

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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Singapore

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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (SOCIAL AFFAIRS) AND
CHAIRMAN, FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE, AT THE SOCCER BALL '82
AT THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL ISLAND BALLROOM ON 15 OCTOBER 1982 AT 7.30 PM

On behalf of the Football Association of Singapore, may I extend a very warm welcome to all of you to this Seventh Soccer Ball. This social event is our annual dinner and dance, gathering under one roof a cross-section of the soccer fraternity, from the players to our supporters. This year's function is being held in conjunction with the inaugural Merlion Cup Tournament, in order that the FAS may shower some Singaporean hospitality on our visiting teams from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Thailand. Along with Singapore, it is a Seven-Nation contest which represents the biggest effort to date by the FAS to organise a major international tournament. We thank all of you for participating. We are hopeful that it will gradually mature into an annual event which will feature prominently in Singapore's sporting calendar.

This tournament and this glamorous evening would not have been possible but for the very generous support given by the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board, Singapore Airlines, Menard Cosmetics, Kentucky Fried Chicken and our many other friends who helped us in one way or another. I would like to say a big thank you to all of them and would look forward to their continued support and co-operation in future.

We have just completed our semi-finals and I must congratulate South Korea and Australia which have emerged as winners and will now contest the final on Sunday, 17 October, for the prestigious Merlion Cup donated by the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. This is a \$30,000/- trophy which the STPB would like to see contested on a regular basis. We are naturally disappointed that Singapore has not reached the final but, together with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, we have to accept that only the two best teams can survive such a major tournament and face each other for the grand final.

Naturally /2.

Naturally luck and superstition can also play a big part in any match. I understand that, before the start of the crucial match between South Korea and Singapore, the Korean Manager was very pleased when he spotted the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Merlion Cup Tournament Organising Committee both with new hair cuts. He was overheard to have predicted a 2-0 victory for Korea. He was correct. At this stage we can only give notice to the eventual winner that Singapore will be better prepared next time, both players and organisers, and it is our intention to capture the trophy at the next available opportunity. I hope that all of you will turn up on Sunday to witness the grand final and I wish both teams the best of luck.

Back to the business for this evening. I understand that the Soccer Ball Organising Committee has drawn up an elaborate programme for your entertainment. Besides the usual 'Footballer of the Year' award, our other highlight this evening will be the Merlion Queen Contest. We have representatives from Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore to contest this title. They are all Beauty Queens from their respective countries and it should be a keenly contested event, although there will be no need for our FIFA referees to flash either the red or yellow cards.

In conclusion, may I once again thank our visiting teams for participating in this inaugural soccer tournament, all sponsors, the press, both foreign and local, the Merlion Cup Tournament and Soccer Ball Organising Committees, and all of you for supporting this evening's function and, last but not least, the Management of Shangri-la Hotel which has been a tremendous help to our organisers.

Thank you and have an enjoyable evening.

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