

20
23

ACTIVITY REPORT

ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION



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FOREWORD BY THE AFF PRESIDENT



Dear Esteemed Members of the ASEAN Football Family,

As we reflect on the past year, we can proudly declare 2023 as a pivotal period of growth and transformation for the ASEAN Football Federation. This year will undoubtedly be remembered as a time when our region elevated its footballing achievements to even greater heights.

At the start of the year, we witnessed a historic AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup Final, where Thailand claimed the prestigious trophy for a record-breaking seventh time. I commend The Football Association of Thailand (FAT) for this incredible milestone. We were also honoured by the presence of FIFA President Gianni Infantino, who attended the Final alongside the AFF Council and Member Associations, elevating the tournament's prestige on the global stage.

The tournament captured widespread attention across the region, with a record total of 438 million viewers tuning in to watch the 26 matches on TV and digital platforms. Our digital media channels saw an extraordinary 4.2 billion views of tournament-related content and over 400,000 fans filled the stadiums to cheer on their national teams. The growing popularity of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup has taken ASEAN football to new heights and I extend my deepest appreciation to our Member Associations for their dedication as well as to our Title Sponsor Mitsubishi Electric, Commercial Partner SPORTFIVE and all our other partners who contributed to making this tournament a resounding success.

While our men's national teams achieved great success, 2023 also marked a significant milestone for women's football in the region. Three (3) of our Member Associations – Australia (as co-hosts), and debutants the Philippines and Vietnam – qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. On behalf of the ASEAN football community, I congratulate Football Australia (FA) for their remarkable fourth-place finish, and I commend them for their exceptional hosting of what has been hailed as the best, biggest and greatest FIFA Women's World Cup ever.

I also wish to recognise the incredible efforts of the Philippines, who achieved a historic 1-0 victory over co-hosts New Zealand, and Vietnam for their valiant World Cup campaign, which included a memorable match against four-time champions, the United States of America.

As demonstrated by the FIFA Women's World Cup, it is crucial that we continue to raise the standard of women's football throughout the region. I extend my gratitude to the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) for hosting the AFF U19 Women's Championship in July 2023, which was won by Thailand. These women's tournaments provide invaluable opportunities for our Member Associations to compete against the best teams globally, strengthening their development.

At the youth level, Indonesia also garnered praise from the international community for hosting the FIFA U17 World Cup 2023 in December, with 24 teams competing across four (4) venues. It was inspiring to witness the emerging stars of global football on display, particularly the efforts of our host, Indonesia. The successful hosting of both the FIFA Women's World Cup by Australia and the FIFA U17 World Cup 2023 by Indonesia demonstrates that ASEAN is more than capable of organising world-class events.

In the AFF U23 Championship held in Thailand, Vietnam claimed their second title after a dramatic penalty shootout against the Indonesia. The final match was an intense affair with both teams showing determination throughout the 120 minutes, but eventually Vietnam held their nerve during the penalty shootout to secure the title. This triumph marked a significant achievement for Vietnamese football as it was their second straight U23 title after winning it in 2022.

The tournament itself was well-organised, and credit must be given to The Football Association of Thailand (FAT) for their outstanding efforts in elevating the standards of the competition. Their commitment to improving the infrastructure, logistics and overall experience for players, officials and fans alike contributed to the tournament's success.

Futsal also played a prominent role in 2023, with Thailand hosting the AFF Futsal Club Championship. The tournament saw six (6) clubs from across the region compete, with Black Steel FC Papua of Indonesia emerging as champions. This event further highlights the diversity and strength of futsal within our region.

In addition to these AFF events, we also recognise the successful staging of the 33rd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games Football Tournament in Phnom Penh that was organised by the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC). Indonesia ended a 32-year wait to claim their third gold medal in the Men's tournament, while Vietnam secured their eighth gold medal in the Women's competition after edging out Myanmar in the final.

Shifting our focus to Asian football, we were delighted that AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa was re-elected unopposed during the 33rd AFC Ordinary Congress in Bahrain last February. Since his election in 2013, Shaikh Salman has been a pivotal figure in guiding the AFC through significant transformations and challenges including but not limited to raising the level of competition across Asia and enhancing the professionalism of Member Associations.

REPORT BY THE AFF GENERAL SECRETARY

We are also humbled that our standing in world football has strengthened following the election of three (3) ASEAN representatives to the FIFA Council. I congratulate Mariano Araneta, Jr. of the Philippines, Tan Sri Dato' Haji Hamidin Mohd Amin of Malaysia and Kanya Keomany of Laos in their election to the FIFA Council. Their presence on the FIFA Council can foster greater collaboration in the broader football community, further enhancing the development of football in our region.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Dato' Sri Zaw Zaw of Myanmar, who was elected as AFC Vice President, as well as Chris Nikou of Australia, Pol Gen Somyot Poompanmoung of Thailand and Dr Tran Quoc Tuan of Vietnam, for their election to the AFC Executive Committee during the 33rd AFC Congress 2023 in Bahrain.

One of the significant milestones the AFF achieved last year was the extension of the commercial partnership with SPORTFIVE until 2032. Through the years, SPORTFIVE has demonstrated their expertise and capability in developing partnerships and commercial products that bring long-term value for AFF and our stakeholders alike. I am excited that our collaboration will now extend to the ASEAN U23 Championship and ASEAN Women's Championship and I am confident that SPORTFIVE's extensive global network and influence within the industry will help propel AFF to greater heights and deliver commercial stability.

As we look forward to the year ahead, we are excited about the launch of the ASEAN Club Championship. This new competition for clubs in our region is a testament to the support we have received from FIFA, AFC and Member Associations, ensuring that ASEAN remains a competitive battleground for clubs. This tournament will further encourage the development of professional football in our Member Associations.

On behalf of the AFF Council, I extend my sincerest gratitude to Winston and the AFF Secretariat for their outstanding work over the past year. I also wish to thank our Council Members and all the officials from our Member Associations for their unwavering commitment to fostering football in our region.



MAJOR GENERAL KHIEV SAMETH
AFF President



To the Members of the ASEAN Football Family,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the ASEAN Football Federation's Activity Report for 2023, a year marked by numerous significant achievements for football in our region.

While competitions remain the lifeblood of football, AFF is equally committed to supporting our Member Associations through development projects and Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. One of the key initiatives in 2023 was the introduction of the AFF Member Associations Development Programme Fund. This programme enables our Member Associations to apply for financial support to enhance football development, particularly in infrastructure.

The AFF Member Associations Development Programme Fund represents a significant investment for the future of ASEAN football.

The programme will help ensure that Member Associations have the resources they need to develop football in a holistic, sustainable and competitive manner. Whether it is building world-class facilities or ensuring that teams can compete on the global stage, the AFF's commitment to growth and development is clear. Initiatives like this are essential for creating a stronger football ecosystem in Southeast Asia, and with the support of AFF, Member Associations will be well-positioned to achieve their long-term goals and contribute to the global football community.

I would like to commend the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC) for leading the way by installing 25,000 bucket seats at the National Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh which enables FFC to meet FIFA and AFC standards for hosting international matches and tournaments. We look forward to other Member Associations utilising this fund to further their development efforts in their respective areas.

