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Sports-SIC
POLLING DAY TO POSE MASSIVE CHALLENGE FOR SIC

SEPANG, March 8 (Bernama) -- Sepang International Circuit Sdn Bhd (SIC), the organiser for the Malaysian Grand Prix, admit they would be facing a massive challenge to stage the race this year due to a clash of dates with the general election.

"With the polling day falling on the same day as the race, it will be a major challenge. Probably, in the history of Formula One racing, this will be the first time a race is being held on the same day of a country's general election," said SIC Chairman Datuk Mokhzani Tun Mahathir.

He was speaking at a media conference to update SIC's preparations in view of the upcoming 11th general election, at the Sepang Circuit here today.

He urged local F1 fans to come and experience the hottest race in the world as well as to carry out their obligations to the country as voters.

"Cast your vote early and then come to the Circuit to watch the race. The race starts at 3pm. I hope nobody brings anything that represent their party symbols to the circuit. But they are encouraged to come here and witness the race and feel relaxed after almost two weeks of hard work," said Mokhzani.

He said that the selection of the polling date was entirely the Election Commission's prerogative.

"Everybody knows that March 21, has been set for polling day and the date also coincides with race day. That's an additional challenges in staging the sixth edition of the race," he said.

Although the situation seems to be tough, Mokhzani said SIC fully believe they would make this year's race as successful as previous F1 races hosted here.

As of yesterday, SIC sold more than 25,000 tickets or almost 60 per

cent higher compared to last year's corresponding period.

He added that SIC is expecting 50,000 foreign spectators from the 120,000 targetted this year. In last year's race, 25,000 of the 101,485 spectators were foreigners.

Asked of the SIC's strategies to counter the expected reduction in local spectators on race day, Mokhzani said among steps taken are to double up efforts to encourage more spectators from neighbouring countries like Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Brunei.

"We will increase our promotional activities in Singapore and other countries to woo more fans. We have also sought the help of our official ticketing agents there," he said.

For the local market, he said various packages and discounted tickets were introduced.

"This year we are not focusing on the value that we would get but our focus now is the volume," he said.

Mokhzani said the SIC has placed special emphasis on school children and college students, with the whole of Hillstand G exclusively reserved for them.

"Entry for the practice and qualifying day is free. On race day we are offering RM50 tickets to them. Through this incentive, we believe the 25,000 capacity Hillstand G will be filled," he said.

The SIC has also established a crisis management centre at the circuit to tackle any form of eventualities.

-- BERNAMA

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