

## **'We're struggling' - Federation shocked over PM's remark on nightclubs**

**Malaysiakini**

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The Federation of Malaysian Entertainment Industry has expressed shock over Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's remark that it might be best for nightclubs to remain closed since it would be difficult to observe physical distancing in these premises.

The federation's president Liew Poon Siak said bars and pubs have not been allowed to operate since the government imposed a lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March.

He said the businesses, which contributed to the nation's economy, are struggling to remain afloat and Muhyiddin's statement had dealt them another blow.

“If physical distancing is the reason (for nightspots to remain closed), then political, religious and public gatherings should be banned as well,” he added in a statement.

Liew said the federation does not oppose the movement control order (MCO) but hopes that the government would look into their plight and allow nightspots to operate under certain conditions.

“Therefore, the federation urges the prime minister to retract his statement and show concern for our situation,” he added.

Muhyiddin had made the remark at a Perikatan Nasional convention in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

The prime minister said the economy has shown signs of recovery after the government reopened almost all sectors.

“Only pubs and nightclubs have yet to resume business.

“But I feel it may be a good thing if they don't open at all,” he added with a smile.

A video of the event showed PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and controversial preacher Ridhuan Tee Abdullah as among those who applauded the remark.

At this point, Muhyiddin added, “Because (it is) hard to practice physical distancing for obvious reasons.”

All Chinese-language newspapers, except for China Press, did not mention that the remark was made in jest.

Meanwhile, Malay Mail had initially reported Muhyiddin's remark with the headline, "At convention, PM Muhyiddin says maybe 'a good thing' if pubs never reopen".

However, this was later amended to "At convention, PM Muhyiddin says only bars and pubs still to reopen under RMC0".

The amended report also stated that the remark was made in "apparent jest" while an editor's note read, "The article's headline and contents have been amended to better convey Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's intended message at the convention."

Malaysiakini has contacted the prime minister's office to seek clarification.

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