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SELANGOR JOURNAL

Strength, courage, confidence

Selangor stands out as a model of economic and welfare success, exemplifying what a modern, developed state should be heading into the next decade. To ensure continued growth and a prosperous future, the state government has made five pledges to the people, especially to those seeking tangible progress and inclusivity, ahead of the highly-contested 2023 state elections.

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More can be done when state, Federal govts align

By NORRASYIDAH ARSHAD

PETALING JAYA - The people of Selangor can benefit much more from having a state administration that moves in unison with the Federal government, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said having the same parties rule both governments would ensure that schemes and initiatives can be implemented faster while promising better livelihoods for the rakyat.

Citing the state's People's Tuition Programme (PTRS) as an example, Amirudin noted how the initiative was only able to benefit about 6,000 students when it was first launched in 2009.

"At the time, the state government was not the same as the Federal. Then, we had to use religious schools during the night (for the tuition) and recruit teachers who were willing to teach.

"As soon as we were both from the same party in 2018, I met with the education minister and the state education director. We discussed and reviewed (the programme), and increased the teacher's allowances," he said when launching

the 'Malaysia Madani in the Civil Service' programme here on July 31.

Amirudin said his efforts paid off when the number of students who came for the tuition classes grew over the years.

He pointed out that at present, 63,000 students are enrolled for free tuition. They are also provided with free lunches to ensure a conducive learning environment.

"If the Federal and state governments are able to work together and are compatible with one another, only then can we expand the state initiatives."

PTRS was first introduced in March 2009, utilising community centres as tuition premises, before it was expanded to schools and then going online following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The programme offers educational assistance in the form of additional classes to students from families with a household income of less than RM2,000 and who have average or poor academic results.

Last year, RM7 million was allocated by the state government for the programme.



Digitalisation efforts, services sector drawing investors

SHAH ALAM - Various digitalisation initiatives implemented to make Selangor a smart state in the Asean region by 2025 have successfully attracted investments to the state, said Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

The Menteri Besar said the booming services sector has made Selangor an investment destination.

"Investors are drawn (to the state) because of the thriving services sector and our readiness for digitalisation.

"In recent months, we have secured several significant investments, including RM3 billion from an Australian data centre and RM2 billion (for an international logistics hub project in Shah Alam)," he said during a public town

hall session at Kumpulan Media Karangkraf in Section 15 here on July 24.

On June 9, leading Australian data centre provider NEXTDC Ltd (NEXTDC) announced its plan to invest approximately RM3 billion in Malaysia over the next five to 10 years through the development of Kuala Lumpur 1 (KL1), a Tier IV-certified data centre in Petaling Jaya.

Meanwhile, Amirudin said the state's economy has been steadily expanding and has created about 89,000 job opportunities in five years. This has encouraged more people to relocate to the state.

"Even though last year (in terms of investment) we were ranked second after Johor, with RM70 billion in terms of job opportunities, Selangor recorded the highest.

"In five years, 89,000 jobs were offered in the state, and I believe it has drawn people from other states and countries (to Selangor)," he said.

In 2022, Selangor recorded RM60 billion in total investments, offering 19,000 job opportunities.

Amirudin previously said that from January to March of this year, the state recorded a total investment value of RM7.4 billion.

He said Selangor's success in

achieving high revenue collection and attracting significant investments allows the state administration to implement various initiatives for the people.

The Menteri Besar added that Selangor stands out when compared to other states as a result of the various initiatives introduced by the state government.

Citing the Skim Mesra Usia Emas as an example, Amirudin said the programme was improved by providing a RM150 cash aid to the elderly and disbursing RM500 to heirs when beneficiaries pass away.

"We will continue to make improvements and rectify the shortcomings. I think this should be done continuously," he said.

In addition to implementing various programmes, Amirudin said the state administration must pay attention to the complaints and criticisms of the people to improve existing policies.

"Of course, in a democratic country, it is impossible to be able to please all. If we receive 60 to 70 per cent of support, it represents good democracy.

"Therefore, it is important for us to listen to complaints, objections, and criticism because it can help us improve the policies and decisions made by the state government," he said.



By DANIAL DZULKIFLY

SHAH ALAM - In a significant move, Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) and its new political ally, Barisan Nasional (BN), have jointly launched their manifesto for Selangor, presenting 53 major offers under five main thrusts for the coming five years.

The manifesto, unveiled by Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, outlines various initiatives aimed at advancing the state's development, including creating 100,000 new high-paying jobs in the state.

"As part of the offer (to ensure economic superiority and employment opportunities), our main focus will be on establishing a high-income economy by generating 100,000 high-paying jobs within the state over the next five years.

"This isn't an empty promise; it's an achievable objective, considering that the state administration has already successfully created around 89,000 well-paying jobs in the past five years," he said during the manifesto's launch at Dewan Raja Muda Musa, here, on July 31.

By providing ample high-paying job opportunities, the state aims to uplift its economic status and improve the well-being of its citizens, he added.

In his speech, Amirudin stressed that these initiatives are not populist in nature but have been carefully and thoroughly deliberated before being finalised.

"These offers are not populist, but based on proper research. God willing, we will be able to execute all 53 initiatives.

"These five thrusts over the next five years are our pledge to the people of Selangor, to ensure the state remains stable and developed, and that it will not only become an (economic) beacon in the country but in Southeast Asia as well," he said.

The five commitments are as follows:

A THRIVING ECONOMY AND QUALITY EDUCATION: CATALYSTS FOR HIGH-INCOME JOBS

- Focus on modern industries — agriculture, aerospace, electric rail and bus, 5G services, robotics, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, e-sports
- Attract investments for 100,000 high-income jobs for youths
- Create a third port in Pulau Carey, making Selangor a premier investment destination
- Establish three new townships with affordable housing in Sepang, Sabak Bernam, and along Sungai Klang
- Create Green Industrial Parks for carbon-neutrality and environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards
- 5G connectivity for Selangor to become a leader in Southeast Asia
- Kita Selangor Rail Line to connect Klang to KLIA and transform the Selangor West Coast
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Train 10,000 youths with Apple, Siemens, Festo, and Dassault Systèmes
- Expand the People's Tuition Programme: Provide free tuition to 200,000 students
- Offer free Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin, Tamil, Japanese, and Korean classes
- Give RM1,500 in aid to each undergraduate
- Provide RM1,500/month internships to 2,000 youth
- Allocate RM5 million for 10,000 creative ambassadors under the Kita Selangor Digital Grant

RELIGION AS THE BEACON AND SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR A DIGNIFIED SELANGOR

- Haj subsidy: RM2,000 for 3,000 first-time muassasah pilgrims
- Al-Ghazali scholarship: Support for religious school stu-

5 more years of stability, prosperity



- dents' education in the Middle East
- Easier and problem-free Islamic school registration process
- Funding for better religious schools and Kelas al-Quran dan Fardu Ain (Kafa) facilities
- Increased allowance for religious officials:
 - Imam: RM1,600
 - Bilal: RM700
 - Siak: RM500
 - Nazir: RM500
- Assistance for small and medium enterprises seeking halal certification
- Expanded Kitab Turath classes in all Selangor districts
- RM3 million extra support under the Shariah Legal Aid Fund for women
- Enhanced facilities for Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Taoist houses of worship

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Full government digitalisation for efficiency
- Greater Klang Valley as a model for high-tech governance
- Support for businesses to digitalise their services
- Improved local council services with better connectivity and responsiveness
- One-Stop Centre in each local council for prompt issue resolution (within 24 hours)

