

Iran's former futsal star Babak Masoumi dies at 39

TEHRANTIMES Sports Desk TEHRAN — Former Iran futsal player Babak Masoumi died after suffering a stroke at age 39 on Wednesday.

Masoumi, who was diagnosed with blood cancer in 2008, was working as futsal technical manager for Persepolis.

Masoumi won AFC Futsal Championship six times in 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007. He also played in the FIFA Futsal World Cup in 2000 and 2004.

He was laid to rest on Friday in Karaj's Imamzadeh Taher cemetery.

Iran's Football Federation Presi-

dent Ali Kaffashian, the national team captain Ali Karimi and the other officials attended the funeral.

AFC Acting President Zhang Jilong expressed his heartfelt condolence over Masoumi's death.

"On behalf of AFC and the Asian football family, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Masoumi's family, friends and the Iranian futsal community," he said.

"It is a great loss to Asian and Iranian futsal in particular because during his playing days he established Iran as a force to reckon with in the continent."



Iran comes 6th in FIVB Junior World Championship

TEHRANTIMES Sports Desk Iran finished at sixth place in the FIVB Men's Junior World Championship after being beaten 3-2 (25-22, 20-25, 19-25, 25-22, 15-10) by host Brazil at Maracanazinho Gymnasium.

Russia claimed the title for the eighth time following a thrilling 3-2 (25-19, 23-25, 21-25, 25-18, 15-12) victory over Argentina at Maracanazinho Gymnasium in Rio de Janeiro.

Final positions: 1. Russia, 2. Argentina, 3. Serbia, 4. the U.S., 5.

Brazil, 6. Iran, 7. Spain, 8. India, 9. Belgium, 10. Germany, 11. Canada, 12. Japan, 13. Bulgaria, 14. Tunisia, 15. Egypt, 16. Puerto Rico.

Individual awards: MVP: Leonid Shchadilov (RUS); Top Scorer: Aleksandar Atanasijevic (SRB); Best Spiker: Leonid Shchadilov (RUS); Best Blocker: Igor Filippov (RUS); Best Server: Amir Ghafour (IRI); Best Setter: Jesus Bruque (ESP); Best Receiver: S. Kanagaraj (IND); Best Libero: Aleksey Kabeshov (RUS).

Sepahvandi wins silver in Asian boxing

TEHRANTIMES Sports Desk Iran's Abdolmajid Sepahvandi claimed a silver medal in the Asian Boxing Confederation's Men's Elite Championships in Incheon, South Korea on Friday.

The Iranian super heavyweight class boxer was beaten by Doszhan Ospanov from Kazakhstan 18:13 in the final and won the silver.

Ospanov had defeated Olympic Games silver medalist, Zhang Zhilei from China while the Persian beat Iraqi boxer in the semifinal.

In the heavyweight division, Mohammad Nouripour was knocked down by Syrian Mohammad Ghosoun 23:8 in the semifinal and claimed a bronze medal.

Altogether 160 boxers from 23 countries took part in the biggest event of the year: China, Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Persepolis suffers another defeat



TEHRANTIMES Sports Desk TEHRAN — Persepolis football team experienced its second loss in the third week of the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Thursday night.

The most popular Iranian team who was defeated by Shahin of Bushehr in the second week, lost to Shahrddari 2-1 in front of about 60,000 spectators in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Meisam Ba'o put the visiting

team in the lead just one minute into the second half, chipping the ball over goalkeeper Alireza Haghighi.

Vouria Ghafouri scored Shahrddari's second goal with a powerful shot outside the penalty box in the 59th minute.

Persepolis dominated the match afterward but the strikers failed to take advantage of their chances. Persepolis captain Ali Karimi eventually scored a consolation goal in the injury time.

U.S. Grand Prix set for November



Austin Texas — Formula One officials say the renewal of the U.S. Grand Prix in Austin in 2012 will likely be run in November instead of June when temperatures will be much cooler.

Tavo Hellmund, chairman of the U.S. Grand Prix, says Wednesday that pushing the race back several months is a

sign Formula One wants the race to be successful.

The race date change won't be official until the revised 2012 calendar is ratified later this year.

The change gives organizers more time to build the \$200 million Circuit of the Americas track. Formula One hasn't staged the U.S. Grand Prix since 2007 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Russian tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov eyeing Prime Minister Job



Russian billionaire entrepreneur and owner of American basketball team New Jersey Nets, Mikhail Prokhorov, reckons that he is "capable" of being Russia's next Prime Minister.

Prokhorov, the third richest man from Russia and the 39th richest man in the world, was recently elected to lead the new Kremlin-friendly Right Cause party in Russia. "I think I am capable of doing the tasks of the prime minister," the New York Post quoted Prokhorov, as saying at a news con-

ference in Moscow. Prokhorov has been majority owner of the Nets since May 2010, making him the first non-North American to own a NBA franchise. The club, however, declined to comment on whether Prokhorov's political aspirations could affect team operations. The Prime Minister is the second most-powerful post in Russia, and is appointed by the President.

Dmitry Medvedev is the current Russian President, while Vladimir Putin is the Prime Minister.

LeBron James hopeful about NBA resolution



TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Miami Heat star LeBron James remains confident the 2011-2012 NBA season will go ahead, despite the growing pessimism of the players' union.

Speaking Friday to reporters in Taiwan, James said "right now I am working toward the NBA season, I believe there will be a season, and hopefully both sides can come together."

Players have been locked out of

team facilities since July 1 as negotiations continue on a new agreement on pay and conditions.

The two sides are split over issues including distribution of revenues and the imposition of a salary cap.

