

## Fixtures released

Booters play practice match today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday released the fixtures of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup international football tournament yesterday, three days after the disclosure of the groupings of the six-nation invitational tournament.

According to the fixtures, the five participating teams except for Bahrain, will travel to Sylhet to play three group matches in as many days while Bahrain, who will arrive late in Dhaka, will play both of their group matches in Dhaka.

It had been decided that hosts Bangladesh will play the tournament opener against Malaysia at the Sylhet District Stadium on January 29 and it was confirmed yesterday that they would play their second and final group match against Sri Lanka on February 2 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh team have been training for the last three weeks under interim coach Saiful Bari Titu, who will get the first opportunity to see the progress of his charges in their first practice match against Abahani at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan ground today, before the arrival of Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruif by next Friday.

"De Kruif was supposed to arrive earlier but he could not do so due to the demise of his father on Jan 13. Now it has been confirmed that De Kruif will come to Dhaka by next Friday to take charge of the national team," said Tabith Awaal, member of the National Teams Committee, yesterday.

Tabith also informed that they plan to arrange two more practice matches for the national team against Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Police.

GROUP A	GROUP B
BANGLADESH MALAYSIA SRI LANKA	BAHRAIN SINGAPORE THAILAND

### FIXTURES

DATE	MATCH	VENUE	TIME
Jan 29	Bangladesh v Malaysia	Sylhet	5:00pm
Jan 30	Singapore v Thailand	Sylhet	5:00pm
Jan 31	Malaysia v Sri Lanka	Sylhet	5:00pm
Feb 1	Bahrain v Singapore	Dhaka	5:00pm
Feb 2	Bangladesh v Sri Lanka	Dhaka	5:00pm
Feb 3	Thailand v Bahrain	Dhaka	5:00pm

SEMIFINALS			
Feb 5	A-1 v B-2	Sylhet	5:00pm
Feb 6	B-1 v A-2	Dhaka	5:00pm

FINAL			
Feb 8	Winner Semi-1 v Winner Semi-2	Dhaka	5:00pm

## ASIAN CUP Uzbekistan in quarters

AFP, Canberra

Uzbekistan booked a place in the Asian Cup quarter-finals after beating Saudi Arabia 3-1 in a nail-biter on Sunday, a bullet header from Vokhid Shodiev helping them over the line.

The substitute's dramatic winner, which came after 70 minutes, averted a controversial denouement after Saudi Arabia had been awarded a soft penalty which cancelled out an early strike from two-goal hero Sardor Rashidov.

Sun Ke scored twice to steal the show again as China defeated North Korea 2-1 in Canberra on Sunday to register their best ever start to an Asian Cup.

## Napoli go third

AFP, Milan

A superb first-half strike from Gonzalo Higuain ended Lazio's six-game unbeaten run and helped Napoli up to third place in Serie A after a precious 1-0 win away to the Biancocelesti on Sunday.

Higuain celebrated scoring his 10th goal of the campaign, which means he is now one short of league-leading Juventus striker Carlos Tevez.

Lazio saw their penalty claims waved away when Keita Balde's shot struck Raul Albiol on the hand.

In the late game, AC Milan were downed 1-0 by Atalanta.



Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates one of his two goals against Getafe yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Ronaldo lifts Real

AFP, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo rounded off a week where he was named world player of the year for the third time scoring a double as Real Madrid opened up a four-point lead at the top of La Liga with a 3-0 win away to

Getafe on Sunday.

The visitors had to wait 63 minutes to make the breakthrough before he fired home Karim Benzema's pass to set them on the road to victory.

Gareth Bale then doubled the visitors' lead before Ronaldo rounded off the scoring with a trademark header from James Rodriguez's cross.

Barcelona can cut Madrid's lead back to a solitary point when they travel to Deportivo la Coruna later on Sunday.

Just before the hour mark Madrid scored a brilliant team goal as Isco and Rodriguez combined to free Benzema and the Frenchman produced an exquisite piece of skill on the byline to cut the ball back for Ronaldo to slam home.

Just four minutes later it was 2-0 as Rodriguez provided a fine low cross that

### RESULTS

Getafe 0 **Real Madrid 3** (Benzema 63, Ronaldo 67, 78)  
Real Sociedad 0 **Rayo Vallecano 1** (Manucho 80)  
**Valencia 3** (Parejo 11, Rodrigo 28, Negredo 83) Almeria 2 (Hemed 13, 33)  
**Villarreal 2** (Cheryshev 42, Bruno 83-pen) Athletic Bilbao 0  
**Espanyol 1** (F. Caicedo 90) Celta Vigo 0

Bale prodded past Codina with the outside of his left foot.

Ronaldo wasn't to be denied his second of the afternoon 11 minutes from time, though, as another sumptuous cross from Rodriguez allowed the Portuguese to plant a firm header past the helpless Codina to register his 36th goal of the season.

Getafe failed to force Iker Casillas into a single save, but did come within inches of a consolation goal when Alvaro Vazquez fired against the post from Alex Felip's low cross late on.

In yesterday's match former Manchester City striker Alvaro Negredo came off the bench to score the winner as Valencia moved into third in La Liga thanks to a thrilling 3-2 win over Almeria on Saturday.

## Gunners silence City

AFP, Manchester



Santi Cazorla scored one goal and made another as Arsenal damaged Manchester City's Premier League title challenge with a brilliant 2-0 victory at a chilly Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

The Spanish midfielder scored a 24th-minute penalty and teed up Olivier Giroud for a second-half header to re-energise Arsene Wenger's side's push for a top-four finish, and maybe more.

Victory avenged Arsenal's crushing 6-3 loss on their last visit to this ground in December 2013 and left Manuel Pellegrini's City five points adrift of leaders Chelsea, who they play at Stamford Bridge on January 31.

For Arsenal, wins against major rivals have been few and far between in recent years, but having closed to within a point of fourth-place Manchester United, and 13 points of Chelsea, they will approach the run-in with renewed ambition.

It was City's first defeat in 15 games and gave Arsenal a first win at the Etihad since a 3-0 success in October 2010, which was the last time the home side had lost by a two-goal margin on their own turf in the league.

City have now conceded two or more goals in three successive home league games for the first time since October 2002, which will deeply concern Pellegrini ahead of their trip to Chelsea in two weeks' time.

Vincent Kompany and Sergio Aguero both made their first City starts since December after injury, but though much had been made of the anticipated showdown between Aguero and Alexis Sanchez, it was Kompany who unwittingly took centre-stage.

Earlier, Andy Carroll helped West Ham move up into seventh place in the Premier League table with a goal in their 3-0 win at home to strugglers Hull.

Second-half goals from Carroll, Morgan Amalfitano and Stewart Downing secured all three points for the east London club in front of the Upton Park home crowd.

Defeat saw Hull remain in the bottom three, still a point away from safety.

The Hammers took the lead in the 49th minute when Hull goalkeeper Allan McGregor could only tamely parry a shot from Enner Valencia and striker Carroll got in front of the covering defence to seize on the loose ball from close range.

The hosts doubled their lead through Amalfitano, who scored five minutes after being sent on as a substitute for Mark Noble by Hammers manager Sam Allardyce.

West Ham then piled on the agony for Steve Bruce's visitors three minutes later when Song's 45-yard pass through the middle evaded the Hull defence and Downing finished with aplomb.

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