

REGION

Immigration to boost staff at checkpoint

CONGESTION: Exit, entry points choked with vehicles during peak hours

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MORE immigration staff will be stationed at the entry and exit points of Terminal 1 of the Sultan Abu Bakar Complex at the Second Link to handle the influx of passenger coaches.

However, Terminal 2 at both the entry and exit points will remain closed as the Johor Immigration Department deemed there was no pressing need to open it.

Johor Immigration Department director Rohatzi Bahari said the situation at the Second Link was unique as there is only one bus lane leading to the complex at both the arrival and departure points, which results in a long queue of coaches.

He said once passengers alight at the complex, most need not take too long for immigration clearance.

"However, we are planning to review our staff strength at the Second Link by stationing more immigration officers to man the booths during peak seasons.

"This includes opening all the immigration booths during peak hours," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Rohatzi was commenting on an NST report on tourists having to queue for up to four hours for immigration clearance at the complex, as only one of the two terminals for passenger coaches is open during



Your guides claim only Terminal 1 of the Sultan Abu Bakar Complex in Tanjung Kupang is open for passenger coaches and has only a handful of immigration staff on duty during the weekends and public holidays.
Pic by Zulkarnain Ahmad Tejuddin

weekends and public holidays.

Tour guides, who have received complaints from clients, are afraid that the visitors would have an impression of poor service even before entering the country.

They claimed that only Terminal 1 was open for coaches and only a handful of immigration staff are on duty during the weekends and public holidays, while Terminal 2 was closed all the time.

National Tourism Council of Malaysia vice-president Jimmy Leong said that Terminal 2 was closed more often than not, although it was supposed to divert passenger traffic during peak hours.

He lamented that at times, the coaches lined up for over 10m even late in the evenings, and questioned the basis for such a big complex when there were so few officers to man it.

Tour guides used to the situation at the Second Link claimed that the lane for passenger coaches at the entry point is choked with vehicles

from 7am to 11am on weekends.

At the exit point, it is choked with vehicles from 5pm to 10pm on both days.

However, there are even more passengers at the entry point on Saturday mornings and exit point on Sunday evenings as the passengers include Malaysians working in Singapore.

The situation is most critical during long weekends as most Malaysians working in the republic rush back for a break.

Meanwhile, the Tourism and Culture Ministry will bring the matter up with the relevant authorities on the congestion for bus passengers clearance at the Second Link's passport control here.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, said he would bring the matter up with Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi after his visit at the Sungai Kumpang Melayu area in Gelang Patah near here yesterday.

Johor fishing village to be heritage site

GELANG PATAH: The government will gazette Kampung Sungai Melayu, a 150-year-old fishing village here, as a national heritage and mangrove zone.

Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz said the area would be gazetted under the National Heritage Act.

"Sungai Melayu is rich in heritage and it will be preserved through the Heritage Act. To do this, we seek the cooperation of various parties," Nazri said after a working visit to the area here yesterday.

A RM300,000 floating jetty will also be built.

"We are projecting a two-fold increase in the income of the local community when the development is ready within five years."

He said plans were ongoing to prepare the village for development.

"The state government will also develop the fishing village near the Nusajaya administration centre as an agro-tourism product to enable its residents to gain from Johor's rapid development," he said.

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