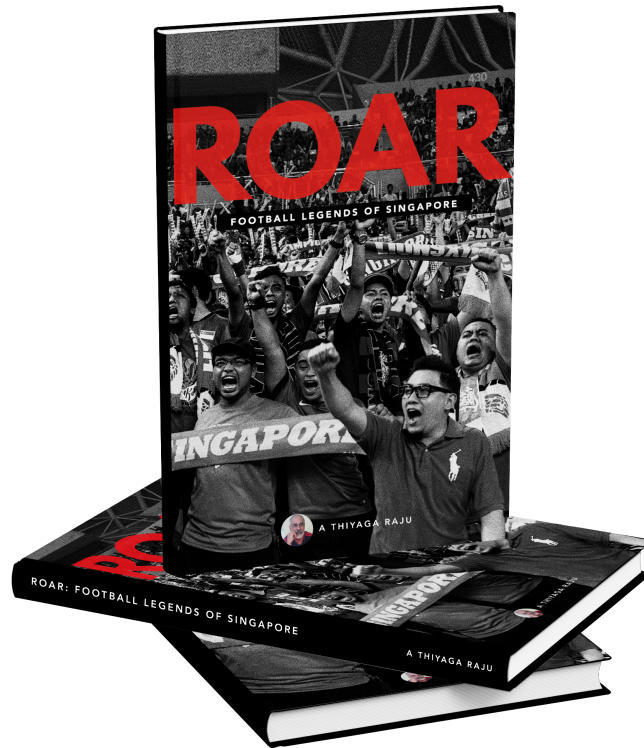


MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**BOOK LAUNCH: "ROAR: FOOTBALL LEGENDS OF SINGAPORE"
— A TRIBUTE TO 100 YEARS OF FOOTBALL HISTORY**

For one night only, revive the Lions' ROAR at Jalan Besar Stadium — the only birthplace of Singapore football that is still standing. Watch a free invitational football match and cheer on the veteran internationals of Singapore and Malaysia.

Singapore, 31 August 2022 — Pagesetters will be publishing *ROAR: Football Legends of Singapore*, a book authored by A Thiyaga Raju and edited by sports writer Gary Koh. The book — which launches at Jalan Besar Stadium on 31 August 2022 — is their endeavour to present football history and Singapore football legends, for us to remember and carry on to future generations.

ROAR: Football Legends of Singapore documents 100 years of football history from the colonial era to the present day, tracing the development of football in Singapore. It features commentaries by Raju on his most memorable moments in Singapore football history.

A Thiyaga Raju, the book's author, said: "We should recognise and appreciate our football legends — past and present — for their contributions to the nation through sport. They sacrificed a lot of their prime years slogging under the sun to bring honour to our country, and this is my small gift to them."

To mark the event, an artefact honouring national footballer Chia Boon Leong will be unveiled on the pitch at Jalan Besar Stadium. Titled 'Twinkletoes', the foot cast was commissioned by Sport Singapore and crafted by sculptor Baet Yeok Kuan. Health permitting, Chia Boon Leong will be present at the unveiling.

Chia Boon Leong, 97, is one of Singapore's most successful soccer stars. The only Singaporean to have played football at the Olympics, he represented China at the 1948 London Games. Chia participated in the 1954 Asian Games, and was voted the most popular player in Malaya that year. He also played an instrumental role in Singapore's Malaya Cup victories in 1950, 1951 and 1952.

After the unveiling, veterans of Singapore and Malaysia football will take to the field for an invitational friendly match featuring illustrious ex-internationals such as: (Singapore international veterans) 1. Fandi Ahmad 2. Malek Awab 3. Razali Saad 4. Leong Kok Fann 5. R Suriamurthy 6. Robert Sim 7. Ho Kwang Hock 8. Fahmi Abdullah 9. Shahri Rahim; (Malaysia international veterans) 1. Soh Chin Ann 2. James Wong 3. Zainal Abidin Hassan 4. Khung Heng Meng 5. Vincent Thambyrajah 6. Chen Wooi Haw 7. Chow Siew Yai 8. Kamarul Zaman Yusoff 9. P Umaparam.

ROAR: Football Legends of Singapore is the product of Raju's lifelong passion for football, which began in the 1970s during his school days.

