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Stimulus package to directly help businesses hit by outbreak, says deputy minister

KUALA LUMPUR: Businesses severely affected by the Covid-19 outbreak can expect direct aid from the government's economic stimulus package, especially the tourism, retail and aviation sectors, said Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Dr Ong Kian Ming.

"We have given our recommendations and I am sure the Finance Ministry is taking a fair view to coordinate all the efforts," Ong said after launching the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre's Smart Trade Zone (STZ) here yesterday.

He said businesses were expected to rebound in the second



Dr Ong Kian Ming

half of the year.

He asked industry players to be prepared to attract more investors from China and multinational corporations given Malaysia's stable and business-friendly environment.

"Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we are cautiously optimistic that we can continue to attract quality investments once business resumes as usual," said Ong.

On the STZ, he said the facility allowed businesses to converge and harvest new leads, especially through the Smart Partners Programme.

The programme provides businesses with opportunities for

laboration, participate in business forums, consultations and global missions, as well as facilitating data and resource sharing via the STZ mobile application.

The National Institute Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) said there was no credible report or research indicating that some 100,000 Malaysians would lose their jobs if the Covid-19 situation continued until year-end.

NIOSH chairman Alice Lau Kiong Yieng said there was no issue of job loss as Malaysia was prepared and able to manage the outbreak.

"There is no issue of people losing their jobs. Employers need to

provide employees with accurate information about Covid-19 so that they do not panic.

"The Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organisation (APOSHO) annual conference also plays a role where it will discuss current issues among participants," she said after the soft launch of the APOSHO35 conference here yesterday.

She was commenting on reports claiming that the Malaysian Employers Federation predicted that the outbreak would spiral out of control.

Human Resources Ministry deputy secretary-general A. Maniam said that prediction was not

backed by statistics.

"So far, nobody has reported (any job loss) to us. What you heard was not true."

In her speech at the conference, Lau said APOSHO could play a role in addressing the Covid-19 outbreak by strengthening and using networks and collaborations to help governments cope.

She suggested APOSHO work with the World Health Organisation and United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in providing information on workers' protection.

"APOSHO members and health experts should help form an interim guideline to prevent new infections, such as Covid-19.

"These guidelines should cover all types of occupations as well as plans for the transmission of more serious diseases." **Bernama**



Alice Lau Kiong Yieng