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Text Message

YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Haji Mohd Yassin
Prime Minister of Malaysia
Dated 4th February 2021

LATEST EXPLANATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF EMERGENCY ORDINANCE IN MANAGING COVID-19 PANDEMICS

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

A good day to everyone. I wish all brothers and sisters well and are always protected against the COVID-19 infection.

1. Over the past few weeks, the daily cases of COVID-19 in our country have increased drastically to more than 5,000 cases a day. This is a development that worries us all. We must continue the effort to break the chain of the infection. We cannot give up.
2. For that, starting from January 13, the Government has announced the implementation of the Movement Control Order or MCO in six states, namely Penang, Selangor, Federal Territory, Melaka, Johor and Sabah. On 22 January, the MCO was extended to six other states, namely Perak, Kedah, Perlis, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang and Terengganu.

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3. During the implementation period of MCO this time, the Government has implemented bans on state and regional crossings except for work purposes, medical treatment as well as transportation of goods and services for the essential economic sectors. Tighter SOPs have also been enforced including banning *dine-in* at restaurants, barring almost all sports and social activities as well as closing certain business operations.
4. The implementation of this MCO has produced a positive effect in several states such as Kelantan, Kedah, Terengganu and Pahang which are starting to show a decreasing trend in the number of daily new cases. Nevertheless, the increase in cases still occurs mainly in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Johor. These are high density states besides having active economic and industrial activities.
5. The government is aware that among the most effective methods to break the chain of COVID-19 infection is by implementing *total lockdown*, or near complete closure of economy sectors. This will of course allow the people to just stay at home as we have done before. InsyaAllah, if we do this, in a few weeks, we will be able to flatten the curve of COVID-19 infection in our country.
6. But we also know that the implementation of total lockdown will have a very negative impact on the national economy and the people's lives. Many factories will have to close, businesses will go bankrupt, companies will be paralyzed, and people will lose their jobs and their income. The lives of the people will surely be severely affected. This is a situation that we must all avoid.

7. At the same time, if the movement of the people is not controlled, we will not be able to break the chain of COVID-19 infection. Cases will continue to increase, hospitals in our country will not be able to accommodate the rapidly growing new cases, our public healthcare system will be paralyzed, and the lives of the people will be threatened. This is also a situation we must avoid.
8. So, in the current pandemic situation, the Government needs to look for a balanced method, which is to ensure the people's economic cycle will continue to be secured and the lives of the people will continue to be protected. The best method at the moment is to allow the essential economic sectors to continue to operate and at the same time to implement a strict SOP to break the COVID-19 infection chain that already exist in the workplace, at residential areas and within our communities.
9. I know this is not something that is easy to achieve. How do we make sure all of you brothers and sisters that are going out to work or to buy daily necessities will not be exposed to the COVID-19 infection?
10. Certainly, this requires the cooperation of all parties. Employers for example, have instructions to only allow 30 percent of employees within the management category to be present at the office or business premises, while others must work from home. When these instructions are followed, at least 70 percent of employees in this category are not in offices or at business premises. They are required to stay at home.

11. This means that even if the Government does not implement the lock down, public movement in public transport, on the road and in office and business premises can be reduced and at the same time, the economy and industries can continue to operate.
12. Also, if any of the employees are found to be positive of COVID-19, they must immediately be isolated and reported to the Ministry of Health to get treatment or undergo quarantine at residences. Tracking of the employee's close contacts must also be done immediately. These people need to undergo a COVID-19 screening test and be quarantined at home or at the employees' accommodation places.
13. Employers should not force employees who are undergoing quarantine to come to work because this will endanger everyone. Infections to others can occur if they are also found positive of COVID-19. We must take care of ourselves. When we take care of each other, we take care of everyone.
14. I emphasize on aspects of SOP compliance at factories, at construction sites, at workers' accommodation places and at workplace. This is due to the fact that a lot of the third wave of COVID-19 infection happen in these places. Recent data shows 59% COVID-19 infection occurs in the workplace, 19% in detention centers, 14% at home, 5% at religious houses or religious activities and 2% respectively from import cases and risk groups.

15. I would like to remind that the Government will not hesitate to take serious action against any party that violate the rules or SOPs in force. A Special Task Force for MCO Monitoring and Enforcement which consists of members of various agencies and Ministries has been established to monitor SOP compliance. For monitoring at factory premises and non-factories in the country, as of 3th February 2021, the Special Task Force from MITI has made survey visits to 2,276 premises nationwide. Of these, a total of 197 premises were reprimanded and 34 ordered to close for non-compliance of the prescribed SOPs. PDRM has also imposed a compound on 82,141 individuals and made 31,740 arrests for various offenses.