"What I like about Singapore football is that all races come together as one voice — regardless of whether you are Chinese, Malay, Indian or Eurasian, you play as one. That is the power of Singapore football," Raju said.

Since 1974, Raju has been compiling information about national players and their backgrounds, with the hope of someday publishing a book.

"I spent many hours doing research at the National Library and going through old microfilms. It was challenging, but very enjoyable because I started learning new things about people like Uncle Choo (Seng Quee) from Raffles Institution. All of these stories are registered in the book," Raju said.

Raju's most vivid memory of Singapore football was a match between Singapore and Penang on 26 May 1974, where a capacity crowd of 70,000 fans packed the old National Stadium. At least 10,000 were locked out, leaving many fans to climb over the gates.

"I will never forget that day. It was a Sunday... It was my first time stepping into the stadium, and I didn't realise it was an illegal entry as I was too naive. But that was where I saw all the legends on the same field. Singapore won the match 3-2, and it really drove me crazy. Ever since I have spent most of my time finding out more about all of these players," Raju said.

Gary Koh, the book's editor, hopes that it will shine a light on the lesser known people and places which have shaped Singapore's national football history.

"Football is part of our nationhood and sporting heritage. These eleven players are fighting for our country and countrymen and this is why we should care about football," Koh said.

"Sometimes people seem indifferent, or pass remarks like 'Singapore football cannot make it lah!' — I do sympathise, because it indirectly reflects that they do care about what is going on in our game, and want us to do better."

Writing the book entailed months of painstaking research and interviews with former national players. While many sporting records have been lost over the years, Raju and Koh trawled through hundreds of newspaper clippings to weave together the story of Singapore football.

"What I had learnt about Singapore football over those months was mind blowing. After completing the book, I realised that what I knew before was only a small fraction — at most 10 percent of what was written," Koh said.

During the event, Raju will pay tribute to the football legends and persons who have made the book possible. Together with Gary Koh, the editor, they will present a signed copy to FAS President Lim Kia Tong, veteran footballer Chia Boon Leong, and a representative from the Malaysian contingent.

Raju will also present commemorative plaques to people who had contributed to Singapore football, including footballers, family members and sports journalists from Singapore and Malaysia.

"The author's and editor's love of football and their work on ROAR celebrate the work of footballers. It is a tribute to athletes who have committed their lives to the pursuit of sporting excellence. This is a symbolic handover of Raju's memories and Gary's documentation work to the people in and of football," said Ng Kah Gay, the book's project manager from Pagesetters Services.

The event will be emceed by veteran radio DJ and former national youth player Brian Richmond. Richmond will invite Singapore and Malaysian veterans in attendance to share significant memories of their footballing careers, including lessons learnt in hardship — stories to inspire legends of tomorrow.

The guests of the book launch will then join the stadium fans to spectate a 8pm match between Singapore and Malaysian veterans. The match will be played in 30 minute halves with a 10 minute break.

"We are humbled to be a part of this historic book launch commemorating 100 years of Singapore football history," said Datuk Soh Chin Ann, former Malaysian international. "Singapore and Malaysia share many great moments on the pitch as competitors, but we are best friends off the field. We look forward to reminiscing about the glorious past and enjoying the priceless bonds between us."

Ho Kwang Hock is a player and organiser of the Singapore veterans team. He said: "The ex-nationals are happy to be remembered till this day and look forward to welcoming our dear friends from across the Causeway on 31 August. The launch of ROAR will bring back lots of memories. Maybe, with good sponsors, we can someday have a Veterans Cup?"

The launch will be attended by Mr Lim Kia Tong, President of the Football Association of Singapore, H.E. Dato' Dr. Azfar Mohamad Mustafar, the High Commissioner of Malaysia and representatives from Sport Singapore as well as football initiative Unleash The Roar!.

"I am putting my indelible stamp of approval for such a brilliant and wonderful book," said Mr Lim.

"Football is such a popular and well-loved game that it has become a universal passion. All the people who have contributed to the creation of this book have displayed the enthusiasm required to share the passion created by generations of devotees," said Dr Nick Aplin, Deputy Director, Sport Heritage at Sport Singapore.

Dr Aplin is an author who has focused on sport in Singapore from colonial times to the present day. The football connection for him is well defined in that his eldest son is a professional footballer. Anders currently plays for Hougang United and has represented Singapore on the international stage.

