MEF: Incentivise firms that instal scanners

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by AFIQ AZIZ/ pic by BERNAMA

PRIVATE firms that provide thermal scanners at crowded areas or tourist hotspots due to coronavirus should be incentivised, the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) said.

MEF ED Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said although the federation is supportive of the government’s call on private sectors to instal thermal scanners, the installation of the scanners may put an additional cost on any private firm.

“IT (scanners) must be made more affordable, like giving exemptions of any import duties over the purchase. Alternatively, companies that decide to buy the scanners could be offered double tax deduction,” Shamsuddin told The Malaysian Reserve last Friday.
From the financing point of view, banking institutions can provide soft loans to make this idea work, he added.

*Bernama* reported Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye as saying that the thermal scanners — which cost about RM40,000 per unit — would be essential to be placed at the main entrance of buildings. Currently, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has a total of 80 scanners at international gateways throughout the country. Dr Lee said so far the capability of those machines is sufficient.

“Although these machines are quite expensive, costing RM40,000, we encourage the private sector to instal them, for instance hotels could have them to help us (the government),” he said at a press conference held after launching the Malaysian Society of Hypertension 17th Scientific Congress in Putrajaya last Friday.

Covid-19 is the official name announced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Last week, MoH received an additional 26 heat scanners to be installed at the country’s entry points. This brings the total number of heat scanners to 80, compared to 54 previously.

According to MoH, among the vital entry points is the crucial cross-border causeway at Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex in Johor Baru, where some 400,000 people pass by everyday.

On the cooperation between the Health Ministries of Malaysia and Singapore on Covid-19, Dr Lee said the first meeting of the Joint Working Committee will be announced this week.

On the same development, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dzulkefly Ahmad said four of the 22 positive cases of Covid-19 have recovered, making up a total of seven patients that have been cleared of the virus (at press time).

According to WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the first vaccines for Covid-19 could be ready in 18 months.

“So, we have to do everything today using available weapons to fight this virus, while preparing for the long term,” he said in a separate Bernama report last week.