The AFF Community Fund is another major initiative that reflects our commitment to supporting community-based organisations throughout ASEAN. This programme aims to improve community well-being and social health through football, covering areas such as community rebuilding, capacity building, football development and environmental sustainability. Through the AFF Community Fund, the construction of an office building and mini-pitch at Prey Bet Meas Secondary School provided the institution with its own football infrastructure for educational and sporting developments. Projects like these are a meaningful way for AFF to give back to the community and I hope that we can reach out to more communities in the future.

This fund is a testament to the AFF's belief in the power of football to transform lives, bring people together and create lasting, positive change in society. Through its strategic focus on community development, the AFF is ensuring that the region continues to emerge stronger, more unified and better equipped for the challenges of the future.

On the competitions front, the AFF turned its focus to organising key competitions in 2023. These included the AFF Futsal Club Championship 2023, held in Thailand in May, which brought together the region's top futsal clubs for high-level competition. In July, Indonesia hosted the AFF U19 Women's Championship 2023, showcasing the talent of young women footballers in Southeast Asia. Lastly, in August, Thailand hosted the AFF U23 Championship 2023, offering a platform for the region's future stars to shine and further promoting the development of youth football. These tournaments reflect AFF's ongoing commitment to nurturing football not just at the senior level but at all age groups across the region.

I would like to extend my gratitude to The Football Association of Thailand (FAT) and the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) for their outstanding efforts in hosting these events. Their ability to manage, among other things, logistical requirements, collaborate with various stakeholders and create a vibrant atmosphere for fans was exemplary.

In addition to these competitions, the AFF made significant strides last year in planning for the launch of the ASEAN Club Championship in 2024. This landmark competition, aimed at bringing together top clubs from across the region, is a milestone for AFF.

The ASEAN Club Championship is a particularly ambitious project that required close collaboration with key stakeholders including our Member Associations, FIFA, AFC, and SPORTFIVE, our marketing partner. We are deeply grateful for all the support and cooperation we have received.

This inaugural club championship offers top ASEAN clubs the platform to play teams from the region, providing a high level of competition where players can have the chance to showcase their talents to a global audience, opening the doors to more playing opportunities on the international arena.

By creating a competition that garners regional interest, the ASEAN Club Championship attracts sponsorships, increases fan engagement, enhances brand equity and raises media coverage for ASEAN football, translating into more financial muscles for clubs to invest in better facilities, coaching and youth development programs and creating a virtuous cycle that strengthens football across the region.

Beyond competitions, the AFF Secretariat also successfully organised the AFF Congress as well as conducted numerous development workshops aimed at furthering football development in our region. While we continue to focus on competitions, it is equally important that we support our Member Associations with programmes that contribute to long-term football development.

The successes we enjoyed collectively is a testament to the guidance of AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth, the AFF Council and the ongoing support of our Member Associations. I would also like to thank all our staff and volunteers for their hard work and contributions.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch the ASEAN Club Championship in 2024 and other competitions, alongside the return of our premier tournament, the ASEAN Mitsubishi Electric Cup. The future of football in the ASEAN region looks bright with the concerted efforts and cooperative endeavors of all our stakeholders, and we are poised for even greater success.



WINSTON LEE
AFF General Secretary



ON THE PITCH

AFF COMPETITIONS: Competitive Spirit and Triumphs in Southeast Asian Football

AFF U19 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

5–15 July 2023: Palembang, Indonesia

The third edition of the AFF U19 Women's Championship was hosted by the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) for the second straight year which was held from 5 to 15 July 2023.

A total of ten (10) AFF Member Associations participated in the tournament led by host Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand and Vietnam.

The competition was held in Palembang, Indonesia, the site of the 2022 competition with the Gelora Sriwijaya Stadium and the Jakabaring Athletic Field serving as the match venues for the duration of the tournament.

Thailand emerged as the champions of the tournament to become two-time winners, with Vietnam as runners-up. Myanmar finished third while host Indonesia had a good showing on home soil with a fourth-place finish.

Group A



Host Indonesia faced Cambodia, Laos and Timor-Leste in Group A with the matches played at the Gelora Sriwijaya Stadium and drew in large numbers of excited fans who turned out in support of the host team.

Indonesia had a great start, winning their opening match against Timor-Leste, 7–0. The win propelled the host's confidence which saw them advance to the knockout stage with wins over Laos (4–1) and Cambodia (5–0).

Group B

Vietnam, runners-up in the previous edition, were determined to make up for their loss to Australia in 2022. They were grouped alongside Malaysia and Singapore.

Ultimately, Vietnam flexed its might with runaway wins over Singapore (5–0) and Malaysia (6–0) to advance to the knockout stages. The other tie saw Malaysia claim a 1–0 win over rivals Singapore.

Group C

Thailand were drawn alongside Myanmar and the Philippines in Group C.

The 2014 champions eventually finished at the top of the group, posting a 6-0 win over the Philippines and a narrow 1-0 win over Myanmar to advance to the next round.

Myanmar, by virtue of their 2-1 win over the Philippines became the fourth team to advance to the semi-finals as the best second-placed team at the end of the group stage.



Semi-Finals, 3rd & 4th Play-Off

The first semi-final tie saw Myanmar take a shock lead over Vietnam in the eighth minute. However, Vietnam showed their resolve to draw level, forcing extra-time where they claimed the win in the 104th minute.

Meanwhile, Indonesia were up against Thailand in the other semi-final match. Thailand took the lead in the 15th minute, but Indonesia answered back in the 24th minute. The 2014 champions moved to a higher gear, scoring six more goals to seal their place in the final.

The 3rd-4th playoff between Myanmar and Indonesia finished at 1-1 after 90 minutes, forcing the tie into extra time and then to penalties. Myanmar were sharper from the penalty spot and allowed them to clinch third place.

Final: Vietnam vs Thailand



Thailand and Vietnam met in the final full of optimism. Thailand headed into the match with a chance to claim their second championship while Vietnam looked to improve on last year's finish.

Thailand struck two quick fire goals in the 69th and 72nd minutes to take a two-goal lead in the second half. Vietnam looked to spring a comeback in the 75th minute, but Thailand's defense prevailed at the end to claim their second title after winning it in 2014.

AFF U23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

17-26 August 2023: Rayong, Thailand

The AFF U23 Championship 2023 was held from 17-26 August 2023 in Rayong, Thailand. Vietnam, as the defending champions, led the cast of the participating teams for the competition, along with nine (9) other participants in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

The matches were well attended as it provided the level of competition needed for the next crop of talents that will represent their senior national teams in the future.

Vietnam defended the crown with a dramatic penalty shootout win over Indonesia in the final.

Group A

Thailand, runners-up in the previous edition, had Cambodia, Myanmar, and Brunei Darussalam in Group A. With the advantage of playing at home and determined to get off on the right foot, Thailand won their opening match.

The hosts proceeded to win their next two matches against Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia to top the group with maximum points and secure their place in the semi-finals. Cambodia and Myanmar won a game each to finish second and third respectively.