He said: "The Sport Heritage team is aligned with the motivation behind ROAR. There is a strong desire to portray the experiences of past sportsmen and women in a way that will inspire young and old today. It is important that we continue to have a concerted effort in rediscovering the legacy of Singapore's sporting heroes so that their contributions are celebrated over time."

31st August is a special day for Raju as it represents all that is dear to him — it is his wife's birthday, and the month when both Singapore and Malaysia celebrate their independence. Above all, it is Ganesha Chaturthi, the day when Hindus celebrate the arrival of Lord Ganesha and mother Goddess Parvati to earth.

"Thanks be to God, and to all those who have supported us and made this project possible. This book is not done by me alone, I have an excellent team behind me to bring this book to a different level and credit should go to the whole team," Raju said.

"We gather in the spirit of friendship and brotherhood, to celebrate the ties and shared heritage between our two peoples. Together, we will keep the faith in this beautiful game."

ROAR: Football Legends of Singapore is available for pre-order from <https://pagesetters.sg/ROAR>. It will be on sale at a special price of \$22 (incl. GST) until 31 August, 2022.

Enjoy free admission to the football match at 8pm at Jalan Besar Stadium, with fans to be seated by 730pm. There will be free finger food for the first 200 fans, while stocks last. No tickets are required.

For more information, please contact:

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Bio: A Thiyaga Raju

An admitted sports enthusiast, Thiyaga Raju Arumugam's passion for writing was ignited when he joined The Straits Times editorial department in January 1979. His letters to The Straits Times Sports View column were published regularly from 1979 to 1981, and he has been a frequent contributor to the Forum page since 2015.

Most of his letters are centred around doing more for our former Singapore national footballers as well as improving the lives of the poor, needy and less privileged. He hopes for more to be done for single parents who struggle to raise their kids single handedly and put food on the table.

In 2017, he organised an Appreciation Dinner for our Singapore Football Legends to mark the 40th Anniversary of our Malaysia Cup victory in 1977. In 2019, he received the Vibrant Football Culture award from the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) for his writings on and contributions to Singapore football.

Bio: Gary Koh

Gary Koh is an experienced Singaporean football writer with sound knowledge of the local game. He began writing in 2004 with now-defunct website Total Football and had a stint as an intern at The New Paper Sports desk. His work has been published in local and international football sites, among them renowned football magazine FourFourTwo and the Asian Football Confederation Quarterly Magazine.

About Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd

Pagesetters is driven by powerful concepts derived from a deep understanding of our clients. With our network of trusted collaborators, we build each project to reach its defined audience. We are the proud owner of the Ethos Books imprint, an independent publisher of non-fiction, fiction and poetry.

A. PROGRAMME FOR 31 AUGUST 2022

Jalan Besar Stadium

All persons to be in position by 6pm

Master of Ceremony: Brian Richmond, one of the football legends of Singapore

6.30pm – 6.45pm (VIP Lounge, Jalan Besar Stadium)

[closed door event for media and invited guests]

* Lim Kia Tong, President of the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) to welcome the attendees to mark the start of this occasion to honour football legends of Singapore, their grit and commitment.

6.45pm – 7.30pm (VIP Lounge, Jalan Besar Stadium)

* The mainstay of the event, the football book - *ROAR: Football Legends of Singapore*, will then be launched. Author and superfan A Thiyaga Raju will pay tribute to the football legends and persons who have made this book possible.

* Together with Gary Koh, the editor, they will present a signed copy to the GOH, FAS President Lim Kia Tong and a representative from the Malaysian veterans team. This is a symbolic handover of Raju's memories and Gary's documentation work to the people in and of football. Their love of football and their work on this book is a celebration of the work of footballers, and a tribute to athletes who have committed their lives to the pursuit of sporting excellence.

* Brian will then invite the Singapore and Malaysian veterans in attendance to share significant memories of their footballing careers, including lessons learnt in hardship, so the media can circulate stories to inspire our football legends of tomorrow.

7.45pm (Jalan Besar Stadium pitch)

* Unveiling of the footcast of Chia Boon Leong, an exemplary footballer and representative for Singapore football.

