



UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN (UTAR)
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

FRAMING A POLITICAL FIGURE ON TIKTOK: A STUDY OF SYED SADDIQ'S
PUBLIC IMAGE IN MALAYSIA

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OCTOBER 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank and show my gratitude to all the lecturers from Journalism Department for constantly being supportive of me and guiding me throughout my degree journey. Their contribution to my degree journey has been a great support for me. Next, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Tan Huey Pyng because she played an important role in making it this far. She is my academic advisor, my guarantor for student loans and she even taught me Communication in Research Method. Her guidance in that subject had made it easy for me to understand what Final Year Project all is about.

Besides that, I would like to thank the Head of Department Ms.Michelle Wong for making sure everything goes well for me, especially during my final year, and for referring me to my supervisor Ms.Saratha who is highly suitable with my Final Year Project topic. To my supervisor Ms.Sarata Balaya, thank you for guiding me throughout this Final Year Project. Your explanations and feedback helped me a lot to refine my research and at the beginning my ideas were scattered and you have helped me to narrow it down and to stay focused.

Lastly, I would like to thank my partner and my brother for constantly supporting and giving me the confidence to not let any obstacles come near me throughout my degree journey. Without their support and all the person, I mentioned above I would not have come this far.

YUDHANEE A/P S. PARAMESWARAN

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This final year project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Journalism at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR).

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the strategic use of TikTok for political image restoration, focusing on Malaysian politician Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman following his 2023 legal controversy. The increasing use of short-form video in political communication has encouraged more personalized and lifestyle-oriented content, raising important questions about its role in political image management. In the aftermath of judicial proceedings that generated negative public narratives, this research explored how TikTok content was framed as a soft power strategy through personal branding and influencer collaboration. Guided by Robert Entman's Framing Theory and the concept of Soft Power, this qualitative study analysed TikTok videos across two phases: the period of crisis and the subsequent image-shift phase. The research identified dominant frames and framing elements, including emotional storytelling and audience engagement techniques, that were used to influence public perception. By examining hashtags, visual content, captions, and interaction patterns, this study provided insights into how commercial-style framing functioned as an image repair mechanism in political communication. The findings contribute to the literature on digital political communication by offering a deeper understanding of image restoration practices through short-form video, particularly within the Malaysian context.

Keywords: TikTok, Political Communication, Framing Theory, Soft Power, Image Restoration

Subject Area: HM1176-1281 Social influence. Social pressure

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this page is the end result of my own work and that due to acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

Name:Yudhanee A/P S.Parameswaran

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Date: 12th May 2026

APPROVAL SHEET

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “Framing a Political Figure on TikTok: A Study of Syed Saddiq’s Public Image in Malaysia” prepared and submitted by “Yudhaneer A/P S.Parameswaran” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Journalism is hereby accepted.



Supervisor

Supervisor’s name: Sarata A/P Balaya

Date: 12th May 2026

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MUDA	Malaysian United Democratic Alliance
CBT	Criminal Breach of Trust
BASS	Bella Astillah Syed Saddiq
S-Commerce	Social Commerce
SMMAs	Social Media Marketing Activities
PSI	Parasocial Interaction
AMLA	Anti-Money Laundering Act
ARMADA	Angkatan Bersatu Anak Muda
SPRM	Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia
NST	New Straits Times
YBSS	Yang Berhormat Syed Saddiq

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The rise of TikTok, a digital platform that has become a key tool in politics, has changed how young Malaysians view political leaders. Subsequently, it has influenced how politicians address issues and build their online reputation. Approximately 19.3 million Malaysians aged 18 and above were regular TikTok users, where the platform was considered as one of the best channels for sharing news, shaping public opinion, and enhancing a politician's image due to its growing appeal (Kemp, 2025). This type of new media shifted politics away from traditional party meetings towards more emotional, personalised content that grabs attention. Attention-grabbing was made possible in a matter of hours through the TikTok 'algorithm', which kept viewers engaged based on their past behavior (likes, search histories, shares, comments) and platform goals (Jalli, Unggraini, & Setianto, 2025). Therefore, any individual, including politicians seeking fame, needed to prioritise 'going viral'. Viral content was created by building connections with the public and staying in touch, as these tactics were found to be more successful than traditional political speeches (Febriana & Rahman, 2025).

