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Early publicity campaigns important: Sabbaruddin

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DATUK Sabbaruddin Chik reiterated yesterday the importance of undertaking early publicity campaigns and promotional programmes for any events, including sporting events, held in the country.

Speaking from experience of organising the Visit Malaysia Years 1990 and 1994, the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister said: "Promotions are very important (to ensure the success of an event).

"If we are good at what we do, people will talk about it. And if we do a bad job, people will also talk about it. It (promotions) is a responsibility," he told Business Times.

He was asked on the developments following his statement on the lack of publicity for the Commonwealth Games which had led to the resignation of Sukom Ninety-Eight Bhd executive chairman Jen (B) Tan Sri Hashim Mohamed Ali on Monday. Hashim has since withdrew his resignation letter following a request by Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"I do not regret making the statement that publicity should be made. My only regret is that the way the developments have taken its course. I am sorry if it it has hurt anybody, especially Hashim," he said.

Sabbaruddin said when the ministry organised the Visit Malaysia Year 1994, the publicity campaign was carried out as early as August 1992 when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched its worldwide publicity campaign in Kuala Lumpur.

This move enabled both the local and foreign tour agents to package programmes under the Visit Malaysia Year 1994 for tourists.

"Tour agents need time to do market segmentation and draw up their packages. They have to look at the programmes we would be organising for the year, find out who would most likely go for these programmes, work out the logistics such as transport and accommodation and then sell these packages," he added.

Although the Commonwealth Games is only 15 months away, Sabbaruddin believed it is never too late to promote the international meet which will be held between September 11 and 21 next year.

Unlike the year-long Visit Malaysia Year, he pointed out that the Commonwealth Games stretches only 11 days. "The shorter the period of an event, the more concentration you have got to give and the more planning that goes into it."

The ministry, he said, has included the Games in its Sports and Recreation Year 1998 calendar of events. It is one of 174 events in the calendar, which also includes the annual tourism activities such as Flora Fest in July and Malaysia Fest in September.

The calendar is expected to be printed soon for distribution in August.

Besides this, the ministry is also promoting the Commonwealth Games through its tourism sales missions overseas. Beginning with the ITB Berlin in February, the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board has included promotions for the Commonwealth Games.

The Commonwealth Games song are sung at Tourism Malaysia's performances during the sales missions. "We also distribute Sukom's gift items such as paperweights, pins, badges ... which we bought at full cost. Our gifts and souvenirs now comprise these items," he said.

Bernama reports: A detailed report of Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd operations and preparations for the 1998 Commonwealth Games will be given to ministers soon, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said

yesterday.

The move is to avoid confusion and criticisms against Sukom '98, the company in charge to organise the games, he told reporters after receiving the E.I. Dubai football squad from Bosnia-Herzegovina at his office, in Kuala Lumpur.

Muhyiddin said the report will contain latest information on the company's preparations for the prestigious tournament from September 11 to 21.

He said the company officials will brief him on June 21 on the publicity aspect and ways to boost the publicity blitz.

He said the budget for publicity campaigns and timing will be among the key issues to be discussed at the meeting.

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