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## The people will be cared for, come rain or shine – PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 25 – The government has given the assurance that the people's welfare will be taken care of despite the country being in the midst of the Movement Control Order (MCO) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said various strategies have been planned to ensure Malaysians are not denied necessary aid throughout this challenging period.

"The measures we are taking will have an impact on the people by making their lives more assured. What is the purpose of the government, if it is not to help and take care of the people? That is the top priority in any government.

"The efforts must be done with conviction as results from these measures taken will help improve their lives," he said in a special interview aired over RTM, Astro Awani, TV3 and Bernama TV tonight.

The prime minister said the Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package (PRIHATIN) announced recently did not leave out any category as each and every citizen has been affected by the pandemic.

"The stimulus package involves a huge amount, but it covers every segment...whether those in the low-income group (B40), businesses, individuals or groups, everyone has a share of the package, the M40 group as well," he said.

Muhyiddin, on March 27, unveiled the PRIHATIN package worth RM250 billion to protect the welfare of the people, support businesses, and strengthen the economy in a move to cushion the COVID-19 pandemic impact.

He later announced a RM10 billion additional stimulus package for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Elaborating on the government's plans to protect the people's welfare post-MCO, Muhyiddin said the government will ensure the country's economy is on solid footing to ensure aid continued to be channelled to the people.

"We will not allow it (economy) to collapse as the government collects taxes from economic activities. If businesses are to wind up or suffer losses, how is the government going to earn revenue to fund the people's needs?" he said.

The prime minister said the government also aims to do its best to assist efforts taken by industries and businesses, besides ensuring those employed in all sectors, regardless of size, are able to keep their jobs.

"This is my priority... let there be no terminations or layoffs, but then again these are businesses and if they are unable to sustain much longer, what choice do they have? It is not like they can hold to their workers as in normal times. They will be without a source of income used to run their operations or to pay salaries," he said.

He said this was why one of the measures adopted by the government in the stimulus package was to assist companies and factories, through, for example, the wage subsidy programme.

"This way (wage subsidy), the load can be taken off employers to some extent, or another way is by placing a moratorium on all forms of bank loans," he said.

Muhyiddin said what the government was doing now is to ensure the economy continues to be developed despite the ongoing challenges.

"We have begun to gradually open up economic activities phase by phase until a point we think we can make that bigger shift, and that we will do in the near future," he said.

— BERNAMA