* Nick Aplin (Deputy Director, Sport Heritage at Sport Singapore) will share a few words on Chia Boon Leong.

7.55pm (Jalan Besar Stadium pitch)

* Group photo with Malaysian and Singaporean veteran internationals, including GOH, FAS President, Malaysia High Commissioner, Sport Singapore, Unleash the Roar!, the author and editor of ROAR

8pm – 9.30pm (Jalan Besar Stadium pitch)

[free entry for 2,000 members of the public, with free finger food for the first 200 fans]

After the book launch, the guests of the book launch will then join the stadium fans for a 8pm match between Singapore and Malaysian veterans. The match will be played in 30 minute halves with a 10 minute break.

After the match, Brian will invite the spectators to join the veterans for a post-match makan at the coffee shop next to Jalan Besar Stadium - The Lobby by Food Paradise.

B. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA

A Thiyaga Raju, author of *ROAR*

Gary Koh, editor of *ROAR*

Ho Kwang Hock, player and organiser of the Singapore veterans team

Thomas Samuel, Honorary Secretary of the Ex-State and Ex-National Footballers Association Malaysia

Dr Nick Aplin, Deputy Director, Sport Heritage at Sport Singapore

Please get in touch with Pagesetters Services to arrange for match day media interviews.

C. PLAYERS SCHEDULED FOR THE 8PM INVITATIONAL MATCH

(Eventual players list is subject to the players' state of health on 31 August 2022. Additional player details are excerpted from the book *ROAR*.)

Team list (Singaporean veteran internationals)

In addition to the names below, there will be other veterans like Fahmi Abdullah and Shahri Rahim.

Name (Nickname & Year of Birth if any), Sex	Position (Countries Represented by Player) [Clubs or States Known to be Represented by Player]	Player Synopsis
Robert Sim (Char Kuay Teow; 1950s?), M	Defender (Singapore) [Geylang International]	Robert Sim was a tough defender who played in the Asian Youth Tournament, before making a name for himself in Geylang International FC and the Singapore Malaysia Cup team, his best game being the 1-0 victory against Hong Kong's Seiko in 1974. A tough and no-nonsense defender, his sweeping tackles gave him the nickname Char Kway Teow, in a reference to the sweeping motion of stir-frying this dish.
Ho Kwang Hock (Ah Siao; 1955), M	Striker (Singapore) [Changi Constituency, Geylang International, Tampines Rovers, Armed Forces, Straits Times, Singapore Chinese]	Affectionately called Ah Siao ("crazy" in the Hokkien dialect), Ho was a member of Singapore's victorious Malaysia Cup team of 1977. He burst onto the local soccer scene as a star striker for Victoria School in the national schools post-secondary football tournament that earned him a place in the 1974 Combined Schools team. With his fearless dashes, power-packed shots and good positional play, Ho featured regularly in Choo Seng Quee's and Trevor Hartley's plans.
Thomas Leong Kok Fann (1958), M	Midfielder (Singapore) [Marble, Tampines Rovers, Combined Schools, Cairnhill, Armed Forces, Singapore Chinese]	A footballer with excellent ball control, skill, speed of thought and pinpoint passing, Kok Fann served the Lions with character, courage and composure. He scored a vital penalty in a 1985 SEA Games semifinal against Malaysia.
Malek Awab (1961), M	Midfielder (Singapore) [Farrer Park, Galaxy Sports Club, Geylang International, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Police, Tampines Rovers, Singapore Malays]	Son to a Yemeni immigrant, Malek had been in love with football since he could first remember. When he was 15, his friend helped him get a job selling tidbits at the old National Stadium during football matches, a job that Malek took very seriously. He was a pint-sized dynamo who made surging runs from midfield and earned 121 caps with the national team in a distinguished career.

