

Decision to do away with blanket MCO lauded

> Targeted approach based on science and data to be put in place to reduce negative impact on economy: PM

PETALING JAYA: The government's decision to do away with a blanket movement control order (MCO) has been hailed as a huge step in the right direction.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday said the government's strategy to curb the spread of Covid-19 will involve a more targeted approach based on science and data to reduce the negative impact on the country's economic activities.

"Movement control will be enforced according to locality and focused only on clusters involved," he said in his special announcement on the Strategic Programme to Empower People and the Economy worth RM20 billion, broadcast on television yesterday.

In an immediate response, the Centre for Market Education (CME) CEO Dr Carmelo Ferlito said there is a need to learn to live with the virus for the time being, until a full treatment is developed.

"Being stubborn on questionable lockdowns would only produce drastic economic consequences," he said in a statement.

Ferlito also welcomed the attempt to move in the direction of more targeted aid rather than generalised subsidies.

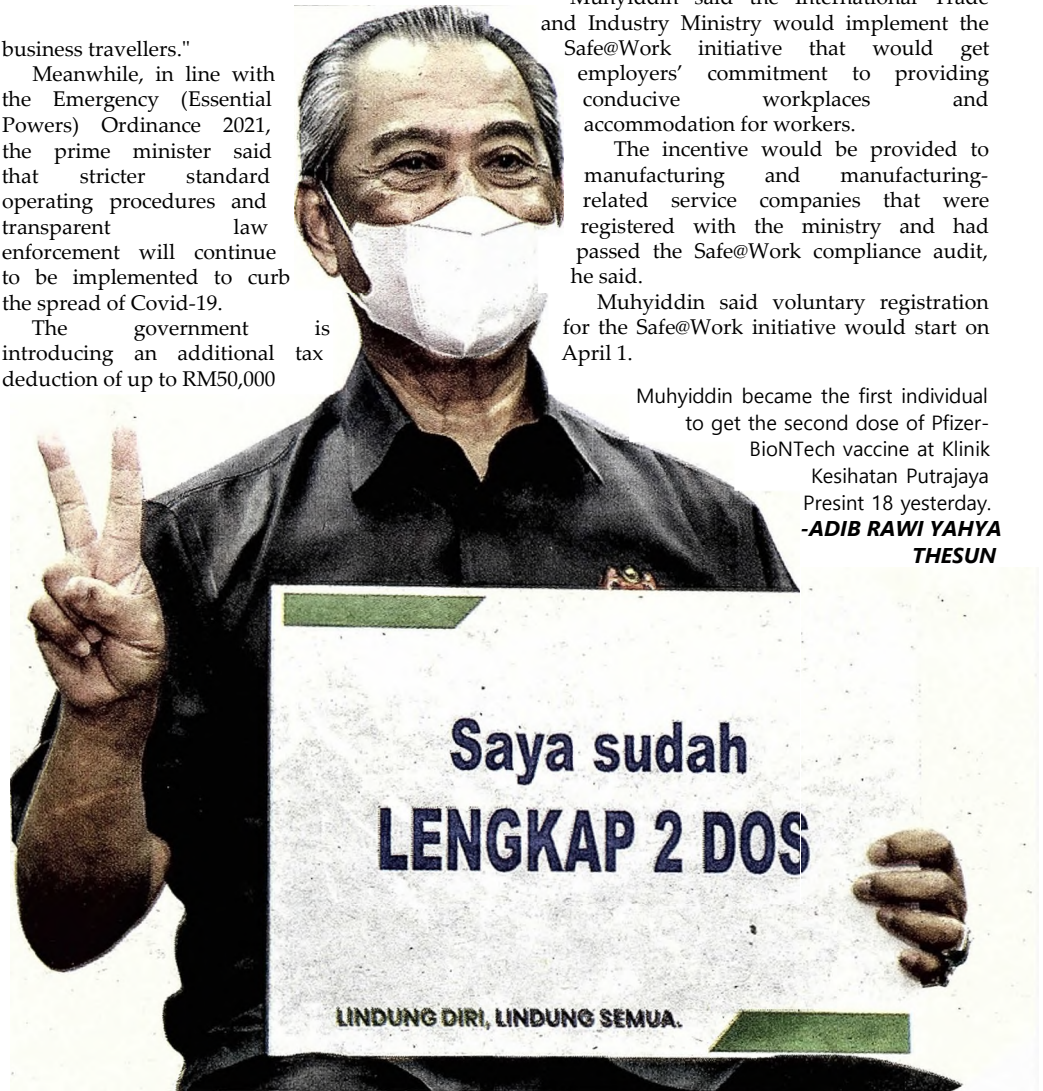
"CME looks positively at the announcement of tax cuts in order to revive the economy.

"Tax cuts can be the most effective way to counteract the downturn. And they need to be accompanied by a better strategy with regard to international borders to attract

business travellers."

Meanwhile, in line with the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 2021, the prime minister said that stricter standard operating procedures and transparent law enforcement will continue to be implemented to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The government is introducing an additional tax deduction of up to RM50,000



on rental of premises and worker hostels as an incentive for companies to participate in the Safe@Work initiative, which is aimed at protecting workers.

Muhyiddin said the International Trade and Industry Ministry would implement the Safe@Work initiative that would get employers' commitment to providing conducive workplaces and accommodation for workers.

The incentive would be provided to manufacturing and manufacturing-related service companies that were registered with the ministry and had passed the Safe@Work compliance audit, he said.

Muhyiddin said voluntary registration for the Safe@Work initiative would start on April 1.

Muhyiddin became the first individual to get the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at Klinik

Kesihatan Putrajaya Presint 18 yesterday.

**-ADIB RAWI YAHYA
THESUN**