

Better transport essential for successful World Cup

WITH less than a year before the 2010 Soccer World Cup, transport needs to be improved to make the tournament a success, Transport Minister Sibusiso Ndebele said yesterday.

The June Confederations Cup had highlighted limitations in the park and ride system, he said in a speech prepared for delivery in Sandton, Johannesburg.

“For 2010, we will therefore employ a combination of the modes of transport, including rail and buses which are principally mass movers.

“These will be supplemented by minibus taxis which we believe are an integral part of the public transport system.”

He said the roll-out plans included long distance services such as buses, trains and planes.

“Our plans must be tight because we know that an estimated 40 000 England fans travelled to Germany in 2006, and more than 100 000 were from Brazil.”

Ndebele said about 500 000 fans were expected to “descend” on the tournament and this figure could rise with travellers not attending the cup but touring the country.

Fifa’s final draw on December 4 would determine where the various teams would play their matches.

This could mean that popular contenders could see themselves based not in main metropolitan areas, but smaller ones with less tourist infrastructure.

“If we plan inadequately for this situation we might end up in disaster.”

For this reason, Ndebele said,

it was strongly believed that one person – through delegated authority in the host cities – should run the entire transport system.

“The buck must stop with one centre that uses a benevolent dictatorship to deal with problems.”

He said ongoing negotiations with the taxi industry over the much-resisted Bus Rapid Transit system should also be concluded and implemented without delay.

“Working together as partners we will be able to address all the shortcomings we experienced during the Confederations Cup. To achieve such a result, the country and the continent need to pull together.

“The government cannot do it alone, neither can the local organising committee.” — *Sapa*