Group B

Former champions Indonesia found themselves alongside Malaysia and Timor-Leste in Group B.

Malaysia dealt a surprise in the opening match of Group B, earning a shock 2-1 come-from-behind win over 2019 champions Indonesia.

Indonesia bounced back with a 1-0 win over Timor-Leste, but it was Malaysia who went on to finish at the top of the group with a 3-1 win against Timor-Leste.

Indonesia finished second and ultimately advanced to the semi-finals as the best second-placed team.



Group C

Reigning champions Vietnam sought to defend their crown and were grouped together with Philippines and Laos in Group C.

Vietnam lashed out on Laos with a 4-1 win and narrowly beat the Philippines, 1-0, to finish at the top of the table.

A costly late goal in the 2-2 draw against Laos saw the Philippines finish second in the group with one point, missing out on a maiden semi-final spot.

Semi-Finals, 3rd & 4th Play-Off

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Final: Vietnam vs Indonesia

Vietnam and Indonesia squared off in the final of the AFF U23 Championship 2023. It was a goalless affair after 120 minutes needing a penalty shootout to decide the winner.

Both teams were on target in their first five attempts, but it was in sudden death where the match was decided. Thai Ba Dat netted Vietnam's sixth penalty and it was down to Ernando Sutaryadi to force another deadlock, but the goalkeeper's penalty attempt was denied by Quan Van Chuan, giving Vietnam its second title.



AFF FUTSAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

1-7 May 2023:
Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

Futsal took centre stage with the staging of the AFF Futsal Club Championship 2023 from 1 to 7 May 2023 in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

It was the third time that Thailand hosted the tournament after hosting it for the past two years. Six clubs led by hosts Hongyen Thakam FC of Thailand, Pahang Rangers FC of Malaysia, Victoria University College of Myanmar, Black Steel FC Papua of Indonesia, Thai Son Nam HCMC FC of Vietnam and Football Victoria of Australia participated in the tournament.

The Terminal 21 Hall in Korat served as the match venue for the tournament, where Black Steel FC Papua were crowned champions with a penalty shootout deciding the winners.

Group A

Thailand side Hongyen Thakam FC led the pack, winning its first two assignments, 4-2 over Victoria University College, and 3-1 against Pahang Rangers FC to advance to the knockout stage. Pahang Rangers FC joined the Thai side after beating Victoria University College, 4-3.

Group B

Black Steel FC Papua of Indonesia started strong with wins over Football Victoria (5-0) and Thai Son Nam FC (4-1) to secure the semi-final spot. Thai Son Nam HCMC FC took the final semi-final ticket by beating Football Victoria, 3-1.



Semi-Finals, 3rd & 4th Play-Off

In a fixture between Thai and Vietnamese squads, it was the host Hongyen Thakam FC that made its way to the final with a 5-1 rout.

The other semi-final saw Black Steel FC Papua hammer Pahang Rangers FC, 7-0, to advance to its first-ever final.

Thai Son Nam HCMC FC and Pahang Rangers FC squared off in the third-place playoff, and it was the Vietnamese side that came away with a 3-0 win to clinch third place.



Final: Hongyen Thakam FC (THA) vs Black Steel FC Papua (IDN)

Hongyen Thakam FC started the match with an early goal in the first minute from Therdasak Charoenphong, but Holypaul Soumilena answered back in the 32nd minute to force extra-time, and eventually penalties to determine the champion.

Black Steel FC Papua was perfect from the spot, but Atippong Munphlai and Wendel Mendes would cost Hongyen Thakam FC the championship after missing their efforts.



OFF THE PITCH
Advancing Football:
Developmental Initiatives and
Professional Innovations

AFF EXTENDS COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH SPORTFIVE UNTIL 2032



PHOTO: SPORTFIVE

The ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) extended its commercial partnership with global sports marketing agency SPORTFIVE until 2032 during a signing ceremony on 19 May 2023, building on the success of their collaboration over recent years. This renewal aims to further elevate the profile of ASEAN football, both regionally and internationally.

The partnership renewal follows the remarkable success of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup, the AFF's flagship tournament. The 2022 edition garnered record-breaking viewership, with 438 million viewers tuning in to watch the 26 matches across television and digital platforms. Digital engagement also saw impressive results, with tournament-related content amassing 4.2 billion views across AFF and tournament social media channels. Additionally, over 400,000 fans attended the matches in person, underscoring the tournament's growing popularity in the region.

The extended agreement with SPORTFIVE covers the ASEAN Championship, ASEAN U23 Championship and ASEAN Women's Championship, creating a unified commercial strategy that will allow AFF to explore new opportunities for growth. This collaboration aims to enhance event presentation, elevate the quality of competitions and contribute to the long-term development of football across Southeast Asia.

As part of the agreement, SPORTFIVE will retain exclusive rights to all commercial and media properties related to these tournaments. The expansion of the partnership reflects SPORTFIVE's ongoing role as a key player in driving commercial success for AFF and supporting its broader objectives.

AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth expressed his optimism about the partnership's future, stating, "We are delighted to be extending our relationship with SPORTFIVE until 2032. SPORTFIVE has demonstrated expertise in developing partnerships that bring long-term value to AFF and our partners. I am excited that our collaboration will now extend to the Under-23 and Women's tournaments, and I am confident that SPORTFIVE's extensive global network will propel AFF to greater heights and ensure commercial stability."

SPORTFIVE CEO Stefan Felsing added, "We are honoured to renew and extend our partnership with AFF for an additional eight years, starting in 2025. AFF's commitment to advancing ASEAN football on the world stage aligns with our vision. The trust and confidence that AFF has placed in us reflect the strength of our relationship, and we are excited to continue enhancing the commercial and competitive relevance of AFF competitions."

This renewed partnership marks a significant step toward further cementing ASEAN football's growing influence and presence on the global football stage.

AFF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FUND

Building the Future of Football in ASEAN

The AFF launched the AFF Member Associations Development Programme Fund, an initiative aimed at the strategic and long-term development of football among the 12 AFF Member Associations. This programme is designed to address the diverse needs of football development across the region. By investing in these areas, AFF aims to elevate the overall standard of football across Southeast Asia, nurturing talent and improving the competitiveness of its Member Associations on the international stage.

Under the AFF MADPF, a Member Association can apply for funding to support a wide range of infrastructure projects. Each Beneficiary Member Association is eligible to receive a maximum of USD 500,000 over the eight-year Development Programme cycle, which spans from 2024 to 2032. The aim of this funding is to strengthen the physical foundation of football in ASEAN nations, enabling them to build and upgrade football-related facilities to meet international standards. The infrastructure projects eligible for funding include but are not limited to:



- **Mini-pitches:** Construction of small-sized football pitches to encourage grassroots and community-level football development.
- **Full-sized football turf (artificial and natural):** Establishment of high-quality playing surfaces that can host domestic and international competitions.
- **Floodlights:** Installation of proper lighting systems to enable evening matches and improve visibility for players and spectators.
- **LED scoreboards and giant screens:** Enhancement of in-stadium fan experience with modern digital display technology.
- **LED perimeter boards:** Standardisation of advertising spaces for commercial partners in line with global best practices.
- **Turnstiles and seating solutions:** Improvement of crowd management, ticketing, and seating capacities to ensure safety and comfort for fans.

