

Iran's saber team, comprising four male and female fencers apiece, left for Georgia on Wednesday ahead of the FIE Fencing World Cup, starting Friday in Tbilisi.

# Iran confirms squad for Women's Asian Cup



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## Sports Desk

Head coach Maryam Irandoost announced Iran's 23-woman squad for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup – kicking off in India on January 20.

Iran will get its campaign underway on the opening day of the competition against the host in Group A, which also features eight-time champion China, and Chinese Taipei.

Irandoost's team will then take on China – the most decorated team in the history of the competition – on January 23 in Mumbai before squaring off against Chinese Taipei three days later.

Four semifinalists of the 12-team event will qualify for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, with the final slot being decided through inter-confederation playoffs.

Iran made history in September when Zohreh Koudaei saved two spot

kicks to lead Irandoost's women to a 4-2 shootout victory over Jordan for a first-ever berth in the Asian Cup.

A place in the finals could already be considered as a huge success for Iran, which had even been removed from the FIFA Women's World Ranking for five months – for what the international football governing body had described as lack of competitive action for two years – before regaining its spot last April.

Iran's full squad for 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup:

**Goalkeepers:** Zohreh Koudaei, Maryam Yektaei, Arefeh Seyyed-Kazemi  
**Defenders:** Fatemeh Aminah, Hadiyeh Kor, Melika Motevalli, Ghazaleh Banitalebi, Zohreh Jalali, Fatemeh Adeli, Behnaz Taherkhani  
**Midfielders:** Zahra Sarbali, Sara Zohrabinia, Samaneh Chahkandi, Yasaman Farmani, Elham Farahmand, Zahra Ma'soumi, Melika Mohammadi, Marziyeh Nik-khah, Sana Sadeqi  
**Strikers:** Negin Zandi, Afsaneh Chatrehoor, Hajar Dabbaghi, Sara Qomi



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## Anderlecht, Hull City among suitors for Fenerbahce's Sayyadmanesh

### Sports Desk

Anderlecht – the most decorated club in Belgian top-flight – and English second-tier side Hull City are in race to sign Fenerbahce's Iranian prodigy Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, according to Iranian website Varzesh3.

Citing several Turkish sources, the website wrote both clubs have already seen initial €5 million offers rejected by the Turkish giant as the club is not willing to let go of its Iranian asset for less than €8 million.

Shakhtar Donetsk also eyes a bid for Sayyadmanesh, but the Iranian has reportedly no intention of moving back to the Ukrainian Premier League, where he spent 15 months on loan at Zorya Lugansk before rejoining Fenerbahce in December.

The Iranian international is believed to be interested in moving to Belgium's Jupiler Pro League and working under former Manchester City center-back Vincent Kompany at Anderlecht, which currently sits third in the table.

Sayyadmanesh, 20, has been in fine form this season, bagging nine goals – coupled with four assists – in 24 appearances for Zorya across all competitions – including a couple of strikes against CSKA Sofia in the UEFA Europa Conference League.

## Grizzlies beat Warriors for 10th consecutive NBA win

Ja Morant scored 29 points to lead the Memphis Grizzlies to their 10th consecutive win with a 116-108 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

The Grizzlies trailed by three points entering the final quarter but took control late on to extend their franchise record for most wins in a row, BBC Sport reported.

Memphis are now fourth in the Western Conference, with the Warriors second.

"I was aggressive, I got going very early," said Morant.

"I made them change their scheme up. If you blitz me I feel like I have a lot of guys who can score the basketball."

Ziaire Williams and Tyus Jones had 17 points for the Grizzlies, while Brandon Clarke scored 14.

Warriors star Stephen Curry made 27 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists – his second triple-double of the season – and Klay Thompson hit 14 points in his second game back after a 31-month injury absence.

The Phoenix Suns moved one game clear of the Warriors at the top of the Western Conference with a 99-95 win over the Toronto Raptors.

Suns guard Devin Booker put his side ahead with a minute remaining and hit two crucial late free throws as he scored 16 points overall.

