

'Addicted to Malaysiakini', PKR reps buy bricks

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FREE A group of PKR parliamentarians from Selangor, Penang and Sabah have pledged a total of RM14,000 toward the cost of Malaysiakini's new office - and all because they are 'addicted' to its content.

They lauded the portal, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in November, for consistently producing "the best, most independent and the fastest news".

"I have to admit, many of us are all addicted to Malaysiakini," said Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin (left) said when handing over his donation to CEO Premesh Chandran yesterday.

"It is an honour to be part of this because we support independent news that's worthy. Right now, there are many news agencies but seldom do we see one as committed (as this one) to press freedom and to (producing) independent news.

"I know many who live overseas who get the news faster than me ... I think they are also addicted ... so I urge them to also donate."

Sim, who is PKR's deputy national publicity chief, said he had lobbied colleagues to support the 'Buy a Brick' campaign, which aims to raise RM3 million for Malaysiakini's new office in Petaling Jaya.

Sabah MP Darell Leiking (left) also said he frequently reads the website.

"I am proud that I can participate in giving something to the news portal that I have been addicted to for many, many years," he said.

"I am not embarrassed to admit this because Malaysiakini has been consistent. During (general) elections, it has given us free news, so a lot of friends were able to access the latest happenings in politics."

The Penampang MP had this advice for the portal: "Do not go to the other side. Keep impartial and carry on."

Wangsa Maju MP Tan Kee Kwong (right) urged Malaysiakini to fight for "a better country, a fairer country" despite the occasional blows it has received. He was

referring to action by the authorities over the content posted.

"To those who are in charge of Malaysiakini, please continue this fight and we will try our best to spread the news to our business friends to contribute generously to your new building," he said.

'Do support press freedom, too'

The PKR parliamentarians who pledged RM1,000 each were those representing Wangsa Maju, Petaling Jaya Selatan, Kuala Kedah, Bayan Baru, Batu, Subang, Ampang, Kapar, Teluk Kemang and Alor Setar.

Those representing Lembah Pantai, Sungai Petani, Pandan, Penampang, Padang Serai, Kuantan, Kelana Jaya and Batu Pahat pledged RM500 each.

Late last year, DAP parliamentarians had bought 40 bricks at a total of RM40,000.

"We would like to thank MPs who have come forward to support the project. However, we also hope to see more MPs from both sides of the divide contributing to press freedom," said Malaysiakini project manager Lynn D'Cruz.

Since the public fund-raising campaign kicked off on Nov 15 last year, supporters have contributed more than RM1.2 million.

Donors can buy a limited edition brick and have their name engraved on it with a contribution of RM1,000. Out of the 1,000 bricks on offer, fewer than 300 are currently available.

The bricks will be used to create an 'appreciation wall' in the new building, named @Kini. Part of the premises will be made available for public use.

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