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Covid-19: Protecting lives and livelihoods

May 6, 2020 @ 1:37pm



While adhering strictly to the SOPs may not absolutely prevent the risk of infections, it is arguably one of the only policies government has. — Bernama

LETTERS: After more than one month of Movement Control Order (MCO), Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced a partial lifting to Conditional MCO (CMCO) to allow some economic sectors to operate.

Companies, however, must adhere to the standard operating procedures (SOPs) outlined by the Ministry of Health, leading to mixed reactions.

On one hand, business owners were happy with the decision allowing them to resume operations while another segment of society feels that the decision may cause another wave of infections.

While experts concluded that the virus cannot be completely eradicated despite a lockdown, some research suggests that lockdown should be in place until a vaccine is found. This might be the best way to safeguard the lives of the people but it is not a practical one.

The consequences would be so great if lockdown measures lasted longer and probably would lead Malaysia into depression, worse than a recession.

MCO has already caused Malaysia to lose up to RM63 billion and another one-month extension would mean another RM35 billion will be lost. Therefore, loosening certain measures is inevitable.

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Despite that, we are in a much more favourable position now to restart the economy due to the implementation of MCO early on. The MCO has bought time for the Ministry of Health to increase its healthcare capability – ramping up tests and preparing more equipment and hospital beds to avoid the unforeseen circumstances of an overwhelmed healthcare system that had unfortunately happened in other countries.

The SOPs for businesses to follow in the new normal has also been developed to minimise the risk of infection. Having said that, a more cautious opening than what was suggested is deemed necessary. Perhaps, the government should go for a staggered economic re-opening.

Firms should be informed earlier about the SOPs so they will be better prepared before requesting workers to go back to work. Most importantly, federal government should engage the help of local authorities to ensure compliance of the SOPs.

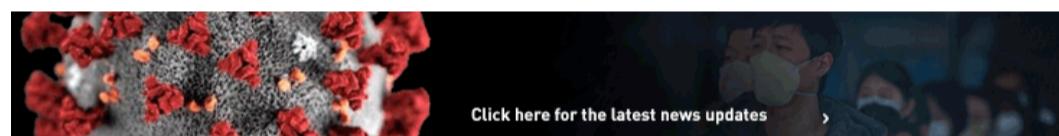
This may include devising possible actions that can be taken by local authorities to enforce SOPs in companies and imposing a penalty if necessary.

While adhering strictly to the SOPs may not absolutely prevent the risk of infections, it is arguably one of the only policies government has. Indeed, it is never an easy decision to make – seeking a balance between protecting lives of the people and their livelihoods.

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No Hari Raya visits under CMCO, even within same state

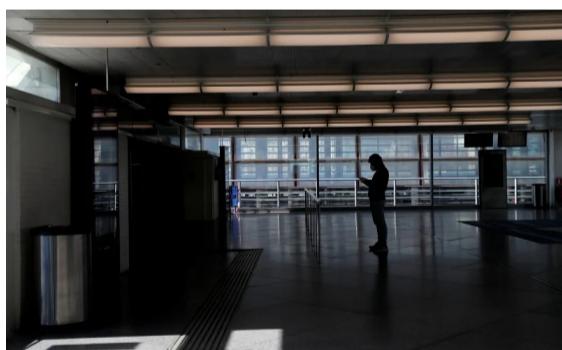


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