



More could be done to soften blow: Industry

PETALING JAYA: While the Covid-19 virus may be blamed for the massive job losses following the closure of many businesses, various industry players opine that the government could have done more to reduce the blow.

Mohd Effendy Abdul Ghani, deputy president of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, told theSun that the various lockdowns have undoubtedly caused this widespread job losses.

“The government must look at things with a ‘helicopter view’ and should not just implement a nationwide blanket lockdown because not all states are facing a surge of Covid-19 cases,” he added.

He pointed out that states such as Terengganu and Perlis are not facing massive numbers of infections and should not be punished with lockdowns.

Instead, Effendy urged the government to use targeted lockdowns to curb cases in a specific locality so that areas not under threat may proceed with economic activities. “The federal government should delegate its powers to state governments to decide on their own whilst the Health Ministry can set individual benchmarks to allow some states to continue operating,” he said.

This will allow employers and employees to continue operating and to help stabilise the economy in general.

The Human Resources Ministry reported that between the first movement control order implemented in March last year and the end of November, 99,696 Malaysians had lost their jobs with the hardest hit sectors being the service industry.

Statistics Department data showed that Malaysia’s unemployment rate hit 5.3% last May, which was the highest level in more than three decades

Economist Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam explained that those in government seem to be lacking empathy for the people.

“This stems from the makeup of the government which is not representative of the people, has hardly made any reforms and does not live up to their promises.”

He said the government has been too focused on political issues and has not prioritised the needs of the people, resulting in a hopeless future. “The pandemic is the ultimate test of good governance and leadership which we have seen from countries such as New Zealand and Singapore but not here in Malaysia,” he said.

Ramon also explained that whilst frontliners are working hard around the clock, those in charge are hiding behind closed doors and simply taking the credit for the work done by those on the ground.

This is shown by the recent white flag initiative which has seen citizens take actions into their own hands.

A recent post by investor and philanthropist Koon Yew Yin has also highlighted the damage caused by the government's mismanagement of the situation.

In response to the post, tourism and transport industry consultant Y.S. Chan noted that travel and tour companies have not been able to get any business since the first MCO.

"There are no clear long-term goals and back and forth decisions have resulted in daily cases going up and down like a yo-yo," he said.

This along with the throwing of money with no end in sight by the government has led to the delay of the opening of economic activities which are much needed for the tourism and travel industry. -Bernama

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