

MALAYSIA

MEF complains over RM5b cost of sick days, says employers should punish those who take extra leave



Employers allegedly lost around RM5 billion due to their staff taking sick days last year, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman reportedly claimed. — Reuters pic

By Zarrah Morden

Sunday, 26 Feb 2023 9:30 AM MYT

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 — Employers allegedly lost around RM5 billion due to their staff taking sick days last year, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman reportedly claimed.

The group, which has consistently opposed measures benefiting employees, said sick leave was taking a heavy financial toll on companies and preventing businesses from reaching their full potential.

“Employers need to establish policies and educate employees about the consequences of them taking sick leave,” he was quoted as saying in *The Star*.

The figure was based on costs for the wages of employees on sick leave, outpatient clinical costs and the cost to replace workers on sick leave based on overtime payment, he said.

He reportedly suggested that workers who use up more sick days than allotted by the company be subjected to stronger measures that include dismissal.

Employers can also offer incentives to encourage workers not to take medical leave, such as giving recognition to those who have taken minimal days off for being sick or rewarding workers with payment for unused sick days, he reportedly suggested.

Besides that, he reportedly recommended that employees be encouraged to discuss problems with their managers so that they may be accommodated with measures such as being able to come in late for work instead of taking a sick day off.

“Once mutual trust and confidence are established, employees will feel free to discuss their matters with their supervisors.

“So when personal problems arise, employees may discuss with their managers and request to be late for work rather than go on sick leave,” he was quoted as saying.

However, employees should also take preventative measures such as proper sanitation of workplaces, free vaccination and wellness programmes for workers, he reportedly added.

But he reportedly warned employees against buying fake medical certificates (MCs), citing heavy consequences for those who were found to have done so.