

Movement Control Order may be extended, says Muhyiddin

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PM tells all Malaysians to stay put and 'just stay home' after the country recorded its 1st 2 deaths on Tuesday

by ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN

PRIME Minister (PM) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the Movement Control Order (MCO) may be extended if the Covid-19 situation does not improve as the country went into a two-week movement restriction period yesterday.

The PM told all Malaysians to stay put and "just stay home" after the country imposed tough regulations on movements and recorded its first two deaths on Tuesday, with the virus infecting 790 people in the country as at press time.

Malaysia now has the biggest outbreak in South-East Asia. Over two-thirds are linked to the mass Muslim gathering in Seri Petaling. The gathering was attended by about 16,000 people from several countries.

"The purpose of the order is to prevent Malaysians from moving about. For two weeks, all you need to do is to just stay home. Spend time with your children, spouse and family. There is no need to go anywhere.

"This will prevent you from Covid-19 infection and the spread of the virus can be contained, God willing. This is the entire purpose of the MCO imposed by the government," Muhyiddin said in a special address last night.

Just hours before the order came into effect, thousands of people had thronged bus stations to return to their hometowns. Major highways linking states in Peninsular Malaysia were also clogged with traffic after it was announced that an interstate travel ban will take place by midnight. The interstate travel ban remains.

"So, please. I beg of you. Stay home and protect yourself and your family," Muhyiddin said. "The prin-

ciple is easy. Over the next two weeks, just stay home. It looks simple and easy. But this is a very important act that you must do to contain the spread of Covid-19 in our country," he said.

The partial lockdown has shut Malaysia's borders for inbound travellers, restricted internal movement, and closed schools and universities, as well as non-essential services. Roads in the city centres were clear yesterday and some eateries remain open for takeaways food.

"As the PM, it is my big duty to manage this crisis that has befallen our nation. But I cannot do this on my own. I will need everyone's support. I need the support of doctors, nurses, the police force, the civil service, the private sector, university students and all Malaysians to address this pandemic.

"God willing, with support, our togetherness and patience, I pray that we will overcome this crisis," Muhyiddin said in his speech last night.