SUSTAINABLE, COMFORTABLE, AND LIVABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Kita Selangor Homes: 200,000 units at RM250,000, with facilities and banking assistance
- Reduce congestion by collaborating with traffic management systems
- Expand minibus and van networks to reduce car dependency
- Premier Kita Selangor Parks: Create leisure parks in

each state constituency

- Install solar panels on government buildings and residential areas
- Introduce waste separation systems and improve recycling
- Enhance parks to mitigate and withstand flooding
- Optimise waste collection through automation
- Empower Akademi Merah Kuning to nurture talent for the Selangor football team
- Kita Selangor e-Sports League: Foster the e-sports industry with centres in each district
- Allocate RM100 million to upgrade rural roads
- Build 5,000 electric vehicle charging stations and streamline residential installations
- Construct 10,000 units for public servants

SELANGOR AS A CARING STATE THAT UPHOLDS THE INTERESTS OF ITS RESIDENTS

- 60 Iltizam Selangor Penyayang programmes for comprehensive support
- Facilities, training, and incentives for childcare professionals
- RM1,000 in childcare aid per year for mothers
- Free screening and mental health programmes via the Selangkah app
- Enhanced closed-circuit television surveillance in public areas to safeguard women and children
- RM1,000 incentive for farmers and paddy cultivators
- Upgrade the facilities in one low-cost apartment complex per district
- Homeownership incentives: Rate conversion options for first-time homeowners
- Free Selangor Penyayang ambulance service in every council
- Kita Selangor RM200 book vouchers for university students
- Inisiatif Roda Darul Ehsan (RIDE) programme expanded to include e-hailing drivers
- Bereavement benefits increased to RM1,000 for senior citizens

Klang's city status will boost Greater Klang Valley goal

SHAH ALAM - The decision to upgrade the Klang Municipal Council (MPK) to city status will strengthen the Selangor government's efforts towards its goal of establishing a Greater Klang Valley administration, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said.

Amirudin welcomed Local Government Development Minister Nga Kor Ming's announcement on the matter on July 26, with the Royal Town of Klang now poised to be the fourth city in Selangor to attain city status after Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam and Subang Jaya.

According to Amirudin, Greater Klang Valley, involving the four local authorities, has been designed to be a metropolitan model in Malaysia and South-east Asia.

This status upgrade will enable Klang, which is steeped in history, to continue to be developed as a sustainable city with vast economic opportunities, he added.

"With the establishment of the Greater Klang Valley, all four local authorities can be consolidated and coordinated through a system capable of improving service efficiency to facilitate the affairs of the government as a service provider for residents from Petaling Jaya to Klang," he said in a statement on July 27.

In fact, he said the Greater Klang Val-



ley could also be a testbed for services based on high-speed internet technology, especially 5G, towards offering fully digital government services in these localities.

"The embodiment of the Greater Klang Valley will be one of the main focuses of this administration in the coming term if it gets a new mandate from

the people of Selangor, God willing.

"Detailed planning such as this is another indication that the state administration is not complacent and is always looking for opportunities to improve processes and service levels," Amirudin said.

He said the proposal and decision will be presented to the Sultan of Selangor

Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj for consent to facilitate the process of proclaiming Klang as a city.

On July 27, Nga said with the proposed upgrading of Klang's status, the ministry, through its Sentuhan Kasih programme, has approved 21 projects worth RM5 million to upgrade public facilities in the municipality. - Bernama

Eco-haven Mangrove Point opens doors to public

SHAH ALAM - State subsidiary Landasan Lumayan Sdn Bhd (LLSB) opened the Mangrove Point ecotourism and educational centre in Klang on July 26 in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.

Offering visitors an idyllic retreat from the urban hustle and bus-

tle, it features a one-kilometre boardwalk loop that allows them to explore the lush mangrove forest along Sungai Klang.

Resting spaces along the walkways encourage visitors to pause and appreciate the surrounding beauty, while specially designed observation decks provide opportunities for bird-watching.

Visitors are also able to observe large mudskippers and striking blue crabs along the swamp floor. Meanwhile, fishing enthusiasts can indulge in their passion at the dedicated angler's deck.

LLSB's managing director Syaiful Azmen Nordin said the company expects Mangrove Point to become a premier educational and ecotourism hub in Klang.

"Mangrove Point, as one of the four catalyst projects under the Selangor Maritime Gateway (SMG), will not only nurture a profound understanding of the environment but also educate and foster sustainable practices among visitors to safeguard our cherished rivers and mangroves," he said in a statement.

Syaiful Azmen added that the park further

strengthens LLSB's commitment to transforming Sungai Klang into a sustainable development that embraces biodiversity.

"Through immersion in the beauty of Mangrove Point, our ultimate aim is to cultivate a new generation of passionate environmental stewards. We encourage not just members of the public to visit, but also welcome tour and cruise operators to add Mangrove Point to their itineraries for tourists," he said.

Mangrove Point was recognised by the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia in the prestigious Malaysia Landscape Architecture Awards in 2019 for Landscape Analysis and Study.

The recognition acknowledged the park's sustainable landscape design prioritising the preservation of mangrove ecosystems.

In line with SMG's commitment to inclusivity, most areas of Mangrove Point are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Mangrove Point is open to the public from 10am to 5pm daily for free.

For more information, log on to SMG's website or any of its social media.

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Selangor's foundation can withstand a wave

SELANGOR is positioned as the largest contributor to Malaysia's gross domestic product and the centre of the nation's economic development. This makes it a hotly contested state in the upcoming elections.

Despite Perikatan Nasional's (PN) ambitions to take over the state, the much-touted 'green wave' of Malay support for its component party PAS that is forecasted by some to sweep through all six states will meet with obstacles, especially in Selangor.

For PN to gain control of the state, it would need to secure at least 29 of the 56 seats in the Selangor Legislative Assembly.

This would prove a challenge. In the 14th general election (GE14) in 2018, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (Keadilan) won 21 state seats, followed by DAP (16), Amanah (8), and Bersatu (6), all of which contested under the Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) banner at the time. Umno secured four seats while PAS had just one.

With 51 seats in hand, Harapan continued to administer the state government post-GE14, but with a bigger mandate and a stronger majority.

This time around, Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, who is the Selangor Menteri Besar and state Harapan chief, has expressed confidence that the coalition, along with their Unity Government partner Barisan Nasional (BN), can win at the very least 33 seats.

This number of 'safe seats' was determined through a recent survey, the details of which were only disclosed to the two coalitions in Selangor.

Amirudin believes that Harapan-BN can secure another seven seats that are considered marginal, although with no more than a 2,000-vote majority for each, and would enable the unity pact to form the state government with 40 seats and obtain a two-thirds victory.

More on page 12 ►



MB: State will thrive under unity banner

By **DANIAL DZULKIFLY**

AMPANG - The incoming Selangor administration should be led by parties aligned with the Unity Government to ensure political stability and continuous growth of the state, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

Amirudin, who is also the Selangor Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) chairman, emphasised the need for political alignment similar to the current situation where long-time rivals, Harapan and Barisan Nasional (BN), have set aside their differences to form the Federal government, bringing stability to the country.

He pointed out that the current composition of parties within the Unity Government, which also includes representation from Sabah and Sarawak, reflects the multicultural values of the country.

"We are creating a new political alignment where five coalitions have come together to form the current Unity Government.

"This is the future of our country, where these coalitions, representing all races and communities, have come together to discuss and resolve issues for the betterment of the country," said Amirudin during the Jelajah Madani campaign held in Kg Tasik Tambahan, here, on Aug 3.

Amirudin also criticised political rival Perikatan Nasional (PN), claiming that it was ambitious to form alliances with other parties to gain power but has failed in its attempts.

"PN is also ambitious to create a giant coalition

with numerous parties. That's why it is named Perikatan (alliance), but as time passes, maybe 'pertikaian' (dispute) would be more suited for it," said Amirudin in jest, referring to PN's supposed infighting, especially among component parties PAS and Gerakan during the state election campaign period.

Amirudin also pointed out that Bersatu and PAS have a poor track record of working together with their political allies, citing the defunct Pakatan Rakyat coalition, where disagreements between DAP and PAS led to the latter's departure.

