

‘Stricter RMCO enforcement vital’

NATION 

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By ALLISON LAI

PETALING JAYA: Businesses have called for stricter enforcement of rules under the recovery movement control order (MCO) period to keep Covid-19 cases low because the country cannot withstand another round of restrictive MCO.

Malaysia Retail Chain Association president Datuk Seri Garry Chua said businesses would be “wiped out” if another round of restrictive MCO was imposed.

“Many small and medium enterprises (SME) and retailers are already on the edge following the start of the MCO on March 18.

“If not for the loan repayment moratorium and wage subsidy, many would have collapsed,” said Chua.

He added that the downward trend of positive cases earlier had left some complacent over norms such as maintaining hand hygiene, social distancing and wearing face masks.

“Sometimes, the public just don’t care but we can’t afford to be relaxed on this. It’s about collective social responsibility, not just of the government,” he said, adding that stricter enforcement was needed to deal with those who put others at risk. Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia’s SME committee chairman Koong Lin Loong agreed, saying that most companies that survived had already exhausted their cash after months of MCO.

“We did a survey and found out that 48% of businesses in Malaysia have less than six months of reserves.

“For now, businesses are slowly getting back onto their feet and consumers are still cautious in spending. They will need the economy to keep moving.

“We cannot afford another round of MCO. Not just businesses, but the people and workers too.

“Authorities should conduct random checks to deal with slack behaviour,” he said, adding that everyone must be diligent in observing the SOP for at least another six months.

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai said the government should

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“Businesses are now focusing on restarting and may not have fully developed a robust continuity plan to address the many challenges during the first lockdown that impacted their supply chain and operations.

“(A second lockdown) may also hamper plans to invest in digitalisation and automation, which have become a critical strategy moving forward to ensure continuity in operations,” Tan said.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said the MCO had caused Malaysia to see the highest unemployment rate ever in the past 30 years.

“More than 98% of businesses in Malaysia are SMEs, and more than 650,000 of these businesses are micro enterprises with less than five employees.

“They cannot sustain their businesses beyond two months without revenue,” he said, adding that more than 50% of micro enterprises had ceased business during the MCO as well as the subsequent conditional MCO.

Shamsuddin said the government should put more enforcers in public areas to ensure a high degree of compliance with the SOP.

“The enforcers should not be trigger-happy to issue summonses, but they should advise the people to comply.

“Issuing summonses will add more financial burden to individuals who are already facing a lot of financial constraints during this period,” he added.