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Najib: Our football team will shine

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KUALA LUMPUR: Sports, especially football, has the ability to bring society and individuals together.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said this was shown from the response by Malaysians everywhere towards football.

He said he himself experienced this last month when cheering with other Malaysians for the national team when they played against Vietnam in the AFF Suzuki Cup football tournament.

"The energy was so strong that one couldn't help but be swept up in it," he said in a posting on his 1Malaysia blog titled the "United Factor" yesterday.

The national team, he said, could rise again to a great standard with focus, discipline and a good team culture.

"This could happen. Our team has already been complimented by Manchester United players, and they should take this as a motivation to

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— *Datuk Seri Najib Razak*

improve and reline their skills.

"I'm also looking forward to meeting our Malaysian football team this Wednesday to congratulate them on their win.

"These young players are the future of national football and have the potential to revive the sport domestically.

"Malaysia Cup, the longest running football tournament in Asia, has a brand new champion in Kelantan. It could be an exciting year for this much loved sport."

Najib said he always tried his best to follow the progress of his favourite sports team.

"I enjoyed some personal time after Christmas to chill out with my wife

and children (and the cats), to go for my routine jogs and to catch up on the English Premier League football."

He said, like any other Manchester United fans, he was thrilled to see the team at the top of the league with a comfortable lead in points and two games in hand.

"It may be too soon to celebrate another title, but I hope that Manchester United is able to maintain this lead in the Premiership while staying sharp for other club competitions, including the English FA Cup and the UEFA Champions League," he said.

Najib also invited people to share and discuss their favourite sports teams as well as predictions on their performance this year on his blog.