

President Pezeshkian Awards Olympic, Paralympic Medal Winners



TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian said that victories achieved by athletes at the Olympics and Paralympics will inspire the Iranian people and pave the way for more achievements in other fields of activity.

The president was speaking in a ceremony held in Tehran on

Monday to honor Iran's medal winners of the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics.

Addressing champions and their coaches, Pezeshkian said, "Your success on international stages inspires the people of Iran. We will do everything in our power to remove obstacles

in your path and pave the way for you to reach even greater and more honorable heights. We hope for a day when our beloved Iran stands as a flagbearer of excellence in all fields."

He appreciated the champions, coaches, and managers, stating, "You have not only brought medals but also joy to the hearts of the Iranian people and strengthened national pride. Meeting you fills me with a sense of pride and honor."

The president highlighted the importance of making efforts as well as unity and belief in national capabilities, emphasizing the need to create an environment for development in all sectors including sports, President.ir reported.

Stressing the necessity of setting aside differences and fostering unity among all segments

of society, he said, "No power can bring us down except the divisions and obstacles we create for ourselves. If we believe that every Iranian, regardless of ethnicity or religion, can be the best, nothing will stop us. We must join hands, set aside our differences, and aim for great heights."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president referred to the goals outlined in the 20-Year Vision Document for Iran's future, emphasizing that Iran must inspire the region and the world.

"In science, technology, sports, economy, and other fields, we must strive to reach the pinnacle, but this position is not easily attained; it requires hard work and effort. Our government has a duty to provide the necessary groundwork to achieve this goal," he said.

Weightlifters Stand 2nd in World Championship in Bahrain



TEHRAN - Iranian men's team have finished runner-up at the 2024 World Weightlifting Championships held in Bahrain.

The Iranian team secured 560 points and stood in second place behind China that gained 566 points.

Iran was followed by North Korea and Colombia that finished third and fourth respectively.

The 2024 World Weightlifting

Championships were held from December 6-15.

Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth issued a congratulatory message on Sunday evening over the achievement by the male lifters.

The ministry appreciated the medalists as well as technical and management staff that contributed to the victory through their efforts and planning.

Milan's 125th Anniversary Celebrations Soured by Draw With Genoa

MILAN (Reuters) - Wasteful AC Milan were held to a 0-0 draw by Genoa in Serie A at the San Siro on Sunday, a result that dampened the festivities on the club's 125th anniversary.

Milan celebrated the club's foundation with greats such as former strikers Marco van Basten and Filippo Inzaghi, who entered the pitch holding their commemorative plates after being inducted into the club's Hall of Fame before the game.

However, Paulo Fonseca's side were booed at the end of the match after their performance failed to match the occasion.

Wearing new retro kits created for the anniversary, Milan had the upper hand from the start but created mostly half-chances in the opening period.

The hosts were fortunate to escape without conceding a penalty when

teenage forward Mattia Liberati's



AC Milan's Italian midfielder #30 Mattia Liberati (right) shoots the ball past Genoa's Danish midfielder #32 Morten Frendrup (L) during the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and Genoa at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, on Dec 15, 2024.

tackle on Genoa midfielder Fabio Miretti went unpunished.

Milan continued to create opportunities after the interval but without being able to break the deadlock.

Halftime substitute Alvaro Morata dribbled through the Genoa defense before firing over in the 76th minute and then hit the bar three minutes later to the dismay of the fans.

The home side had 22 goal attempts but only four on target.

Milan, who were celebrating the anniversary of their founding on Dec 16 1899, remain eighth in the standings on 23 points from 15 games, eight points adrift of the top four.

After extending their Champions League winning streak to four games with a late 2-1 home victory over Red Star Belgrade on Wednesday, Milan are now winless in four of their last five Serie A games.

Patrick Vieira's Genoa, meanwhile, extended their unbeaten run to six matches and sit 13th with 16 points, two points above the relegation zone.

Bologna beat fourth-placed visitors Fiorentina 1-0 earlier on Sunday, ending Viola's winning streak of eight league games, while struggling AS Roma conceded twice in stoppage time to lose 2-0 at lowly Como.

Barcelona Stunned by Lowly Leganes in 1-0 Home Defeat



Leganes' Oscar Rodriguez (left) and Barcelona's Jules Kounde challenge for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Leganes at the Lluis Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain, on Dec 15, 2024.

BARCELONA (AFP) - LaLiga leaders Barcelona lost 1-0 to Leganes on Sunday with defender Sergio Gonzalez's early header enough to stun the wasteful hosts who lost their second consecutive league game in front of their own fans.

While they have been excellent in the Champions League with five wins in six games, Barcelona have struggled in LaLiga for over a month, with only one victory in their last six league matches.

