

AFF Suzuki Cup Final: PM's Visit A Big Boost For Harimau Malaya
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 (Bernama) -- The Harimau Malaya (national squad) players) who will be playing the match of their lives against Thailand in the AFF Suzuki Cup final second leg match at the National Stadium here tonight could not have asked for a better boost when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak himself paid them a visit at their locker room.

Najib, who arrived at the venue at 7 pm, went straight to the locker room and shook hands with the players and team officials before performing the Maghrib prayers with the Muslim players and officials.

After the prayers, Najib spent about 15 minutes talking to the players to boost their spirits ahead of the all-important match which kicks off at 8pm.

Najib said he hoped they would redeem their defeat in the first leg in Bangkok on Wednesday.

He said the three-goal margin victory they needed tonight was not something impossible because they had performed a miracle when they defeated Vietnam in the semifinals.

"Most of us did not expect we could do it (beat Vietnam), but we proved we could. I believe we can do it again tonight," said Najib to thunderous applause from those present.

Coach Dollah Salleh was clearly very touched by the encouraging words from the prime minister, especially with the country eagerly awaiting to see the team overturn the 2-0 defeat in Bangkok and lift the Cup.

Malaysia had lost 1-2 to Vietnam in the first leg of the semifinals at home but defeated Vietnam 4-2 in the return leg in Hanoi.

Malaysia won the Cup in 2010 while Thailand are three-time champions.

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