

TOP GLOVE WORKING TOWARDS RECTIFYING FIVE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION'S INDICATORS, SAYS MD

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On March 29, the CBP announced that it was directing its personnel at all US ports of entry to begin seizing disposable gloves produced in Malaysia by Top Glove. — Picture by Yusof Mat Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, April 8: Top Glove Corporation Bhd is working towards rectifying the remaining of its five International Labour Organisation (ILO) indicators as pointed by the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), managing director Datuk Lee Kim Meow said.

He said the company has an engagement with the CBP last week and informed that the rubber glove producer has been complying to the CBP's direction while aiming to convert at least one 'B' into 'A'.

There are 11 significant indicators that requires the company to improve and currently Top Glove has achieved six As and 5Bs.

The As are abuse of vulnerability, restriction of movement, excessive overtime, abusive working and living conditions, isolation and withholding of wages.

Meanwhile the Bs are retention of identity documents, deception, debt bondage, physical and sexual, and violence and intimidation.

"We think that these are important criteria that the US CBP want us to rectify and we are working hard to improve them so that they can quickly uplift its ban on Top Glove," he said during a zoom webinar to update on the Glove Market, Workers' Hostel Improvement and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) WRO status.

The company is also investing RM195 million in capital expenditure to provide better accommodation for 10,000 workers.

On March 29, the CBP announced that it was directing all personnel at all US ports of entry to begin seizing disposable gloves produced in Malaysia by Top Glove.

The decision came after the CBP Office of Trade, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, published a forced labour finding against disposable gloves produced by Top Glove.

Lee also assured Top Glove's stakeholders that the company is working with urgency to resolve the WRO.

“There will always be challenges in business and the important thing is for us to take them positively, learn and take the required actions to overcome these challenges.

“We also reiterate our unwavering commitment to improving the welfare and wellbeing of our employees, while progressing in our journey of ongoing improvement,” he said, adding that 2021 will be the year that Top Glove would focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) concerns.

In another development, Top Glove has collaborated with an independent migrant worker rights specialist Andy Hall to work for the benefit of its migrant workers.

“Together with Hall, we will work together to move to become the leading manufacturer with the best possible ESG practices across our industry,” Lee said.

Meanwhile, commenting on the demand for rubber gloves, Top Glove executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai said although the company had to temporarily stopped its shipment into the US, it still sees strong demand for the product.

“We still have customers asking for immediate deliveries, especially from countries in Europe and Asia Pacific,” he said.

However, he added that the average selling price (ASP) of rubber gloves would be adjusted to reflect the demand and supply situation.

After a recent meeting with Top Glove, a research house reportedly said that it anticipated a decline in the ASP of nitrile gloves and powder-free natural rubber gloves by three per cent to five per cent in April and May 2021, from levels recorded in February and March.

The research house however maintained a positive near-term outlook on the company.

At the close today, Top Glove shares jumped 9.98 per cent to RM5.40 with 82.27 million shares transacted. — *Bernama*