

Stern measures soon to stem pandemic: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Immediate closure of business premises and stiffer legal action against operators who fail to follow standard operating procedures (SOP) are among measures to be implemented to break the Covid-19 chain.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said these are among the amendments to be made to the Prevention and Control of Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342) being studied by the Emergency Management Technical Committee to enable faster and sterner action to be taken.

"Compliance with SOP at workplaces, workers' accommodation, business premises and factories is important for us to break the Covid-19 chain. Enforcement action must be stepped up to ensure SOP adherence.

"The Emergency Management Technical Committee is studying the provisions in Act 342 for six amendments to be made to the Act," he said in a 40-minute special broadcast by major television stations yesterday.

He urged the industry and public to fully comply with the SOP to ensure that businesses, and trading can continue.

"The government is listening to your views by not shutting down the

> Six amendments to law being studied by committee to enable quick and stringent action against SOP violators

economy during the movement control order (MCO) period.

"Please reciprocate this gesture by complying strictly with the SOP so that we can ensure businesses and trade can continue to operate, while at the same time help break the chain of Covid-19 transmissions at workplaces and in the community."

Muhyiddin said that a total lockdown will not be imposed as it will have a very negative impact on the economy and lives.

A Special Task Force for Monitoring and Enforcing the MCO, comprising various agencies and ministries, has been set up to monitor compliance with the SOP.

The National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme which is set to roll out at the end of this month is the biggest vaccination effort ever implemented in Malaysia.

Muhyiddin said 80% of the country's population, or about 26.5 million people, are expected to receive the vaccine free of charge.

"The vaccine is crucial for us to win the war against Covid-19. The government has managed to secure access to the vaccine and the first shipment of the supply is expected to arrive this month.

"The shipment comprises vaccines produced by Pfizer and BioNTech which have shown a very high efficacy rate of 95%."

Muhyiddin reiterated his commitment to dissolve Parliament once the virus situation eases to make way for the 15th general election.

He reminded all parties to stop throwing baseless accusations against the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, for consenting to the emergency proclamation to help the nation curb the spread of Covid-19.

"I call on my friends from both the government and opposition blocs to work together and mobilise efforts to fight the pandemic regardless of our political ideologies." - Bernama