

MEF: Why raise wages if locals don't benefit?

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BY JERRY CHOONG



According to a report, MEF executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan claimed the increase to benefit foreign workers more than locals and could trigger other problems. — Picture by Firdaus Latif

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 21 — Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan wants the government to review the latest minimum wage hike.

He claimed the increase to benefit foreign workers more than locals and could trigger other problems, *Sinar Harian* reported today.

“When there is an announcement of an increase in minimum wages, I feel the pay grade made in the public sector ought to benefit our people as well.

“But it is foreign workers who benefit. So what is the use of increasing wages if domestic workers do not benefit from it? Any wage increases for foreign workers should be in line with the actual quality of their work,” he was quoted saying in response to complaints of higher living costs from the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services.

But Shamsuddin said the RM1,800 minimum wage for civil servants should continue for the time being so as not to add pressure to both the government and the private sector.

He added that the salaries of public sector workers can be raised later.

“If we increase the wage levels, this will pressure both the government and private sector to do the same. It should not be like this.

“The government sector is capable of much, and I feel the existing rate should be retained until it can be improved,” he was quoted saying.

The Human Resources Ministry announced on December 18 that the monthly minimum wage for the private sector will be raised to RM1,200 in 57 cities and towns in the peninsula and in Borneo Malaysia from January 1, 2020.

The existing rate of RM1,100 monthly will be retained elsewhere.