

MEF: EMCO could have been better planned

Tan Siew Mung / theedgemarkets.com

July 02, 2021 16:09 pm +08



KUALA LUMPUR (July 2): The imposition of the enhanced movement control order (EMCO) in most parts of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur could have been better planned considering that they are highly populated areas and contribute 40% to national gross domestic product (GDP), said the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the move would be challenging for both employers and employees, though it was a necessary step to flatten the rising trend of daily new Covid-19 infections.

“The number of daily new infections was large from the beginning, and it should have been addressed much sooner with stronger controls like the EMCO,” he said in a statement.

Syed Hussain said adding another two weeks of lockdowns under the EMCO after four weeks of lockdowns under the full movement control order (FMCO) is too much for employers to absorb.

“Many more employers, especially small and medium enterprises and microenterprises (MSMEs) that are not normally within the essential economic and services sectors category, will close and the suffering will increase.

“Without any revenue during the lockdown, it would be extremely challenging for them to remain in business,” he said.

The MEF president also noted that employers were given such a short notice that it is not feasible to “switch on and off” abruptly as there are many logistical aspects that require planning before the shutdown.

“The ad hoc changes from the FMCO to EMCO will create much pain to employers” he said

According to him, only employers or people in the trade understand such requirements and the MEF had many times requested for the industry to be involved in discussions of the National Security Council as the decisions made affect them.

“The success of any plan can only happen if the stakeholders are involved. Execution is the mother of success.

“Let’s all learn from this and in moving forward, proper planning and execution must be fully thought through before execution,” he said.

Syed Hussain also hopes that the facilities for the moratorium on loans would not be disrupted during the EMCO period in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

“Even before companies can reach out for help under the recently announced PEMULIH programme, they are now subject to the EMCO,” he said, hoping that the banks will continue to approve the moratorium for those who require it because employers, employees and the rakyat cannot afford to wait much longer.

He also proposed to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) that the moratorium on loans should be made automatic instead of by application, and that there should be no interest charges or other charges associated with it.

Meanwhile, apart from the EMCO, he said, there is a need for the government to intensify and speed up screening and vaccination in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur with all government agencies and private-sector facilities being mobilised.

“What is needed is fast execution in screening and giving vaccination, and enhancing the utilisation of all resources in the government and in the private sector to achieve the desired target in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur quickly,” he said.

Edited by S Kanagaraju