

# MEF: Lockdown red zones but open all sectors in other areas

PETALING JAYA: Companies located outside of the Covid-19 red zones should be allowed to operate based on the low number of new daily infections recorded within those non red zone areas.

“The government has done much to control the spread of Covid-19 and we appreciate all the efforts and support provided to employers throughout this difficult period,” said MEF President Dato’ Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P. today.

“However, the pressures on employers, employees and the *rakyat* had reached extreme levels and we are of the view that the best way forward to ensure the survivability of livelihoods is to allow business to operate.

“In consideration of the FMCO currently being enforced nationwide, we propose that companies operating outside of the red zone areas be allowed to operate based on the low number of new daily infections recorded in those areas, but the ban on interstate travel should continue to remain.

“We have members in low infection areas such as Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis that have complained that it was not fair for them to be subjected to the same treatment as companies in red zones such as KL and Selangor where the infection rate is still high.

“According to the Ministry of Health’s Covid-19 status report today, except for Negri Sembilan which recorded 700 new cases, none of the other states recorded new infections above 300 cases with Perlis recording none at all.

“The wellbeing of our overall economy should not be made to suffer due to high number of recorded new cases in red zone areas.

“We propose that the efforts to control the spread of Covid and the screening and vaccination be intensified in the red zones and that only industries in the essential sectors be allowed to operate.

“For those outside of the red zones however, all industry sectors should be allowed to open but with strict compliance with SOPs.

“We must not adopt a blanket approach but instead should focus on a holistic targeted approach, and advocate joint responsibility between government and the private sector in its management.

Dato' Dr Syed Hussain said that as each State is at a different level of development, MEF recommends that the respective State authority work closely with the Federal authorities to customise a special approach to address Covid and the economy in the respective States.

“This approach becomes very targeted and may be more effective as it addresses the specific needs of stakeholders,” he said.

“In this way, at least the employers, employees and *rakyat* in those States can still find ways to survive, and at the same time the States would be able to resuscitate its economy.

“We are in no position to speak about the Federal government’s approach but from a business point of view, we suggest our approach to be carefully considered by the experts.

“The local business associations, together with the Federal and State governments, can beat Covid-19 without the employers, employees and the *rakyat* having to suffer for much longer.”

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