Phoenix now have a NBA-best record of 31 wins and nine defeats.

Eastern Conference leaders the Chicago Bulls comfortably beat the Detroit Pistons 133-87 for their 10th win in their last 11 games.

Nikola Vucevic hit 22 points for the Bulls, while DeMar DeRozan added 20.

The Los Angeles Clippers, who scored just 28 points in the first half, came from 25 points down in the third quarter to beat the Denver



JOE RONDONE/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL  
 Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (C) goes up for a dunk during an NBA victory over the Warriors at FedExForum, Memphis, TN, US, on January 11, 2022.

Nuggets 87-85.

The Washington Wizards beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 122-118 and the New Orleans Pelicans secured a 128-125 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Novak Djokovic said "human error" was behind a mistake made on his Australian entry documents that breached the country's strict laws on reporting recent travel, as the government weighed whether to deport the player.

Djokovic was held in immigration detention in Melbourne for several days after his visa was cancelled by border force officials, who questioned his medical exemption for a requirement to be vaccinated for COVID-19, Reuters reported.

He was released on Monday when a judge quashed that decision, saying the cancellation of the visa was "unreasonable" because the player had not been given time to consult with lawyers and tennis officials when he arrived in the country.

On Wednesday, Djokovic said his travel declaration was filled in by his support team, who made an "administrative mistake" when they ticked the "no" box in response to whether he had travelled elsewhere in the 14 days before arriving in Australia.

"This was human error and certainly not deliberate," Djokovic said in a post on Instagram. "We are living in challenging times in a global pandemic and sometimes these mistakes can occur."

The statement came as Australia's Immigration Minister Alex Hawke considered whether to cancel the world number one tennis player's visa ahead of the Australian Open, which starts on Jan. 17.

Djokovic, who is seeking to win a record 21st tennis major at the Open, said his lawyers had provided additional information to the Australian government on Wednesday.

A spokesman for Hawke, who has the discretionary power to again cancel Djokovic's visa, said the consideration process would be extended to assess the new information.

A medical exemption. Djokovic's visa was cancelled on the grounds he has not been vaccinated and his medical exemption was not satisfactory.

Monday's court ruling did not

## Djokovic confirms error on Australian entry form, visa still in doubt



LOREN ELLIOTT/REUTERS  
 Novak Djokovic practices at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, on January 12, 2022.

### Strict rules

Djokovic's case sparked global interest, provoking a row between Canberra and Belgrade and fuelled heated debate over mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies.

Australia has a policy barring non-citizens or non-residents from entry unless they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 but offers

address whether that exemption – based on Djokovic contracting COVID-19 last month – was valid.

The Women's Tennis Association raised concerns on Wednesday about doubles specialist Renata Voracova, who left Australia on Friday after her visa was cancelled, saying the Czech player followed the rules and had done nothing wrong.

Voracova, who also had a CO-

VID-19 exemption and was detained after Djokovic's arrival, had already been in the country for several days and taken part in a warm-up event.

Voracova told Luxembourg TV channel RTL Today she would consider legal action if Tennis Australia did not compensate her for travel expenses and potential lost prize money.

Questions arose about Djokovic's movements before coming to Australia when social media posts appeared to show him in Belgrade less than two weeks before he headed to Spain and then on to Australia.

### Interview apology

The player also apologised in his statement for attending a L'Equipe interview and photoshoot on Dec. 18, the day after he said he learned he had tested positive for COVID-19 – for the second time.

"While I went home after the interview to isolate for the required period, on reflection, this was an error of judgement and I accept that I should have rescheduled this commitment," he said.

Djokovic denied media reports he also knew he had contracted the virus when he attended a tennis event in Belgrade to present awards to children a day earlier.

Public opinion in Australia, which is battling an Omicron wave of infections and where more than 90% of the adult population is double vaccinated, has been largely against the player.

A leaked video showing two news anchors on a top-rating television network attacking Djokovic off-air went viral on social media on Wednesday.