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Let's prove to Thailand we can beat them

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FIRSTLY, I want to congratulate the Malaysian contingent for being the overall champion for the 21st Sea Games. It is surely a great success for the Malaysian athletes and the Youth & Sports Minister, Datuk Hishammuddin who gave his full support throughout this fascinating period.

Our PM, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also went to various venues to support our Malaysian athletes and obviously, he is a happy man to see this success.

The Malaysian soccer team also did a great job and gave their best performance. Even though they lost the gold medal to Thailand because of a terrible mistake by goalkeeper Kamarulzaman, they should not be overly sad or disappointed.

Malaysia's captain, Hairuddin Omar, said after the match against Indonesia, that there are still some people who love them - "masih ada yang sayang" - and this is true. I am one of those fans who still give full support to the Malaysian soccer team.

There are still many players that can play in Vietnam in two years time. Two years is not a long time but what has to be done now is not to point fingers at whoever caused the defeat and not to accuse the players and the coach for not doing well.

Actually, Alan Harris has done a great job and I hope FAM will retain him as Malaysia's coach until at least the next Sea Games because he is very familiar with Malaysian soccer. As for the players, they should keep improving in their games to come.

Those who can't play in the next Sea Games also should keep improving themselves so as to qualify at least for the Asia Cup or win the next Tiger Cup. In the next Sea Games, we might see a few new faces and that would mean fresh legs to lead our nation's charge.

The new players would comprise the goalkeeper from Pahang who went to Germany for training and a young player from Johor who was approached by Manchester City.

What FAM should do now is send this team overseas for further training. Just look at Akmal and Juzaili, their game has improved vastly compared to others, including the Thais. Just imagine if the whole Malaysian team was trained abroad.

If funding poses a problem for FAM, maybe they can send players overseas for a year or two. If they are good, maybe those clubs will keep them for at least five years. What is most important now is to retain all of them in the squad including the coach so that they can improve further.

FAM should also take whatever steps necessary to improve the soccer standard in Malaysia.

Lastly, I hope that the players can do better in the matches that await them. Players such as Kamarulzaman Hassan should not be disappointed in light of what happened in the Games final because what they need now is encouragement, time and experience.

Do not forget Malaysia (especially the soccer team) - there are still many who love you and support you. We will always be behind you and keep up your good work.

Do your best in the months and years to come and prove that the Thais are wrong - that we can beat them indeed.

Malaysia Boleh!!!!!!!!!!!!