16. I urge the industries and the public to comply strictly with the SOPs imposed by the government. The government listens to your views by not shutting down the economy during the Movement Control Order period. So, please reciprocate this gesture by complying strictly with the SOPs so that we can ensure businesses and trade will continue to operate while at the same time help break the chain of COVID-19 transmission at the workplace and in the community.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Proclamation of Emergency

17. Following the Proclamation of Emergency by His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021 was gazetted on 14 January 2021. By gazetted this Emergency Ordinance, an Emergency Management Technical Committee has been set up to ensure the implementation of emergency in the fight against COVID-19 will be managed efficiently and effectively.

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18. I would like to take this opportunity to explain to all brothers and sisters regarding the actions that have been and is being taken by the government through the Emergency Ordinance to curb the transmission of COVID-19. This includes the amendments to some existing Acts, the acquisition of important national assets and the restructuring of human resources, aiming for a faster, more efficient and more effective management of COVID-19.

Amendments to the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1998 [Act 342]

19. As I have mentioned earlier, compliance of the SOPs at workplaces, employees' accommodation places, business premises and factories is important for us in breaking the COVID-19 infection chain. Enforcement actions must be raised to ensure compliance with the SOP. Thus, the Emergency Technical Management Committee has examined the allocations in the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1998 or Act 342 that needs to be amended to enable stricter and faster enforcement action. Among them are:

- i. Instructions of immediate closure for business premises that do not comply with the rules and SOPs set by the Government;
- ii. Legal action against business owners, franchise holders, franchise operators and other stakeholders in business organization chain;
- iii. Legal action against foreign employee management chain including employers, labour supply agents, major contractors, sub-contractors and sole proprietors;
- iv. Higher compound action on repeat offenders or offenders who have been warned;
- v. Imprisonment of offenders violating rules and SOP; and

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- vi. Disciplinary action against Civil Servants who do not comply with the Rules and SOPs including to the Heads of Department regarding the implementation of the Work From Home policy;

**Reinforcement of Act 446 – Workers’ Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act 1990
[Act 446]**

20. Crowded foreign workers’ accommodation and inability to meet standards became one of the main causes of COVID-19 transmission among the workers in this country. As at 3rd of February 2021, the manufacturing sector recorded the highest number of COVID-19 clusters which is 128 clusters, followed by the construction sector of 82 clusters and services sector of 61 clusters.

21. Through the powers given to the Government under the Emergency Proclamation, the Government is in the process of amending the Workers’ Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act 1990 or Act 446 for the purpose of addressing housing management issues through stricter enforcement action.

Among them includes obligating employers to:

- (i) provide accommodation that meets the standards;
- (ii) bear the costs of accommodation, transfer and screening of employee’s health;
- (iii) carry out monitoring measures on foreign workers while working on the premises and after working hours at home; and
- (iv) ensure that employee accommodation agent centres provide employee accommodation that meet the requirements and standards of public health set by the government.

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22. The Ministry of Human Resources will lead the Employees Accommodation Management Task Force which will have larger and more comprehensive jurisdiction through amendments to the Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act 1990.

Resettlement of Human Resources and Public Sector Assets

23. Through the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021, the Government has also implemented the human resource resettlement process, public sector assets and services for the purpose of enhancing the ability of Ministries and agencies to manage the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This is to enable the front-liners at health and non-health agencies to be assisted by additional staff from other ministries and agencies.

24. By using existing resources, the government can optimize the mobilization of additional personnel, assets and expertise in managing pandemic situations. A total of 20,000 civil servants is involved in this initiative managed by the Public Service Department. This initiative does not involve any increase in government operating costs.

Outsourcing and Acquisition of Resource

25. In facing the pandemic situation, the Government must ensure the healthcare system in our country is always ready and able to accommodate the admission of COVID-19 patients who need treatment at hospital. With the rising trend of positive cases at this moment, the health system in our country is almost reaching a breaking point. COVID-19 Hospitals including the wards of the Intensive Care Units have almost reached 100% capacity. This situation must be addressed immediately so that the healthcare system of our country is not paralyzed.

