

Evaluate the risks in easing MCO: UMS

DE 04.05.2020 P.3
KOTA KINABALU: The country's leadership needs to plan and further evaluate the risks posed in opening up the economic sectors as the country relaxes the Movement Control Order (MCO) to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Prof Rosalam Sarbatly of University Malaysia Sabah's Strategic Management and Corporate Communications Centre in a statement here Saturday said an important step is to close the borders of the country.

"This will prevent the import of outbreaks", he said, adding that the Government also introduced the Conditional MCO which requires the community to continue living with new normal life practices.

He said the success of the Conditional MCO in preventing the outbreak is conditional with the key prerequisite is that the society needs to be knowledgeable and disciplined.

"In Malaysia our society is far behind Singapore and Hokkaido which both are knowledgeable and disciplined.

"However, one thing that balances it, is the culture of our people who fear the law. This means that the success of the Conditional MCO depends largely on the role of local authorities in ensuring that new life practices are adhered to.

"The economy must be open and the outbreak contained. If either fails, Malaysia is expected to face a long humanitarian crisis," he said.

Prof Rosalam said the opening of the economic sector shows that the government is trying to capitalise on the global economic crisis by building an internal economy to cope with the inevitable

global economic crisis.

The three main advantages at stake are; while the contagious situation in Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines are raging, it opens up Malaysia as a contributor and economic saviour; the health framework in containing the outbreak has proven to be the best in the world and; a culture of society that is afraid of law enforcement.

He said the worst of all, is the presence of many foreign workers who are either unemployed or not contributing to the country's economy and need to be helped by using the country's funds.

In Sabah, apart from the economic crisis, the delays in the construction and plantation sectors will also lead to the same crisis, economic and humanitarian crisis, he said.

"This is because foreigners are workers in both sectors.

"However, the opening of the economic sector must be in line with the strict enforcement of the Conditional MCO.

"If the economy does not open, the RM423 billion international reserves capable of financing imports of around eight months and the country's savings of around RM2 trillion will continue to decline to cover operating costs and help Malaysians who lose their source of income.

"The oil and gas sector, which is a contributor to the country's economy, is unreliable.

"New economies based on basic needs such as the food industry and the digital technology will become a key pillar of the country's sustainability in the practice of new living norms," he said.