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Many forced to postpone, cancel events

KUALA LUMPUR: The Covid-19 outbreak has led to many organisers to either cancel or postpone events.

At least six large-scale events scheduled for the next two months had been postponed, while a "fun run" had been cancelled.

The outbreak had affected concert-goers with the cancellation of two K-pop gigs and the postponement of another five musical events.

Most organisers said their decision to postpone or cancel these events would safeguard the health and safety of participants.

The need to reconsider mass gatherings had become more vital after the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 a pandemic on Wednesday.

One major event is the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (Matta) three-day fair, which was supposed to start today, at the Putra World Trade Centre. It was postponed to May 1 to 3.

Matta president Datuk Tan Kok Liang said the postponement signalled a bleak period for the tourism industry.

He said recent travel bans and negative perception caused by indiscriminate social media postings had an adverse affect on Malaysia's tour and travel businesses.

Other events that have been cancelled were the hot air balloon fiesta, conferences and exhibitions.

The Putrajaya International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta, initially slated for March 19-22, has been postponed to later.

AKA Balloon Sdn Bhd and Perbadanan Putrajaya (PPj), in a joint statement, said the decision was made to prioritise the health and safety of the public, pilots, vendors and suppliers, staff and their families.

Malaysia's biggest palm oil conference, the Palm and Lauric Oils Price Outlook Conference and Exhibition, has been rescheduled to June 22 to 24. It was supposed to be held earlier this month.

The Defence Services Asia 2020 and National Security Asia 2020, Asia's largest defence and security exhibition, has been postponed to Aug 24 to 27 at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre.

Organiser DSA Exhibition and Conference Sdn Bhd chairman Tan Sri Asmat Kamaludin said the postponement followed consideration and consultation with the Defence and Home Ministries, as well as stakeholders.

Malaysia International Halal Showcase has been postponed to Sept 1 to 4 from April 1 to 4.

Organiser Malaysia External Trade Development Corp said the postponement came after gathering feedback from exhibitors and agencies, which expressed their wish for the trade fair to be rescheduled.

The Malaysia Autoshow 2020, initially scheduled from April 9 to 12 at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang has been postponed to July 2-5.

The Unicorn Fun Run, slated for March 15, has been cancelled.

Several concerts have also been cancelled or postponed since last month.

K-pop groups Seventeen and GOT7, which were scheduled to hold concerts here on Feb 22 and March 7, respectively, cancelled their gigs due to Covid-19.

Other concerts that have been postponed are Kenny G (Feb 16), Raveena (March 8), Super Junior (March 1), Rockaway Festival (March 14-15) and Kim Jae Joong Asia Tour (March 14).