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Lack of tourism promotion at MAS London office

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IT was not surprising to read that visiting tycoon Mohammed Al-Fayed was very impressed with Malaysia, especially Langkawi.

During his first visit, he said that Langkawi was a great tourist destination, making the Caribbean look out of date.

Our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that our tourism industry was not aggressive enough in promoting Malaysia and attractions like Langkawi.

Our beloved Prime Minister has been marketing and promoting our country worldwide during his travels and bringing well-known intellectuals and billionaire businessmen to invest in our country.

I was recently in London during Hari Raya and went to the MAS ticketing office in Green Park, opposite the Ritz Hotel, to purchase a ticket to Kuala Lumpur.

Much to my surprise and disappointment, there were no brochures or posters displayed about Malaysia or its many interesting cities or holiday resorts in the office.

When I asked the person across the counter about these posters or brochures, the woman replied there was none. My father told me it was the same situation in October last year when he was there.

I would have imagined the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism or MAS would have no trouble providing these brochures or posters for display at their offices to attract travellers from the United Kingdom to come to beautiful Malaysia, especially now that the sterling is so high in value against the ringgit.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth Games is fast approaching and this would provide another reason to visit Malaysia.

When I inquired further whether those visitors who purchased MAS tickets and flew to Kuala Lumpur would be able to fly to another local destination, like Penang or Langkawi, as clearly advertised by other airlines, MAS chose to remain silent.

MAS seems more interested in making money out of passengers. As it is, there is a vast difference in the air fares among MAS and other airlines to and fro Kuala Lumpur!

Posters of Malaysia - Kuala Lumpur with its many interesting buildings and greenery, Penang, Langkawi, Ipoh, Malacca and other holiday resorts - are being displayed in ticketing and travel agencies in Malaysia. Why then not at overseas ticketing offices, particularly MAS?

To be more aggressive, video tapes of Malaysia should be shown regularly in the ticketing offices to attract would-be tourists and investors to our beautiful and friendly country, not just on board MAS planes.

MAS ticketing offices in large cities throughout the world are important centres of attraction for tourists, businessmen, investors and sports enthusiasts.

Such places can be the best avenues for marketing and promoting our beautiful, hospitable Malaysia.

I do hope other MAS ticketing offices in large cities in Europe or the United States do not have the same attitude as that in London.

The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and MAS should have woken up a long time ago to do some aggressive marketing. Don't leave the tourist promotion to the top leaders only.