

After 14 years, Malaysia win, Najib declares Friday a public holiday
Malaysianmirror.com
Disember 29, 2010

JAKARTA - Malaysia eventually lifted the AFF Suzuki Cup 2010 after beating Indonesia on a 4-2 aggregate, although in the preliminary group match the Malaysians lost 1-5 to the Indonesians who were the favourites to emerge as the champions.

Malaysia's AFF Suzuki Cup win after 14 years marks the "start of a new era" for Malaysian football, said Selangor Football Fan Club president Mohd Nasir Yunus after watching the final at the Malaysian embassy here Wednesday night.

"We came here with a three-goal cushion from the win in Bukit Jalil, that gave us the confidence and optimism here," said Malaysian football coach, K. Rajagobal after the match here.

The Malaysian football squad, dubbed as "Harimau Malaya", rebounded from the early defeat in the Group A elimination round, which Rajagobal described was due to the individual mistakes of his players.

The coach said he was always confident that the young team under his guidance could lift the championship this time after defeating defending champion Vietnam 2-0 in the first-leg semifinal.

He praised his players, especially the young defenders who were capable of giving their maximum performance to repel the attacks by the Indonesian players, who, by his assessment, were playing well on the night.

Rajagobal was also proud of the goal which he described as "sophisticated" from Safee who weakened the mental strength of the Indonesian players and, on the other hand, lifted the confidence of the Malaysian team.

"I praise the players. They certainly deserve to be the AFF Suzuki Cup champions," he said.

On the game strategy, the coach said he could read the style of play adopted by the Indonesian team who had to win 4-0 to grab the trophy.

"People usually say that Malaysian football is in decline but now the dream of fans has finally come true," said Mohd Nasir.

Nasir who led Malaysian supporters here decided to watch the match on a giant screen as a protest for seats allotted by Indonesian Football Association (PSSI) and for safety reasons.

He said Malaysia's win was a yardstick to new players and should spur them to greater heights as this would help retain the number of fans.

"Next stop is the Sea Games also in Jakarta. Fans want the football squad to prove that the win tonight is no fluke," he added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has declared Friday, Dec 31, as a public

holiday to celebrate the success by the Malaysian football squad.

Najib also congratulated the Malaysian squad for beating the Indonesian team, describing it as "the greatest night in Malaysian football".

"The young team had done us proud and we must build this success to propel Malaysian football to greater heights," he said in a statement to Bernama.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/51329>