

Voters fixated on race, religion issues, says Ideas

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Ideas CEO Wan Saiful Wan Jan advises Pakatan Harapan not to focus solely on issues related to 1MDB.

PETALING JAYA: Malaysian voters do not care about policies, however good, presented by opposition candidates because they are fixated on issues of race and religion, said the Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (Ideas).

“People are stuck on these issues and will not care if candidates have a better grasp of more important issues,” said Wan Saiful Wan Jan, the think tank’s CEO, to FMT.

He was commenting on a suggestion by Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) that opposition candidates should not rely solely on controversial issues such as the 1MDB scandal in the coming general election.

PSM secretary-general A Sivarajan, in an interview published in MalayMail Online, said voters should go for candidates who highlighted issues such as privatisation of healthcare, highway construction in forested areas, environment and land rights.

Wan Saiful said he supported the PSM suggestion but only if Pakatan Harapan (PH) candidates formulated their policies quickly and started explaining them to the public.

“The public should also demand that Barisan Nasional and PH set out their respective policies,” he said.

Meanwhile, PPBM policy and strategy chief Rais Hussin Mohamed Ariff said he disagreed with Sivarajan’s view, adding PH candidates did not only focus on issues related to 1MDB although they were important.

Apart from 1MDB, he said, PH also raised other issues including healthcare, education, housing, security and, most important of all, the escalating cost of living which burdened the people.

“We already have a manifesto which will be revealed to the people in stages. We are not focusing only on 1MDB but also other big issues like the mismanagement within Felda,” he said.

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