26. In this context, one of the important things in emergency implementation is a provision in the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021 that allows temporary outsourcing of private health facilities by the Government. These include hospitals, clinics, laboratories, human resources, services and assets deemed necessary to improve the efficiency of pandemic management. This outsourcing is temporary until the emergency period ends.

27. Currently, the government has started cooperation with the private medical service providers for the usage of hospital clinics, laboratories, expertise, services and human resources for the purpose of helping to ease the burden borne by the Ministry of Health.

28. For this purpose, the cluster hospital concept between hospitals under the Ministry of Health will be expanded to include other public hospitals such as university hospitals, military hospitals and private hospitals to be used for treatment of COVID-19 patients. Private hospitals will be placed under operations of Cluster Hospital with the public sector under the COVID-19 Integrated Control Centre.

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29. To reduce the pressure on government hospitals that are responsible for treating COVID-19 patients, Malaysian Ministry of Health has begun working with 31 private hospitals to outsource treatment of some non-COVID-19 patients to these private hospitals. The Ministry of Health Malaysia has allocated a total of RM 27 million in 2021 for this purpose.

30. For the management and treatment of COVID-19 patients in private hospitals, Ministry of Health Malaysia has received good cooperation from private hospitals across the country. As of 3rd of February 2021, the private hospital intends to provide 1,344 beds in the regular wards and 65 beds in the ICU wards.

31. In addition, government and private laboratory facilities are also being mobilized to increase the implementation capacity of the COVID-19 screening test. Currently, there are 68 government and private laboratories in the country that have the capacity to conduct 76,805 screening tests daily. The government will further enhance the ability of government and private laboratories to conduct COVID-19 screening tests.

32. Through the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021, the Government will also begin to take over the facilities for the purpose of adding COVID-19 screening quarantine centres.

33. For those outsourcing and acquisition activities, a form of compensation will be given to the owners of the premises based on the inspection by the government.

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Acquisition of PLKN and Vision Camp

34. The Government has also exercised its powers under the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021 to make temporary acquisitions of PLKN Camps and Vision Camps used as Detention Centres and Temporary Quarantines for Illegal Immigrants (PATI) and temporary prisons. This is part of the Government's immediate action to reduce congestion in the Malaysian Immigration Department detention depots and prisons which can directly prevent the spread of COVID-19 among detainees. A total of 16 PLKN camps and Vision Camps have been temporarily taken over for this purpose. This action is also able to increase government enforcement in preventing the entry of illegal immigrants into this country which is also one of the causes of the spread of COVID-19 in our country.

Enhancing Enforcement Capabilities

35. To further enhance the capacity of government enforcement action in fighting against COVID-19, I have issued a directive under the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021 to delegate police power to the Malaysian Armed Forces to make arrests, inspections and seizures while assisting other agencies in performing PATI prevention duties and COVID-19 prevention operations.

36. I have also instructed 3 million of RELA members to assist in SOP enforcement tasks at business premises and public places. In addition, the Government will also implement a Community Empowerment Program that will involve local community leaders in the COVID-19 prevention campaign at the community level.

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My dear brothers and sisters,

National COVID-19 Immunization Program

37. The COVID-19 vaccine is one of our most important ray of hope for us to win the war against COVID-19. The government has successfully ordered the COVID-19 vaccine and the first delivery of this vaccine supply is scheduled to arrive in our country this month. The first delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine involves vaccines produced by Pfizer and BioNTech which have shown a high effectiveness rate of 95 percent.

38. Therefore, I would like to inform that the Government will start the roll-out of the implementation of the National COVID-19 Immunization Program from end of this month. We are targeting 80 percent of the country's population or 26.5 million individuals to receive this vaccine, which will be given free of charge to Malaysians.

39. This National COVID-19 Immunization Program will involve three phases. The first phase will involve a total of 500,000 frontline staff comprising health and non-health personnel. This phase is crucial to protect our frontliners who are at the forefront of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The first phase of this immunization program is scheduled at end of April.

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40. The second phase will involve groups that have higher risk from getting infected with COVID-19. They are the elderly and vulnerable people aged 60 and above, who suffer from morbidity problems such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. People with disabilities (OKU) are also included in this phase. An estimated 9.4 million people will receive the vaccine under this second phase, which will run from April to August 2021.

41. For the third phase of the National COVID-19 Immunization Program, the remaining vaccine recipients are adults aged 18 years and above, which will start from May 2021 to February 2022. This phase is important to form group protection or herd immunity and further control this pandemic overall.

