

Joint efforts vital to fight pandemic: PM

> Community Empowerment Programme can stem spread of Covid-19, Muhyiddin says

KUALA LUMPUR: The best method to tackle the spread of Covid-19 infections is to ensure that the communities step up efforts to play the role of frontliners, said Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He stressed that until Covid-19 vaccinations reach the stipulated target, the country would continue to face a tough period in combating the pandemic because the number of cases is still high, although there is a decline in new positive cases.

He said efforts to curb the spread of the virus will not bear fruit without the support of everyone.

"As such, the Community Empowerment Programme is a weapon that we have, to jointly stem the spread of the virus.

"The efforts are also in line with the strategy in the National Unity Policy launched on Feb 15 to empower family and community institutions," he said in his speech in conjunction with the Community Empowerment Programme telecast live on TV1 yesterday.

Muhyiddin added the government was targeting vaccine jabs for at least 80% of the adult population in the country by February 2022.

The government has mobilised several Community Empowerment initiatives, including Covid-19 Eradicating Agent Programme through the "Whole-of-Society" approach led by government agencies, community leaderships and non-

governmental organisation volunteers nationwide, he said.

As of March 23, a total of 29,408 members of agencies and leaders of communities had reached out to more than 1.3 million Malaysians in over 22,166 hotspots, he said.

"Community leadership is the backbone of every community. For example, penghulu, village heads, religious leaders, heads of longhouses, village development and security committees, and other community leaders must be mobilised to jointly make this effort a success.

"If we look at the Health Ministry's statistics, the high number of infections in the community is very worrying. We do not know who among us is infected because symptoms are sometimes not evident.

"Community leaders must also ensure their members comply with standard operating procedures by advising, reprimanding, guiding and reminding people to always remain vigilant." - Bernama