

PM: NATIONWIDE MCO UNTIL JUNE 7

Govt taking drastic steps to prevent country from heading for tragedy

DAWN CHAN
AND TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE nation will come under the Movement Control Order (MCO) from tomorrow to June 7, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

He said the decision was reached in a special National Security Council Covid-19 Management meeting that he chaired yesterday.

He said based on the increasing number of daily Covid-19 cases, the government had decided to take stricter measures to curb infections.

However, he said, all economic sectors were allowed to operate during the period.

"Malaysia is facing the third wave, which can spark a national crisis.

"Daily cases are more than 4,000, with 37,396 active cases and 1,700 fatalities up to May 10.

"The existence of new variants with higher infection rates, the critical toll on the public healthcare system and weaknesses in people's compliance with the standard operating procedures (SOP) have forced the government to take drastic measures to prevent the country from heading for a tragedy," he said in a statement.

He said data analyses showed



People shopping at a hypermarket in Subang Jaya, Selangor, yesterday, PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

that mass gatherings or people in crowded spaces had led to difficulty in maintaining physical distancing, which led to an increase in Covid-19 cases.

"The chain of Covid-19 infection can be broken only by encouraging the public to continue to stay at home via a strict movement control order."

During the MCO, Muhyiddin said all educational institutions would be closed, save for students sitting international exams.

All childcare centres, preschools, nurseries and kindergartens were allowed to operate according to the SOP to ease the work of parents and guardians, he added.

Only three people, including the driver, were allowed to travel in a private car, taxi or e-hailing vehicle, he said.

The number of people allowed in a vehicle carrying a load and the economic and industrial activity chain depended on the number allowed on a commercial

vehicle registration licence, he said.

He said the number of people allowed in public transportation must conform to physical distancing and to the SOP.

He said it was compulsory for employers to implement the work-from-home policy with the presence of less than 30 per cent of management staff at all times.

The policy for the public sector would be determined by a guideline expected to be issued by the chief secretary to the government, he added.

He also outlined the SOP for Hari Raya Aidilfitri.

"House-to-house visits, as well as cemetery visits during Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebrations, are barred.

"Aidilfitri congregational prayers are allowed with fewer than 50 people for mosques and surau that can accommodate more than 1,000 people.

"Twenty people are allowed in mosques and surau that can hold fewer than 1,000 people.

"The same number is applicable to the five daily prayers and Friday prayers," he said.

The operations of non-Muslim places of worship would be tightened, adding that their SOP would be set by the National Unity Ministry.

He said special measures being enforced in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan would continue.

The enforcement of the interstate and inter-district travel ban as well as on social activities, sports and education had started from today to June 6, as announced by Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob on May 8, he said.

He said the restrictions for interstate and district travels were exempted only for emergencies, health, work, economy, vaccinations and long-distance spouses.

All social gatherings — including feasts or kenduri, weddings and engagement parties, *doa selamat* and *tahlil*, dinner events, birthdays and official events or-

ganised either publicly or privately, as well as seminars, conferences and face-to-face meetings — were barred.

"Only nikah ceremonies are allowed with a limited number of guests and the SOP will be implemented by state religious authorities for Muslims and the National Registration Department for non-Muslims.

"All sports and recreational activities are barred, except those done individually in open spaces, such as jogging, cycling and exercising, while complying with physical distancing."

The government, he added, would continue to use the Hotspot Identification for Dynamic Engagement (HIDE) system to monitor premises and Covid-19 hotspots and take action.

"I hope people will continue to be disciplined and comply with the SOP to break the Covid-19 infection chain and flatten the curve.

"It is best to stay at home if there is nothing important to manage.

"Only we can protect our lives, other than the will of God.

"We successfully did that during the first and second waves of the transmission.

"I would like to remind the people that the third wave we are facing now is even more vicious and critical. We have not won.

"The virus will become weak and defeated if we practise high self-discipline, which is not hard to do.

"Avoid crowded spaces, practise physical distancing, always wear face masks in public places, and clean your hands at all times, apart from ensuring good personal hygiene."