"Similarly, in the case of Muafakat Nasional, we witnessed PAS abandoning Umno. And as for Bersatu, it didn't fare any better as it also clashed with its partners in Harapan when it was in the government with us in 2018, and later with Umno when PN formed the Federal government.

"Surely, if it were voted in to lead the state, political instability would return," said Amirudin.

Highlighting Selangor's success, where the state now contributes 25.5 per cent to the national economy, Amirudin acknowledged the contributions of both BN and Harapan in developing the state.

He emphasised that the state's progress was built upon the work of previous administrations, including both BN and Harapan.

"We (Harapan) continued the work from where BN left off in 2008 to achieve the progress we see today.

"We (Harapan) have worked with PAS in Pakatan Rakyat and in 2018 with Bersatu under Harapan, and, God willing, in 2023, we will create history with our allies under the Unity Government," he said.

IT is hard to reject the 'Kita Selangor: 5 Pledges for 5 Years' manifesto. Topmost on the cards is the promise by the Harapan-BN government to keep developing Selangor and protect the welfare of the people. The alliance needs to get a new mandate from the people to continue its vital work.

Unlike their political rivals who are accustomed to making promises without real plans to carry them out, Harapan-BN's offers in this manifesto are pragmatic and build upon the already tried-and-tested framework of focusing on the economy and the people's well-being.

From the 46 areas of focus championed by the existing Iltizam Selangor Penyayang (ISP), 'Kita Selangor' has added 12 more to provide all-round benefits to students, youths, women, mosque administrators, farmers, traders, athletes, first-time homeowners and public transport users. Few development plans have been so comprehensive.

The manifesto was launched by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari in Shah Alam on July 31. It offers voters — who will head to the polls on Aug 12 — insight into the detailed plans the state has made for their prosperity and protection in the years to come.

Senior lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Mujibu Abd Muis, said he is certain the Harapan-BN government is able to deliver on its pledges in just one term, reports *Berita Harian* on Aug 1.

"If we look at the state's performance, what it has achieved so far, it isn't a surprise at all if these pledges are delivered within the given timeframe.

"Selangor is one of the states that has been performing really well," he said.

If we look at the state's performance, what it has achieved so far, it isn't a surprise at all if these pledges are delivered within the given timeframe. Selangor is one of the states that has been performing really well

MUJIBU ABD MUIS
SENIOR LECTURER
UNIVERSITI
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What people want

Political analyst Khairul Ariffin Mohd Munir from Institut Darul Ehsan (IDE) said looking at what's on offer, the manifesto is all-encompassing and addresses what the people want at this point in time.

"From IDE's analysis, we found that the people of Selangor are greatly concerned about issues that revolve around the economy, like living expenses and the price of goods, while the youths want better and more varied jobs.

"So, the pledges are addressing what the people want. What is being offered is extensive, it covers a big percentage of the population's needs.

"Based on Harapan's report card in Selangor and the Menteri Besar's achievements so far, it is evident that managing the people's cost of living is on the top of their agenda," he told *Berita Harian*.

While economic issues are paramount, the manifesto also pays



KHAIRUL ARIFFIN MOHD MUNIR
POLITICAL ANALYST

Based on Harapan's report card in Selangor and the Menteri Besar's achievements so far, it is evident that managing the people's cost of living is on the top of their agenda

attention to those who can easily fall between the cracks. Mosque administrators will have their allowance increased to RM1,600 a month and working mums will be accorded RM1,000 a year to help with the cost of childcare.

Aside from receiving book vouchers worth RM200, university students are promised a monthly allowance of RM1,500 for on-site training.

Tahfiz students and students from state-run Islamic schools are eligible to apply for scholarships to further their studies.

The current People's Tuition Programme (PTRS), which offers free tuition and meals to some 65,000 students from low-income families, will be expanded to benefit 200,000 students in all.

In a move to provide wholesome activities for youths, the manifesto has also offered to create an e-sports league and build e-sports centres in every district.

Other incentives include offering 10,000 places for vocational and tech-

nical training, and language schools for those keen to learn a second or third language.

200,000 homes

The Harapan-BN alliance has also pledged to focus on improving the quality of sports at the state level. Akademi Merah Kuning will be empowered to produce champions for Sukan Malaysia (Sukma), the Malaysia Cup and the Super League by 2025, and the AFC Cup in 2027.

As for those seeking to buy a house, Harapan-BN is offering 200,000 units to the public that cost below RM250,000, and 10,000 special units for civil servants.

Under the pledge, more recreational parks would be built in the 56 state constituencies while concerted efforts will be made to develop the townships of Sabak Bernam, Sepang and the fringes of Sungai Klang.

Farmers and growers too, will not be left out. Each will receive RM1,000 to buy better quality seeds and other farming necessities.

RM100 million has also been promised for road maintenance in rural Selangor for improved connectivity.

Also on offer are better railway services across the length and breadth of the state. Plans are underway to provide railway networks between Klang and Sabak Bernam in the north. In the south, railway lines will connect Tanjung Sepat, Kuala Langat and Sungai Pelek in Sepang to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

In short, the 'Kita Selangor: 5 Pledges for 5 Years' manifesto has much to offer to the people, and to the continued success of the state. The Harapan-BN alliance has given its word. It is now for the Selangor people to give it their trust.

Robust economy, supportive policies, a draw to investors

By **ABDUL RAHIM SABRI** and **NADIAH ZAMLUS**

SHAH ALAM - Selangor remains a top destination for local and foreign investors, especially in the area of manufacturing. The zeal of investors to engage in business opportunities here reflects their confidence in the state's leadership, style of governance and political stability.

When Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari took office as Menteri Besar in 2018, Selangor's approved investments stood at RM24.7 billion. In just a year, Amirudin's administration almost doubled the figure to RM47.8 billion.

Then, Covid-19 happened and tested the resilience of economies across the globe. Selangor was not left unscathed — its approved investment figures saw a drop to RM38.7 billion in 2020 and RM28.8 billion in 2021.

Yet, it remained anchored when in more recent times other state administrations fell and leadership changes took place. It also did not waver when parties jostled for Federal-level control that resulted in political deadlocks and crises.

Amirudin's ability to steer the state to calm waters has paid off. In 2022, Selangor attracted an impressive RM60.1 billion in total investments.

To further consolidate its position, the state introduced a five-year development plan last year that comes with 14 macro indicators to assess its overall success by 2025. Called the First Selangor Plan (RS-1), it focuses on four strategic themes that aim to, among others:

- increase the average household income to RM9,290 a month
- reduce the percentage of absolute poverty to 0.7 per cent
- provide employment opportunities to between 3.5 and 3.8 million individuals
- target RM25 to RM35 billion in approved investments for leading sectors each year
- achieve an annual GDP growth rate of 6.5 to 7.0 per cent
- ensure daily supply of clean water
- reach a fixed broadband penetration rate of 70 per cent for every 100 premises
- target an 85 per cent digitalisation rate for end-to-end government services
- achieve an 8.0 scale on the Family Wellbeing Index score, and
- increase the rate of waste recycling to 15 per cent.



Access to Asean

Selangor has also been actively promoting itself as a friendly business destination and the investment gateway to Asean. It courts foreign investors with a host of incentives and since 2015, has been hosting the annual Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS).

Among SIBS' highlights are the Selangor International Expo, the Smart City and Digital Economy Convention, and the Asean Business Conference.

Last year, SIBS' transaction value saw a sharp increase to RM1.45 billion.

At a state assembly session on Nov 24 last year, the exco for investment, industry and trade, Dato' Teng Chang Khim, said 75 per cent of SIBS' 44,342 visitors in 2022 were people from the business community.

Aiming high

The state's plan to attract other forms of investment to its shores also include the Selangor Aviation Show (SAS), introduced at the height of the pandemic in 2021.

