

Employers' group makes second appeal for govt to reopen business sector

Staff Writers Jun 25, 2021 3:04 PM



Only essential services are allowed to operate under the present lockdown.

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) today issued a second plea for the government to reopen the business sector, saying companies would rather manage Covid-19 and vaccinations than deal with the problem of an irreparable economy.

MEF president Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the longer the full lockdown remained in force, the more businesses would close down, resulting in a loss of employment for many workers and further damage to the economy.

“MEF is pleading with the government to open up all sectors of business with strict implementation of SOPs and penalties,” he said.

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

The MEF, which issued its first plea on June 23, said then that there had to be a “reasonable balance” between saving lives and livelihoods.

Syed Hussain also said restrictions under the FMCO or full movement control order and confusion over SOPs were “killing businesses”, with many SMEs and

micro enterprises severely affected.

The current lockdown was imposed on June 1. It was originally scheduled to end on June 14, but was extended to June 28 in light of the continued trend of high Covid-19 numbers.

In a statement today, he said companies were “failing on a daily basis” with thousands on the brink of bankruptcy.

“This is on the table and the stress level has reached boiling point,” he said.

He said MEF appreciated the government’s efforts to conduct tests and mass vaccination and acknowledged that the pandemic had created havoc not only in Malaysia but all over the world.

However, he added that the lockdown strategy should be discontinued as it was ineffective.

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

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

Adding that the “man on the street” needs to live, Syed Hussain said businesses would “rather manage Covid and the vaccinations than be saddled with another major problem which is an irreparable economy that would lead to social implications”.

“We can live with the SOPs but survival and livelihoods must be prioritised.”