

'STILL AT WAR'

PM: BE VIGILANT AGAINST VIRUS

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We must all be frontliners as data shows Covid-19 still active, urges Muhyiddin

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FOLLOWING the emergence of new Covid-19 clusters in the country, the government has again reminded the people to remain vigilant in curbing the infection rate.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said everyone must be a "frontliner" to prevent infections by adhering to the standard operating procedure (SOP) and quarantine measures.

In a special televised address last night, he noted that the latest data from researchers around the world showed that the virus was still spreading actively and would continue to do so for some time.

"This takes into account preventive factors as well as the fact that effective management of infections require specific treatments and safe vaccines. Given this situation, anyone right now could be exposed to Covid-19 infection."

He said cases in Malaysia had yet to reach zero, a clear indication that the chain of infection had yet to be broken. He urged Malaysians to continue to remain vigilant, practise self-discipline and abide by the rules to curb infections.

He said while Malaysia had been able to handle the outbreak well so far, he was still concerned about the recent surge in cases.

"In the last 14 days, 615 new cases were detected. This includes three districts that recorded 41 cases or more during the period," he said, referring to Kota Setar, Kedah, and Tawau and Lahad Datu in Sabah.

He said the government would not hesitate to enforce the Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) in areas with a high number of Covid-19 cases.

Up to Tuesday, Malaysia recorded a total of 9,969 cases.

Muhyiddin said 1,017 foreign visitors entering Malaysia had tested positive for Covid-19 between April 3 and Sept 15.

He said 1,395,578 people had been screened for Covid-19, with a ratio of 41.8 people for each 1,000 population. He said 108 clusters had been reported to the Health Ministry's Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre, with 11 still active.

He expressed concern over the



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin speaking during a televised address on the Covid-19 situation in the country yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

Sabah election, where more than a million voters are expected to cast their ballots.

"Avoid shaking hands with voters. I think voters will understand if candidates do not shake hands.

"Protect each other from being infected with Covid-19. *Kita jaga kita bah.*"

He urged everyone to be strong, resilient and disciplined in embracing new norms as a culture.

He reminded all Malaysians that if the situation worsened, the government would have to re-enforce the MCO, which could adversely impact people's livelihood and the economy.

He advised the public to wash their hands frequently with soap or use hand sanitiser, as well as wear a face mask in public places.

"Do not feel weird or awkward wearing it (face mask). We all play a role as frontliners. Please seek medical attention if you suffer symptoms like fever and cough.

"Without an effective vaccine to treat Covid-19, the new norm is a critical step to prevent infections. Malaysia is still at war with Covid-19."

Muhyiddin said public discipline and SOP compliance were crucial in breaking the chain of Covid-19 infections.

He said the government wanted to not only flatten the curve, but also ensure long-term containment of the virus.

He said the government was in no rush to reopen the country's borders, with the exception of travel for business, including for investment and education, with stringent adherence to the SOP.

"In fact, the borders will continue to be tightened to prevent an influx of illegal immigrants."

Muhyiddin said Malaysia had been able to keep the situation under control thus far, compared with other countries that were facing new waves of infections.

He said while border control inconvenienced the public, it was necessary to protect the people.

"We need to strike a fine balance between protecting lives and livelihoods of all Malaysians."

Last month, Muhyiddin announced the extension of the RMCO, which commenced on June 10, until Dec 31.

The MCO, which began on March 18, was enforced by the government to break the chain of infection of the deadly virus.

The RMCO phase saw the reopening of various sectors.

The Economic Recovery Plan (Penjana) and Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package were launched to ease the economic burden on people and businesses affected by the pandemic.

As restrictions were eased, including the lifting of the interstate travel ban, SOPs were introduced to ensure vigilance in the fight against Covid-19.