Rajagopal Suriamurthi (Suria, Cod Liver Oil Kid, Pink Panther; 1961), M	Midfielder (Singapore) [Tampines Rovers, Armed Forces, Blue Star, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Malaysian Police, Malacca, Public Bank Selangor, Singapore Indians]	A Brazilian born in Singapore: Rajagopal Suriamurthi was most recognised for his ball juggling skills, honed to an art under Choo Seng Quee. At the age of 12, Suria was scouted by Choo and by 16, he played for the Singapore Indians and Tampines Rovers youth team. He debuted for Singapore in the 1977 pre-World Cup tournament, and played for the Lions, delivering accurate passes and curling freekicks with his skilful left leg, before leaving Singapore for Pahang in 1982, winning the Malaysia Cup with Pahang in 1983.
Fandi Ahmad (1962), M	Striker (Singapore) [Kaki Bukit, Guthrie Waugh, Armed Forces, Geylang International, Niac Mitra (Indonesia), FC Groningen, Greek Club OFI Crete, Kuala Lumpur, Pahang, Singapore Malays]	Fandi bin Ahmad was one of Singapore's best footballers. He was signed on by FC Groningen in 1983. Wearing the Lions' No. 17 jersey, Singapore's star striker powered his team on many occasions with acrobatic volleys, cheeky lobs, tap-ins and diving headers.
Razali Saad (1964), M	Defender (Singapore) [Farrer Park, Geylang International, Armed Forces, Singapore Malays]	Razali Saad, a classy centre-back, was known for his strong one-on-one duels with opposing strikers. His superb control and ball distribution, as well as his well-timed tackles, gave shape and composure to the team.

Team list (Malaysian veteran internationals)

Some of these veterans will be present with the team but may not take to the field. In addition to the names below, there will be other veterans like Dollah Salleh, Md Nor bin Haji Yaacob, Vincent Clement D Thamby Rajah, Chen Wooi Haw, Chow Siew Yai, Ahmad bin Yussoff, Thomas Samuel, R Rajakumar, Teoh Yit Huat, Basker Tharmar, Puvanasingam Veerasingam, Tharma Kumaran V Danapalan, Viajantheran Krishnan, Hoo Tat Chang, Kevin Louis, Sivakumar.

Name (Nickname & Year of Birth if any), Sex	Position (Countries Represented by Player) [Clubs or States Known to be Represented by Player]	Player Synopsis
Thanabalan Nadarajah (Lilliput; 1943), M	Striker (Malaysia) [Selangor, Selangor Indians, Malaysian Indians]	N Thanabalan, a Lilliputian who could take down giants, was a celebrated striker in his heydays. He helped to transform the Red Giants and the Malaysian national team with his dazzling array of flicks and tricks, wowing supporters across the land. For his contributions to football, he was bestowed a datukship by the Sultan of Pahang in 2017.
Soh Chin Ann (Towkay; 1950), M	Defender (Malaysia)	Soh Chin Ann was a cool-headed defender with a commanding influence on the field. He was not noted for his speed. Rather it was

	[Malacca, Selangor, Hong Chin, Malaysian Chinese]	his perfect timing and ability to read the game to perfection that gave the illusion that he was everywhere at the same time. Chin Ann played in the 1969 Burnley Cup, where he was then scouted for the national youth team, making his international debut in the Bangkok King's Cup in the same year. By 1971, he was the youngest member of the Malaysia national pre-Olympic Games team. Chin Ann was selected as captain for the 1980 Moscow Olympics and earned more than 250 caps in his career. After stepping down, he took on coaching duties at the Malacca Legenda Football Academy.
Santokh Singh (1952), M	Midfielder, Defender (Malaysia) [Selangor, PKNS, Hong Chin, Hotspurs, Malaysian Indians]	Santokh Singh was known for two things: his uncompromising defending and his glorious beard. With footballer Soh Chin Ann, they were considered the best defensive pair in their time. A tower of strength in defence who was strong and ruthless, his interceptions were timed with split second accuracy and it was a treat to watch him steal the ball away from the feet of opposing players. He was a key player for the Malaysia national team, particularly during the 1974 Asian Games and 1975 Malaysia Cup final.
James Wong Chye Fook (King James; 1953), M	Striker (Malaysia) [Sabah, Outsiders, Sydney Hakoah]	James Wong Chye Fook was a formidable striker in a class of his own, possessing excellent dribbling skills, a powerful header, and two deadly legs. He played professionally for Hakoah in Australia New South Wales Premier League from 1974 to 1975, managing a balancing act: working in a meat factory in the day, and attending training sessions after work. The goal he was most proud to score was the winning goal against South Korea in 1980 which qualified Malaysia for the Moscow Olympic Games.
John Engkatesu (1955), M	Striker (Malaysia) [Selangor, Hong Chin, Malaysia Indians]	A magnificent player and a lethal striker known for his tireless runs and willingness to take shots at goal from any angle. Engkatesu struck up a potent combination with Mokhtar, Yip Chee Keong and Abdullah Ali at Selangor.
Zainal Abidin Hassan (Black Pearl; 1962), M	Striker (Malaysia) [Selangor, Pahang, Public Bank, Balestier United]	Ace striker for Malaysia, Zainal made his international debut in the 1980 Merdeka tournament. In the Malaysia Cup, playing for Selangor and Pahang, his powerful bursts, skilful dribbles and razor-sharp instinct for goals helped him to the Golden Boot Award four times in 1983, 1986, 1991 and 1992. This was a total of 79 goals in 138 appearances. After football, Zainal switched briefly to futsal before returning as a coach for Pahang and Melaka United.

