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Saturday, 19 August 2017

'Check illegals' to stop disease spread

PETALING JAYA: The fight against the spread of contagious diseases should focus on illegal immigrants, says Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan.

"The Government is targeting the wrong group. The presence of illegals should be dealt with more holistically so that contagious diseases can be better controlled," he added.

Shamsuddin also said while locals should be given priority to fill up vacancies by re-branding lower end jobs, the Government should not increase the levy on foreign workers because the rates were already high.

He said the extra medical screening was not necessary as it would add to the cost of doing business, especially now with employees facing many challenges.

On Thursday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said all registered foreign workers were required to undergo compulsory periodical medical check-ups from next January.

He said this new ruling had to be implemented to stop contagious diseases from spreading locally.

On another matter, Dr Ahmad Zahid who is also the Home Minister, said the Government agreed in principle to progressively increase the levy on foreign workers from 2019 to discourage local employers from depending on foreign workers.

The Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (Acccim) secretary-general Datuk Low Kian Chuan said Acccim will comply with the health screening requirement.

Low also said that the foreign workers' levy should not be treated as revenue and the Government should plough it back to the industry and provide incentives to increase productivity.

He said, for instance, the levy should be used to help SMEs to go into automation and reduce the need for foreign workers.

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Ravindran R. Naidu said the frequent health screening was necessary.

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diseases although yearly will be highly recommended because when they go back to their home countries (for visits) and return with an infectious disease, it will be spread before their next medical screening," he said.

Foreign Workers' Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (Fomema) president and chief executive officer Datuk Mohd Hatar Ismail shared a similar view.

"Now, everyone can fly, so workers can go back to their home countries.

"What if when they return, it is the alternate year which does not require them to undergo medical check ups?" he asked.

It was reported last year that the Cabinet had approved for the health screening to be done annually.

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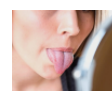
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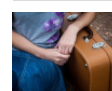
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