

Fear and fatigue a turnoff

Covid-19 and political infighting may lead to lower turnout

PETALING JAYA: Health safety concerns and political fatigue could lead to a lower turnout in the Melaka election, say political analysts.

Universiti Utara Malaysia political lecturer Prof Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani said there could be some hesitancy among voters to come out in full force to cast their ballot on Nov 20.

"People are still scared of Covid-19. Even with strict standard operating procedure, many may worry that there is no compliance," he said.

He also said some voters might be exasperated with the political infighting that led to the collapse of the state government twice since 2018.

"I think this is the issue that all parties will have to tackle, particularly in attracting young voters and fence sitters.

"The hardcore supporters have already made up their minds," he added.

Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian of



Nomination: **Nov 8** | Polling: **Nov 20**

Universiti Sains Malaysia said health safety concerns, particularly among elderly voters, could lead to a lower voter turnout.

Some people, particularly Chinese voters, might decide not to cast their votes as a show of protest. "If you look at the Teluk Intan by-election, there was a lower Chinese voter turnout due to the dissatisfaction over the choice of candidate," he said.

"There is a possibility of it happening in Melaka as there had been two chief ministers since 2018 and voters are wary of this."

Last month, Election Commission (EC) chairman Datuk Abdul Ghani Salleh noted that there were 495,196 voters in the state and a 70% voter turnout was being targeted.

In the 2018 general election, some

84.5% out of 418,000 voters turned out in Melaka.

Political analyst Dr Oh Ei Sun said a lower turnout would put Pakatan Harapan at a disadvantage.

"I suspect those who are not coming out to vote will be from the more urban areas which are traditionally Pakatan strongholds," he said.

Oh, who is adjunct senior fellow at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, noted, however, that Pakatan might be able to make up for the "shortfall" with the multi-cornered fight in all 28 seats.

"This is because it will split the Malay votes. For example, in closely contested seats, you may see Umno votes being split by PAS and possibly handing the win to Pakatan," he added.

MCA deputy president Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon acknowledged that the strict SOP set by the Health Ministry and the EC had changed how campaigning was being done in the state polls.

However, he believes that voters, despite their health concerns, may choose to come out to vote in a bid to bring stability back to the state administration.

"People have been under stress both because of Covid-19 and its effect on the economy.

"With that, I think people will place more importance on stability in terms of health as well as the overall situation for the state," he said.

He called on voters in Melaka to have the confidence in the SOP implemented for the polls.

"I urge the people, as it is their duty as voters to come out to vote," he said.

Melaka DAP state election director Khoo Poay Tiong admitted to having concerns over a lower voter turnout due to health safety concerns and political fatigue.

"This is the biggest challenge for us; how to explain to voters the importance of the state polls and convince them to come out to vote," he said.

MELAKA: Public gatherings may be prohibited in the Melaka state election but that's no excuse to not have an all-out poster and flag war.

Flags from contesting parties have been erected at many strategic spots even as face-to-face campaigning is not allowed under strict Covid-19 prevention measures.

Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Harapan flags have sprung up by the roadside, especially around settlements.

The Duyong, Ayer Molek, Lendu and Bukit Katil state constituencies are among the areas where the "flag war" has started.

However, Perikatan Nasional flags are visible only in several areas such as Ayer Keroh and Pantai Kundor. Even then, they seem to be outnumbered by those of the other two major coalitions.

Apart from flags, posters featuring candidates contesting in the polls have also energised the atmosphere.

Melaka has 28 state seats and 495,195 registered voters.

Poster and flag wars pick up pace