Anything online, viral, or fame-related has been changing globally. According to Tatler Asia (2025), Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's public image transition provided an important example of how these factors appeared in the Malaysian political environment. A prominent figure in Malaysian politics, Syed Saddiq bin Syed Abdul Rahman was widely recognised for supporting reform of the laws and empowering young people. Born in 1992 in Pulai, Johor, he became known as a talented professional speaker in debate and won three awards as Asia's Best Speaker in the Asian British Parliamentary Debating Competition. His political appearance in 2016 as a member and youth leader of the Malaysian United Indigenous Party (BERSATU) was made possible by his academic excellence and communication skills. His decision to turn down

a scholarship from the University of Oxford, despite his desire to remain connected to Malaysian politics, highlighted his commitment to local reform. During the 14th General Election in 2018, he was appointed the youngest government minister in Malaysia's history, serving as Minister of Youth and Sports at the age of 25. It marked a significant turning point in his political career. The 'Undi18' (Vote18) amendment to the constitution, a nonpartisan initiative that lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 and established automatic voter registration, was the most enduring achievement of Syed Saddiq's administration (Mat Ali & Yusoff, 2022). Following a period of national electoral restructuring in 2020, he stepped away from traditional party structures to create the Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (MUDA). MUDA was the nation's first ethnically diverse, youth-focused political party that valued policy-based governance over identity politics (Tatler Asia, 2025).

The most critical 'downfall' in Syed Saddiq's career occurred in November 2023, following a High Court verdict regarding charges of Criminal Breach of Trust (CBT), misappropriation of funds, and money laundering (Bernama, 2023). The court initially sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment, two strokes of the cane, and a substantial fine of RM10 million, marking the first time a politician was sentenced to whipping for a white-collar crime in Malaysia (Bernama, 2023; CNA, 2023). This judicial outcome catalysed a dramatic shift in media and public framing. Formerly celebrated as a 'golden boy' of Malaysian politics and a champion of reform, Syed Saddiq began to be portrayed through a lens of moral inconsistency and hypocrisy. Digital media platforms and political detractors framed the conviction as evidence of the very systemic corruption he had built his career on opposing (Malaysiakini, 2023). This intense 'politicisation of image' led to severe social media backlash and public vitriol, prompting judicial concern regarding the limits of online commentary. During the proceedings, the High Court judge advised the public and the accused to maintain decorum and exercise restraint on social media to prevent the trial from being prejudiced by 'social media attacks and misinformation (Malay Mail, 2022).

It is evident that Syed Saddiq's political trajectory provided a significant case study of how digital reputation and public image can be radically transformed under the weight of judicial pressure and political controversy.

By the end of 2023, the cumulative effect of the conviction and subsequent media framing characterised Syed Saddiq not as a reformist leader, but as a figure of 'disgrace' within the Malaysian political landscape (Malaysiakini, 2023). However, in June 2025, the Court of Appeal unanimously overturned the conviction, ruling that the initial verdict was unsafe and that the funds in question were personal campaign donations rather than proceeds of illegal activity (Free Malaysia Today, 2025). While Syed Saddiq faced his legal issues, his social media content, specifically TikTok content, shifted away from formal political content towards lifestyle-oriented and personal content. This raised questions about how such content influenced public perception and gained support. Initial observations suggested that his TikTok content focused on highlighting his personal life and daily activities, such as mountain climbing, marathons, and swimming across the sea. Syed Saddiq became the talk of the town after collaborating with the high-profile clothing brand Prima Valet and the popular singer Bella Astillah (Agency, 2025). Their collaborative videos, which featured him in more romantic and caring gestures, led the audience to view him as a 'romantic figure' rather than a politician. The partnership became so influential that it sparked the viral public-generated hashtag #BASS (Bella Astillah and Syed Saddiq). The hashtag served as another tool to spread this new narrative about his personality. Such entertainment-oriented content encouraged parasocial forms of engagement, prompting audiences to interpret political figures through emotional and personal lenses rather than purely political ones. This shift towards lifestyle-oriented and personal content can be understood as a soft-power strategy, in which non-political messages and personal representations helped reshape audience interpretations.

Within the digital platform and political landscape, Syed Saddiq's transformation was analysed through the lens of framing theory, which 'involves the deliberate process of selecting

and presenting specific elements of a story to influence audience perception and guide them toward a particular interpretation’ (Guran and Özarslan, 2022). This study examined whether such soft-power framing facilitated the formation of public perception through attraction and persuasion rather than through force, and the extent to which it overrode negative narratives. Using this as the thesis backdrop, this study examined how TikTok hashtag framing and lifestyle-oriented content were utilised in an attempt to shift Syed Saddiq’s image from a negative to a positive narrative.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rapid growth of TikTok has fundamentally transformed political communication in Malaysia, moving away from formal speeches toward highly personalised, lifestyle-oriented content. This shift was notably observable in the case of Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, whose public image underwent a significant transition following his 2023 legal controversy. While judicial proceedings framed him in terms of ‘moral inconsistency’ and corruption, his use of TikTok was examined to determine whether it functioned to humanise his identity and facilitate emotional engagement with online audiences.

