

'Economic recovery a priority'

PM: At the same time, well continue to balance lives and livelihood

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PUTRAJAYA: Moving forward from a challenging year brought by a worldwide pandemic, the government's top focus now will be to ensure that economic recovery efforts are in full swing, says Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Pledging his full commitment, the Prime Minister said the Perikatan Nasional administration would continue to be "Prihatin Rakyat", adding that controlling Covid-19 would remain a priority.

While this is being done, economic activities would remain open to ensure livelihoods are not affected.

Outlining the government's post-Covid-19 plans, Muhyiddin said creating job opportunities and strengthening the digital economy were among efforts to be undertaken, whereby for this year, the National Employment Council was targeting to create 500,000 jobs for Malaysians.

"The pandemic has created a big impact on unemployment. In 2020, there were 107,024 layoffs recorded.

"The government, through Socso, is implementing the PenjanaKerjaya 2.0 programme and the MY-FutureJobs portal has been upgraded to encourage employers to take in and train new workers," he said.

Speaking at the "Setahun Malaysia Prihatin" address, in conjunction with his first year in office, Muhyiddin added that MyDigital initiative was now in place and had the potential to attract an estimated RM70bil in investments.

This, he said, would boost the country's competitiveness, become a catalyst for economic recovery and create more job opportunities for the people.

The government will also focus on the implementation of the Digital Education Policy, aimed at creating a digital-literate generation, boost competency and professional development as well as to lessen the digital gap and create a knowledge virtue-based society.

"I am aware that although the government channels aid and assistance to the people, particularly during the pandemic, there are still those who have to bear hardship.

"I have directed the Cabinet



In the spotlight: Muhyiddin arriving at the one-year anniversary of Malaysia Prihatin at Putrajaya International Convention Centre. With him are (clockwise from left) Senior Minister (International Trade and Industry) Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, Senior Minister (Security) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, Senior Minister (Education) Datuk Dr Radzi Jidin, Communications and Multimedia Minister Saifuddin Abdullah and Senior Minister (Works) Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof. — Bernama

Committee on Poverty to look into this and see how the government, GLCs, volunteer groups as well as the private sector can come together to solve the issue," said Muhyiddin.

According to the Economic Action Council, the number of people in the poverty bracket has increased.

with those in the M40 group now becoming B40.

Those who are in the latter category have become even poorer.

On protecting the people's safety, Muhyiddin said while security measures along border areas would be enhanced, the government would also ensure movement con-

trol order compliance and that legislations and policies be adhered to.

"Border control will be our focus and will adopt a five-front approach encompassing borders in northern Kedah, northern Kelantan, South (border area) Sabah and Sarawak where the use of high-tech equipment will ensure that our borders will not be breached," he explained.

He also gave his assurance to improve the nation's health system, acknowledging that Covid-19 had exposed gaps in the system and the need for measures to be installed so that the healthcare system will not have to bear extreme pressure in the future.

"Aside from a good healthcare system, unity among people of different races, religions and regions is an important basis for the country to successfully overcome any crises.

"The pandemic has proven how our community comes together to give a helping hand and offer support during difficult times.

"The role played by individuals, communities, volunteer groups and the corporate sectors to aid those in need, overlooking racial and religious barriers is commendable and I hope this will continue to be a trait among Malaysians," he said.

On the international front, Muhyiddin said to facilitate economic recovery, the government would continue with efforts to create a travel bubble with potential countries, explaining that the effort was important to reactivate bilateral trade cooperation and investment, which will accelerate economic growth.

"We will continue to look into creating Reciprocal Green Lane initiatives with countries such as China, Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam," he said.

He said the Asean Travel Corridor Arrangement, adopted by regional leaders last year, would facilitate intra-Asean travel again.

On civil service, the Prime Minister said government initiatives for the people require commitment and cooperation from a public sector that was effective and of integrity.

"Helping the people during these difficult times should be their top priority," he said.