- **Academies and headquarters:** Development of dedicated facilities for football training, education, and administration.
- **Press conference rooms in stadiums:** Compliance to best practice standards for media and communications required for major tournaments.
- **Solar energy solutions:** Promotion of sustainability practices by incorporating green energy solutions into football infrastructure.
- **Land purchase for football-related activities:** Acquisition of land for football pitches, academies, or other related facilities.
- **Refurbishing and renovation:** Renovation or upgrade existing football facilities, including headquarters, academies, and stadiums.

Any other infrastructure projects proposed by Member Associations must receive prior written approval from the AFF Ad Hoc Member Associations Development Programme Fund Committee to ensure alignment with the goals of the Development Programme.

The AFF Member Associations Development Programme Fund is part of a broader vision to ensure the sustainability and growth of football in the ASEAN region. This program ensures that Member Associations have the tools and resources needed to develop football at all levels—from youth and grassroots initiatives to elite competition and national teams.

By providing substantial financial backing for infrastructure development, the AFF is laying a solid foundation for the future of football in the region.

Football Federation of Cambodia Utilises AFF Member Associations Development Programme Fund for National Olympic Stadium



The Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC) served as a notable example of how the Infrastructure Assistance fund can be utilised. The FFC applied for funding under the MADPF for the installation of seats at the north, south and east bleachers of the National Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh, increasing the seating capacity from 5,000 to 30,000. This enhancement allowed the stadium to fully comply with the stadium regulations set forth by FIFA and AFC, thereby making it eligible to host international tournaments. This upgrade not only provided a boost to Cambodia's football infrastructure but also positioned the nation to be more competitive in attracting major sporting events to the region.

AFF COMMUNITY FUND

Strengthening Communities Through Football

In line with its commitment to the development and well-being of the ASEAN community, the AFF launched the AFF Community Fund in April 2023. This initiative is part of AFF's strategy to contribute to the socio-economic upliftment of the region, acknowledging that football plays a unique and powerful role in bringing people together, fostering unity and driving positive change.

The AFF recognises that its influence extends beyond the football pitch and into the community. The AFF Community Fund is designed to support, assist and partner with community organisations across Southeast Asia, aiming to meet the evolving needs of these communities and align with AFF's strategic objectives. Through this initiative, AFF is ensuring that its legacy is not just about football but also about community development, education and capacity building, thereby contributing to the region's holistic growth.

The AFF Community Fund is managed by the AFF Finance Committee and offers grants of up to USD100,000 for each community project. The fund is dedicated to projects that have a lasting, tangible impact on communities across ASEAN. By focusing on initiatives that build capacity, develop sustainable infrastructure and foster strong partnerships, AFF is ensuring that the projects supported by the fund are both impactful and enduring.



The fund's goal is to strengthen the ASEAN community through football-related projects that align with AFF's strategic objectives. These projects contribute to the broader development of the communities where they are based. Key areas of focus include:

- **Capacity Building:** Empower local communities by providing education, training, and resources to improve their self-sufficiency and capabilities.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure Development:** Support the construction and maintenance of community facilities, such as football pitches, office buildings, and training centers, which serve as hubs for both sporting and non-sporting activities.
- **Partnerships for Community Benefit:** Encourage collaboration between community organisations, local authorities, and other stakeholders to ensure that the supported projects have a wide-reaching and long-lasting impact.

Through these focus areas, the AFF aims to create opportunities for communities to thrive, particularly in underdeveloped areas where access to such resources is limited. Football is used as a vehicle to deliver broader social and developmental outcomes, making it a powerful tool for social change in the region.

One of the beneficiaries of the AFF Community Fund is Prey Bet Meas Secondary School located in Cambodia. In partnership with the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC), AFF provided funding for the construction of a mini artificial turf pitch and an office building in the school. This project has had a profound impact on the local community.

The mini artificial turf pitch not only provides students with a safe and well-maintained venue to play football but also facilitates regular training sessions, promoting physical fitness, teamwork and discipline. In addition, the new office building has enhanced the school's operational capabilities, providing much-needed space for administrative activities and school functions. The project has helped to elevate the status of the school in the local community and has given students the opportunity to pursue football in a structured and supportive environment.



The inauguration of the mini pitch and office building at Prey Bet Meas Secondary School was attended by AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth, AFF General Secretary Winston Lee, FFC President Gen Sao Sokha and Deputy Chairman of the AFF Ad Hoc Member Associations Development Programme Fund Committee Thanasak Suraprasert. This event underscored the importance of the project not only for the school but for the region as a whole, symbolising AFF's commitment to the development of both football and community infrastructure across ASEAN.

The project at Prey Bet Meas Secondary School is a prime example of how the AFF Community Fund can create opportunities for young people, provide communities with essential resources and promote the positive values of sport in society.

As the AFF Community Fund continues to grow, the AFF is committed to supporting more community organisations across the region. The fund will focus on creating sustainable projects that have a lasting impact, ensuring that communities throughout the region benefit from enhanced infrastructure, educational opportunities and a greater sense of unity through football. By funding such initiatives, AFF aims to leave a lasting legacy that goes beyond football and touches the lives of individuals and families in the region.

As AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth reiterated, "Our commitment to supporting community development goes hand in hand with our mission to elevate football in ASEAN. Through initiatives like the AFF Community & Staff Welfare Fund, we are ensuring that our work contributes to the betterment of society, fostering a spirit of unity and collaboration."

The AFF Community Fund represents a vital step in AFF's mission to use football as a catalyst for community growth and development. By providing funding for projects that enhance community infrastructure, build capacity and foster partnerships, AFF is empowering communities across Southeast Asia.

30th AFF ORDINARY CONGRESS 2023

1 October 2023: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



The AFF successfully held its AFF Ordinary Congress 2023 and 4th AFF Council Meeting on 1 October 2023, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This event gathered key figures and stakeholders in the Southeast Asian football community, setting the stage for landmark decisions concerning the future of the sport within the region.

The AFF Ordinary Congress was attended by the 12 AFF Member Associations, Members of the AFF Council, along with distinguished guests from FIFA, AFC, the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA), the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB), the German Football Association (DFB) and the South African Football Association (SAFA).



The Congress opened with a welcome speech from Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) President, Dr Tran Quoc Tuan, who emphasised the significance of football in the region and praised the continued collaboration among AFF and its members. Following his remarks, AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth delivered his address, touching upon the successes of the previous year and outlining the strategic vision for AFF's future.



A major focus of the Congress was the presentation of the activity report prepared by AFF General Secretary Winston Lee. This report highlighted the federation's various initiatives and events from 2022, underlining AFF's commitment to promoting football at all levels across Southeast Asia. It also showcased the impact of key tournaments, grassroots programmes and educational efforts aimed at fostering talent development and improving infrastructure in member countries. The Congress also approved the AFF's financial report, ensuring transparency and sustainability in AFF's operations. The financial review underscored the Federation's responsible management of resources in supporting football development across the region.



