



Governing well is a boring thing because it is scandals and exposes of corruption that sell the newspapers. Still, it is important that the people choose those who govern well.

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First published in [The Star Online](#)

SOMETIMES, we can miss the forest for the trees. In Malaysian politics, there are so many rotten trees that we sometimes forget there's even a forest in the first place.

The forest I am talking about here is that when we elect a government, we are primarily concerned that they should jolly well govern.

However, everyday government business is actually a very boring thing, so it is unlikely that the newspapers will cover it.

Why should they when scandals sell so many more copies. This is true with the online media as well.

So there is a tendency to emphasise more on the juicy stories.

In the meantime, boring stories about governing either do not get told or are lost amid the more titillating tales.

I admit I too am guilty of running with the most exciting issue of the day but sometimes we need to just look at the boring stuff to remind ourselves that a country is not run by rhetoric alone but the drudgery of simply organising things day after day.

We have to look at this because it is important for Malaysians to not just look at the “big” stories, we must also examine the minutiae of a government’s record of doing its day-to-day job.

If we take a look at Selangor for example, the state government made some good decisions since it has been in power.

Local councillors in my area have been chosen from a wider array of people than before, many of whom are recognised and respected in our local community.

There are councillors who established their reputations by being representatives of the interest of the disabled, local residents and human rights.

It is reassuring that local council posts are not being treated merely as a reward for the faithful and if the Selangor government can overcome the legal minefield that lie before it, we should see proper local government elections.

The Freedom of Information Bill, if it is passed by the state legislature will ensure much better access to information that citizens deserve.

Sure, it is not perfect, but it does put into place a mechanism where in a clear and organised manner, we can demand information which, by and large, should not be denied to us.

And I am certain that if it comes into force, we can demand information about the open tenders being conducted by the state government and it won't have anything to hide.



Despite the whinging in some quarters, I like the fact that on Saturday I will not get plastic bags in my local store.

It forces me to carry my little canvas bag when I go shopping.

And although I have yet to see a canvas shopping bag that has even the slightest hint of masculinity, I am quite happy to do my little bit by using them even if it means swinging a girly bag when I buy my onions and coffee.

The Penang state government also has much to be proud of.

For example, my home state finds itself in the black from better financial management after tottering on the brink of being broke.

The fact that the mainstream press so gleefully print stories of protests by disgruntled citizens in both these states is also a reason to be happy for it shows their respect for the freedom of assembly.

The Pakatan has had many hiccups in the political arena, the latest being of course the sheer debacle of Parti Keadilan Rakyat's party elections.

I have said it before, and I will say it again that my main concern for Malaysian politics is that we achieve a proper two-party system, where we have a real choice to vote one party in and if we don't like the party, to vote it out again.

It is imperative therefore to look at the ability of the parties to govern and if they do a poor job, we can just kick them out again and put whichever party we like in.

That's the beauty of democracy.