TikTok’s dominance in Malaysia is not only evident in the political sphere; the platform has also emerged as a major business space and social commerce (s-commerce) platform. Several research works have investigated the core mechanisms that drive commercial success on TikTok. Andon and Annuar (2023) focused on Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs), while Basri et al. (2025) examined trust factors. Farhan et al. (2024) explored brand awareness and psychological influences. The literature on business and marketing on TikTok suggests that strategic framing techniques are utilised to influence consumer behaviour. Consequently, this study investigated the extent to which Syed Saddiq appeared to adapt these commercial framing elements, such as entertainment, interactivity, and personal branding, to influence public perception of his image following his legal challenges.

These authors argued that mastering TikTok's unique environment is key to achieving business success. Andon and Annuar (2023) highlighted that SMMA's are crucial in helping businesses stand out from advertising clutter and effectively influence users' purchasing decisions. Basri et al. (2025) found that perceived ease of use and trust significantly influence online shopping intention, suggesting that business owners must prioritise user-friendly experiences and build consumer trust. Similarly, Farhan et al. (2024) emphasised that understanding branding, product positioning, and psychological engagement is essential for making strategic decisions and leveraging TikTok for e-commerce growth.

The way business and marketing operate on TikTok demonstrates that strong framing strategies are used to influence consumer behaviour. Accordingly, this study examined how a political figure, Syed Saddiq, utilised similar commercial framing elements, including entertainment, interactivity, and personal branding, to shape public perception of his image after his legal controversy. This study conducted a systematic analysis of this strategic shift in political communication by applying Framing Theory. Therefore, this study analysed how Syed Saddiq employed commercial-style communication strategies on TikTok to reshape public perception.

1.3 Research Objective

- 1) To study the dominant frames used in TikTok content related to Syed Saddiq across two distinct periods.
- 2) To examine how the framing elements are used to construct representations of Syed Saddiq's public image across two periods on the TikTok platform.

1.4 Research question

- 1) What were the dominant frames used in TikTok content related to Syed Saddiq across two distinct periods?
- 2) How did the use of framing elements on the TikTok platform differ in the representation of Syed Saddiq across two periods in creating a public image?

1.5 Research Significance

This study contributed to the understanding of how the fast-paced, algorithm-driven environment of TikTok works together with Framing Theory in the context of Malaysian politics. The research is significant because it moved beyond simply treating TikTok as a social media platform, a business platform, or an entertainment medium. Instead, this study analysed the platform as a strategic political tool where commercial and personalized framing techniques were adapted and utilised for political survival.

Academically, this study enriched the literature on digital political communication by offering one of the early empirical analyses of a politician's image restoration attempt using short-form video, specifically by applying Robert Entman's Framing Theory and the principles of Soft Power within the Malaysian political environment.

Practically, the findings identified specific types of content, including personalized narratives and entertainment-focused videos, that contributed to positive image building for political figures after a crisis. These insights provided practical guidance for communication strategists managing public reputation in the digital age.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provided a review of the existing research and literature that established the foundation of this study. The discussion began by looking at how political communication changed in Malaysia, moving from traditional media toward digital platforms that allowed politicians to speak directly to the public. Next, the chapter explored TikTok as a unique space for "politainment," explaining how its features helped politicians build personal connections with younger audiences. Because this study examined a crisis period, the review also covered the concepts of political scandals and image repair strategies to explain how leaders tried to manage their reputations. Furthermore, the chapter introduced Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI) as supplementary theories; these were used to support the analysis of how a politician builds attraction and a sense of "friendship" with the audience. Finally, the chapter detailed the main theory of this research, which was Framing Theory. The framing theory was used to analyse how Syed Saddiq selected and highlighted specific messages on TikTok to shape his public image.

2.1 Political Communication and Social Media

Political communication was broadly defined as the purposeful exchange of information regarding the distribution of power, involving interactions between political actors, the media, and the public. In the contemporary era, this field has been fundamentally reshaped by social media and interactive digital technologies that facilitate user-generated content and real-time connectivity. Unlike traditional media, which operated under a centralized 'gatekeeper' model, social media enabled a decentralized flow of information, allowing the public to engage directly with political figures. In Malaysia, this shift was particularly evident, as digital platforms broke the government's historical monopoly over traditional news outlets such as television and newspapers.

