

Residential areas off limits

New worker housing only in commercial, industrial zones

By LO TERN CHERN

andylo@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: New worker accommodation will no longer be allowed in residential areas in Penang starting Sept 1.

Penang local government and town and country planning committee chairman Jason H'ng Mooi Lye said the move was part of the state's efforts to scale down the previous Temporary Labour Quarters (TLQ) guidelines while gradually shifting towards Centralised Labour Quarters (CLQ).

The CLQ are purpose-built, centralised and designed to provide a more sustainable long-term housing solution for workers.

"TLQ permits issued under the 2024 guidelines are valid for three years and will expire on Dec 31, 2027. Our aim is to scale down the previous guidelines.

"Although worker accommodation was previously allowed in residential areas, the new guidelines stipulate that it will only be allowed in commercial and indus-

trial areas," he said at a press conference in Komtar yesterday.

H'ng said existing worker accommodation in residential areas will be reviewed if operators apply to continue their operations.

He said this included premises that had been operating since the 1990s, such as those in Taman Pelangi near Juru.

"We will look into such areas through their applications and check whether there have been complaints filed," he said.

There are currently 1,617 permitted TLQs under the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) and 1,492 under the Seberang Perai City Council (MBSP).

There are at present two CLQs under MBPP and four under MBSP.

The new guidelines also set minimum space and toilet requirements.

For dormitories, each worker must have at least 3 sq m of space, with one toilet required for every 15 workers.

For high-rise buildings, each



Shift in accommodation rules: A high-rise foreign workers dormitory under the Centralised Labour Quarters scheme in Sungai Pinang, Penang. — CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

worker must have at least 3.6 sq m, with one toilet required for every six workers.

Applications cost RM1,500 per unit for accommodation measuring 750 sq ft and below.

The fee is RM3,500 per unit for

accommodation measuring 751 sq ft and above.

Operators must obtain a permit from the relevant local authority before applying for a Certificate of Accommodation from the Penang Labour Department.