

PM: Harness Development Of Football From Grassroots Level
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SUBANG, April 8 (Bernama) -- The development of football in a planned manner right from the grassroots level should be harnessed as it is capable of raising the level of the sport in the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said he would like to see children and youths in this country playing football according to the right process and training.

"I truly believe the future of Malaysian football rests upon the systematic development of grassroots football among kids and youngsters," he said when launching the 1MCC-Astro Kem BOLA (Talent, Objective, Agility and Action) League at the Rubber Research Institute, Sungai Buloh field, near here today.

He said initiatives such as the 1Malaysia Cardiff City (1MCC) League activated by 1MCC chairman Datuk Chan Tien Ghee were among the noble efforts that could contribute effectively towards raising the standard of national football.

A total of 2,200 participants have registered to take part in the 1MCC League involving a notable football club, Cardiff City, which will select 24 of the best players to participate in football programmes in the United Kingdom.

The 1MCC League is an FAM-sanctioned league and is a platform for all aspiring footballers to make their mark in a fun-filled, safe, organised and well-structured environment.

He was confident that the involvement of Cardiff City in the 1MCC League system, which also drew the participation of players below the age of 12, would get the support of the people in the country.

"Malaysia is so passionate about football. We drink 'teh tarik' and talk about football and talk more on football over issues on politics. I can see for myself the excitement when Malaysia wins the SEA Games, Suzuki Cup and the amount of excitement is incredible," he said.

Najib said football had proven to be capable of uniting the people in the country.

"Imagine if the national (football) squad can participate in the World Cup or Olympics, it will mobilise support from the people throughout the country into a situation that cannot be achieved by any other sport," he said.

Najib said the government would do its best to assist the development of the football sport in the country.

"Yesterday I was in Temerloh, and there is a small stadium there with a seating capacity of 3,000, but I had released an allocation of RM3 million to expand the capacity of the stadium to 9,000 seats so that the people of Temerloh can benefit from sporting activities there," he

said.

He said the expansion of the stadium would bring life to the small town of Temerloh and would bring positive impact to the local traders and economy.

"Sports is not about sports alone. The sports industry also has economic value and is linked to national development," he said.

When tabling the 2012 Budget, Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, approved an allocation of RM57 million to build 2,000 futsal courts throughout the country.

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