

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE SCOPE EXPANDED SAYS PM

This will cover joint operations with other agencies, he says on force's 69th anniversary

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THE Civil Defence Force (CDF) will expand the scope of its emergency and disaster management to cover joint operations with other agencies, said Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said this was crucial as the country continued its fight against Covid-19.

Muhyiddin said these inter-

agency operations would be vital since the CDF was involved in setting up quarantine centres and stations, border control and community empowerment programmes.

"The government will look into proposals to strengthen the Civil Defence Force's role as part of the country's defence line, especially in providing humanitarian services during emergencies or disasters."

He said this during the simultaneous launch of the force's 69th anniversary celebration and its new headquarters here yesterday.

When elaborating on the expansion plans, he said among the proposals was the construction of training and office complexes in Perak, Sabah and Sarawak under the 12th Malaysia Plan.

These facilities would serve as temporary shelters for residents affected by disasters and would



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin arriving at the Civil Defence Force's 69th anniversary celebration and launch of its new headquarters in Bangi, Selangor, yesterday, pic by ha'irul anuar rahim

be equipped with early warning system, he added.

He said other initiatives included upgrading and restructuring of permanent staff at state and district CDF offices through the Disaster Management Secretariat.

"I was made to understand only 578 personnel hold permanent posts in disaster management."

He urged the force to continue playing its role to increase the community's preparedness when facing disasters and emergencies at the state, district and the grassroots levels.

"This includes going to the ground more frequently to educate or hold public engagement sessions to improve public awareness and to ensure that they will be ready to act as first responders when facing emergencies, such as natural disasters or fires.

He said as a permanent mem-

ber of the International Civil Defence Organisation since 2010, the Civil Defence Force had become the main player in volunteer activities in Malaysia.

"CDF members and volunteers have demonstrated high commitment and have worked in managing disasters and emergency situations, such as humanitarian missions and rescue operations during floods."

He said during the pandemic, the force had taken on the responsibility of being frontliners to curb the spread of Covid-19.

"Many of the force's personnel have been and will be mobilised to rural areas under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme to help communities register for the vaccination."

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Special Functions) Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof said the force was up-

grading its manpower to improve its visibility and involvement in community empowerment programmes.

Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Khairul Adib Abdul Rahman said the proposal would take into consideration the capabilities of personnel in managing their states and districts, as well as those facing frequent natural disasters.

"For instance, Kapit district (in Sarawak), which is larger than Melaka, has a chief with the pay grade of a clerk. However, the implementation of the proposal depends on the outcome of discussions with the force."

CDF Chief Commissioner Datuk Roslan Wahab said there were 1,265 positions for permanent staff in the force, but only 91 to 92 per cent of those positions were filled. The CDF had about 50,000 volunteers.