

PM LEADS BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

A FEW days ago, I read a senior political science lecturer's views on the role of the prime minister in managing the Covid-19 threat. His opinion caught my attention.

He said: "The task of the Covid-19 war general should now be carried out by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, no longer by Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah (Health director-general).

"The best way is for the prime minister himself to lead, serving the country and the people, taking on this responsibility as a Covid-19 war general because he has the power."

I strongly agree with this view as this is what the prime minister is doing. In fact, that's the role the prime minister has been carrying out since the pandemic began almost a year ago.

Many may not know about it in detail because a lot of things related to pandemic management happen behind the scenes.

These are the things that are said to be the black box in the political and governmental systems.

(My students who took the Introduction to Political Science class will remember our discussion of the theory of political systems explored by David Easton.)

As assistant to the prime minister, I can explain a little about his role in managing the pandemic. They are:

THE prime minister chairs the cabinet meeting every Wednesday. When Parliament convenes, the cabinet meeting is held every Friday. Cabinet papers on economic stimulus packages, vaccine procurement, vaccination programmes, emergency declaration proposals and other matters related to the management



The public should know that the prime minister has been actively involved in efforts to overcome Covid-19 infections since the pandemic began. FILE PIC

of the pandemic were discussed and approved;

THE prime minister chairs the Special Security Council Session on Covid-19 Management three times a week. The National Security Council Special Session began in March, attended by relevant ministers, menteri besar, chief ministers and heads of government agencies. It was during this special session that important decisions were made on the management of Covid-19.

These include the implementation of the Movement Control Order, Conditional MCO, Enhanced MCO and Recovery MCO, financial allocation to frontliner agencies, increase in officers and staff of the Health Ministry, assistance to affected states, and prevention of Covid-19 outbreaks among illegal immigrants and inmates.

The defence senior minister made important announcements as a result of the decisions made in this special session, while the Health D-G held a daily press conference on Covid-19 developments, the essence of which was first reported in a special conference chaired by the prime minister;

THE prime minister chairs the NSC on Emergency, which meets twice a week, discussing matters related to the implementation of the Emergency, including enforcement and amendments to laws to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency implementation in the fight against Covid-19.

This also includes an Emergency Management Technical Committee, co-chaired by the minister in the Prime Minister's Department (parliamentary and legal affairs) and the

chief secretary to the government;

THE prime minister chairs the Economic Action Council meeting every Monday, examining reports on economic indicators and made important decisions about them. The focus is on ensuring the people's survival and to restore the economy amid the pandemic challenges;

THE prime minister chairs the National Employment Council, which focuses on creating jobs, especially those affected by the pandemic.

Apart from these meetings, the prime minister also listened to briefings on the management of the Covid-19 pandemic from ministers, heads of government agencies and health and economic experts, as well as made important decisions to be implemented by agencies.

In terms of the prime minister's

work schedule, he is almost every day directly involved in matters related to the management of Covid-19. Instructions are given to agencies for immediate implementation.

The latest is the directive under the Emergency Ordinance 2021 to delegate police powers to the armed forces to make arrests, inspections and searches in operations to tackle illegal immigrants and prevent Covid-19 infections.

It is hoped that my brief explanation will help political science researchers, students or anyone who wants to know more about the role of the prime minister in the management of Covid-19.

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