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Acceptable wages for daily-rated employees

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Government will come up with an acceptable pay solution for daily-rated workers if the haze forces them to stop work for an extended period of time, Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek said today.

"I'm sure we will be able to work out a solution if it reaches that point. I don't anticipate any difficulty," he said.

He said this when asked by reporters about the possibility of daily-rated workers suffering wage loss if the haze forced a prolonged shutdown of work activities.

Following the declaration of a state of emergency in Sarawak today after the Air Pollutant Index breached the 500 mark, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had asked the National Disaster Relief Management Committee to take remedial measures and abide by a set of guidelines.

These include closing all government and private sector agencies which include factories, plantations, construction and quarries.

Meanwhile, when asked if employers should provide face masks for their employees as protection against the haze, Lim said it should be a discretionary decision.

"That decision should be made on a voluntary basis. If the workers work mostly indoors, then the employers will say that it is not fair.

"But worker safety at worksites is a different matter. There is no compromise, and under the law employers must protect their workers," he said.

Lim was speaking after launching the Ministry's book entitled Malaysia: Labour and Human Resources Statistics.

Also present were the Ministry's Deputy Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and secretary-general Datuk Kong How Kooi.

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