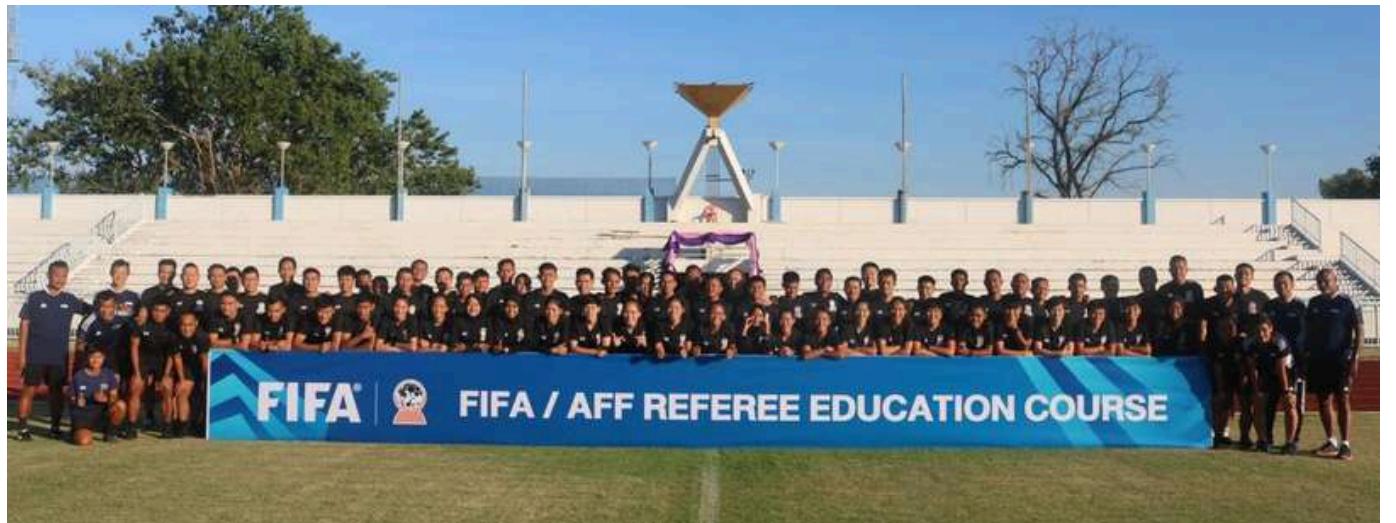
The Congress moved forward with the election for the positions of AFF Vice President and AFC Executive Committee Member. Mariano Araneta, Jr from the Philippines was elected unopposed as AFF Vice President. Araneta's election was a testament to his contributions to football, both in the Philippines and in world football, where he also sits in the FIFA Council.

Dr Tran Quoc Tuan of Vietnam was also unanimously chosen to serve as AFF's representative in the AFC Executive Committee. His election signifies a strong alignment between AFF and AFC's broader goals for regional integration and influence in Asian football. As a member of the AFC Executive Committee, Dr Tran will play a vital role in advocating for ASEAN's interests on the continental stage, ensuring that the voices of Southeast Asian football communities are heard and considered in key decisions.



FIFA-AFF REFEREEING EDUCATION COURSE

Elevating Standards in ASEAN



In its continued efforts to enhance the quality of refereeing in the ASEAN region, the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF), in collaboration with FIFA, organised the FIFA-AFF Refereeing Education Course from 19 to 24 December 2023 in Chonburi, Thailand. This course is the region's commitment to maintaining high refereeing standards and ensuring consistency in officiating at all levels of competition.

The course also served as a crucial preparatory step for the upcoming elite competitions in 2024, in the ASEAN Mitsubishi Electric Cup and the ASEAN Club Championship. These two tournaments are set to be the AFF's flagship events, showcasing the best of Southeast Asian football and drawing significant attention from across the region, requiring match officials to be primed for high level competition.

Hosted by The Football Association of Thailand (FAT), the course saw participation from 87 referees representing ten (10) AFF Member Associations, showcasing the diverse and inclusive nature of the event. Among the participants were 26 female referees, reflecting a growing focus on gender inclusivity and the promotion of women's involvement in the sport. This aspect of the course highlighted AFF's mission to encourage equal opportunities for both men and women in the footballing world, especially in areas traditionally dominated by men, such as refereeing.

The course covered a comprehensive array of topics essential for modern-day refereeing. A key focus was the latest updates to the International Football Association Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game. This ensured that referees are up to date with the recent changes and interpretations that impact their officiating duties on the field. Specific areas such as challenges in the penalty area, the handball rule, tactical fouls, game management, and offside decisions were given special attention. The course also included modules on teamwork between referees and assistant referees, emphasising the importance of collaboration and communication to make correct decisions in high-pressure situations.

To ensure a well-rounded training experience, the program combined theoretical learning with practical sessions. Participants not only engaged in classroom-based discussions but also took part in practical training sessions on the field, where they could apply their learning in real-time scenarios. These on-field exercises helped referees gain confidence in making split-second decisions during match situations. A critical component of the course was fitness training, which aimed to ensure that referees remain in peak physical condition, capable of keeping up with the fast pace of modern football. This is especially crucial in ensuring that referees are match-fit, as physical endurance is a key factor in maintaining concentration and decision-making accuracy throughout the duration of a match.



The course was led by an expert team of instructors, headed by former FIFA match official Subkhiddin Mohd Salleh from Malaysia. Subkhiddin's wealth of experience, having officiated at the highest levels of international football, was invaluable in guiding the referees through the intricate aspects of the game. He was joined by a distinguished group of instructors, including Mohamad Rodzali Yacob (Malaysia), Ahmad Khalidi Supian (Malaysia), Widiya Habibah Shamsuri (Malaysia), John Eng Wah John (Singapore) and Maniam Ganesan (Singapore), each bringing their expertise to different aspects of the course. The collective knowledge and experience of these instructors provided participants with insights into best practices in officiating, preparing them for both local and international competitions.

Reflecting on the course, FIFA Referee Coordinator Mohamad Rodzali Yacob emphasised the crucial role of referee development in the growth of football competitions within the region. "Developing referees is crucial for the growth of competitions in the region," Rodzali stated. He underscored the importance of equipping referees with up-to-date knowledge of the Laws of the Game, alongside strong refereeing principles. "We have to ensure that the referees are well-equipped and knowledgeable of the latest updates to the Laws of the Game, as well as refereeing principles, and to keep them in top shape even during the off-season," he added. His remarks highlighted the AFF's commitment to ensuring the readiness and fitness of referees, even during periods when there are fewer competitive matches.

Referee Mick Jon Pineda of the Philippines saw the course as a way to enhance his skills both in domestic and international competitions.

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the FIFA-AFF Refereeing Education Course. The course was an enriching and transformative experience, providing me and my fellow participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are essential for my development as a referee. The course covered a wide range of topics, from the latest updates to the IFAB Laws of the Game to teamwork, game management, and crisis decision-making on the field," said Pineda. "I am confident that the skills I have gained here will help me perform better in future matches and contribute to the growth of football in my home."



