

Change of strategy

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SIC target regional markets as F1 race clashes with polls

BY LIM TEIK HUAT

SEPANG: The organisers of the Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix, the Sepang International Circuit (SIC), have made adjustments to their promotion strategies in view of the country's general election.

Malaysians will go to the polls on March 21, which is race day for the GP. And the situation has presented the SIC with additional challenges.

With less than two weeks to the event, the SIC are now targeting the regional markets, especially fans from Singapore:

On the local front, they will give special emphasis to attract school children and college students to the race. They also have to work out special arrangements with the police to ensure smooth flow of traffic on race day.

The SIC chairman, Datuk Mokhzani Tun Mahathir, remained hopeful of meeting the original target of 120,000 spectators on race day.

"We are targeting for more sales in terms of volume. Because of the general election, this year's race has presented us with a different scenario," he said.

"It was totally unexpected but I still believe we can overcome any problem. There is no reason for peo-

ple not to vote early and attend the race later."

More than 8,500 tickets sold last year were from the Singapore market and they did not include the sales made at the circuit or bought by Singaporeans at outlets in Malaysia.

Mokhzani said that they hoped to double the figures this year.

"The SIC are increasing their promotion activities in Singapore. It is common for them to drive to Sepang to watch the race. Emphasis will also be made on wooing spectators from Thailand, Brunei and Indonesia," he said.

This year, Hillstand G will be exclusively for school children and college students. Entry for Friday and Saturday is free. For race day, a ticket will cost only RM50.

"With this incentive, we hope to fill the maximum capacity of 25,000 for Hillstand G," said Mokhzani.

As of last Sunday, the SIC have sold more than 25,000 tickets with an estimated value of RM9 million.

"It is almost 60% higher than the corresponding period last year. With the adjustments to our strategies, we hope sales of tickets will increase," said Mokhzani.

The SIC recorded their best-ever attendance of 101,485 spectators for race day last year.