

Citing Covid-19 ‘emergency’, DPM says mask makers can hire more migrant workers to ramp up output

Friday, 14 Feb 2020 07:24 PM MYT

BY RADZI RAZAK



A sales assistant arranges boxes of face masks at a Pharmhouse Pharmacy outlet in Setia Alam January 28, 2020. — Picture by Miera Zulyana

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 14 — Putrajaya is allowing local manufacturers of face masks to recruit more foreign workers to meet rising market demands over the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak here.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said the manufacturers pled for a relaxation in the policy on migrant workers as they would not be able to cope with the tenfold demand for face masks since January for both medical and public consumption.

“The Cabinet through the Ministry of Home Affairs has already given the flexibility of hiring more foreign workers to produce more face masks.

“The manufacturers said if they have the workers, they could operate 24 hours in three shifts,” she told reporters after chairing a special high level committee meeting on the coronavirus at Putra Perdana this afternoon.

Dr Wan Azizah said all face mask productions will be for the domestic market only.

She said the both the Home Affairs Ministry and the Human Resource Ministry will work together to process the necessary paperwork.

“This is an emergency, we do not want any excess numbers to happen here,” she said.

Yesterday, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail gave an assurance that the government will ensure sufficient supply of three-ply face masks up to 400,000 units for public consumption amid continued concern over the viral infection.