The FIFA-AFF Refereeing Education Course served not only as a vital learning experience for the referees but also as a platform for knowledge exchange and networking. By bringing together referees from across Southeast Asia, the course fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose in improving refereeing standards in the region. Moreover, the inclusion of female referees points to a promising future where women play a more prominent role in the officiating world, further promoting the development of women's football in ASEAN.

As football continues to grow in popularity and competitiveness across the region, ensuring that referees are equipped with the right tools and training is essential for maintaining the integrity of the game. Through initiatives like these, the AFF and FIFA continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of football in ASEAN, contributing to the sport's growth both regionally and globally.

AFF MEDIA COURSE

Equipping Media Officers for the Digital Age

Recognising the increasing importance of media in modern football, the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) organised a dedicated AFF Media Course during the AFF U23 Championship in August 2023. Hosted by The Football Association of Thailand (FAT), this initiative aimed to provide Team Media Officers (TMOs) from the region's Member Associations with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the rapidly evolving media landscape.

With the rise of digital platforms and the public's growing demand for real-time content, the responsibilities of a Media Officer have expanded significantly. The course, designed to address this shift, tackled a broad range of topics that reflect the current demands of football media management. In particular, it covered the essential duties of a Media Officer during competitions, emphasising the critical role they play in ensuring smooth communication between teams, journalists, and tournament organisers.

The AFF Media Course explored various media-related responsibilities as the TMOs learned more about the scope of their work, from overseeing the dissemination of official communications to managing media engagements during high-profile competitions. Understanding journalists' needs and ensuring the smooth flow of information was a key aspect, as was knowing how to respond to media inquiries, particularly in high-pressure situations. Additionally, the course focused on understanding tournament regulations, which are vital for Media Officers to effectively carry out their duties while ensuring that teams and the media comply with established guidelines.

Crisis management, another focal point of the course, underscored the importance of preparation in times of adversity. Media Officers were trained in handling delicate situations where urgent and often sensitive information must be conveyed efficiently. This skill is increasingly crucial in today's fast-paced media environment, where public relations crises can quickly spiral out of control without proper management. Participants were given scenarios that required them to think on their feet and devise communication strategies that would protect both the integrity of their teams and the reputation of the AFF.

Beyond technical skills, the course also included best practices in media operations. Media Officers were briefed on effective strategies to optimise media operations, ensuring smooth coverage during matches and other key moments in a competition. In particular, they were introduced to strategies for managing media centres, coordinating press conferences and facilitating interviews, all while ensuring the needs of both journalists and team representatives were met. As media operations continue to evolve, these practices are crucial for ensuring that matches run efficiently and are effectively covered by local and international media.

A key point of discussion was the growing influence of social media in football. With platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook playing an ever-increasing role in how fans consume content, Media Officers were briefed on the importance of utilising these networks as powerful digital tools. The course stressed that today's Media Officers need to be adept at curating and disseminating real-time content that engages fans across multiple channels, while also maintaining a professional and accurate portrayal of their teams.

This new digital reality has brought on unprecedented demands for live updates, instant reactions, and engaging multimedia content. The course equipped participants with the tools necessary to handle these pressures, including effective social media management, the creation of compelling digital content, and the monitoring of online engagement to ensure positive fan interaction. The importance of visual storytelling was emphasised, with particular focus on how social media platforms can be leveraged to enhance fan engagement and bring fans closer to the action in a way that traditional media cannot.

The course was conducted by AFF Media Officer Abdul Rahman and All India Football Federation and AFC Media Officer Nilanjan Datta, both of whom are seasoned professionals in football media. Their experience in managing media relations for international tournaments provided the participants with firsthand insights into the challenges and best practices of the role. Under their guidance, the Media Officers representing the various Member Associations engaged in interactive sessions that encouraged knowledge sharing and the development of practical skills that can be applied during high-stakes football competitions.

Nilanjan Datta highlighted the importance of media relations and operations in football, emphasising collaboration, knowledge-sharing and practical skills development.

"The course offered an excellent opportunity to share best practices and real-world experiences from international tournaments, which are essential in navigating the fast-paced and dynamic world of football media. Football today is not just about the action on the pitch—it is also about how the game is communicated, how stories are told, and how relationships with fans, stakeholders and the media are managed."



Participants left the course with a greater understanding of how the role of a Media Officer has evolved over the past five years, with much of this change driven by the adoption of social media as a primary communication tool. As football continues to grow as a global sport, the expectations for instant access to news, interviews, and behind-the-scenes content will only increase, making it imperative for Media Officers to stay ahead of trends and technological advancements.

In conclusion, the AFF Media Course was an invaluable opportunity for the region's Team Media Officers to develop their skills and stay current with the best practices in media relations and operations. By equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to succeed in a fast-evolving digital landscape, the course helped to ensure that football in the ASEAN region remains well-represented and accessible to fans and media alike. This investment in media training reflects the AFF's commitment to professionalism and excellence not only on the pitch but also in how the sport is presented to the world.

AFF SECURITY BRIEFING

Ensuring Safety and Preparedness at Competitions

The safety and security of our stakeholders remain our top priority in every aspect of our operations, including all competitions. AFF is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for everyone involved, ensuring that every event is conducted with the highest standards of protection and care.

In recognition of the ever-growing importance of safety in modern sports, the AFF continues to prioritise security measures at every level, ensuring that all events, are conducted in a safe and well-controlled environment. This is particularly essential during high-profile tournaments where crowds, media, and logistics are part of the operational landscape.

In line with this, the AFF conducted a comprehensive Security Briefing was conducted ahead of the AFF U23 Championship held in Rayong, Thailand. AFF Security Officer for the competition, Ekapol Polnavee conducted the security briefing which was a crucial step in preparing for the competition, as it aimed to establish clear protocols and procedures to safeguard participants, officials and fans.

The briefing was attended by a broad range of personnel, highlighting the importance of a collaborative approach in event security. Among the attendees were the Match Commissioner, Referee Assessors, Media Officers, Secretariat Staff, FAT officials and other appointed personnel. Each individual and team played a unique role in the tournament's operations, and the briefing ensured that every facet of their responsibilities was aligned with AFF's security standards.

The security briefing covered a variety of crucial topics, ensuring a holistic and well-rounded approach to safety. The discussions included:

- **Training and Pre-Match Security Protocols**

Before the tournament even begins, security starts with the training sessions and activities that take place ahead of match day. The briefing highlighted the importance of securing training grounds, managing team arrivals, and ensuring that any interactions between teams, media and fans during these sessions are conducted in a safe and controlled manner.

- **Match Day Logistics and Stadium Safety**

On match day, the operations become more complex, with larger crowds, media personnel, and heightened tensions. The briefing addressed match-day logistics, from the arrival of teams at the stadium to crowd management, ensuring that all stadium entry and exit points were secure and that fans could enjoy the event in a safe atmosphere. Special attention was given to high-risk areas, such as team tunnels and seating arrangements for VIPs and team officials, which required additional layers of security.

