

Coping with high demand

Passport offices on extended hours up to 6pm and 10pm in some states

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: There has been a deluge of applications for passports since the announcement of the border reopening.

To cope with the demand, Immigration offices in Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Johor, Negri Sembilan and Melaka will now open until 10pm from Monday to Friday.

Offices in Penang, Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu and Perlis will be opened until 6pm.

All passport issuing offices in Peninsular Malaysia will also be opened from 8am to 12.30pm on Saturdays beginning May 14 while Immigration offices in UTC buildings will be opened until 10pm every day once the Finance Ministry gives its approval.

The surge in applications, which began in March before the reopening of the borders on April 1, is expected to continue for another three months.

In March, the department issued 111,931 passports while 165,449 were issued between April 1 and May 6.



Long queue: Applicants waiting to collect their passports at the Immigration office in Jalan Duta. — LOW LAY PHON/The Star

Immigration director-general Datuk Seri Khairul Dzaimée Daud said an average of 500 passport applications could be processed daily and the extension in operating hours to 10pm would allow an additional 300 passports to be processed.

Some of the department's busiest

offices were in Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Selangor and Penang.

Khairul Dzaimée acknowledged there were some difficulties in applying for passports due to the increased demand.

Among the issues raised were the

delay in receiving post-application email notifications, problems in uploading photographs and thumbprint verification.

He said the department had also received complaints of long waits while some people could not get queue numbers.

"The online appointment system will cease from Wednesday and appointments after the date can no longer be used.

"We have also opened special counters to assist those who have been offered to perform the haj obtain their passports," he said.

Khairul Dzaimée added that passport renewals were to be made online except for new applications, and those involving senior citizens, persons with disabilities, children under 13, students and haj pilgrims.

He said the department had prepared 970,000 passport books, adding that the problem was the application process, which should be resolved with the extended operating hours.

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