That year, amid travel and movement restrictions, the inaugural show recorded RM100 million in transaction value. It also witnessed the signing of



12 memorandums of understanding (MoU) and a total of 4,987 physical visitors.

Just a year on, SAS 2022 achieved a transaction value of RM1.174 billion. The number of MoUs signed was 14, powered by commitments towards the state's plan to expand its aerospace subsector. Some 10,563 visitors came for the show that highlighted, among others, the latest jets and drones from five participating countries.

For the third instalment of SAS this year, organisers are expecting 50 exhibitors and no fewer than 12,000 vis-

itors to grace the event, which will run from Sept 7 to 9. Organisers are also expecting transactions to reach RM2 billion in value.

In the field of e-commerce and digitalisation, Invest Selangor, through its agency, the Selangor Information Technology and Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec), is aiming for the state to become the region's digital hub.

In a statement made on March 14, Teng said Sidec has contributed a total of RM334.37 million to Selangor's economy through a host of e-commerce and digitalisation activities since 2015.

The 2023 state elections: Why a sound economy matters

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM

SELANGOR, Malaysia's thriving economic powerhouse, has achieved remarkable success in recent years. The prosperous state has capitalised on its strategic location, robust infrastructure, and favourable business climate to attract substantial foreign investments and foster a dynamic local economy.

Following the five-year leadership of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari from 2018 to 2023, the Pakatan Harapan (PH)-held state government on July 13 unveiled its progress report.

The 161-page document detailed the state's numerous people-oriented schemes and initiatives, in particular, what the Harapan-led administration has done to spur the economy after the pandemic.

The report also included the state's comprehensive five-year development blueprint, the First Selangor Plan (RS-1), which aims to accelerate the post-pandemic economic recovery, promote inclusive growth, and enhance the quality of life for the people of Selangor.

To further complement the state's ongoing determination to develop progressive and inclusive policies and planning, Selangor in 2022 recorded an impressive economic success when its contribution to Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded one-quarter of that of the country, at 25.5 per cent. The figure also represented a 0.7 per cent increase from its contribution to the national GDP in 2021.

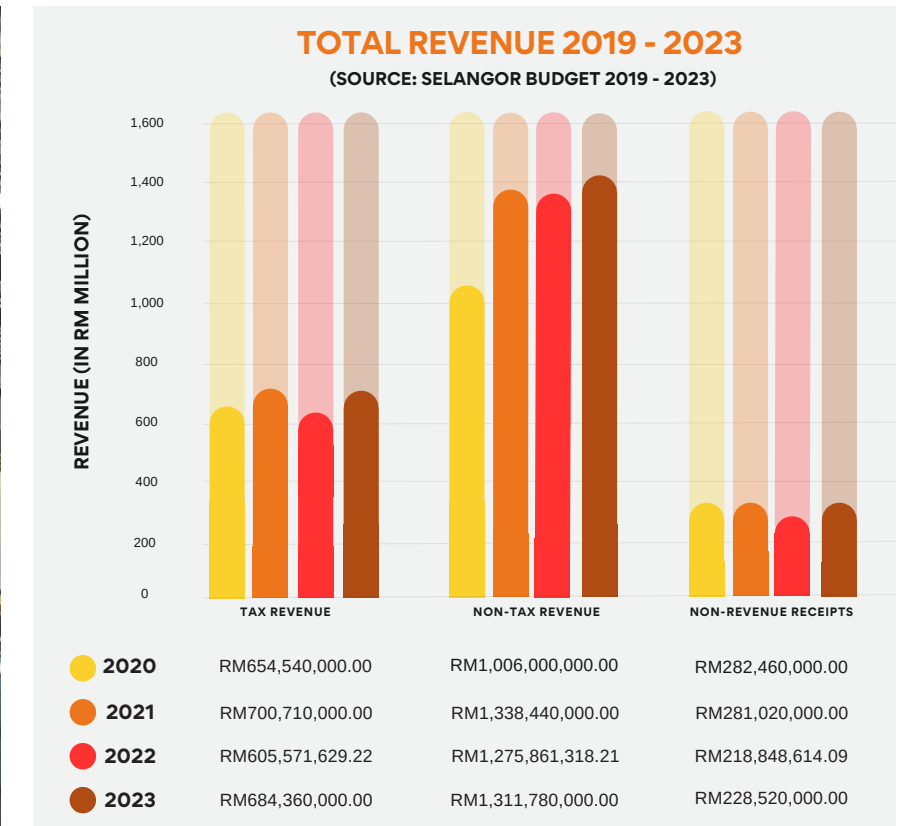
According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, Selangor also recorded an economic growth of 11.9 per cent in 2022, surpassing the national growth rate of 8.7 per cent. For the year 2022, Selangor also recorded a significant jump in its revenue with a total of RM2,532.86 million.

Bank Muamalat chief economist Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid commended Selangor's track record, stating that as one would expect, the numbers have projected continuous growth for the Golden State and were able to catch the attention of investors to bring their business over.

"Looking at their numbers, I have noticed that Selangor's GDP has been growing above trend. For instance, last year, Selangor was growing at 11.9 per cent whereas our national GDP was growing at a rate of 8.7 per cent. This has been the case in the past decade where the Selangor economy has always been accelerating much faster than the Malaysian economy.

"For the past 10 years, Selangor's GDP growth continuously outperformed the nation's growth, which says much about the state's potential. If I were an investor, I would want to be in Selangor because I know the appreciation of my investment values is much faster than if I invest elsewhere.

"There must be something good from their state government policies that resulted in such a strong economic momentum, and if you look at Selangor's economic structure, you can see that it is the main hub for logistics whereby you have KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) and Port Klang," he said during the 'Lunch On Us!'



talk show on *SelangorTV*.

Afzanizam said apart from being a logistics hub, Selangor is an education centre as many major universities are located in the state.

He said although Selangor's location could be a contributing factor, the good planning by its administration in regards to the resources and expenditure available cannot be downplayed.

"Of course, the proximity to the capital city of Kuala Lumpur also helps to some degree. Therefore, all of these factors play a role in contributing to Selangor's economic performance, and I believe it has been doing really well.

"Location is something that you can't control. But what you can do is plan what to do with your available resources. You have your tax revenue, you have your plans in terms of expenditure. This is in the context of the fiscal position of the Selangor economy.

"Certainly, the planning side plays a major role in terms of charting the economic trajectory. Otherwise, if you are endowed with so many resources, but you don't know what to do with them, definitely you won't be able to produce that kind of growth miracle, so to speak," he said.

Importance of branding

Similar to the country's five-year Malaysia Plan, which has entered its 12th edition, The RS-1 is a development plan that caters to the

needs of the Selangor people.

No other state in the country has introduced something similar.

"Usually when the Federal government tables its five-year plan, it's always about development expenditure, what it is they plan to do and what the key areas are to focus on.

"Similar steps are being taken under the RS-1. One of the key sectors the state would talk about is aerospace, something that can command good salaries," he said.

Afzanizam said many people do not realise the power of branding, something Selangor has used to its benefit with RS-1. He said the economic blueprint was able to lay out in detail the administration's plans and what it aims to achieve within a certain time frame, and this is what would attract investors.

"From the perspective of investors, this would help them when they do their due diligence. Because every time they come and invest, due diligence is a must thing to do.

"So, this plan would help to clear a lot of things. To a large degree it is this branding which helps to make the state stand out from the rest. I suppose moving forward, there would be other states that will try to copy this strategy."

Afzanizam also stated that RS-1 reflects the continuous improvement in the initiatives and programmes that have been introduced by the state administration.

"We've been talking about Industrial



There must be something good from their state government policies that resulted in such a strong economic momentum, and if you look at Selangor's economic structure, you can see that it is the main hub for logistics whereby you have KLIA and Port Klang

MOHD AFZANIZAM ABDUL RASHID
Bank Muamalat chief economist



Revolution 4.0 and how technological advancements can shape the economy and affect the employment market.

