

Speech For Mr Majid Rashed for 2022 Iran Paralympic Day

My name is Majid Rashed and I have the honour of being the President of the Asian Paralympic Committee. I am delighted to be invited to speak at this, the 15th National Paralympic Day, to be held in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

To have such a longstanding event, celebrating the achievements of people with an impairment, is a testament to the fine work being done by Iran's National Paralympic Committee. These days have been held up as a beacon of best practice right across our region, with many NPCs using them as inspiration to hold similar events.

I'm really delighted that, thanks to Iran's success in controlling the Covid pandemic, the Paralympic days can take place across the country once more. The 2019 day reached 60,000 people across 31 cities and I'm sure that this edition in 2022 will be equally as successful.

National Paralympic Days are important because they shine a spotlight on the Paralympic Movement, which changes attitudes towards people with disabilities. This in turn leads to a more inclusive society where everyone has opportunities to contribute and progress. These are the fundamental aims of the whole Paralympic Movement and, within our region, Iran is having great success.

This can be seen in the impressive results that Iranian athletes achieve on the field of play in both summer and winter sports. At the last edition of the Asian Para Games in Jakarta in 2018, Iran came third on the medal table. At last year's, Asian Youth Para Games in Bahrain, the young stars of Iran topped the medal table, winning an impressive 122 medals. This shows that these days are working and are making young people with an impairment in Iran aware of the possibilities available to get involved in sport.

If you are listening to this having never tried para-sport, I urge you to give it a go. To see the sport and meet the athletes will hopefully inspire many of you here today to take up sport and begin a journey that will enhance your life. I was once an athlete and, whilst I never competed at a Paralympic Games, I know how beneficial getting involved in sport can be, for your physical health and your mental well-being. You can make life-long friends and grow in confidence, things that will benefit all aspects of your life.

I'd like to thank everyone at the National Paralympic Committee of Iran for all their hard work in putting on this event. It is a very powerful demonstration of the Paralympic spirit in action and will help to grow the movement even further in this country. Finally, I'd like to wish the event every success, I'm sure it will continue to be an inspiration to other countries in Asia to follow suit.

Best of luck to everyone and have fun!

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