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Lim-HRDF

DECISION ON HRDF CONTRIBUTION NEXT WEEK

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 (Bernama) -- Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek will announce next week whether to lift or extend the exemption for companies from monthly levies to the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF).

Companies which were still badly affected would probably continue to be exempted but not for those which are still doing well despite the economic downturn, he told reporters after the weekly Cabinet meeting today.

"We need the money for the training and upgrading of employees' skills," he said.

Lim said he would brief the Cabinet on the recommendations of the review on the reprieve first.

Companies in the manufacturing and services sector were given a six-month reprieve from last February following appeals due to the current economic situation. The reprieve ends on Aug 11.

Employers are required to contribute one per cent of the monthly wage bill to the HRDF which was set up in 1993 and they can apply for financial assistance from the fund to retrain or upgrade the skills of their workers after six months.

With an average RM10 million monthly contribution, the fund has slightly over RM500 million and so far, HRDF has approved about RM500 million for retraining programmes.

Meanwhile, Lim said that Singapore's Manpower Minister Lee Boon Yang had replied to his letter last week on the issue of the withdrawal of Central Provident Fund (CPF) savings by Malaysians from the peninsula working in the republic.

Lim declined to reveal the contents of the letter saying that he has to brief Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad first.

On the requirement for employers in Peninsular Malaysia to report the particulars of their foreign employees to the Director-General of Labour, Lim said forms for that could be obtained from all labour officers from Aug 1.

Employers who employ foreign workers before Aug 1 must submit the particulars by Sept 1 while those who employ them after Aug 1 must submit the particulars within 14 days of employment.

The exercise does not cover foreign maids and foreign employees who are permanent residents in Malaysia.

Lim also said that a total of 2,536 out of the 4,128 workers retrenched by Read-Rite (M) Bhd in Prai had been placed in alternative jobs, while 1,187 of them turned down job-placement assistance.

The workers were retrenched following the winding down of the head-stack manufacturing facility by Read-Rite Corporation of the United States.

-- BERNAMA

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