

Government tested in the Covid-19 crucible

PUTRAJAYA: Having to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic as soon as they got into power has been the main challenge faced by those in the Perikatan Nasional government.

Speaking to the press after Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's anniversary speech, senior ministers of the Perikatan administration shared how the tumultuous year has resulted in the introduction of unprecedented measures.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, who is also Senior Minister (Economy), said the government's biggest challenge in the past year was balancing between lives and livelihoods throughout the pandemic.

"Perikatan, as a responsible government, had to make many important decisions, including the implementation of the movement control order.

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"This is why the government came up with many economic stimulus packages that are meant to help small businesses as well as the industry," said Azmin.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri

Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who is Senior Minister (Security), said the implementation of the MCO was something unprecedented that the government had no experience with.

"It was about two weeks after the government came into power that we had to implement the MCO. At that time, there were no other countries that we could refer to as it was an unprecedented situation.

"What we implemented was based on our own mould. Thankfully, we succeeded in that in MCO 1.0," he said.

Education Minister Datuk Radzi Jidin said the education sector also had to go through an unprecedented period with school closures and home-based learning modules becoming the norm.

"Software and connectivity issues were among the challenges we faced when students were asked to study at home.

"When schools were reopened, so

many new things were introduced, like taking the temperature of students, distancing between desks, and eating in classrooms," he said.

"These are standard operating procedures that we never imagined would be implemented. But everything we did, we consulted all stakeholders and ensured the decision we took was the best one possible."

Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, who is also Senior Minister (Infrastructure), said the Perikatan government had so far honoured its pledge to safeguard the rights of Sarawak and Sabah.

"Under the Prime Minister's leadership, in less than a year, he has managed to resolve many issues related to the Malaysia Agreement 1963, including the Sarawak and Petronas matter.

"This is the government's commitment to ensuring shared prosperity," said Fadilah.

The anniversary event, held at

the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, was attended by ministers as well as heads of government departments.

Meanwhile, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said the Perikatan government had a clear plan on restoring the country's economy and the people's livelihoods that were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Prime Minister's address explains what the government has achieved and what it plans to do, moving forward. The policies and reforms that have been implemented were detailed.

"The government's plan to deal with the post Covid-19 pandemic period has been outlined, including capitalising on digitisation.

"It is a comprehensive speech which gives us all a ray of hope. This is a direction that needs to be implemented immediately," he said after the event.