

Iran Honors 30 Athletes Martyred in Israeli Aggression

TEHRAN -- Iran held a solemn ceremony here to honor the families of 30 Iranian athletes martyred during the recent 12-day Israeli aggression against the country.

The event, attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Sports and Youth, heads of sports federations, and relatives of the martyred athletes, underscored the nation's commitment to remembering the victims and promoting unity amid ongoing conflict.

The ceremony also marked the send-off for Iran's delegation to the 12th edition of The World Games (TWG 2025 Chengdu), scheduled for August 7 to 17 in China.

In a symbolic show of solidarity, the athletes performed a military salute, echoing a similar gesture by Iran's under-16 women's basketball team during their recent match



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against Jordan at the West Asia Championship.

Since the outbreak of Israeli attacks on June 13, Iranian officials

have reported that at least 68 athletes were among those martyred, highlighting the extensive human cost of the conflict.

Ali Rezaei, the Leader's representative in Iran's Volunteer Basij Force Organization, opened the ceremony, emphasizing the critical role of sports martyrs in preserving the country's national and religious identity.

Rezaei called on today's athletes to carry forward values of sacrifice, spirituality, and resistance, beyond mere athletic achievement.

Abdolhossein Khosrowpanah, Secretary of Iran's Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution, praised the athletes' patriotism and solidarity during the war, calling them "the real heroes" who made profound sacrifices despite their non-combatant roles. He noted that the sports community had suffered the largest number of martyrs, bringing honor and dignity to Iranian sports amid the turmoil.

Iranian Wushu Fighter Bags Silver at Asian Championships in China

TEHRAN - Amir Mehdi Shirdel, a promising young wushu athlete from Iran's Ardabil Province, secured a silver medal in the 75kg weight class at the ongoing Asian Junior Wushu Championships in China.

Shirdel showcased impressive form throughout the competition,

defeating several opponents to reach the final bout.

However, in the championship match, he fell short against his rival from Macau, earning the silver medal and the title of runner-up.

The Asian Junior Wushu Championships have seen strong perfor-

mances from the Iranian delegation overall. With a total haul of seven golds, two silvers, and one bronze, Iran emerged as the overall champion of the tournament, underlining its dominance in the sport across the continent.

Ardabil's wushu program contin-

ues to produce top-tier talent, with numerous athletes from the province representing Iran on international stages in recent years.

Many have gone on to achieve significant success in Asian and world championships, as well as the Olympics.

U-19 Volleyballers Fall Short Against Italy at World Championship



TEHRAN -- Iran have lost in three straight sets to Italy at the 2025 FIVB Boys' U-19 World Championship.

The young Iranian volleyball team lost to the team of Italy 3-1 (25-16, 26-28, 26-24, 25-17) in Pool C and finished in fourth place. Muhammad Amin Rahimi

scored 19 points for Iran and Manuel Hristov Zlatanov collected 15 points for the Italian team.

Iran will meet Belgium in Round of 16 later today.

The competition is being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from July 24 to August 3.

Marchand Returns to World Stage With Fastest Heat Swim in 200 Medley



France's Leon Marchand in action during heat 5

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Leon Marchand was fastest in the 200 meters individual medley (IM) heats at the world championships in Singapore on Wednesday as France's Olympic hero made his long-awaited return to the world stage.

The four-times Olympic champion glided to a time of one minute, 57.63 seconds, 0.11 ahead of Japan's Kosuke Makino, in an encouraging start to his bid for a third world title in the event and a possible world record.

Exhausted after the Paris Games, Marchand skipped the short course world championships in Hungary last December and suffered injuries before returning to the pool for the TYR Pro Series in Florida in May.

He is swimming a reduced program in Singapore, focusing on the 200 and 400 IM alone for individual events as he works through what he calls a "transition year".

Summer McIntosh is on the other end of the spectrum as she looks to match Michael Phelps's record of five individual gold medals from a single world championship.

Having already won two of them, the 200 IM and 400 freestyle, the 18-year-old Canadian started her bid for the third in the 200 butterfly on day four with the fastest swim in the heats (2:07.07).

American Regan Smith was third quickest into the semi-finals, more than a second behind McIntosh, while China's 12-year-old wunderkind Yu Zidi was fifth fastest (2:08.95).

Three years after winning the 100 and 200 freestyle in Budapest, Romania's David Popovici is eyeing another double in the

sprints.

The 20-year-old Olympic bronze medalist was fastest in the 100 heats in 47.41, the morning after his 200 triumph in Singapore.

Olympic champion and world record holder Pan Zhanle (47.86), and runner-up Kyle Chalmers (47.48) were among eight swimmers under the 48-second barrier on the way to the evening semi-finals.