- **Role of Media Officers in Security Management**

Media personnel play an integral role in every tournament, and managing their safety, along with ensuring they adhere to security protocols, was a key discussion point. The briefing stressed the importance of monitoring media movement, especially when journalists are interacting with players and officials. The Media Officers in attendance were briefed on the necessary steps to manage press conferences, mixed zones and other areas where media and players interact.

- **Crowd Control and Crisis Management**

Managing large crowds is always a challenging task, especially in a tournament setting where emotions run high. The briefing addressed crowd control techniques, such as ensuring that entry and exit points are clearly marked, and that there is enough security personnel to manage any potential disturbances. Plans for emergency evacuation, should the need arise, were also laid out to ensure that everyone was well-prepared in the event of a crisis.

- **Referees and Match Officials' Protection**

Another vital area of concern is the security of match officials. Referees and other match officials often face scrutiny and pressure from both fans and teams, making it essential to ensure their safety before, during and after matches. Special protocols were set in place to provide them with a secure and undisrupted route to and from the pitch. Any potential post-match confrontations were accounted for, ensuring referees and match officials had a protective barrier from irate fans or individuals.

- **Contingency Planning for Unforeseen Incidents**

Football tournaments are dynamic events, with unexpected incidents often occurring both on and off the pitch. The briefing emphasised the importance of contingency planning for unforeseen situations, such as medical emergencies, natural disasters or security breaches. Each official and team member was provided with specific instructions on how to act and who to contact in the event of an emergency, ensuring that every possible scenario was accounted for.

The AFF Security Briefing is an essential component of the AFF's commitment to excellence in tournament organisation. By covering every angle of security and ensuring that each individual involved is thoroughly prepared for all eventualities, the AFF demonstrates its dedication to creating a safe, enjoyable, and incident-free environment for everyone involved—whether they are players, coaches, officials, media, or fans.

The role of the Match Commissioners, Referee Assessors, Media Officers and other officials is not limited to their usual duties during the tournament. Their involvement in the security aspects ensures that they are aware of potential risks and prepared to assist in maintaining order. This collaborative approach helps reduce the likelihood of incidents and ensures that, if they do occur, the response is swift and efficient.



As football continues to grow in the ASEAN region, so too will the need for comprehensive security strategies. The AFF understands that ensuring the safety and security of its tournaments is fundamental to their success. By conducting regular security briefings and enhancing protocols, the AFF sets a high standard for the future of football tournaments in Southeast Asia.

AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth has consistently emphasised the importance of security in football, stating, "The safety of our players, officials, and fans is paramount. We will continue to invest in security measures to ensure that every AFF event is conducted with the highest standards of safety."

With this forward-thinking approach, the AFF remains committed to delivering secure and successful competitions, ensuring the growth of football in the region while prioritising the safety of all stakeholders. The Security Briefing held during the AFF U23 Championship is just one example of how the AFF takes a proactive approach to safeguarding its events, with plans to expand and evolve security measures for future tournaments.

AUSTRALIA CO-HOSTS FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP; PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM SHINE IN WORLD CUP DEBUT

Football Australia (FA), led by its chairman Chris Nikou, delivered a memorable FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023. Co-hosted with New Zealand, the tournament saw an expanded cast of 32 Participating Member Associations. The tournament, which was won by Spain after a 1-0 win in the final against England, brought in over two million spectators at the match venues as well as over two billion viewers globally.



Among the venues that Football Australia (FA) utilised for the Women's World Cup were Stadium Australia and Sydney Football Stadium in Sydney, Brisbane Stadium in Brisbane, Melbourne Rectangular Stadium in Melbourne, Perth Rectangular Stadium in Perth and Hindmarsh Stadium in Adelaide.

It was also fitting that there were three (3) AFF Member Associations among the participants in hosts Australia and the debuting teams of the Philippines and Vietnam.

The Matildas impressed in Group B, with a 1-0 win over the Republic of Ireland, a 4-0 win over Canada and a narrow 1-2 loss to Nigeria to win the group and advance to the knockout stage. In the Round of 16, Australia dispatched Denmark, 2-0, before needing a penalty shootout to beat France, 7-6 after extra-time. Excitement loomed when the hosts faced England in the semi-final, but despite talismanic striker Sam Kerr scoring the equalizer, Australia bowed out, losing 1-3. They soon faced Sweden in the third-place play-off, which they lost, 0-2, ensuring a fourth-place finish.



As first-time participants on the world stage, both the Philippines and Vietnam were determined to make a statement in the competition.

The Filipinas started their campaign with a 0-2 loss to Switzerland, before recording their first ever win in the FIFA Women's World Cup when they beat co-hosts New Zealand, 1-0, at the Wellington Regional Stadium. Sarina Bolden scored the Philippines' first ever goal at a FIFA Women's World Cup when she headed in Sara Eggesvik's cross in the 24th minute, ensuing bedlam not only in Wellington,

but also in Manila where throngs of watch parties were organised to support the team. The Philippines had a chance to sneak into the knockout stage but they were defeated by Norway, 0-6, in their final group assignment to finish third in Group A.

Vietnam had the toughest assignment among the three AFF Member Associations with two-time defending champions the United States of America and 2019 finalists Netherlands in their group alongside Portugal. A 0-3 opening match loss to the United States did not dampen the Vietnamese resolve as Tran Thi Kim Thanh denied Alex Morgan from the spot in the 44th minute. Losses to Portugal (0-2) and the Netherlands (0-7) saw Vietnam finish Group E in fourth place.

The performance of Australia, the Philippines and Vietnam in the FIFA Women's World Cup bids well for AFF's intention on furthering the development of women's football in the region. Among the plans for 2024 is the introduction of the AFF Women's Cup 2024, which will serve as a qualifying competition for the ASEAN Women's Championship 2025. The tournament will see six (6) nations – Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Timor-Leste in action in Vientiane, Laos from 23 November to 5 December 2024.

The top three teams in the AFF Women's Cup will advance to the ASEAN Women's Championship 2025 where they will compete alongside defending champions the Philippines, Australia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.



INDONESIA HEAPED PRAISE FOR SUCCESSFUL HOSTING OF FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP 2023

The Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) made history as the first ASEAN Member Association to host the prestigious tournament, which ran from 10 November to 2 December 2023. This opportunity came on the heels of Indonesia's earlier setback in missing out on hosting the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2023. However, when FIFA presented the chance to host the U-17 competition, PSSI acted, without hesitation, and demonstrated their commitment to delivering a memorable and well-organised event.



PSSI's commitment to hosting a FIFA World Cup competition was reflected in the preparation of the tournament's venues. Four stadia were selected to host the matches: the Jakarta International Stadium in Jakarta, Gelora Bung Tomo Stadium in Surabaya, Jalak Harupat Stadium in Bandung, and Manahan Stadium in Surakarta. These stadiums were equipped to handle the technical demands of such a high-profile event and also offered fans an exciting atmosphere to witness the action up close.

The tournament attracted a mix of 24 Participating Member Associations, bringing together some of the most promising young football talent from around the world.

The opening ceremony was a grand affair with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and FIFA President Gianni Infantino in attendance. Both leaders emphasised the importance of this event, not only for Indonesia but for the entire ASEAN region, which had aspired to host a FIFA World Cup.

