

Iran remains 21st in FIFA Ranking, second in Asia



● MOHAMMADREZA ALIMADADI/IRNA

Sports Desk

Iran retained the 21st spot in November's FIFA Men's Ranking, released by the international football governing body on Thursday.

Amir Qalenoee's side tallied 1565.08 points to remain second to Japan, which moved up to world No. 17 with 1620.19 points, in the Asian standing. Qalenoee's men began their quest for a place in the 2026 World Cup with a 4-0 home victory over Hong Kong, China in the latest international break in mid-November, before surrendering a two-goal halftime lead to share the points with Uzbekistan in a 2-2 draw in Tashkent in Group E of the Asian qualifiers less than a fortnight ago.

Iran is followed by South Korea (23rd), Australia (25th), Saudi Arabia (56th), and Qatar (58th) in the AFC ranking.

A three-time AFC Asian Cup champion, Iran will be looking to end a 58-year drought at the continent's flagship international event – starting January 12 in Qatar. Iran will kick-start its campaign against Palestine in Group C – also featuring the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong – in Al Rayyan's Education City Stadium on Jan. 14.

Meanwhile, reigning world champion Argentina remained atop the FIFA Ranking, with France – beaten by the Argentines in last year's World Cup final – in second. England, Belgium, Brazil, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Croatia complete the top 10 of Men's Ranking.

IHF Women's World Championship: Iran off to losing start against Poland



● Iran's Hadiseh Norouzi shoots during a defeat against Poland at the IHF Women's World Championship in Herning, Denmark, on November 30, 2023.
● IHF

Sports Desk

Iran began its campaign at the IHF Women's World Handball Championship – cohosted by Sweden, Norway, and Denmark – with a 35:15 defeat against Poland.

Participating at the flagship international tournament of the sport for only the second time, Iran struggled early on against the European side in Herning's Jyske Bank Boxen on Thursday, turning the ball over on 18 occasions, as plenty of misplaced passes saw the Asians fall 9:1 behind before taking their first timeout.

The introduction of goalkeeper Fateh-meh Khalili improved the Iranians' defensive display, helping them em-

bark on 6:4 run, but Poland coach Arne Senstad made several changes to turn things around.

The substitutions paid off as Poland went into halftime with an 18:8 advantage and then picked up where it left off before the break, extending the lead with a 4:1 run.

Iran tried to reduce the deficit by bringing in an extra outfield player but was left exposed in the back, with Poland – fourth-placed in the competition in 2013 and 2015 – making the most of the situation to seal the victory.

Magda Balsam and Dagmara Nocuń were Poland's top scorers on the night with six goals apiece, while Iranian back Fatemeh Merrikh, who was among the top 10 scorers at last year's Youth

World Championship, also bagged six to grab the Player of the Match award. Elsewhere in Group F of the preliminary round, Germany edged out Japan 31:30.

Having finished fourth in the Asian Championship last year for a second successive berth at the world event, Iran will be the clear underdog when taking on Germany today before Monday's game against Japan – in a repeat of the Asian last-four encounter, which the Japanese won 43:19.

A place in the main-round groups might be far beyond the Iranians' reach, but they will still be looking to have a decent run in the President's Cup, which will decide the 25th-32nd places of the competition.

Saudi Arabia to host AFC Champions League Elite finals

REUTERS – Saudi Arabia will host the first two editions of the AFC Champions League Elite finals when the continent's revamped elite club competition begins next season, the Asian Football Confederation said on Friday.

The competition, which replaces the existing AFC Champions League, begins in September next year and sees the region's top 24 clubs divided into two leagues of 12 across East and West.

Clubs will compete home and away for a place in the round of 16, with the eight winners advancing to a centralised final round where teams play the quarter-finals, semis and final in a single leg format. The move is part of a major overhaul of club competitions in Asia that has also seen the top prize in the continent's top tier club event increase to \$12 million

from \$4 million.

Saudi Arabia won the rights for the first two years of the finals ahead of a rival bid submitted by the Iraq Football Association "after evaluating the infrastructure and accommodation requirements", the AFC said in a statement.

The Saudis have also been provisionally awarded the hosting rights for a further three years subject to an AFC review of the initial seasons, it added.

The event is the latest to be awarded to the Saudi Arabia, which will organise the FIFA Club World Cup later this month and is the only nation to have submitted a bid to host the 2034 World Cup finals.

The country has already been granted the rights to host the 2027 Asian Cup finals and Riyadh will organise the 2034 Asian Games.



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Notice of tender for export sale No. 14/1402/Z		Analysis %	
Min	65.00	Fe	
Ave	1.2	FeO	
Max	0.05	P	
Max	0.01	S	
Max	3.5	SiO2	
Max	0.7	Al2O3	
Max	0.9	CaO	
Max	2.5	MgO	
Ave 250		CCS(kg/p)	
Min 90		8-16 mm%	
Ave 5		-6 mm%	
Max 3.8		A.1%	
Min 95		T.1%	
19-24		Prosity%	
Min 90		Reducibility%	

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Iron Ore pellet (%Fe:65.00) on basis of F.O.B at Barco Jetty Bandar-Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.gog.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 11th Dec. 2023 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road) Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 12th Dec. 2023 at the office of the Seller.

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