

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE  
OPENING OF FIFA COACHING COURSE AT  
DEWAN TUNKU CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY  
OF MALAYA, KUALA LUMPUR ON 5TH  
FEBRUARY, 1972

Y.B. Datuk Hamzah, Mr Dettma Cramer, Honoured Guests,  
Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure indeed to address you all this evening on the occasion of the launching of the Second FIFA Coaching Course. The actual course, I understand, will commence tomorrow.

I would also like to join the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and the FAM Secretary, in extending you all a warm welcome particularly to our FIFA Coach, Mr Cramer, who have come to attend the three month Coaching Session.

Mr Cramer, of course, is no stranger to us; we have had the benefit of his skill and expertise and by now he has an ex-pupil in almost every town, big or small, in this country.

Gentlemen,

Football or soccer, whichever term we prefer to use, is undoubtedly the most popular game the world over. Every school-boy, I think, knows all about Pele and his brilliant exploits; likewise, in every country, there is bound to be a national soccer idol, a local Pele, who is an object of emulation by every youngster and who commands greater admiration and influence than even the Prime Minister.

There is no better indication of the game's popularity than the fact that our TV network, Television Malaysia, has been screening "Star Soccer" programme continuously for the past many years. I can imagine that apart from the tens of thousands spectators on the screen, there must be several thousands of local soccer fans who are literally glued to their TV sets every Sunday afternoon.

Truly, therefore, this branch of sports can be considered a significant contribution to universal friendship and understanding.

Gentlemen,

I am sure you all agree with me that football in Asia has seen much progress in recent years. Quite a few countries namely Japan and Korea have already reached world standard, and, very lately, our Malaysian national team has successfully qualified for the Munich Olympic to be held in August this year.

Our initial success has brought with it a new inspiration and impetus among our youngsters. More and more are taking to the game, and there is no lack of audience for quality matches either between our own teams or with visiting teams from overseas.

Speaking for ourselves in Malaysia, this is undoubtedly a good augury for the future. And it is in this connection that we place very high value on the joint efforts by FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation and our own Football Association in holding this much needed Coaching Course.

Coaching, as we all know, is a very important aspect of any game including soccer and competent coaches should be considered vital in order to ensure progressive and systematic development of the game. Although every country is already making great strides in the training of our own national Coaches, Malaysia included, it is in my view still desirable that we should continue to obtain the services of professional coaches from overseas.

For one thing, soccer, as a game, has become highly scientific and technical. It is, therefore, very essential that we should seek assistance from the more advanced nations, at least for the time being, for the much needed professional expertise if we want to maintain the high standard in Europe and Latin America.

Gentlemen.

I am very happy that this Second FIFA Coaching School has brought here as many as sixty participants from twenty Asian Countries and Australia. While admittedly there is plenty of hard work in store for you—knowing the fast pace which Mr Cramer usually keeps up—I hope you will find time to see more of our Capital, Kuala Lumpur, and also visit other parts of the country.

I now have great pleasure to declare the Second FIFA Coaching School open.