

Don't burden employers with foreign workers' Covid-19 vaccine mandate, says MEF

By MAHADHIR MONIHULDIN

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PETALING JAYA: Foreign workers should be given the Covid-19 vaccine in their home country before entering Malaysian soil, says the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

Its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said employers should not be forced to bear the additional costs of vaccinating their foreign employees following reports that the government was considering making it compulsory for foreign workers to receive booster shots in Malaysia.

He claimed that the proposed move was due to Pharmaniaga Bhd - the sole distributor of the Covid-19 vaccine in Malaysia - losing almost RM216mil or 38% of market capitalisation in a week after a RM552mil vaccine provision sparked panic among investors in the company's shares.

"Employers cannot be forced to incur additional costs on employing foreign workers due to bad management of any company.

"Plans to make booster jabs compulsory for foreign workers just because of overstocking of Sinovac vaccines are very irresponsible on any party," Dr Syed Hussain said in a statement.

He said he hoped the government would find other ways to assist pharmaceutical companies and not pass the burden to private sector employers who have done much to assist the nation in the fight to control and eliminate Covid-19.

"MEF is fine if workers in Malaysia are given a vaccine for free, but any additional burden imposed on employers is totally irresponsible" he said

Currently, foreign workers are required to undergo a medical check-up in their home country and be declared medically fit before being able to work in Malaysia.

Within one month of arrival, foreign workers have to undergo a medical check-up by the Foreign Workers Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (Fomema) and will be sent back if they fail to pass.