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## 'MORE HEAT ON ILLEGAL BUSINESSES'

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Sustained operations by enforcement agencies most effective way to curb its spread, says IGP

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**T**HERE must be a sustained multi-agency effort to check the spread of illegal businesses run by foreigners, said Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain.

He said he welcomed such joint operations to prevent a repeat of the aftermath of the Jalan Silang crackdown in December last year.

After that massive operation, downtown Kuala Lumpur's "Mini Dhaka" was deserted as scores of undocumented migrants were arrested and illegal businesses were shut down. But the area again became a hub of illegal mi-

grant activity after just a few weeks.

"We will cooperate with any agency that approaches us to conduct joint operations," Razarudin told the *New Straits Times*, adding that he did not want the area to continue being dubbed "Mini Dhaka".

Kuala Lumpur Immigration Department director Wan Mohammed Saupée Wan Yusoff said local councils and other agencies were previously effective in shutting down these businesses.

"Local councils, such as Kuala Lumpur City Hall will target the illegally run business, while other agencies, such as Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) would cut off their electricity. The Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry and local councils also make seizures during operations."

He said it took one to two weeks to plan and initiate an operation in the past, but now agencies would mount a raid within hours of receiving a tip-off.

Kuantan City Council's (MBK) corporate and public communications section head Norkamawati Kamal said its enforcement team had been conducting random checks on business premises here, but found no irregularities.

"The business licence is granted only to locals and in most cases the foreigner would register the business under his Malaysian wife's name. They comply with the licence conditions and hired foreign workers with valid permits to assist," she said.

The Penang Island City Council had also cracked down on illegal businesses.

State Local Government, Housing, Health and Environment Committee chairman Hilmi Abdullah said local councils would issue licences only to locals.

"It is not easy for us to detect if a foreigner had misused or breached the licence's conditions as we issue business licences only to Malaysians.

"The licence might be issued to

the foreigner's local wife, and it is under the Immigration's jurisdiction to check on the foreigner's status," he said.

Johor Baru mayor Datuk Mohd Noorazam Osman said the city had issued RMI,000 compounds each on 53 foreigners operating stalls at 13 night markets in the first four months of this year.

The foreigners, who were from Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Myanmar, sold products or traditional food from their home countries.

Besides the compounds, the licences of local night market traders would be suspended for two weeks if they allowed foreigners to use them.

Bumiputra Retail Organisation president Datuk Dr Ameer Ali Mydin said the practice of foreigners using the licences of locals was a "cancer" that had infected brick-and-mortar and online businesses.

"Previously, these businesses operated only in Kuala Lumpur's

Chow Kit, Masjid India and Jalan Silang/Leboh Pudu areas, but now they are everywhere.

"Foreigners have infiltrated wholesale markets such as the Selayang market, as well as markets in Nilai (in Negri Sembilan), Temerloh (in Pahang), Kelantan and even Terengganu," he told the NST recently.

Ameer, who is Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd managing director, said the authorities should tackle the issue with a two-pronged approach: open only 20 per cent of the retail sector to foreigners and conduct constant enforcement.

"Foreigners will monopolise everything if we do not take strict and swift measures. Businesses like mine started in Masjid India before we ventured out.

"But, if you ask entrepreneurs now, they cannot even start a business in Masjid India because foreigners have monopolised the businesses in the area," he said.

**Additional reporting by Audrey Dermawan and Jassmine Shadiq**



Tan Sri Razarudin Husain



Datuk Dr Ameer Ali Mydin