

Melaka polls will lead to new Covid-19 surge, says think tank

By **Wong Pek Mei** - October 26, 2021 9:30 AM

278
Shares

167

88

17



Political rallies will still go ahead, says Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy chief executive officer Azrul Mohd Khalib.

PETALING JAYA: There will be a surge in new Covid-19 positive cases because of the Melaka state election, says the head of a health think tank.

Azrul Mohd Khalib, chief executive of Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy, said it was most likely that there would be "breakthrough cases" in which the majority would be those already vaccinated.

"This will definitely happen. What we are concerned about are the number of people needing hospitalisation due to severe illness, and dying as a result," he told FMT in response to a government ban on political and social gatherings for the election campaign.

Azrul said election rallies and gatherings would still go ahead despite warnings, and SOPs would be "selectively observed or ignored altogether" as politicians would want to be seen shaking hands, speaking without masks, and glad-handing supporters.



Azrul Mohd Khalib.

"We have to acknowledge the fact that Malaysia is unable to organise large-scale elections which would enable voters to safely participate in campaign activities and cast their votes during a communicable disease epidemic," he said.

"Sabah has demonstrated that, and that situation was before the deployment of vaccines," he said, referring to the Sabah state election held in September last year.

Azrul said people could still get infected with Covid-19, after being vaccinated, and infect others.

"The problem is whether the public and politicians will listen, understand and behave in a safe way, such as keeping a distance, wearing face masks, using hand sanitisers and avoiding closed and crowded spaces.



Dr Koh Kar Chai.

"Experience tells us no amount of policing or enforcement is going to work unless people are proactive and supportive of these measures," he said.

He said it was also possible that the election turnout would be low as people were not fully convinced that an election could safely be held.

Preventing another superspreader event

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai said a ban on physical campaigning was necessary to prevent another superspreader event, in which cases would rise in Melaka and even other states, with interstate travel now allowed.



Dzulkefly Ahmad.

He said politicians should adapt to the new norm.

Former health minister Dzulkefly Ahmad said the election should not have been called in the first place. The government should have looked into the best way to resolve issues in the Melaka legislative assembly if it was truly concerned for the people.

However, as the Melaka election was going ahead, the Election Commission should draw up SOPs modelled after protocols in Singapore and Germany. "Singapore opened up its mainstream media so that the opposition had access to a fair amount of airtime," he said.

Federal elections were held in Germany last month to choose a new chancellor to replace Angela Merkel.

Subscribe to our newsletter and get news delivered to your mailbox.

Email

You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Play online for free. Play now

Hero Wars

Win Gold & Other Prizes Worth More than RM80,000!

Magnum Life

Neuropathy (Nerve Pain) Do This Immediately

Neuropathy Hacks

Bmw 328i M SPORT 2.0 LIMITED SPORT SPEC FULON OTR

RM 99,999

mudah.my

[Go !](#)