingly environmentally and culturally conscious players.

Pro-fossil fuel media commentator Chris Kelly accused Cummins of "having a whinge" and carrying out an "idiotic" protest.