

# End lockdown, give more financial aid, bosses tell govt

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*MEF says companies are failing on a daily basis and thousands are on the brink of bankruptcy.*

PETALING JAYA: The lockdown strategy is not effective and must be discontinued, says the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

Its president, Syed Hussain Syed Husman, said the longer the full lockdown remained in place, the more businesses will close down, causing many employees to lose their jobs and making it even harder for the economy to recover.

“We acknowledge that the pandemic has created havoc in Malaysia and all over the world.

“There is no simple solution, but when a strategy does not work, we must quickly switch to another so that we all don’t continue to suffer.

“Keeping to the same strategy for an extended period will not change the result,” he said in a statement today.

Syed Hussain said companies are failing on a daily basis and thousands are on the brink of bankruptcy. This will cause lasting damage to the economy, businesses and employment.

“Our members are suffering and forced to shut down and be declared bankrupt. This is on the table and the stress level has reached boiling point.

“MEF appeals once again to the National Security Council to seriously consider our position.

“Employers need a breather and require space to keep alive our businesses and livelihoods.”

Syed Hussain pleaded with the government to open up all sectors of the economy, with strict implementation of SOPs and penalties.

He also urged the government to provide more financial assistance for businesses, adding, “We hope members of the NSC have empathy for employers, employees and the rakyat. Provide immediate relief and aid.

“Some of the immediate relief could be enhanced wage subsidies, targeted credit facilities for micro-SMEs, automatic loan moratorium, exemption of statutory payments, and moratorium on penalties to government agencies as well as tax exemptions.”

Yesterday, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) called on Putrajaya to “immediately” move into the second phase of the full movement control order when Phase 1 ends.

Its president, Soh Thian Lai, said the industry was in a precarious and fragile position, with revenue and cash flow severely affected by its inability to meet contractual global supply chain obligations.

He added that export commitments, with order deliveries delayed or cancelled, had led to mounting legal action from customers.

Meanwhile, science, technology and innovation minister Khairy Jamaluddin dismissed the assumption that Phase 1 would end on June 28. He said it was targeted to end in July.