



SPECIAL GUESTS: Dr Mahathir being introduced to some of the players of the Norwich City Football Club before the charity dinner in Putrajaya last night. Behind him is Proton CEO Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff.

Footballers too busy to holiday

The Star - 26/7/2004: 28 Perdana

Norwich team training hard for matches

PUTRAJAYA: For the players of Norwich City Football Club, their two-week visit to Malaysia has been far from a holiday.

The players have been busy training and playing exhibition matches against the best Malaysian football has to offer.

The team and their entourage, comprising 59 players, trainers and other staff of the football club, however, enjoyed a well-earned break last night at a charity function organised by Proton Holdings Bhd.

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad attended the dinner with his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

"I cannot confess to be a football fan but every time there is an important match, I can be

sure there will be no traffic jams as the streets of Kuala Lumpur will be unusually clear," Dr Mahathir said.

There was one parting word of advice from Dr Mahathir to the players and the 122 fans from England who followed the team - "always keep some Imodium handy in case your stomach starts to rumble from enjoying too much Malaysian food."

The fans who followed the team were treated to the sights and sounds of Kuala Lumpur and for many of them, this was their first visit to Malaysia.

According to Joe Ferrari, the media head for Norwich City, the fans ranged from children to the elderly.

One of the football club's biggest fans and major share-

holders is celebrity chef Delia Smith, who is here to cheer on her team.

She will also be meeting her fans at 3pm tomorrow at the Kinokuniya Book Store in Suria KLCC for an autograph session.

Nigel Worthington, Norwich City's manager, was happy with the team's performance on Wednesday against Selangor MPPJ but said the real test would come when they return home to the start of Premier League season in mid-August.

"The standard of Malaysian football is very high and the team knew that we would be facing a skilful side.

"Our visit here has mainly been a training session as we have to get ready for the upcoming season," Worthington said.