"The focus on digitalisation is the right thing to do and the fact that it is embedded in the RS-1 shows a (commitment to) continuous improvement."

Stability fuels the economy

On June 28, the Selangor state assembly was dissolved to pave the way for the state elections that will be held concurrently with five other states, namely Penang, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu.

Following the results of the 15th general elections (GE15) last November, the country saw Perikatan Nasional's component party PAS capturing a number of seats that were previously held by Harapan and Barisan Nasional (BN), including in Selangor.

Out of the 22 parliament seats, six were won by PAS in GE15.

This leads to the question as to whether PAS' significant victory in the general polls would translate to a similar outcome in the six

states. In the case of Selangor, analysts have projected that while Harapan is expected to lose several seats, it would retain its hold on the administration for the coming term.

In terms of the economy, Afzanizam said stability in the government plays an important factor as it would affect various economic components, such as investor confidence.

"What we want to see is stability in terms of the implementation of economic policies. Of course, the ones who drive the policies are the politicians. Therefore, any changes (in representation) can have a direct impact on investor confidence. Investors are very mindful of that.

"I would say there would be major reactions (if there is a change in administration) because whatever investments that have been approved by the state government, the investors would try to reevaluate them or at least keep the status quo.

"I believe there would be a wait-and-see approach and that's quite common," he added. Moving forward, Afzanizam expressed hope that the electorate would make their decisions based on economic performance.

"From my observation, the arguments raised in the state elections are quite mixed. There is some sensitive stuff, (while) some are objective ... but I really hope our society will be able to graduate (from sensitive issues) and start to look at economic policies when heading out to vote."

By AMAR SHAH MOHSEN

WHILE the 2018 general elections may be perceived as the most memorable in Malaysian history for its impact on the nation's political landscape, the significance of the 2008 state election in Selangor should not be downplayed.

It was, after all, the first time that Barisan Nasional's (BN) stranglehold on the state was broken.

The then Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) coalition successfully dethroned the BN state administration led by Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo, winning 36 of the 56 available seats.

Since then, Harapan has not looked back. In fact, such has been its dominance in Selangor that it has won more seats in each subsequent state elections.

In the 2013 poll, the coalition secured 44 state constituencies, before further extending its superiority by capturing 51 seats in 2018.

While Harapan is not projected to repeat the impressive outing of five years ago in the coming state poll, many analysts believe that it would still maintain its two-thirds majority in the legislative assembly.

Clean, effective, people-centric

For observers, the secret to voters' continued support for Harapan in the country's most developed state is simple — economic excellence, a welfare agenda, and a clean administration that has largely stayed clear of controversies.

Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research senior fellow Prof Azmi Hassan said the administration's ability to effectively handle the state and its economy, including being the country's largest contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP), has been a major draw for voters here.

In its 2022 GDP by State report released on June 27, the Statistics Department (DOSM) noted that Selangor contributed 25.5 per cent to the overall economy while also recording an annual growth of 11.9 per cent, higher than the national figure of 8.7 per cent.

For comparison, the three states under PAS' rule that are also facing elections on Aug 12 — Kedah, Terengganu and Kelantan — are positioned in the bottom half of DOSM's report, respectively contributing 3.4, 2.5 and 1.8 per cent to the national GDP.

"This (Selangor's success) doesn't just come coincidentally. There must be proper planning," Azmi told *Selangor Journal*, adding that the good economic performance has allowed the state to expand its welfare agenda.

As of this year, the state government has already rolled out 46 different initiatives under Iltizam Selangor Penyayang, ranging from cash assistance to free



Harapan's secret to success in Selangor

health screenings and affordable housing projects.

The political analyst said it is no wonder that Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari and other state leaders have been highlighting these successes when out campaigning.

"This is to demonstrate that, if you give PAS the mandate to be the state government, for example, look at what is happening to Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu."

Azmi also pointed out that since coming into state power in 2008, the Harapan government has not been embroiled in any major scandals, controversies or cases of corruption, which has been a pull factor for voters.

"I do think this resonates well with the people of Selangor, which I would describe as generally reasonable, intelligent and pragmatic."

No strong alternative

Azmi said voters in Selangor also have no impetus to vote for other parties owing to the fact that there is no strong alternative in the state, which remains true for the upcoming election.

From the voters's perspective, he said there may be a sense of fear that if PAS and Perikatan Nasional (PN) come into power, Selangor could end up being like the states currently under the Islamist party's rule, where race and religion issues often take precedence over issues on welfare and the economy.

"For me, it's very scary if we look at Kelantan or Terengganu, because PN

has nothing to show in the event it is given a chance to administer (Selangor). They can't say that Selangor will be as developed as Kedah," he said.

When you're dealing with racial and religious issues, Harapan will always lose to PN. But if you deal with administrative efficiency, PN has nothing to show."

Azmi said this is also why PAS and Bersatu continue to propagate issues of race, religion and royalty to garner support.

Ilham Centre research fellow Mujibu Abd Muis echoed this sentiment, adding that there are not many prominent political figures among the opposition, past and present, who have been able to lead the charge against Harapan in Selangor.

Even former menteri besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, who is tipped to assume the post again in the event of a PN victory, has fallen out of favour among voters over the role he played in the infamous Sheraton Move in 2020, he pointed out.

"Hence, I see a huge challenge at the moment in trying to break Harapan's dominance in Selangor," he said when contacted.

Mujibu said Harapan's decision to cooperate with Umno has further strengthened its position in the state, resulting in a larger pool of Malay voters.

Additionally, he said the Harapan narrative that it is vital to have the same party rule both the federal and state governments to ensure the smooth implementation of programmes, will make

it even harder for PN to make further inroads in Selangor in the near future.

Addressing weaknesses

All these, however, do not mean Harapan can rest on its laurels.

Mujibu said the coalition's main challenge moving forward would be to plug any existing weaknesses, including finding ways to recapture Malay support in Selangor, which has diminished following Bersatu's exit in 2020.

"I see the need for them to empower their Malay components, particularly Amanah and, to a certain extent, Parti Keadilan Rakyat," he said.

Mujibu's remarks are not without substance and should serve as a valid concern to Harapan and BN.

In the last general election, PN won all four parliamentary seats in northern Selangor which previously belonged to either Harapan or BN, namely Sabak Bernam, Sungai Besar, Tanjong Karang and Hulu Selangor.

Similarly, Azmi believes that key to stopping PN's march on Selangor in the future would be Harapan's ability to minimise the impact of racial and religious rhetoric accentuated by the opposition coalition.

He said this can be done by its leaders portraying Malay voters in Selangor as being intelligent and rational.

"How I see it today is, even if Harapan loses a couple more seats in the coming election, it will not be because of its own weaknesses and mistakes, but rather the rhetoric being played up by PN."



Madani plan to re-energise Klang Valley

By **NADIRAH H. RODZI**

AS the state elections approach, Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) and former rival Barisan Nasional (BN) appear to have an advantage in their political campaigns by focusing on national-level issues that would bring prosperity and a better quality of life to the people.

The Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim-led Harapan is addressing socioeconomic concerns and has unveiled the Madani Economy Plan to transform Malaysia into one of the world's top 30 economies in the next 10 years.

The plan seeks to establish a specialised financial zone in the Iskandar Malaysia area in Johor, review minimum wage standards, promote female participation in the workforce, stamp out corruption and reduce our dependence on foreign labour.

Although the ultimate goal is to win over the economic powerhouse of Selangor, Anwar's Unity Government believes that offering a secure future for all Malaysians will strike a chord with the state's highly savvy voters who struggle with bread-and-butter issues living in the most expensive region in the country.

Many believe that the polls in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Penang, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor are crucial for Anwar and his administration, as they are seen as a referendum on his leadership.

The last general election in November resulted in a hung Parliament, leading to the alliance between Hara-

pan and former nemesis BN.

