

Travellers: Visa services essential

Authorities urged to let centre reopen for overseas work and study applications

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KUALA LUMPUR: Students and others planning to travel overseas for work later this year are alarmed by the suspension of a visa processing centre here.

They fear that their application and travel plans will be delayed over the suspension of the centre, which has been categorised as a non-essential service.

An online petition initiated on June 30, urging the relevant authorities to step in, has obtained over 1,400 signatures as at press time.

The centre, VFS Global, in a statement on its Facebook page, said its UK Visa Application Centre would resume operations in phases

starting from July 12.

It added that other application centres would remain closed in view of the ongoing government directives related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, in a statement on its official Facebook page, reminded visitors to make an appointment with VFS Global as it could only accommodate a limited number of people.

The Advocacy Alliance for Affected VFS Visa Applicants, in a letter to an online portal, expressed concerns that the delay could cause a backlog of applications.

"We project that the applications will peak from July to October as students are expected to enrol in September, while workers will rush

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Melody Chong

to start work for the new fiscal year," it said.

It added that the two-week enhanced movement control order

from July 3 should not affect the centre as it was not based in any of the affected localities.

VFS Global deputy general manager (corporate communications) George Cherian, when contacted, pledged to look into the matter.

An International Trade and Industry Ministry spokesperson said the issue did not come under its purview as it was solely responsible for the manufacturing sector.

Immigration director-general Datuk Khairul Dzairree Daud said the centre did not come under the department, adding that the matter should be referred to the respective embassies instead.

Kuala Lumpur National Security Council director Azizah Mohamed Said pledged to review the matter.

Applicant Melody Chong called for a speedy resolution to allow students to make travel arrangements soon.

"Many students and their parents are stressed as they have paid deposits and rentals upfront," she said.

Fellow applicant Lee Ing Ng said the centre should reopen as the service it provided was essential to those planning to study overseas, while another applicant, Muhammad Azhar Muhammad Yusoff, urged for it to reopen with a strict standard operating procedure.



'Visa centre service essential to us'
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