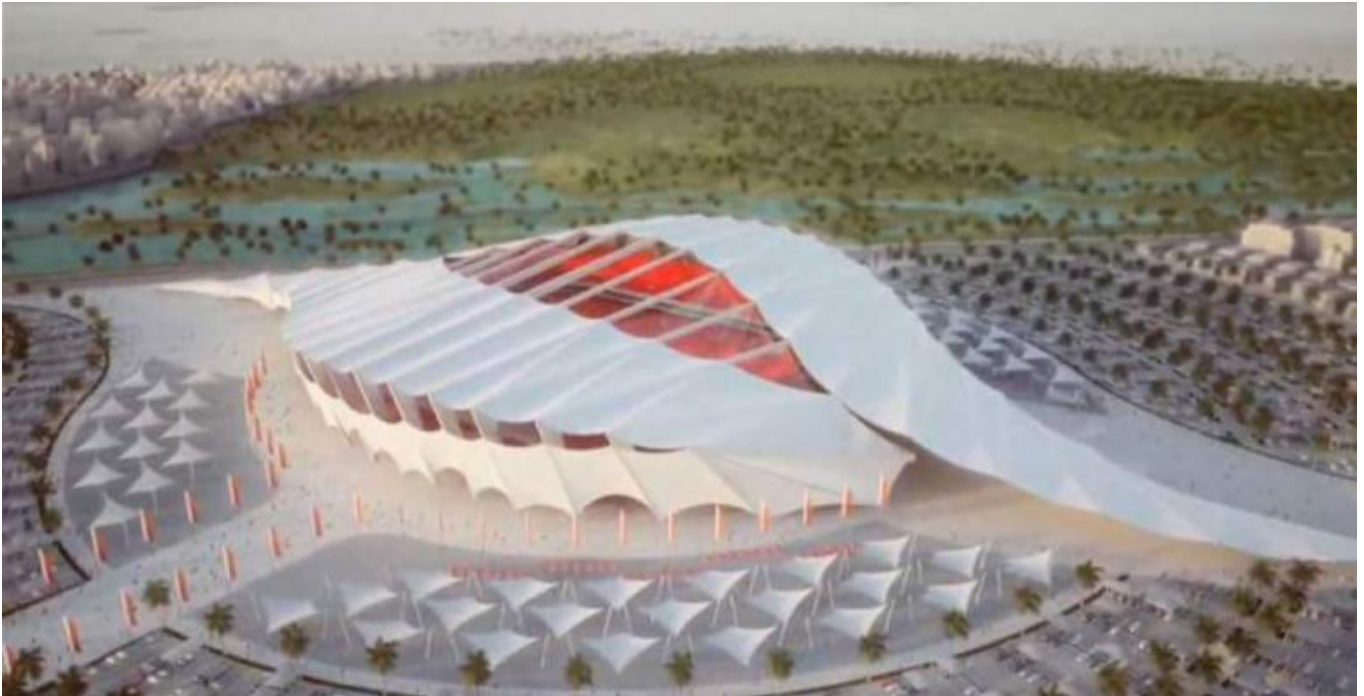

FIFA Decides On Qatar World Cup Final Date

20/03/2015



Spokesman Walter De Gregorio announced the date of the final on Thursday, but did not say when the tournament will start.

He said the governing body's committee preferred a 28-day tournament starting on 21 November, but added the kickoff date could be confirmed on Friday.

"It is a major step because finally we know and we can move forward," he added.

If confirmed, a 28-day World Cup would cut the amount of time clubs have to release players to their national teams. The usual duration is 32 days.

Video: 2013: Inside The Home Of Football

It would also protect the English Premier League's traditional Boxing Day programme on 26 December.

A FIFA task force recommended that the tournament be moved to November and December due to the searing temperatures in the Gulf emirate during the summer months.

The country's bid had originally specified that the games would be played in air-conditioned stadiums to combat the problem, but the issue of player and fan welfare has repeatedly been raised by critics.

The final is traditionally played on a Sunday and 18 December is Qatar's national day.

The Premier League has repeatedly voiced its opposition to a winter World Cup because of the problems it will cause with domestic fixtures, but UEFA backed the plan to move the tournament.

Video: FIFA: Fresh Corruption Claims

FIFA has said clubs will not receive any compensation for the move to November and December.

"It's not perfect, we know that, but why are we talking about compensation? It's happening once, we're not destroying football," secretary general Jerome Valcke said.

"Why should we apologise to the clubs? We have had an agreement with the clubs that they are part of the beneficiaries.

"It was \$40m (£25.8m) in 2010 and \$70m (£45m) in 2014."

Last month, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he wanted the 2022 World Cup final to be played at the latest on 18 December.