42. To ensure that this program runs smoothly, orderly and facilitates the public, more than 600 storage centres which are also vaccination centres will be opened nationwide. I have instructed the authorities to use various facilities including public and private health facilities, stadiums, convention centres, public halls and universities as vaccination centres. Provisions in the Emergency Ordinance (Necessary Powers) 2021 will be used by the Government to temporarily take over the halls and other facilities for the purpose of preparation to implement the National COVID-19 Immunization Program.

43. The National COVID-19 Immunization Program is the largest vaccination program ever implemented in our country. Therefore, I call on and invite all Malaysians to work together to mobilize their energy and all available resources to make this program a success. All of you can together provide assistance both from the medical and non-medical aspects, especially the health education aspects in vaccination centres to make this program a success.

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44. We are all in this together, and only together can we win. Protect yourself, protect everyone.

45. The Government welcomes the participation of volunteers, students, community leaders, religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, the Red Crescent Society, St. John's Ambulance, the private sector and the people of Malaysia as a whole.

46. More information on the National COVID-19 Immunization Program including the registration procedures, location of vaccination centres and other relevant information will be announced shortly.

47. To ensure that this immunization program is implemented properly, the Cabinet has agreed to appoint the Honourable YB Khairy Jamaluddin, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation as the Coordinating Minister for the National COVID-19 Immunization Program. He will lead a Special Task Force that manages the implementation of the National COVID-19 Immunization Program especially issues related to logistics and coordination with states and Government agencies. This is to enable the Ministry of Health to continue to focus on the functions of health services in dealing with the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic which is still showing a worrying trend.

Federal and State Government Cooperation

48. I am also aware that the Federal Government cannot act alone without the involvement of the State Governments in facing this pandemic situation. There are important matters relating to the management of COVID-19 which are under the jurisdiction of the State Governments.

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49. Therefore, the Federal Government will work closely with the State Governments to ensure that every action is implemented in an integrated manner. I have invited all the First Ministers and the Chief Ministers to attend the Special Session of the National Security Council on the Management of COVID-19 which is held three times a week. Many issues that involve the importance and role of the states are discussed in this special session.

50. At the state level, the First Ministers and Chief Ministers chair meetings at the respective state levels involving various departments and agencies to jointly manage this pandemic more effectively. Thus, every level of government administration takes a shared responsibility to preserve the safety of life and the well-being of the people.

Respect the Emergency Proclamation by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong

My dear brothers and sisters,

51. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all parties to stop throwing baseless accusations against the concern of His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, in approving the Emergency Proclamation. The government has obtained the consent of His Majesty after His Majesty is satisfied that the transmission of the COVID-19 epidemic in the country is at a critical level and the need for emergency implementation is in line with the decision of the Cabinet.

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52. As I have explained at length just now, the Proclamation of Emergency proclaimed by His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, is intended to give certain jurisdiction to the Government to manage the COVID-19 pandemic more quickly, efficiently and effectively. Immediate actions are being taken by the Government under the provisions of the Emergency Ordinance in forced. The Proclamation of Emergency by His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, has no purpose other than to curb the spread of COVID-19 more effectively and protect the lives of the people.

53. Although there are a few parties who try to challenge the Proclamation of Emergency in court, I believe that His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, as the Head of State, fully understands and respects the country's legal system and process.

54. As the Head of Government, I also respect the legal system and process of our country which is based on the system of Constitutional Monarchy and Parliamentary Democracy. I would like to reiterate my commitment that I will advise His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, to dissolve Parliament as soon as the outbreak of COVID-19 has subsided and the General Election is safe to be held.

55. Meanwhile, I call on my friends from both the Government and the opposition, let us work together and mobilize efforts to fight the COVID-19 epidemic regardless of political differences.

My dear brothers and sisters,

56. The Government has announced the extension of PKP until 18 February 2021. During these two weeks, the Government will monitor the development of daily COVID-19 cases by sectors and localities and re-evaluate the effectiveness of PKP implemented.

57. Whatever action or further steps taken by the government is definitely based on the goal to balance the need to ensure the survival of the people and protect the lives of all of you.

58. I pray to Allah SWT that our goal to win the war against COVID-19 will be granted by Allah SWT and we are all always in the overflow of His grace and protection, amin ya rabbal alamin.

Wabillahi al-taufiq wal hidayah wassalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

YAB TAN SRI DATO 'HAJI MUHYIDDIN BIN HAJI MOHD YASSIN

February 4, 2021

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