

PM: Malaysia cannot afford another lockdown

Malaysian Reserve
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PRIME Minister (PM) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the country cannot afford to go through another lockdown and warned the public against complacency as new outbreak clusters have been reported in various areas within recent weeks.

Muhyiddin, in a televised address to the nation yesterday, said health officials are on high alert after new cases returned to double-digit numbers with the government now considering making face mask usage compulsory in public spaces.

The PM said a repeat of the scenario in March would cost the government losses of up to RM2 billion per day and would put more jobs on the line.

"I believe three months are long enough to keep everyone at home. The impact it had on the economy has been severe, with businesses reporting record losses and many losing their jobs. Surely, we do not want to live in a lockdown state again.

"If the government is forced to reinstate the curbs on movement, the impact on our economy will be devastating," Muhyiddin said in a televised address yesterday.

He said the economic rebound expected in 2021 will not happen if Malaysia re-enters a lockdown phase, while the unemployment rate of 5.3% in May will surge further.

The government unveiled multiple stimulus packages worth a total RM295 billion to revitalise industries badly hit by the coronavirus. The country's trade-reliant economy is seeing early signs of recovery with factory activities expanding in June.