

Team Melli hunts Dragons!

Iranian players celebrating a late dramatic win over Wales in FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar.

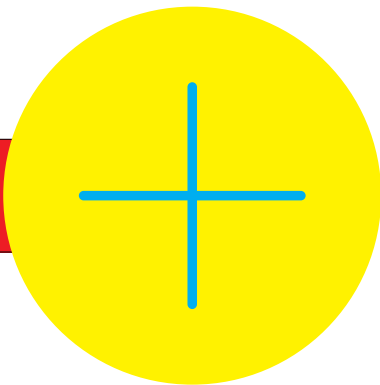
Team Melli lads overcame Wales in a late dramatic 2-0 win that marked Iran's first ever win over a European opponent in FIFA World Cup 2022. The win kept the hopes of Carlos Quieroz's men alive to advance to the knock-out stage.



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Amlash:  
A pearl in northern Iran



Amlash, a city in the northern province of Gilan, resembles a massive house in a dead-end street, as it meets green mighty mountains on the south. From gorgeous nature to history, Amlash has it all. So your journey to this site will be a full one. A pearl in the province, Amlash, recently expanded, is now a haven for tourists and sightseers. It has indeed raised the expectations of national and international tourists with its heavenly beauty, iranasia.com wrote. A popular tourist attraction in recent years, Amlash is geomorphologically important. There you can see three distinct parts: plains, foothills and mountains. Once clad in verdant forests, the foothills are now home to tea gardens. The mountains in the south are visited by climbers and hikers. The highest parts are quite cold and covered in snow and ice. In hot seasons, it's cool and mild. The plains and foothills are mild. The unspoiled piece of land brings together all elements of a cool journey: Caves, natural glaciers, springs, and wetlands. As a historic place, Amlash holds cultural and historic landmarks, among which are the Imam Tower, Sufism houses, and Shahneshtin Castle. Best time to visit is in the spring when fresh cool air rejuvenates visitor's souls. All the hills and slopes are green, a genuine manifestation of beauty. Autumn is also imposing in Amlash. Vivid colors of foliage are amazing; it feels as if you are going through a covered road with mesmerizing natural colors. Perhaps autumn presents best opportunities for honeymooners. There is plenty to do there, from fishing in the rivers to encountering animals, and swimming. Photography lovers will irresistibly record spectacular landscapes.

EXCLUSIVE

It was November 23, 1997. I was 11, living in Yazd, and anxious to see Team Melli (Iran's national football team) play the second leg of its draw against Australia in the last qualifying round for 1998 FIFA World Cup. The first leg had ended in a 1-1 draw at Azadi Stadium, swarmed by some 120,000 spectators cheering Iran boys on. The day began doubly apprehensive for me and millions of other students all over the country as it was a Sunday – a school day in Iran. To add insult to injury, Melbourne, the game's host city, was in a time zone where Sándor Puhl, the Hungarian superstar referee's first whistle coincided with our math or physics or Farsi classes. We wanted our school to close just in time for the game. We demanded that through shouts and jeers and slogans during the first two breaks. But the school authorities showed no sign of giving in, and asked us to be calm and obey the rules. And yet, seconds before we were supposed to go back to our classes after

the last break, the PA system was turned on and our solemn schoolmaster told us that those of us who wanted to watch the game, could, in an orderly fashion, assemble in the school's spacious prayer room, where a 21-inch color TV was used for educational purposes. It was our little victory that preceded our bigger one. The drama that ensued on the field, resulted in the birth of many national icons. Khodadad Azizi, who scored Iran's second goal turned into a national hero, just like Ali Daei, who assisted him, and Karim Baqeri, who scored the first goal. I doubt that there is anybody who watched that game could fight the chills when they hear the static shouts of Javad Khia-bani, the game's commentator for national TV. Oh, what a joy it was to be alive and Iranian that day. Cars kept honking and people kept shouting maa bordin (we won) all through the evening. If there really is anything to a national identity, that day was it. Twenty five years and two days later, I'm walking anxiously in the yard,

smoking, and praying to God that I'd soon hear my colleagues shout GOAAAAAAL!!!, so that I could go back inside the office, relieved, and watch who scored and how. Seconds before my wish was granted, I was thinking how we, all of us, could use a break to reflect deeply on what it means for us to be Iranian. And here we go: Right now, Team Melli is perhaps among the very few things that can unite us again. And it's been under attack, constantly, by mercenary media pundits and undiscerning political hardliners alike. Team Melli and its players have been somewhat overwhelmed by irrational requests and odd expectations, not to mention blunt insults directed at them in and outside of the stadium during the past few days. Team Melli, however, is a football team, and its mission is to score goals and win games above all else, which they beautifully did against Wales. But even as sporting figures whose positions reach and perhaps affect a wider audience, they have been what they ought to be: Iranian.

Mashallah Team Melli



PHOTO: ISNA



Winners of mosque architecture to be announced in March 2023

ARCH DAILY – Winners of the 4th Cycle of Abdullatif Alfozan Award for Mosque Architecture Announced will be announced and awarded in March 2023 in Saudi Arabia. The international master jury of the 4th cycle had their second and final meeting at Kuwait last 11-13 November 2022. The meeting was chaired by Architect Rasem Badran and attended by jurors Architect Emre Arolat (Turkey), Architect Kashif Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Artist Ahmad Mostapha (United Kingdom) and Sociologist Sari Hanafi (France).

The meeting was held over three days, during which the jury reviewed 22 shortlisted projects, which are distributed among four continents from 17 countries around the world. For the meeting, 22 detailed portfolios were prepared by 10 technical reviewers who visited those mosques and met with all architects, and eventually presented these portfolios to the jurors at Kuwait. The jurors have setup a list of criteria with different considerations through the process of selecting awarded designs for mosques, includ-

ing mosque connectivity with the surrounding environment, evolution of new forms, renovation of urban fabrics, serving surrounded communities and competence with local cultures. As a result, the jurors have selected five projects to be awarded at a massive ceremony that will take a place at the National Museum in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) on March 5, 2023. It is worth mentioning that the international master jury had its first virtual meeting last February 2022, where it reviewed the longlist of 201 nominated mosques from 70

countries, six contents of the 4th cycle (2020-2023) of the award, and the jury concluded their first meeting with 22 mosques, which was reviewed in Kuwait. The Abdullatif Alfozan Award for Mosque Architecture is a triannual architectural award that was established in 2011 in Saudi Arabia by Sheikh Abdullatif bin Ahmad Alfozan to award the best architectural design of mosques, in a process to develop mosque architecture worldwide, and currently is concluding its 4th award cycle (2020-2023).