

Bread-and-butter issues will shape Sarawak votes

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 *Political* analyst Datuk Prof Dr Lee Kuok Tiung  Travel Guides & Travelogues

KUCHING: Federal issues such as living costs, subsidies and the economy will influence Sarawak voters, alongside their assessment of the Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS)  government’s performance.

Political analyst Datuk Dr Lee Kuok Tiung said “bread-and-butter” issues would inevitably influence voting behaviour in the coming state election, as people closely evaluate how government policies affect their daily lives.

“Of course, these issues matter. The people will see whether the policies introduced by the government help ease their burden or instead increase it,” said Lee, an associate professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

He said voters would adopt an objective approach in assessing the performance of both the federal government and the Sarawak administration, rather than placing responsibility on only one level of government.

“In this context, the people will evaluate both the federal government and the Sarawak GPS government fairly,” he said.

Lee pointed to the Sarawak  Government’s electricity bill assistance programme as an example of a policy that has generated widespread public attention, extending beyond the state’s borders.

“The Sarawak Government’s electricity bill assistance has become the talk of the town, even as far away as Sabah,” he said.  Southeast Asians & Pacific Islanders

At the same time, he noted that the federal government’s fuel subsidy policies continue to dominate public discussion because of their wider impact on the cost of living.

“The issue of fuel subsidies, which has created a domino effect throughout the economic chain, has become a daily topic of conversation among the people,” he said.

According to Lee, such issues have become key benchmarks through which voters compare the effectiveness of the federal government with the Sarawak administration under Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg, as well as the working relationship between Abang Johari and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He observed that Sarawak’s growing financial strength has also attracted attention beyond the state, citing recent remarks by Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian that Sarawak’s annual revenue now exceeds the equivalent of 15 years of Penang’s revenue and five years of Selangor’s revenue.

Lee said such developments have resonated strongly in neighbouring Sabah, where Sarawak’s governance model continues to attract admiration.

“I noticed a long time ago that many politicians in Sabah have tried to portray themselves as being close to GPS. Some have even described their party president as the ‘Abang Jo of Sabah’,” he said.

Lee said this reflected the growing recognition of Sarawak’s development model and leadership, even as voters continue to weigh national economic concerns against the state’s own policy initiatives ahead of the coming election.