

Pay hike hitch

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PETALING JAYA: Employees, including professionals, should be more considerate and sympathetic of their employers in demanding for better salaries and benefits, particularly in the current market climate.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan

➤ Employees advised to be considerate in demanding for better salaries due to current market climate

said the goal for many employers this year would be to keep their firms afloat, and many are not thinking much about providing greater incentives for their staff.

He said with the global economy not doing particularly well, coupled with the

Covid-19 outbreak that has impacted many economies worldwide, it would not come as a surprise if some companies even resort to cutting their workers' salaries.

Shamsuddin was commenting on the recent 2020 Hays Asia Salary Guide report,

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that found professionals in Malaysia to be the most unhappy with their current compensation packages compared with other countries in the region.

"Of course, many employers are not even talking about salary increments, but whether or not their companies can survive, and if they can retain their employees financially," he told *theSun* yesterday.

"I think employees should be more understanding of the situation their bosses are in right now. It is a question of survival. It is better that a person has a job than having his pay increased now, only to be retrenched later because the company can't survive anymore."

Shamsuddin said for now, companies would be looking to adjust their finances accordingly with the impact of the global economy, and many would only review their employees' salaries and benefits should finances improve.

On Tuesday, he said up to 100,000 Malaysians could lose their jobs this year if the Covid-19 outbreak persists until year-end.

The salary guide report by Hays claimed that 46% of Malaysians surveyed were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their compensation packages, and that 24% of them had asked for a raise but did not receive one last year.

It added that the majority of employees also expect increment upwards of 3%, but 20% of employers have no intention of providing any, leading to a severe mismatch in salary expectations.

The study went on to say that 52% of respondents were actively seeking a new job, and cited compensation as their top reason. A check by *theSun* found that many professions in Malaysia offer considerably less, currency to currency, compared with others in the region.

For instance, journalists with three to five years working experience earn an average of RM3,500 in Malaysia, as opposed to about RM9,500 (SG\$3,200) in Singapore. Engineers here earn as low as RM1,700, considerably less than Japan's average of above RM10,000. This does not take into account currency exchange, inflation and the consumer price index.

Meanwhile, economist Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam said current and prospective employees should lower their expectations in terms of the salaries and benefits they are asking for.