Although the Indonesia U-17 national team did not advance beyond the group stage, they earned respect for their spirited performances, especially in securing two (2) draws against Ecuador and Panama. Despite finishing third in Group A, Indonesia showed much potential and growth, resonating with the passionate fanbase and hinting at a promising future for the nation's football development.

Throughout the month-long tournament, young football stars delivered a series of thrilling performances that captivated fans both in the stadiums and watching from home. The tournament was filled with intense matches, remarkable goals and moments of brilliance, providing a platform for the next generation of football stars to showcase their talents.

The excitement and energy displayed by these up-and-coming stars contributed to the overall success of the event. The tournament not only highlighted the skill level of these young athletes but also reminded fans of the appeal and unifying nature of global football. From breakout performances to surprise victories, the event delivered on the promise of entertaining and inspiring fans around the world.

The successful organisation of the tournament did not go unnoticed by no less than FIFA President Gianni Infantino. Infantino publicly praised PSSI President Erick Thohir and his team at PSSI for their swift and effective response in taking on the responsibility of hosting the tournament within a limited timeframe. The successful staging of the FIFA U-17 World Cup was a testament to Indonesia's ability to rise to the challenge, even with the constraints of time and logistical complexities.

Infantino's acknowledgment highlighted Indonesia's growing influence in the footballing world and its potential to continue playing an important role in future international tournaments. The successful hosting of the FIFA U-17 World Cup was not only a proud moment for PSSI but also a significant achievement for Indonesia as a whole.

The FIFA U-17 World Cup Indonesia 2023™ marked a pivotal moment for Indonesia's football journey. The event's success has boosted Indonesia's reputation as a capable host for international sports events, enhancing its profile in the global football landscape. Moreover, the tournament has had a lasting impact on the country's footballing ambitions, inspiring young players and fans across the nation.

PSSI has taken an important step in promoting the growth of football in Indonesia. This experience will likely strengthen their bid to host more international competitions in the future, while also energizing grassroots football development programs that can nurture the next generation of football stars.

The hosting of the FIFA U-17 World Cup Indonesia 2023™ was a resounding success, showcasing the country's capabilities as a host nation and its potential as a rising football power. The event left a legacy of inspiration for young players and fans, while also positioning Indonesia to play a more prominent role in the world football community in the years to come.

NEW MEMBER ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS ELECTED IN AUSTRALIA, BRUNEI DS, INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE

In 2023, the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) welcomed five (5) newly elected Member Association Presidents, marking a significant moment of leadership transition across various ASEAN nations. AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth extended his heartfelt congratulations to the new presidents and expressed his eagerness to collaborate with them on advancing football development in their respective countries. He emphasised AFF's commitment to supporting its member associations through strategic partnerships, governance support and football development programmes.

AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth and AFF General Secretary Winston Lee personally attended these events, and their presence underscored the AFF's dedication to fostering unity and collaboration within the football community, ensuring that these leadership transitions contribute positively to the growth of football throughout the region.

Here are the newly elected AFF Member Association Presidents:



The **Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI)** announced the election of Erick Thohir as the new President of PSSI during the PSSI Extraordinary Congress held on 16 February 2023. Thohir, a prominent Indonesian businessman and sports executive, is renowned for his extensive experience and contributions to the sports industry, making him a significant figure in the realm of football leadership.

Thohir's rise to prominence in sports management stems from his track record in international sports. As the former owner of Inter Milan, one of Italy's most prestigious football clubs, Thohir has demonstrated his capability to manage and develop high-profile teams. His involvement with the National Basketball Association (NBA) further underscores his diverse experience in international sports, showcasing his ability to navigate complex organisational landscapes and enhance the visibility and commercial viability of sports entities.

With Thohir at the helm, Indonesian football is poised to enter a transformative era focused on growth and professionalism. His vision for the PSSI includes a commitment to elevating the standard of the game at all levels, from grassroots initiatives to the professional leagues. Thohir recognises the importance of fostering local talent and developing robust training programs to nurture young players, which will be essential for the long-term success of Indonesian football.

Erick Thohir's election as the President of PSSI marks the beginning of a transformative chapter for Indonesian football. With his extensive experience in managing top-tier sports organisations, both in football and beyond, Thohir is well-equipped to steer PSSI towards a brighter future. His vision, centered on professionalism, talent development, and infrastructure improvements, has the potential to elevate Indonesian football to new heights and establish the country as a force to be reckoned with in the global football landscape.



In Singapore, the **Football Association of Singapore (FAS)** elected Bernard Tan as its new President during the 41st FAS Congress held on 23 September 2023. Tan, who had been serving as the interim president, following the untimely passing of FAS President Lim Kia Tong (+), was elected as president for the remainder of the 2022–2025 term. Tan's leadership comes at a time when Singaporean football is on a transition phase underlining its focus on youth development, improving the professional league, the Singapore Premier League and enhancing the performance of the national team.



Football Australia (FA) elected Anter Isaac as its new President during its 20th Annual General Meeting on 22 November 2023 at the Allianz Stadium in Sydney. Isaac, who ran unopposed, has a longstanding association with Australian football and is a respected figure in sports administration. His appointment comes at a crucial time for Australian football, which has seen increasing global recognition following the country's successful co-hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. Isaac's presidency will focus on building on this momentum, developing the women's game, expanding the domestic leagues and fostering greater grassroots engagement across the nation. His vision is to ensure that football becomes the most popular and accessible sport in Australia.



In the Philippines, John Anthony Gutierrez of Bukidnon FA was elected as the new President of the **Philippine Football Federation (PFF)** during its Extraordinary Congress on 25 November 2023. Gutierrez's election ushers in a new chapter for Philippine football, as he takes over from Mariano Araneta, Jr., who served as president from 2010 until 2023. Gutierrez's leadership is expected to focus on continuing the progress made in both men's and women's football, with particular attention on youth development, grassroots expansion and enhancing the quality of domestic competitions. He brings a fresh perspective to the PFF, aiming to promote greater inclusivity and development across the country.



The **Football Association of Brunei Darussalam (FABD)** elected former national team player Haji Feisal bin Haji Eusoff Patail as its new President during the FABD 9th Ordinary Congress on 16 December 2023. As a former player, Feisal brings a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities within Bruneian football. His presidency signals a new direction for the FABD, with plans to enhance the development of young talents, improve football infrastructure, and strengthen the national team's competitiveness in regional and international tournaments. Feisal has expressed a clear vision for Brunei football, with an emphasis on building a more robust domestic league and encouraging greater participation at all levels of the sport.

AFF President Major General Khiev Sameth expressed his confidence in the newly elected presidents, stating, "These leaders have the vision and the expertise to take football in their countries to new heights. We at AFF are committed to working closely with them, offering our support to ensure the growth and success of football across the ASEAN region."

The AFF looks forward to fostering stronger relationships with these new leaders and working together to achieve the shared goal of advancing football development throughout Southeast Asia. As these new presidents begin their tenures, the focus will be on building strong foundations, improving governance, and ensuring that football continues to thrive across the region for future generations.



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