Canada's Kylie Masse qualified fastest for the women's 50 backstroke semi-finals with a time of 27.46. Regan Smith and fellow American Katharine Berkoff, who medalled in the 100 behind winner Kaylee McKeown, were also safely through.

Australia's world record holder McKeown skipped the event.

The session finished with a shock as Olympic champions the United States failed to reach the final of the 4x100 mixed medley. Several U.S. swimmers have not been at their best in Singapore after a bout of food poisoning swept through the team's pre-meet camp in Thailand.

France and Britain also missed out but Italy emerged quickest in the heats in a time of 3:42.19, ahead of the Netherlands and China. Fourth-quickest Australia are also a chance for a medal in the evening final.

Five golds will be up for grabs in the evening session, with Australian Olympic champion Mollie O'Callaghan bidding for a second 200 freestyle title.

The men's 800 freestyle final will feature Ireland's Olympic champion Daniel Wiffen battling a stacked field including Australian Sam Short and Tunisia's Ahmed Jaouadi.

Top Seeds Zverev, Gauff Advance at Canadian Open

OTTAWA (Reuters) - Top seeds Alexander Zverev of Germany and American Coco Gauff advanced to the third round of the Canadian Open on Tuesday after both players were pushed hard by their opponents.

World number three Zverev, playing in his first match since his first-round loss at Wimbledon, was far from his best but emerged with a 7-6(6) 6-4 win over Adam Walton under the lights in Toronto.

Momentum shifted firmly in Zverev's favor when he won a 52-shot rally in the first set tie-break, and he sealed the win on a double fault by the Australian in the second set.

"It was a very important moment, very important point for me," Zverev said. "Lucky to get through in the first set



Alexander Zverev (GER) hits a ball to Adam Walton (not pictured) during the second round at Sobeys Stadium.

and finish it off in two."

Zverev said he did not play his "prettiest" match but was proud of how he battled after taking a break from the game following his early Wimbledon

exit.

"I took some time off, which I needed also for myself. I'm happy to be playing again," he added.

Zverev next plays 32nd seed

Matteo Arnaldi on Thursday.

On the women's side, top seed Gauff was two points from defeat but battled back to beat fellow American Danielle Collins 7-5 4-6 7-6(2) in a nearly three-hour battle to reach the third round.

French Open champion Gauff overcame 23 double faults and 74 unforced errors to beat Collins in their first career meeting.

"I was practicing well and I don't think I transferred it today, but hopefully I got my bad match of the tournament out of the way," Gauff said.

Several top players withdrew ahead of the Masters and WTA 1000 tournament including world number ones Aryna Sabalenka and Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz, Novak Djokovic and Jack Draper.

Bayern Sign Luis Diaz From Liverpool on Four-Year Deal

BAYERN (Reuters) - Bayern Munich have signed Colombian winger Luis Diaz from Liverpool on a four-year contract, the Bundesliga club said on Wednesday.

Financial details of the transfer were not revealed but British media reported Bayern paid around 75 million euros (\$86.67 million) for the 28-year-old Colombia international.

Diaz's contract with Liverpool ran until June 2027. He moved to the Merseyside club from Portuguese side Porto for around 50 million euros in January 2022.

"Three years and a half that I'll treasure forever. I arrived with all the dreams in the world, and I am leaving proud of everything we achieved together," Diaz posted on Instagram.

"I have met incredible people, fabulous colleagues, coaches who helped me a lot, and ex-

traordinary fans. Liverpool is, indeed, a special team, and I will keep everyone in my heart...

"It would have been the perfect goodbye if we hadn't lost one of ours in such a tragic way," Diaz added, referring to former Liverpool teammate Diogo Jota, who was killed in a car accident earlier this month.

"As I said, and I repeat, I carry everyone with me in my heart, but one of them in particular: Diogo. I will never forget him. We will never forget him. Thank you for everything. YNWA."

Diaz made 148 appearances in all competitions across four seasons at Liverpool, scoring 41 goals and registering 23 assists.

His best performance in the Premier League came last season, when he helped Liverpool to their record-equalling 20th English top-flight title with 13 goals and seven assists from 36 games. Diaz also helped Liver-



pool win the FA Cup in 2022 and the League Cup in 2022 and 2024.

He primarily played on the left wing at Liverpool and can also be deployed as a striker.

"Luis Diaz is an internationally experienced player with enormous quality, great skills and great reliability. He will help our team immediately. We are delighted that we were able

to sign him for Bayern," Bayern sporting director Max Eberl said in a statement.

"Transfers like this work when everything clicks into place. Our fans can look forward to an exceptional player."

Diaz is the second Liverpool player to join a German side in this transfer window, after defender Jarell Quansah moved to Bayer Leverkusen this month.