D. 'TWINKLETOES' BY BAET YEOK KUAN (2022)



PHOTO: Sport Singapore

About Chia Boon Leong

Mr Chia Boon Leong is one of the ultimate pioneers of elite sport in Singapore and was one of Singapore's most illustrious soccer stars from the 1940s, until his retirement from competitive football in 1955. Pioneer Olympian Chia Boon Leong is the only Singaporean to have played football at the Olympics, having represented China at the 1948 London Games. He was nicknamed 'Twinkletoes' for his speed and sublime skills. He participated in the 1954 Asian Games and was voted the most popular player that same year. He played a key role for Singapore in Malaya Cup victories in the 1950s. Now at 97 years of age, he is worthy of acknowledgement as one of the early greats.

Pre-War and during WWII

- Date of Birth: 1 January 1925 – date (97 years of age)
- Raffles Institution – pre-War
- Badminton player in 1940
- Pasir Panjang Rovers in 1942 as a 17-year-old
- Syonan Sports Association (1942 – 1945)
- Participant in tours to Malaya – 1942, 1945

Post-War

- Played for Base Ordinance Depot (1946)
- Singapore Amateur Football Association league for Singapore Rovers
- Also played for Singapore Chinese Football Association (SCFA)
- Lien Hwa

Nickname

- ‘Twinkletoes’ – also known as ‘The Schemer’, and ‘The Engineer’

Representative Football

- Lian Hwa tour (Bangkok, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Manila) – played 23 games in 42 days – November 1947
- Played in pre-Olympic tour in October 1948 for China
- Represented China at Olympic Games in London versus Turkey 1948
- Selected for All Singapore XI – one of only 3 civilians in the team – others from the British Armed Services – 1949
- Winning Malaya Cup team – 1950, 1951, 1952
- Played for Singapore in the Asian Games 1954 in Manila
- Voted most popular player in Singapore and Malaya in 1954
- Retired from competitive football in 1955

Management

- Four years on FAS Council (1977 – 1980)
- Three years as Team Manager – Singapore National team – 1978, 1979, 1980
- Stepped down after Pre-Olympic games, became the FAS Welfare Officer

About Commissioned Artwork - "Twinkletoes" by Baet Yeok Kuan, 2022

Sport Singapore has commissioned renowned local sculptor, Mr Baet Yeok Kuan, to create a foot cast of Mr Chia Boon Leong. The artwork titled "Twinkletoes" to honour the legacy of Mr Chia Boon Leong will be unveiled on 31 August 2022 at Jalan Besar Stadium. The foot cast artefact serves as a permanent reminder and a symbol of appreciation of Mr Chia's valuable contributions to the local football scene.

The unveiling event marks the second time in Singapore's history that a local sports person has been honoured with such an artefact. The first hand and foot casts of legendary sprinter Mr C. Kunalan was unveiled on 19 October 2018, and are placed on permanent display at the Singapore Sports Museum at the Singapore Sports Hub.

Through the creation of the artwork, the Sport Heritage Division aims to increase awareness of our nation's sporting heroes, past and present and their contributions to nation building. It is hoped that modern Singaporeans do not lose sight of their inspirational forebears, and that Singaporeans such as Chia Boon Leong continue to be seen as iconic figures by younger generations.

After the unveiling, the artwork will be on temporary display at the Football Association of Singapore at Jalan Besar Stadium for viewing by the football fraternity.