Barca remain top of the LaLiga standings with 38 points, level with Atletico Madrid - who they host on Saturday - and one point ahead Real Madrid in third, with both their title

rivals having a game in hand.

It was Leganes's first ever win at Barcelona and left them 15th in the table on 18 points.

Leganes took the lead from a corner after four minutes when visiting captain Gonzalez rose unmarked at the near post to fire an unstoppable header past goalkeeper Inaki Pena.

Barca immediately went after the equalizer but, despite dominating proceedings throughout the match with over 80% possession, they were clueless as they sought to overcome a disciplined and well organized five-man Leganes defense, spurning a handful of opportunities.

Manchester United's Diallo Snatches Derby Victory at Stunned City

MANCHESTER (Reuters) - Manchester United poured on the misery for flagging Premier League champions Manchester City as late goals by Bruno Fernandes and Amad Diallo snatched an unlikely 2-1 away victory from the jaws of defeat on Sunday.

Ruben Amorim's first Manchester derby looked like ending in a third successive league defeat after Josko Gvardiol's header put City

ahead but Ivory Coast youngster Diallo tuned the game on its head in stunning fashion.

Diallo was fouled by City's Matheus Nunes after latching onto a dreadful back pass by the same player with Fernandes stroking home the penalty in the 88th minute.

City had hardly got over that shock when seconds later it became the "Diallo Derby" as he sent the visiting fans into delirium with

a superb finish from the tightest of angles.

What was initially a worrying slump in form by champions City has now snowballed into a full-on nightmare before Christmas for Pep Guardiola's side as they have now lost eight of their last 11 games in all competitions, winning one.

They stay fifth in the table with 27 points from 16 games, nine

points behind leaders Liverpool having played a game more.

United remain in the bottom half with 22 points but will hope their smash-and-grab raid at The Etihad Stadium will spark a move up the table during the festive period.

Fernandes breathed a sigh of relief after the game, having missed a gilt-edged chance to equalize shortly before Diallo lit the touchpaper for United's stunning win.

China Win Men's 5,000m Relay at Track Speed Skating World Tour

SEOUL (Xinhua) - China claimed gold in the men's 5,000m relay on Sunday, the final day of the Short Track Speed Skating World Tour in Seoul.

The gold-medal lineup featured Li Wenlong, Liu Shaoang, Liu Shaolin and Sun Long, who showcased outstanding teamwork and delivered a winning time of six minutes and 53.654 seconds, defeating Japan and South Korea in a closely fought race.

Canada's William Dandjinou dominated the men's 1,000m, capturing his second gold of the tournament with a time of 1:24.548. Jens van't Wout of the Netherlands took the silver in 1:24.741, and the bronze went to local skater Jang Sung-woo in 1:24.843.

In the women's competition, Kristen Santos-Griswold of the United States stood out with two gold medals, winning the 500m and 1,500m.



Florence Brunelle of Canada and Belgium's Hanne Desmet completed the podium in the 500m, while Desmet and America's Corinne Stoddard earned silver and bronze in the 1,500m.

In the mixed team relay, South Korea delivered a thrilling performance to claim victory with a time of 2:38.036. The host nation nar-

rowly edged out China, who finished just behind in 2:38.051, and Canada, who secured third place in 2:38.513.

Over the three-day competition, Canada emerged as the biggest winner with four gold medals, while South Korea and the United States each claimed two. China finished with one gold and one silver.

Suns Send Trail Blazers to 6th Straight Loss With 116-109 Victory

PHOENIX (AP) — Devin Booker scored 28 points and the Phoenix Suns beat Portland 116-109 on Sunday night to extend the Trail Blazers' losing streak to six games.

Kevin Durant added 20 points, Tyus Jones had 19, and Royce O'Neale — starting for the injured Bradley Beal — scored 13 points. Jusuf Nurkic had 10 points and 14 rebounds.

Anfernee Simons scored 20 points to lead the Trail Blazers. Jerami Grant and reserve Deni Avdija scored 17 apiece.

A game after the Suns made 22 3-pointers in a victory at Utah, they hit 15 on Sunday. Booker and Grayson Allen each made four to lead Phoenix.

Former Suns No. 1 pick Deandre Ayton didn't make the trip for the Trail Blazers due to illness.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Jerami Grant (9) guards Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant (35) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024, in Phoenix.

Rookie Donovan Clingan started in his place and finished with 10 points and nine rebounds.

The Suns never trailed in the first half, but the Trail Blazers began the third quarter with an 11-0

run to take a 62-57 lead. Simons' 3-pointer gave Portland its first lead at 60-57 early in the third quarter and Shaedon Sharpe's steal and dunk completed an 11-0 run