

# Felda United enters fray

The Star - 12/12/2006

## Team set to take part in FAM Cup, says Najib

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** While their parents toiled in the plantations, the children of Felda settlers look set to take on the giants in local football.

Felda has set up the Felda United football and fan club to transform the youths into towering personalities.

It has set aside RM2mil to implement sports programmes, including the forming of the football team.

"Felda United will participate in the FAM Cup and will work towards qualifying for the Premier League," said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

If all goes well, the team would also play in Sukma (Malaysia Games) 2008.

Najib made the announcement at the launch of the Felda Youth Convention and Awards ceremony at Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday.

He hoped the children of Felda settlers would form the majority of the players in Felda United.

At a press conference, Najib said the team already had a manager and a coach.

"We will arrange their first match soon where they will take on the Malaysian Armed Forces. We want to see how they fair against the team."

Najib said the idea of setting up the football team came from the success of futsal centres at 12 Felda settlements.

"Sports activities particularly football is popular among children of Felda settlers. It is good to tap their talents and instil the *esprit de corp* among them."

Earlier in his speech, Najib outlined the other five programmes targeted for Felda youths.

They are the Felda entrepreneur incentive scheme (SIUF); housing projects for Felda set-

tlers; construction of community halls and sports complexes; skills training or courses; and the annual Felda Youth Convention and Awards.

Najib said the children and grandchildren of Felda settlers who were competitive would be given priority under SIUF, an interest and collateral free loan scheme.

He said RM100mil had been

allocated for the scheme and so far, 3,926 people had received loans amounting to RM58.5mil.

He added that emphasis would be placed on skills training or courses for Felda youths.

Over 11,000 youths are undergoing courses from tailoring to computers to aircraft maintenance engineering at the Malaysia Airlines Academy.