

State polls to go ahead

PM: No plans to declare emergency to delay election

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TANGKAK: The government has no plans to declare an emergency to delay the state polls despite the rising number of Covid-19 cases, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

He said the election would need to go ahead with strict standard operating procedure (SOP) similar to what was done in the Melaka polls.

He said he did not want to have another emergency just for Johor to stop the election.

"What happens to the other states as Covid-19 is nationwide?"

"The Election Commission (EC) has already set the dates and the only way to stop this state election is to declare an emergency, which I do not intend to do as people will not accept it," he said.

Ismail Sabri was saying this in response to calls from opposition leaders for the state polls to be delayed following an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country.

He said Malaysians need to live with Covid-19 and view it as an



Election mode: Ismail Sabri arriving for a closed-door meeting with the Muar Barisan Nasional electoral machinery at the Johor Umno building.
- Bernama

endemic just like other infectious diseases.

"I have told people, we will no longer have any lockdowns whether in the state or across the districts.

"We will only have targeted lockdowns in places with a high number of cases," he said after his one-day working visit to Muar and Ledang yesterday.

On Thursday, the Pakatan Harapan presidential council urged the government to delay the polls and not allow the political parties to campaign openly.

On the SOP for the elections, Ismail Sabri said the EC would announce it soon based on advice

from the Health Ministry.

"The important thing is for everyone to adhere to the SOP," he added.

In his speech, caretaker Menteri Besar Datuk Hasni Mohammad said Barisan Nasional was not power crazy in forcing the state election as it could not govern anymore with a one-seat majority.

He stressed Barisan had dignity and decided to dissolve the state assembly as it was untenable to continue with the administration.

"If we had 29 seats against Opposition's 27 seats, we could still continue. But with just one-seat majority it cannot be done anymore.

"That is why we decided to seek a dissolution and return the mandate to the people to choose the government they prefer," he said.

Hasni stressed that Johor had lost out a lot of opportunities since Pakatan governed the state for 22 months after GE14.

"They were unable to keep to the promises made in their manifesto as it was impossible to be implemented," he said, adding that Johor under Barisan previously had brought in RM362bil in investment via Iskandar Malaysia.

He urged the Barisan machinery to work hard and not miss out in canvassing for every vote.