

Of sleepless game nights and fake MCs

Companies losing up to RM8bil yearly

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KUALA LUMPUR: The current World Cup is expected to be no different from the last two editions when more than 55% companies indicated productivity loss in the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) surveys.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said for the current tournament in Brazil, fans will want to watch the matches live, which are broadcast at unearthly hours.

"As a result, workers suffer insufficient sleep and become less productive at work," he said at the *Medical Absenteeism - Whose Responsibility?* seminar here yesterday.

He said MEF also estimated that the country incurred losses of up to RM8bil a year as a result of fake medical leaves. "This needs to be addressed," he said.

"Many go to clinics, take medical leave and

then do their own thing such as engage in business or even travel overseas," Dr Hilmi said, adding that there were about 12 million employees in the public and private sectors.

According to MEF, employers jointly suffered 26.3 million person days lost a year due to sick leave, he said.

Its nationwide survey found that employers cumulatively paid out an estimated RM8.12bil for the medical problems of the 6.5 million private sector workers nationwide.

Dr Hilmi said this posed a challenge as the country aspired to be a high-income nation.

"Employers forked out some RM3.3bil to settle medical bills," he added.

At the seminar, some of the speakers highlighted that common causes of absenteeism were bullying, harassment, burnout, stress, low morale, childcare and eldercare, depression, illness, injuries and job-hunting.



Energy boost: Chow staying focused at work with energy bars and energy drinks.