Although the state elections only comprise six states, Prof Azmi Hassan, a senior fellow at the Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, said the total number of people eligible to vote — at almost 10 million — constitute half of the total voters in the entire country.

"So, I think the result is more of a signal (of confidence) towards the Federal government," Azmi said.

A recent survey conducted among Malays in Selangor has revealed a positive outcome for the prime minister and the Unity Government he heads.

Of the 1,068 respondents who participated in the Selangor Malay-Only Public Opinion Survey, 69 per cent expressed their approval of Anwar's performance, while another 68 per cent supported the Unity Government.

But experts still disagree on whether the ruling coalition can retain its hold over its two bastions Selangor and Negeri Sembilan as the two states' demographics show significantly more Malay voters than non-Malay ones.

Meet them halfway

Anwar's multicultural Harapan has long struggled to woo ethnic Malay voters, following the deep ideological divide in the community that makes up more than 60 per cent of the population.

Harapan is depending on BN to attract Malay voters. Still, studies have shown a greater likelihood that BN Malay voters will transfer their votes to Perikatan Nasional (PN) candidates in-

stead, especially in 39 Malay-majority seats in the state.

To form the next Selangor state government, a coalition must secure at least 29 out of 56 seats in the state assembly to obtain a simple majority.

"This round of state elections is mostly a contestation on the religiosity of either side, as another wave of Islamic revivalism is sweeping over Muslim-majority nations," Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, told *Selangor Journal*.

"So, I think Harapan is barking up the wrong tree by emphasising socioeconomic issues," he said.

Oh suggested that the coalition should engage in honest and open conversations with the voters, highlighting the differences between religious beliefs and economic progress as the block is up against two Malay parties exclusively driving race and religion issues.

Azmi believes it would be best for Harapan to fight the racial and religious rhetoric used by PN in its campaigns with facts.

"PN is very comfortable with these rhetorics; they know they can gain a lot of sympathy votes if they use these particular issues. But in Selangor, the below-40-year voters comprise the bulk of the voters, and these kinds of voters are not inclined to tie themselves to a political party. So if Harapan-BN uses contemporary issues, it can attract these 40-year-olds and those younger to secure a victory," he said.

Leveraging stability

Political stability is another aspect that is often overlooked, said security and political analyst Dr Noor Nirwandy Mat Noordin.

"There were a lot of political crises after GE14 that led to the changing of prime ministers. It's a situation people don't want to repeat, which gives Harapan justification to acknowledge the country's stability which people enjoy today," he told *Selangor Journal*.

"The state polls are definitely a strong test for Harapan-BN, but due to the stability (of the country) in the past eight or nine months, it can decrease the onslaught of the PN wave, especially in the states governed by Harapan-BN, namely Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Penang."

Nirwandy added that while it would be difficult for Harapan to wrestle Kelantan from the opposition, some constituencies may experience growth as voters opt for stability.

As an example, he named Pedu in Kedah, where BN chairman Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, a former minister, will be contesting.

"Penetrating states like Kelantan would be challenging due to the demographics and the polarisation of the political scenario there, like the ideologies. But it's different for Kedah and Terengganu.

"So, Harapan should shift its campaign to how it offers stability and can achieve it. They need to get people to acknowledge that stability is also essential, other than the cost of living."

► Continued from page 5

THE key question in the upcoming state polls is whether there is vote transferability between Harapan and BN supporters.

Malay supporters of BN may be less keen to shift their support to Harapan candidates even though both parties have united at the Federal level. The same could be true for some Harapan voters towards the candidates fielded by BN.

Ilham Centre fellow researcher Mujibu Abd Muis said there are three groups of Umno supporters who would resist voting for Harapan — those who oppose the party's president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, those who find Zahid acceptable but do not support the BN-Harapan alliance, and those who are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, such as the issue of cost of living.

"In the case of Umno, it is very possible that there won't be vote transferability among these three camps, where voters might choose to abstain altogether.

"Another group to watch out for is the youth because the majority of them were supportive of PN in GE15 due to the 'green' wave' and their lack of experience (in politics). Therefore, PN had the upper hand for being in the Federal government at the time," he told *Selangor Journal*.

Even though it is difficult to read the current trend on vote transfers among the youths, Mujibu said the popularity of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim seems to have built the momentum in Selangor while the controversy surrounding Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor insulting the Selangor royals would have an effect on voters too.

"Because of these two factors, there may be some vote transferability from PN (to Harapan), but we are unsure to what extent," he said.

Scenarios

A projection for the state election results by DAP's Ong Kian Ming considers three main scenarios based on GE15 results at the parliament level for all six states.

In the worst-case scenario, 70 per cent of BN supporters and 20 per cent of Harapan supporters would vote for their political rival, PN.

The most positive outcome would see at least 70 per cent of BN supporters voting for Harapan and 100 per cent of Harapan voters voting for BN.

In agreement to this, Mujibu said it isn't much of an issue for Harapan voters to vote for BN as many of them are aware of the formation of the Unity Government following the hung parliament in GE15 and have an understanding of the Malay-Muslim sentiment.

"What is important to them is how a



Better-informed voters can turn tide

stable government has to be formed to spearhead the country," he said.

Hard to predict

The results of another survey conducted by the Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute and published on July 5 indicate that there is no significant vote transferability between Harapan and BN.

According to the survey, 39 per cent of Malay voters in Selangor who previously voted for BN in GE15 last November stated their intention to vote for PN in the upcoming state election if it becomes a direct contest between PN and Harapan in their constituency. In contrast, only 15 per cent said they would vote for Harapan.

It stated that a substantial percentage of Malay voters for both BN and Harapan are showing a preference for PN candidates while a significant number of them have become 'unsure voters' — expressing uncertainty in who they will eventually pick.

The survey also revealed a higher probability of Malay BN voters shifting their support to PN candidates and this outcome grants PN an advantage, particularly in the 39 Malay-majority seats in the state.

These seats include Sungai Air Tawar, Sabak, Sungai Panjang, Hulu Bernam,

Sungai Burong, Permatang, Bukit Melawati, Ijok, Jeram and Kuang, all of which were won by their incumbents with less than a 3,000-vote majority and are at risk of either going to PN components parties or being retained by them.

However, at places such as Batang Kali and Gombak Setia, both incumbents, Bersatu's Harumaini Omar and Keadilan-turned-Bersatu assemblyman Hilman Idham, had won with a more than 10,000-vote majority.

Mujibu noted that the scenario has, however, changed since the last general polls eight months ago and that the patterns in the last two elections cannot be used to predict the outcome of the upcoming state elections.

Citing marginal seats that garnered 1,000 to 2,000 majority votes as an example, he said the increase in the number of voters following the implementation of Undi18 in December 2021 and the right strategies could determine a different outcome.

"If BN and Harapan are able to get hold of their grassroots and make them understand the pact between the two coalitions, there would not be many issues."

What's on offer

Oh Ei Sun, a political analyst from the Singapore Institute of International

Affairs, also believes that "many disappointed Umno supporters are likely to switch to PN, as they may not align with the supposed liberalism and multiculturalism of Harapan".

As a result, it is crucial for both coalitions to focus on what they can offer in terms of governance to attract voters.

Despite PN's efforts, it is evident that the coalition lacks a strong narrative for Selangor, and many voters in the state are pragmatic and less loyal along party lines.

Also, whether the votes garnered by Keadilan's turncoats like Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali in the last state election will translate into support for them again under PN, remains to be seen.

Harapan's 15-year track record, including Azmin's one-term tenure as Menteri Besar, has given them an advantage in terms of experience and governance.

Additionally, PN's coalition lacks a robust multicultural component, and some view Gerakan as lacking the credentials to bring in non-Malay support in urban areas, which could further hinder its chances.

The state assembly elections in Selangor, Penang, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu are scheduled on Aug 12, with early voting on Aug 8.

Youths hold key to power — if they show up

By **DANIAL DZULKILFY**

YOUTH voters have a big impact on the outcome of any election.

After the 15th General Elections (GE15) where for the first time 18-year-olds could decide at the ballot box, political parties in the country have come to realise the power wielded by the young, and have been reaching out to win them over.

Pakatan Harapan (Harapan), Barisan Nasional (BN) and Perikatan Nasional (PN) have all employed various strategies for this, including using targeted messaging and holding social media campaigns and youth-oriented events.

Progressive wages, the welfare of gig workers, environmental protection, social justice, and digital rights — once regarded as the buzzwords of young millennials — have suddenly become relevant issues at political campaigns.

During GE15, 73.89 per cent of eligible voters participated. Though not the highest percentage, it recorded the highest-ever number of voters (due to the lowered voting age) in Malaysia's electoral history.

The question this time around is whether as many young people will be coming out to cast their vote.

Political analyst Prof Azmi Hassan, a fellow at Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, opined that the state elections would see a similar turnout.

"The turnout for the state elections will likely be similar to the last general election, and I don't think it will exceed 74 per cent. Although I consider this state election as a referendum on the Unity Government, I don't think this perception is valid for the voters in this case.

"In the last election, not only Malay youths but also Malay voters in general, were preoccupied with PN. However, since last November, a lot has happened, and most probably those who voted for PN during GE15 are now considering trying a new party.

"PN was relatively new at that time compared to BN or Harapan, so I presume they wanted to test something new," he told *Selangor Journal*.

Azmi said much can be learned in the eight months that followed the general polls, especially on the performance of PN as an opposition.

"I expect that there will be some Malay youths who will align with the PN coalition, but it won't be as significant as it was last November," he said.

According to the data released by the Election Commission on the six states holding their elections on Aug 12, the biggest category of voters belongs to the 21 to 29 age bracket. This group makes up 2.17 million vot-

ers out of the 9.77 million total number of voters in the six states combined, with Selangor recording the highest at 851,180 voters.

Selangor also has the highest number of young voters between the ages of 18 and 20, totalling 274,194 people out of the 661,905 people in this category.

This is followed by Kedah with 104,284 voters, Kelantan (96,513), Penang (67,633), Terengganu (64,264) and Negeri Sembilan (55,017).

Party loyalty

While youths have dissimilar values and interests from that of the older generations, their voting habits may not differ so greatly.

Azmi highlighted that voting habits in Malaysia, irrespective of age, are still largely based on party lines rather than individuals.

"The older generation will still vote for the party. I think this is generally the same principle held by other voters because they feel more comfortable aligning with a party rather than an individual candidate."

Azmi also pointed out the example of the Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (Muda), which, despite the help of Harapan, did not manage to gain much support in GE15.

"Young voters are different. They are more willing to try new things. But then, considering the performance of Muda, (even) with the help of Harapan, they still did not get the support they needed.

"So, whether you're an older- or a younger-generation voter, you still stick to the party. In this case, when making a decision on who to vote for, the candidate comes second.

"Only in a few instances do the candidates play a greater role than the party as a decisive factor," said Azmi.

Deciding factors

Another political analyst, Oh Ei Sun from the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, has echoed Azmi's

views, stating that the voter turnout for the upcoming elections is unlikely to surpass the percentage achieved during GE15.

However, Oh opined that a considerable number of young Malay voters may choose to support the PN coalition, particularly because of the well-organised election machinery of one of its component parties, the Islamist party PAS.

"As these are state elections, the turnout is likely to be at most about the same level as the last general election. But if PAS is as efficient as before in eliciting its supporters, both old and young, then another round of the 'green wave' is distinctly possible.

"In more urban states such as Selangor and Penang, socioeconomic factors such as employment and price hikes will play a major role, to the disadvantage of incumbents. However, non-socioeconomic factors such as religion and race will also come into play," he said.

Oh based his observations on GE15 when it appeared that a significant number of first-time voters preferred PAS, in particular, and Bersatu by association.

Currently, the state governments of Selangor, Penang, and Negeri Sembilan are led by Harapan, while PN leads Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah.

Undi18 co-founder Tharma Pillai pointed out that although many young Malay voters supported PN in GE15, PN's support might have eroded since then as some of its top leaders, including coalition chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, have been implicated in corruption cases.

"Leading up to GE15 and even today, there is a strong sentiment against BN as they were synonymous with corruption cases and abuse of power, which made PN more appealing to young voters," he said.

"But now there is a sense of disappointment with PN as its leaders too are implicated in corruption cases. So they cannot campaign that they are a clean government."

Tharma said BN still faces a tough challenge to shed its tainted image. He was referring to the corruption charges faced by a few Umno leaders.

"There will be cases where BN and PN will face off against each other. In this situation, frustrated voters may not vote for either.

"This time around, while it is expected that voter turnout will be lower than GE15, maybe at around 65 per cent, it will be a very complicated affair to deter-



By NADIRAH H. RODZI

SELANGOR is currently under intense scrutiny as the Perikatan Nasional's (PN) 'green wave' of political Islam and Malay nationalism seeks to wrest control of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's Pakatan Harapan (Harapan) coalition stronghold in the upcoming state polls.

While there have been mixed opinions, most observers believe Harapan would retain Selangor — the wealthiest state in peninsular Malaysia — following more than a decade of good track record.

Prof Azmi Hassan, a senior fellow at the Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, projected that Harapan-BN would be able to win 48 seats out of 56 in the upcoming state polls, which would allow the coalition to form a state government.

The political analyst explained that for a seat to be considered safe for Harapan, the maximum percentage of Malay voters in a constituency should be 60 per cent.

"Safe seats for Harapan in Selangor would be those with 50 per cent Malay voters and 50 per cent non-Malay voters because non-Malay voters, including those supporting BN, are more likely to vote for Harapan-BN candidates. Therefore, if Malay voters are not the majority, it is a safe seat for them," he said.

Expressing similar thoughts, security and political analyst Dr Noor Nirwandy Mat Noordin said these seats — mainly in the centre of Selangor — are more balanced as the constituents seek stability rather than be provoked by racial and religious issues.

"It's not easy for PN's green wave to penetrate these areas," he told *Selangor Journal*.

"Coastal areas, constituencies like Tanjung Karang, Sabak Bernam, Sungai Besar, and Kuala Selangor ... are some of the Malay constituencies. However, these seats are also getting safer because of the realisation that they have to stop and go for stability," he said.

The term 'green wave' was coined after the general election in November 2022 saw Parti Islam SeMalaysia (Pas), identified by its green and white moon emblem, winning in 43 out of 222 contested wards, making it the biggest party in Parliament.

The Islamist party plays a significant role in PN and receives substantial support from the rural regions east and north of Peninsular Malaysia.

PN, led by former prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, is expected to mount a severe challenge against Selangor in the upcoming state polls on Aug 12, given its performance in northern Selangor during the general election. Despite that being its first foray into Federal polls, the coalition won six out

Balanced demographics a crucial factor



of 22 parliamentary seats.

The gains made by PN in Selangor indicate their progress in the Malay-dominated regions throughout the country, which resulted in them becoming the preferred choice for Malay voters, replacing Umno, the new partner of Harapan.

Harapan and former nemesis BN allied to form a unity government after the last general election in November resulted in a hung Parliament.

Guilt voting

Having ruled Selangor for 15 years since 2008, Selangor remains a valuable asset for Anwar's Parti Keadilan Rakyat, as all three state chiefs since 2008 have come from his party.

Coastal areas, constituencies like Tanjung Karang, Sabak Bernam, Sungai Besar, and Kuala Selangor ... are some of the Malay constituencies. However, these seats are also getting safer because of the realisation that they have to stop and go for stability

DR NOOR NIRWANDY
SECURITY AND POLITICAL
ANALYST



According to a survey conducted by Endeavour-MGC, out of 1,068 Malay voters in Selangor, 42 per cent expressed their intention to vote for the ruling Harapan coalition in the forthcoming Selangor state elections.

PN was the second preference with 33 per cent, followed by 15 per cent for BN and 1 per cent for the Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (Muda).

About 9 per cent of the respondents were unsure about their choice, while none backed Parti Pejuang Tanah Air.

A political scientist at Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development (JSC), Sunway University, Professor Wong Chin Huat (pic, above) predicts

Harapan would win at least 32, a slight majority at worst to 42 at best.

"Harapan-BN's safe seats would be those they can win after factoring in a strong swing of BN votes to PN and a low turnout amongst Harapan supporters. This would include at least 13 out of 15 seats contested by DAP, 13 of the seats contested by PKR and Amanah (most of whom have at least 40 per cent non-Malays), and two seats contested by Umno.

That gives precisely 28 seats or half of the total."

PN's safe seats, he said, would be those it can win even when the swing from Harapan-BN is somewhat limited.

"That would include four seats contested by Umno, three by Amanah and one seat contested by PKR.

The remaining 20 seats may go either depending on how strong the swing from BN to PN is and how low the turnout rate amongst Harapan supporters is. Overall, Harapan-BN should be able to retain Selangor, but the size of its majority may depend on the swing and turnout rate," he said.

However, the problem with BN core supporters is they are divided, said Azmi.

Another pre-election survey among Malay voters in Selangor found no significant vote transferability between Harapan and BN, revealing that BN Malay voters may not necessarily transfer their votes to Harapan candidates in the state election and vice versa, despite the two parties forming a coalition government at the Federal level.

The survey also found a greater likelihood that BN Malay voters will transfer their votes to PN candidates instead, thus giving it an advantage in the election, especially in 39 Malay-majority seats in the state.

"For example, if in one constituency there's a DAP candidate, and another is a PN-Pas candidate, Umno supporters would be more inclined to vote for Pas so that they won't feel guilty as they are voting for race and religion. This is why I say if 70 per cent of the constituency is Malay, it can be considered a very safe seat for PN.

"Let's take Batang Kali in Hulu Selangor, for example ... where most of the Malay voters are. I think Harapan needs to work harder in those areas," said Azmi.



We have what it takes, says analyst

By **DANIAL DZULKIFLY**

SHAH ALAM - Selangor stands a favourable chance of securing three major local football championship titles, and may even clinch the elusive Asia Football Confederation (AFC) Cup in the coming years, according to a sports analyst.

Mohd Sadek Mustafa, a senior lecturer at Shah Alam Universiti Teknologi Mara's (UiTM) Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, has asserted that Selangor's financial resources, top-tier sports facilities, and abundant pool of football talent position it well for future success.

However, questions linger over how the state plans to spend its allocation and how to find the right leaders for Selangor's football team, The Red Giants.

The strategies to be employed and the individuals who will lead the team to secure these victories remain central concerns, said Sadek.

"Selangor has what it takes to win these tournaments and even the AFC. They have the facilities to properly

house and train these athletes, not to mention the proper financial capacity.

"The same goes for the talent pool. Speaking of any sport, Selangor has the talent for it.

"But the issue now is how they plan to spend the allocations; who will strategise and lead the team is the main question. They have to be meticulous with a sound strategy to execute and ensure the best possible chances to achieve this objective," he told *Selangor Journal* when contacted.

Sadek, who has been a Selangor resident for the past 33 years, noted that the state has shown a positive trend in the past few years by consistently allocating funds to its football team. However, he emphasised the need to revise the amount to reflect current financial requirements.

Sadek's comments were made in light of the Unity Government's ambitious target of winning the AFC and the treble of local footballing silverware by 2025, namely the Malaysia Cup, Super

League, and the biennial Sukma Games.

This target was announced by Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari on July 31 as part of the manifesto, 'Kita Selangor: 5 Pledges for 5 Years'.

Sadek applauds any party that prioritises legitimate sports development over mere rhetoric.

"In general, sports is more than just a symbol of unity. It represents our culture in terms of our manners as fans, our behaviour as hosts, and our ability to play the game well, as well as how we achieve our victories," he said.

Selangor has what it takes to win these tournaments and even the AFC. They have the facilities to properly house and train these athletes, not to mention the proper financial capacity

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5 YEARS OF CARE

In the span of five years, the Selangor government, under the stewardship of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, has brought a wealth of improvements to the state. Here is a look at some of them.



SKIM AIR DARUL EHSAN

Under the scheme, qualified Selangor residents are given 20 cubic metres of free water each month. The state has allocated RM160 million in the past five years to this initiative, benefitting 1.2 million citizens.



JUALAN EHSAN RAKYAT

This initiative offers basic food necessities at 30 per cent below market price. Among the items sold are fresh chicken, eggs, cooking oil, rice and fish. Some eight million people are estimated to have benefited from the cheaper prices.



ASSESSMENT TAX AND HAWKER LICENCE FEE EXEMPTIONS

Some 2.5 million people residing in low-cost and village houses are exempted from paying assessment tax. In total, the beneficiaries have saved up to RM546.6 million. Similarly, the government exempted the licensing fee for 496,000 small-time hawkers and traders.



SMART SELANGOR BUS

The scheme offers free bus services throughout Selangor to all Malaysian citizens. The state has spent RM163 million for this purpose, with 51 million commuters benefitting.



RUMAH SELANGORKU SCHEME

An affordable housing project targeted at first-time homeowners. The initiative aims to realise the state's objective of ensuring every family has a comfortable and safe place to live in.



THE PEOPLE'S TUITION PROGRAMME

In 2018, a decision was made to offer free tuition to Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia candidates and primary six students from low-income households. The programme, now run online, has benefited 166,853 students and has cost the state RM35.2 million.



RODA DARUL EHSAN (RIDE)

As part of a larger bid to protect gig workers during the pandemic, the state allocated RM8 million to subsidise the cost of obtaining motorcycle licences for those in the e-hailing industry. Since its inception in 2020, over 6,000 individuals have benefited.



TRADE AND AVIATION SHOWS

The annual Selangor Aviation Show debuted in 2021, giving the public a chance to see live displays of the latest aircraft models and serving as a regional networking and business platform. The annual Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS), existing since 2015, features expos on food, health, industrial properties, and the digital economy. It also draws investments into the state.



SMART SELANGOR PARKING

The electronic parking payment system was launched in 2018, allowing users to make payments via a mobile app. Since going fully digital in 2022 and doing away with parking coupons, the app has saved the use of 900,000 tonnes of paper.



UPGRADING OF 4 LOCAL COUNCILS

In October 2020, the municipality of Subang Jaya received city status, while between 2019 and 2021, the Hulu Langat, Kuala Selangor and Hulu Selangor District Councils were upgraded to municipalities. This has helped to improve the quality of life of the citizens there.



PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE

Over 10,000 temporary business licences were issued by the state at the height of Covid-19 to help those who lost their jobs. A RM500 one-off cash aid was also given to help businesses stay afloat.



RAW WATER SECURITY SCHEME (SJAM)

Expected to be completed next year, this project addresses the issue of water disruption as a result of pollution at the state's raw water sources in Sungai Selangor and Sungai Langat.



SELANGOR GENERAL INSURANCE SCHEME (INSAN)

Insan is a free group general insurance scheme offered to Selangor citizens aged between 30 days and 80 years old with a coverage of up to RM10,000 for permanent disability and death due to accidents. The state has allocated RM12.7 million to cover 12 million individuals.



FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS, TREATMENTS

The state offers many free health programmes, among them, Selangor Saring (blood and urine tests to identify diabetes, hypertension and heart and kidney diseases), Selangor Cancer or Selcan (offers diagnosis and treatment), Selangor Mental Health (early screening and treatment subsidies), and tuberculosis treatments.