Last week, players' union chief Billy Hunter said he was doubtful about the 2011-12 season going ahead.

James is on a two-day promotional tour of Taiwan.

Fabregas finally seals Barcelona switch as Arsenal skipper jets to Spain to seal £31m deal

Arsenal have finally cut their ties with Cesc Fabregas after agreeing a £31million deal with Barcelona.

Fabregas is expected to sign a five-year deal with the European champions and should be unveiled on Saturday before attending the Spanish Super match with Real Madrid at the Bernabeu.

Barca star Gerard Pique Tweeted his friend: 'He's finally here!'

Earlier, Arsene Wenger invited ridicule after claiming he expects 'nobody to leave' Arsenal during the transfer window.

Samir Nasri is also on the brink of quitting the Emirates and is tipped to

join Manchester City in the next 48 hours.

Both players attended what is likely to be their final training session together on Friday morning.

Fabregas has finally settled his long-running sag, with the club's goalkeeper Victor Valdes earlier claiming his Spain team-mate is set to join him at the Nou Camp.

'I cannot see Barcelona without Cesc,' Valdes said. The deal is nearly done - it will be made official in the next few hours.'

Neither Fabregas or Nasri were included in the Arsenal squad to face

Newcastle on Saturday.

But speaking ahead of his side's Premier League opener, Wenger remained adamant the wantaway duo would not be leaving.

'I expect nobody to leave the club,' said Wenger. 'The best thing for us one day before the championship starts is to focus on possible transfers.'

'At the moment there is no news. If there is news I promise I will give it. I will decide what's best for the club.'

'My personal feelings are not important. What is important is the club and how well we do.'

'I have not been disappointed with their attitudes. They are professionals. I take nothing personally.'

'The transfer speculation is disruptive but that is not an excuse.'

Man City boss Roberto Mancini was giving little away over his pursuit of Nasri.

'I don't know what the situation is,' he said. 'We start in the Premier League on Monday and we need to complete our team.'

'We hope we can do that very quickly because we need more players.'

(Source: DailyMail)

FOOTBALL

Liverpool sign Enrique from Newcastle

Liverpool have signed left-back Jose Enrique from Newcastle United.

The Spanish defender, 25, penned what the club described as a "long-term contract" in a reported £6 million deal after undergoing a medical.

"This is one of the happiest days of my life," he said. "I have come to one of the biggest clubs not just in England, but in the world. I am really, really happy."

"They have won a lot of things including the Champions League. They have amazing players and I hope to win things here."

"Of course I am looking forward to playing in front of the Kop. Everybody speaks about the fans here and they are amazing. I am looking forward to it. I hope it will be this weekend, but if not I can wait."



He replaces Paul Konchesky, sold to Leicester, and will compete for a starting berth with either Emiliano Insua or Fabio Aurelio, with one of the South American pair now set to move on.

The deal is another major signing for Reds boss Kenny Dalglish, with England midfielders Stewart Downing and Jordan Henderson, Brazilian goalkeeper Doni and Scotland playmaker Charlie Adam also bought this summer.

Former Newcastle striker Andy Carroll and Uruguay World Cup star Luis Suarez were signed by Dalglish in the winter transfer window.

Even though Liverpool's opening match of the season - at home to Sunderland - is just over 24 hours away, Enrique feels he is ready to play and ambitiously targeted the league title.

"If the manager needs me, I am ready to play," said Enrique.

"I have already played for Newcastle in pre-season, not every game but two or three games and I am fit and if the manager needs me, I am ready to play."

"My ambition is win everything with Liverpool. This year we won't play in the Champions League, so the most important thing is to try and win the league."

Enrique joined Newcastle from Villarreal in 2007 for around £6.3m but a contract impasse saw the Magpies cash in with just a year left to run on his existing deal.

He is the third big-name player to leave the club following owner Mike Ashley's decision to replace Chris Hughton with his friend Alan Pardew, joining Carroll at Anfield, while former captain Kevin Nolan moved to West Ham.

Midfielder Joey Barton is also expected to leave the club after being handed a free transfer.

(Source: Eurosport)

All athletes to be blood-tested, says IAAF

Every athlete competing in this year's World Athletics Championships would be blood-tested in an unprecedented anti-doping programme, the sport's governing body said on Thursday.

The blood-testing programme at the August 27 to September 4 event in Daegu, South Korea, would be carried out in addition to the regular doping controls—in Daegu approximately 500 urine samples will be collected in and out-of-competition combined, the IAAF said.

It will mark the first time that almost 2,000 elite athletes competing in a major sports event will be blood tested under the same optimal conditions, within the same period.

The samples will be analysed by the Lausanne WADA-accredited Anti-Doping Laboratory on-site in Daegu for a first screening analyses and after the end of the Championships in Lausanne for further analyses.

The analyses would focus on measuring relevant parameters (biomarkers) for individual profiling purposes within the framework of the Athlete Biological Passport, the IAAF said.

The results will be used in three ways—as a first "fingerprint" for athletes with no previous records at the IAAF; to build upon already existing athlete profiles recorded and followed at the IAAF; and to establish the reference ranges of relevant biomarkers among elite male and female athletes.

Suspicious results from the screening analyses performed on-site could trigger follow-up target tests in Daegu in urine (notably for EPO) and/or further analyses for prohibited substances or prohibited methods in blood in Lausanne.

All results can ultimately be used in support of an anti-doping rule violation if an athlete's overall biological profile is found to be consistent with the use of a prohibited substance or a prohibited method, in accordance with IAAF Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations.