

# 'Emergency was to curb pandemic'

## Sole reason was to fast-track necessary measures in virus management, says PM

By **ZAKIAH KOYA**  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government has no sinister motive behind the declaration of emergency over which some concerns have been raised in the recent past, says Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said the declaration of emergency was made for the sole reason of curbing the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Emergency, he added, would not be used to violate human rights, private property and other legal rights.

He said the sole rationale behind the declaration was to fast-track the necessary legislative measures related to the management of the pandemic.

"This covers matters related to the use of private hospital assets, temporary land ownership, buildings or private hospital moveable property and to allow the use of private hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients.

"So, please be assured that there is no sinister motive behind this declaration of emergency," he said in his speech at a dialogue session with captains of industries organised by the International Trade and Industry Ministry (Miti) here yesterday.

"I must reiterate that the Emergency will not be used to violate human rights, private property and other legal rights.

"Malaysia is a firm believer of the



### Meeting of minds:

Muhyiddin speaking with (from left) Malaysia Semiconductor Industry Association chairman Datuk Seri Wong Siew Hai and National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia president Tan Sri Ter Leong Yap prior to a closed door meeting with industry leaders in Kuala Lumpur.

rule of law and hence, we will not behave in a manner that is derogatory to the legal principles that we hold dear.

"And it is imperative that the business community, both domestic and international, understand this," he added.

On Jan 12, the Yang di-Pertuan

Agong proclaimed a Covid-19 Emergency, to be enforced up to Aug 1, as a proactive measure to contain the pandemic in the country.

Meanwhile, Muhyiddin also said the government had no intention to impose another nationwide movement control order.

He said as most cases came from foreign workers, particularly those housed in workers' quarters, it was imperative that employers moved swiftly to overcome the issue.

"More than 83% of the recorded cases are from the manufacturing sector and this is indeed a worrying trend.

"It is telling that the source of this increase is at workers' accommodation and hostels, rather than work premises or manufacturing lines.

"I strongly urge the industries to ensure strict compliance to the SOP at the workplace and collaborate with the government in adhering to Act 446. (The Act refers to standards of housing for workers.)

"This is also a reminder that the government does not intend to impose another period of MCO.

"However, targeted MCO would be imposed in designated locations that are considered as points of ignition sites," said Muhyiddin.

He also said that employers must innovate as it was no longer business as usual.

The private sector must embrace new technologies and infrastructure to ease the process of doing business.

"This includes reducing our reliance on unskilled labour, as we move swiftly into a phase of automation and digitalisation," he added.

He also promised the industry players that unemployed or displaced Malaysians due to the pandemic would be assisted in various ways, including upskilling and reskilling to enable them to get jobs.

"I wish to reach out and seek the support of the private sector to offer job opportunities to local talents; please join us as we work diligently to ensure a sustainable livelihood for all Malaysians," said Muhyiddin.