‘Employers and workers need help’

MEF: Human Resources minister and deputy must assist during this challenging time

By FATMAH ZAINAL
fatmah@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: New Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M Saravanan and his deputy Awang Hashim must immediately get to work by assisting both workers and bosses amid the challenging weak labour market.

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said they must help employers and employees address the challenges caused by the sluggish economy and the lingering impact of Covid-19.

“Employers need to be assisted to manage the rising cost of doing business now and be given incentives as well as encouraged to retain their existing employees rather than retrenching them.

“Enabling employers to retain employees during the challenging period will in the long run assist them to quickly seize the opportunities since the economy recovers,” said Shamsuddin.

He said during this challenging period, it would also be important for Saravanan and Awang to urgently strengthen tripartism.

“This is so that employers and employees together with their trade unions can work together in order for the existing harmonious industrial relations to be strengthened to enhance the country’s productivity and competitiveness,” he added.

The National Association of Skilled Workers (PRSP) secretary-general Mohammad Rizan Hassan said the new minister should look into providing initiatives in the form of grants or funds for the Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET) youths.

“Grants and funds should be given in order for this group, which are made up of youths who had dropped out of the education system, workforce or formal training, to pursue education or informal skills training.

“This immediate measure is important to help the NEET youths who are handicapped by the country’s economic challenges,” said Mohammad Rizan.

Tackle rising healthcare costs and Covid-19, minister urged

By CLARISSA CHUNG
clarissa.chung@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Health groups have made clear that the new minister must deal with urgent issues such as rising healthcare costs and the Covid-19 outbreak.

“The handling of the Covid-19 situation, the issues of contract officers and the welfare of healthcare workers are urgent areas that will need to be addressed,” said Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr N. Ganabaskaran.

“It is also hoped that the Health Ministry under the new leadership will look into more allocation of funds for public healthcare and the sustainability of our nation’s healthcare,” he said in a statement yesterday.

The newly appointed Health Minister is Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, while his two deputies are Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali and Datuk Aminuddin Haji Romly.

Ganabaskaran said that the rising cost of healthcare for serious illnesses remained a concern among the people, and policies such as the smoking ban at restaurants should be continued.

Forces chief executive officer Datuk Paul Selvaraj said the new appointees would have to tackle significant issues.

“For one, there is the Covid-19 outbreak,” he said, citing also a need to focus on increasing the budget for public healthcare.

“They have to concentrate on making public healthcare more accessible and affordable,” he said.

He said that at the end of the day, it was the delivery of good healthcare services that counts.

Breast Cancer Welfare Association president Ranjith Kaur hoped that the newly appointed minister and deputies would carry out their duty to the people, especially in terms of cancer care.

“We need them to overcome the shortage of specialists in cancer care. The government can buy cancer services from private hospitals.

“Every state should have resident cancer care specialists in hospitals where surgery for cancer is done and they should work as a team,” she said.

She said the government should look into reducing waiting time and to cease charging higher consultation fees for patients referred to government hospitals from private hospitals.

Byline:
THE STAR, Wednesday, March 11, 2020
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