

# Azerbaijan, Turkey split gymnastics gold

**A**zerbaijan claimed their 11th gold medal of the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games in the women's artistic gymnastics team event, before Turkey followed suit in the men's competition in Baku yesterday.

The hosts wrapped up their women's team gold medal early in the session as they held off Turkey to win by 3.400 points on 99.300 overall at the National Gymnastics Arena.

The Azerbaijani men put some pressure on Turkey, but the overnight leaders held their nerve in a thrilling finish to seal the title with a 1.35-point margin on 162.800.

The best two results from each apparatus were tallied to give a team total, during a competition that doubled up as qualification for Monday's individual apparatus finals.

Solid floor routines from Yuliya Inshina and Ekaterina Tishkova extended the hosts' lead in the women's team event to 4.950 points going into the final rotation.

Azerbaijan just needed two beam routines without glaring errors to wrap up the title, as rivals Turkey competed next to them on the floor.

Goksu Uctas Sanli (12.900) and Ekin Morova (12.400) did apply a little pressure, but Marina Nekrasova responded with the

best beam of the competition to score 12.600 and seal the home country's first artistic gymnastics gold medal of the Games in style.

Indonesia took the bronze by virtue of being the only other team competing.

Turkey led the men's competition by 1.650 going into the second and final day, but Azerbaijan had a great opportunity to take control as they were performing first.

Murad Agharzayev wasn't at his best, but Bence Talas' fantastic high bar (14.150) and solid vault (13.150) kept his team in gold-medal contention going into their last apparatus, the pommel horse.

Teenager Agharzayev picked up 13.850, before Talas produced the goods at the perfect time.

The man from Budapest pulled off a tricky routine and nailed his dismount to roars from the crowd, which only increased in volume when they saw his score of 14.100.

That effort gave Azerbaijan a final total of 161.450 ahead of Turkey's last three rotations.

The fans, although aware of the situation, were happy to cheer on Azerbaijan's traditional good friends as they solidified their lead in the high bar.

The home team had struggled in the vault and Turkey made them pay thanks to Ferhat Arican (13.400) and Ahmet Onder (14.100).

That left Turkey needing a score of just 24.750 on the pommel horse to pip the Azeris to the gold medal.

But Ibrahim Colak stuttered and made a mess of the dismount to leave his teammates with plenty to do.

## Abdullayev shines in welterweight prelims

**Baku**

**A**zerbaijan's Tamerlan Abdullayev produced one of the performances of the day as the boxing events continued yesterday with the men's welterweight (69kg) preliminaries.

The local fighter was given a

raucous reception at Baku's Crystal Hall as he squared off against Turkmenistan's Muhammetmyrat Sahedov in the second bout.

Abdullayev stood at least half a foot taller than his opponent and always looked in control, in spite of some spirited resistance from the Turkmenistanis.

The home hopeful grew into the fight after a somewhat laboured opening, and sent Sahedov to the mat at the end of the second round after surviving a furious flurry.

Sahedov visibly tired in the third and it was no great surprise to see the five judges award victory to Abdullayev by a unanimous points decision.

Meanwhile, it was a good day for boxing's traditional powerhouses.

Ilya Ochkin of Kazakhstan won opening combat with Morocco's Abdelkadir Bellassek, while Uzbekistan's Bobo-Usmon Baturov powered past Ahmed Harara of Palestine.

Turkey's Onder Sipal, Syria's Ahmad Ghosson and Cameroon's Mahaman Smaila also progressed to the next round of the welterweight (69kg) competition.

Azerbaijan's Ruslan Lunev competes during the men's 25m rapid fire pistol event

## Double for Lunev, firsts for B'desh, Qatar

**Baku**

**A**zerbaijan's Ruslan Lunev made it two straight title wins as he claimed his second gold medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku on Sunday in the men's 25-metre rapid fire pistol final while Bangladesh and Qatar both opened their gold medal account.

The home shooter, who took gold in the 25-metre centre-fire pistol event on Saturday, beat Said Al Hashmi of Oman in a shoot off and then came from behind in the final to overtake Turkey's Murat Kilic.

Oman's Hashmi had a perfect series with five hits to earn bronze in what was his first international final.

In the men's trap final, Egypt claimed a second gold medal as Ahmed Kamar edged a tightly-contested

showdown.

Kamar hit an impressive 25 consecutive targets to leapfrog Turkey's Orguzhan Tuzun into first place, finishing with an impressive 42 points. Nasser Ali Al Hemaiddi of Qatar grabbed bronze.

But the story of the day came from Qatar as Aldana Saad Almubarak shed tears of joy when she won her country's first gold in the women's 25-metre pistol final.

The 24-year old

sharpshooter came from behind to see off Iran's Haniyeh Rostamiyan and three-time African champion Olfa Cherni of Tunisia.

"I'm very happy. It's the fruit of my hard work. But it wasn't easy: I had to come from behind to win in front of shooters who were at the Olympics.", Almubarak said.

It was a maiden win for Bangladesh too as the mixed team claimed victory in the 10-meter air-rifle event.

## Kata gold for Azeri

**Baku**

**A**zerbaijan's Roman Heydarov edged out Mehmet Yakan of Turkey in Sunday's men's kata karate final at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku.

The local hero won 3-2 in the final match after cruising past his opponents 5-0, 3-2 and 5-0. Zeyad Mohamed of Egypt and Abolfazl Shahrjerdi of Iran both claimed bronzes.

The women's kata final was won by Dilara Bozan of Turkey, who got the better of Egypt's Aya Ismail 3-2.

Bozan finished ahead of Ismail while Iran's Mahsa Afsaneh and Indonesia's Sisilia Ora took the bronzes.

Uzbekistan's Nuriniso Usmanova competes during the Rhythmic Gymnastics Individual Women Apparatus Finals



Saudi Arabia's Alsumami Faisal competes during the men's weightlifting 62kg event