

Labuan incentives to mitigate impact of Covid-19

LABUAN: The Labuan Corporation (LC) has unveiled post-Covid-19 incentives to mitigate the pandemic impacts on the people's wellbeing.

Firstly, the local authority is offering free hawker's licence to local residents wanting to start small businesses within their residential compound and in their villages, hence, reducing its revenue collection to RM48,260 yearly.

Its Chief Executive Officer Dr Fary Akmal Osman said the incentive was aimed at ensuring continuous economic activities and helping improve the livelihoods of local residents.

"With everyone hoping to make great strides forward in the year 2020, the unprecedented Covid-19 has upturned our lives and our businesses.

"We have seen businesses across multiple sectors come to a standstill, delivering a significant blow to our economy. Therefore, the post-Covid-19 incentives were in line with the Minister of Federal Territories' top agenda of getting people to bounce back the sooner the better," she told a press conference here Friday.

Fary said those interested must apply for the incentive (free licence fee) to the LC for the standard operating procedure (SOP) and regulations.

"We don't limit the nature of business activities, so long as it is not against the law and it can help pull them out of the economic doldrums," she said.

Secondly, the food delivery services by food riders (private and registered e-commerce firms) are extended until Dec 31 this year.

"We have 122 food riders from e-commerce food delivery service Morefun, fast food outlets and private runners registered with the LC since the Ramadan. And now their services are extended until year-end, and this will help them continue to earn income," she said.

Fary said at least 200 jobs will be created soon in the digital enterprise, e-commerce, gig economy, services and gastronomy sectors on the island.

"Employment opportunities are also created in the tourism (tour guides and boat operators) in the soon-to-be-developed Labuan Geopark, agriculture and fisheries sectors," she said.

"Labuan recorded a lesser unemployment rate of only less than 100 following the previous movement restrictions (Movement Control Order), and we hope we could help those who had been retrenched, as well as the jobless, to employment again," she said.

Fary said some 2,000 jobs were still vacant in various international financial firms at the Labuan Business International Centre (IBFC) following a new ruling set forth by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for all IBFC's registered companies to set up office in Labuan.

"The Labuan Corporation and Labuan Financial Services Authority (Labuan FSA) are working together to open up employment in the financial sector to jobless university graduates.. The oil and gas industry currently needs about 200 people to work in plant maintenance," she said.

Fary said the Ministry of Federal Territories has allocated RM15 million in development fund to the LC this year to implement small projects to revive the local economy quickly. "This will help create jobs for contractors and local residents, as well as boost economic activities," she said.