

'GOVT WILLING TO SPEND TO SAVE LIVES'

More than RM7 billion spent to overcome Covid-19 pandemic, says Muhyiddin

KOTA SAMARAHAN

TAN Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the government is spending a lot to combat the Covid-19 pandemic because it is important to save lives and the national economy.

The prime minister said the pandemic was very challenging because it posed a threat to people's lives and had battered the economy, forcing the government to spend huge amounts of money to buy medicines, ensure hospital beds are sufficient and increase the number of doctors and nurses.

"We are doing this because saving every life matters. The government has spent RM7 billion to RM8 billion to overcome Covid-19, and this figure does not include the money for buying vaccines," he said at a meet-the-people session at the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) Tun Abdul Razak Campus here yesterday.



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (second from left) and his wife Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman (left) visiting a booth at the Prihatin and Perjana programme at Medan Niaga Satok in Kuching yesterday.

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He said the government had to act fast to book vaccines for the National Immunisation Programme because people's lives were precious.

Muhyiddin expressed satisfaction with Sarawak's vaccination programme and promised to ask the Health Ministry to send more Covid-19 vaccines to the state.

He said the country had remained peaceful and united despite grappling with the unprecedented challenges posed by the spread of Covid-19 over the past one year.

Muhyiddin said he had to deal with the pandemic the moment he took over the country's administration after the previous prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, resigned following a political crisis.

"A decision had to be taken to enforce the Movement Control Order (MCO) so that the people would remain safe in the face of the pandemic throughout the country. Although its (MCO) impact was great, its aim was to protect the people," he added.

He said the government had to

strike a balance between protecting lives and livelihoods, as the country suffered losses of RM2.4 billion per day during the MCO last year, which caused almost all sectors of the economy to be shut.

The government had announced various aid packages worth RM300 billion to help groups impacted by the pandemic, and the situation was recovering with almost all sectors of the economy already back in operation except for industries like tourism, he added.

"We're back in business and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel," said Muhyiddin, adding that the administration of the country must be strong and uninterrupted so that the government could give full focus on administering the country and the people effectively.

In this regard, he urged the people of Sarawak to continue their support for the current federal government, to enable it to continue helping the state to achieve its vision of becoming a developed state by 2030.

Touching on his latest visit to the state, the first full visit since becoming prime minister in March last year, Muhyiddin said that there was an extraordinary feeling this time around, as it felt like returning to his hometown.

"It is very special. I was touched when the Chief Minister (Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg) said that GPS (Gabungan Parti Sarawak) would continue to give me strong support as prime minister," he said.

The meet-the-people session was one of the programmes he attended in his hectic working visit to Sarawak, which started yesterday. He also inspected the Sarawak General Hospital upgrading project yesterday before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

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