

PKR No 2 contest throws up an acid test
Malaysiakini.com
October 31, 2010

COMMENT A nice contrarian test of authenticity suggests itself after day one of the first weekend of the historic direct election of principal office-bearers of PKR.

Three more weekends of balloting follow in this first-ever enactment of the one-member-one-vote franchise in Malaysian politics. Truly, the very thought staggers the imagination.

However, thus far the script for the prelude to the actual balloting has been unedifying. It has resembled the melodrama of soap operas than the mundane histrionics of political process.

That is why the disclosure at the end of day one that deputy presidential aspirant Zaid Ibrahim is in the lead is propitious grounds for the application of a test of sincerity that would redeem things somewhat: let's see if his faction sustains their critical scrutiny of the electoral process and queries its "irregularities" even as he leads.

On the other side, let's see if rival candidate for the No 2 post, Azmin Ali, in trailing in the tally of votes, keeps his cool about the electoral process, as he has thus far, and disdains to accuse the other side of resorting to underhand tactics even as he lags.

An unedifying prelude

Why the contrarian test to establish sincerity and authenticity?

azlanThis is because the prelude to the actual balloting has been marked by the tendency of life to imitate art, something that's bad for politics.

It leads to exhaustion, suggests that political life is not serious, and that the PKR arena is marred by hamsters and clowns.

An unedifying prelude, if the two prime deputy presidential contestants measure up to this contrarian test, would be followed by a redemptive conclusion - just what proponents of the one-member-one-vote school argue is the elevating thing about the 'vox populi vox dei' theory of democratic governance.

Of course, the best test of the sequel to the deputy presidential contest would be the credible accommodation of the losing side by the winning one.

That would be a test of the imagination of the most creative sort, possible when art imitates life.

TERENCE NETTO has been a journalist for close on four decades. He likes the occupation because it puts him in contact with the eminent without being under the necessity to admire them.

