

**Are we sick of politics?**  
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**Ong Kian Ming and Oon Yeoh**

Recently, a few prominent bloggers including Wong Chun Wai, Jeff Ooi and Rocky's Bru have expressed their disgust at the politicking that's been going on in recent weeks. There was even a call for a 24-hour strike during which time they would not blog about anything political.  
MCPX

Is their opinion reflective of the sentiments of the broader public? Will more and more people tune out politics as the political jostling between de facto PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim and Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak continue?

najib pc in parliamnet on altantuya murder case allegations 030708After a long discussion, with some minor differences of opinion, we came to the conclusion that although there is public disgust at the behaviour of certain politicians, the level of interest in Malaysian politics has never been higher among the general reading public.

The most viewed stories in the Star Online are usually political stories. When we checked while doing this podcast, four out of the top five stories were political in nature. Notice how often the Malaysiakini and Malaysian Insider servers have been overwhelmed by traffic lately?

This might seem odd at first – if the public is fed up of politicians why do they keep reading about politics? Probably for the same reason people say they are upset about the fact that there are so many rape cases and then they go on to read about those very same cases in the newspapers.

People are fascinated by the blood sport that's going on between Anwar and Najib. The more intrigue, the more twists and turns, the more scandal emerges, the more people become engrossed in it. Drop by any coffee shop or talk to any taxi driver - the topic inevitably turns to politics.

Perhaps, being sick of the politicking yet maintaining a high level of interest in all things politics might not be contradictory after all. One can be sick of the politicking only if one is a regular consumer of political news and it is not likely that the interest in political news will abate by much, despite the over-saturation of coverage surrounding the events of the past week or so.

p balasubramaniam private investigator najib razak baginda altantuya murder case 3It wouldn't be surprising that those who declare that they are "sick of the politicking" would go on to trawl the Web for the latest updates on the Kelana Jaya rally or the presumed whereabouts of private eye P Balasubramaniam and so on.

Granted, there is probably a segment of the population that is fatigued by all this political news. These are the people who either have absolutely no interest in politics whatsoever or they are supporters of the Barisan Nasional who long for the good old days when the government controlled everything and the political situation in this country was stable and predictable.

But for political pundits and news junkies like the two of us, we've never had it better. More scandals, more politicking and more intrigue mean more fodder for us to dissect, analyse and discuss. We're sure the editorial team at Malaysiakini feels the same way.

### **What people want is concrete proof**

The 'striking' bloggers are probably right on one matter though. People are fed up of politicians. And they are fed up because they believe the political scene is inundated with lies, lies and more lies.

Few people believe the sodomy allegations against Anwar just as few people believe he can form the government by September 16. Few people believe Najib had no knowledge of Altantunya Shaariibuu before her murder just as few people believe the retraction made by PI Bala was done voluntarily.

protes fuel price hike rally mppj stadium 070708 30What people want is concrete proof. If someone claims Anwar is a sodomite, they must produce evidence of it. If someone claims Najib knew Altantunya or that Rosmah was present when she was murdered, they have to produce evidence.

If Anwar continues to do more of the same and continue to declare he has the numbers to take over the government without producing any names, he will be discredited. Similarly, if he continues to claim he has evidence on Najib without furnishing the proof, people will soon call him the boy who cried wolf.

He has to be careful. The tide of public opinion is currently behind him but it won't always be. If he continues to make grandiose claims without backing them up, people will soon treat it as empty rhetoric.

So, the onus is on Anwar to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. If he can produce documentary evidence or a photograph that implicates Najib; or if he can hold a press conference and produce the 30 or so BN MPs who have decided to cross over to Pakatan Rakyat, he will be unstoppable.

Then you can be sure Malaysiakini's servers will crash and the striking bloggers will fall over themselves to come up with the latest scoops or opinion about what's going on.

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