Leong (2019) provided an extensive analysis of the Malaysian political landscape in the 'New Media Age'. The research suggested that social media was becoming a primary site for democratic transparency, finding that active online citizens were significantly more likely to participate in offline political activities. Leong posited that because traditional media in Malaysia was often subject to state monitoring and censorship, the public viewed the online sphere as a more credible source of information. However, the study also highlighted the 'dark side' of this openness, noting that the lack of regulation was identified as a factor contributing to increased online attacks and the rapid dissemination of misinformation. Willnat et al. (2013) supported this transition through a quantitative survey of 526 Malaysian adults. Their findings demonstrated a strong correlation between frequent online media consumption and heightened political involvement, suggesting that the internet served as a powerful tool for disseminating messages and managing perceptions.

To understand the structure of these messages, Kasim and Kamarul Zaman (2021) used framing theory to examine how the public expressed sentiments toward political parties through social media comments. Their research highlighted how political entities had to carefully frame their responses to public feedback to maintain legitimacy. Parycek and Edelman (2014) provided a macro-perspective on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and e-democracy across the Asia-Pacific region. Their work emphasised a global movement toward technology-enhanced political participation, although they noted that early digital tools were less sophisticated than the current mobile-first landscape.

This body of literature indicated that social media was redefining the power dynamics of political communication in Malaysia by providing a decentralized platform for discourse. Scholars generally posited that digital engagement had become an essential element for political participation. However, a significant gap existed, as much of the existing scholarship was rooted in the early digital era of blogs and platforms such as Facebook. As communication shifted

toward short-form, algorithmically driven content on platforms like TikTok, there was a clear need to investigate the extent to which these newer platforms altered traditional gatekeeping and framing processes.

2.2 Tik Tok as a Political Space

TikTok has emerged as a unique political space characterised by politainment, the blending of political messaging with entertainment. This platform relies on a sophisticated recommendation algorithm and high-engagement features such as ‘duets’ and ‘stitches’ to foster parasocial relationships between politicians and younger audiences. Duet referred to a feature where a user was allowed to post their own video side-by-side with an existing video, playing both simultaneously on a split screen. This feature was vital as it allowed politicians to react immediately, offer commentary, or engage in direct interaction with user-generated content, making them appear highly responsive and accessible. Stitch referred to a feature where a user was allowed to incorporate a short clip (up to five seconds) from another user's video into the beginning of their new video. This allowed a politician to seamlessly quote a voter's question or a clip from a rival's post and then respond accordingly, effectively setting the agenda and appearing attentive to public concerns. Both features were theorised to break down the traditional barrier between politicians and audiences, which was argued to be essential for establishing parasocial relationships, defined as one-sided feelings of intimacy and connection with audiences on the platform.

Ghanem et al. (2018) provided one of the early assessments of TikTok's political potential. By analysing US partisan communication, they introduced the concept of ‘communication trees,’ where users created extended sequences of responses to a single video. Using qualitative methods such as computer vision and language processing, they demonstrated that the platform's visual nature was highly effective in capturing the attention of Gen Z and Millennial voters. Hernandez

(2022) expanded on this by examining the 2020 US election, arguing that TikTok's architecture forced politicians to simplify complex policies into engaging, viral content in order to maximise reach and shape public campaign debates.

The concept of digital authenticity was further explored by Grantham et al. (2025), who analysed the communication strategies of Australian political leaders. They identified 'instantaneousness' as a primary tactic, where politicians shared raw, casual updates of their daily lives, such as personal hobbies or domestic activities, to project a humanised image. Their mixed-methods analysis of 380 videos concluded that this 'ordinary' portrayal was more effective in building credibility compared to formal political communication. Cervi et al. (2023) investigated the rise of celebrity politics on TikTok in South America. They argued that younger audiences were more influenced by figures who successfully merged political identity with entertaining, lifestyle-driven content, effectively transforming politicians into digital influencers.

Overall, TikTok functioned as a critical ecosystem for political branding, where relatability often outweighed policy expertise. The consensus among researchers suggested that the platform's emphasis on humanisation [ordinary] facilitated political figures in building deeper emotional connections with the public. Drawing from these findings, this study examined how a local political figure, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, utilised TikTok content to repair his public reputation. To support this analysis, the study further conceptualised the ideas of political scandal, image repair, and soft power in the following section to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social media interacts with public perception.

2.3 Scandal and Image Repair

A political scandal occurred when a public official was accused of behaviour that violated public trust. The management of these crises was often analysed through image restoration which outlined how individuals attempted to mend their damaged reputations. This process generally moved from the initial crisis (scandal) to the negative public perception (image) and finally to the strategic restoration phase (repair).

Eriksson and Eriksson (2012) emphasized that successful image repair depended on the strategic selection of tactics such as denial, rectification, or the reduction of offensiveness. Their research focused on how politicians handled media scrutiny in real-time, arguing that the success of a repair strategy depended on the politician's ability to 'detour' negative accusations and control the narrative through specific communication channels. While their study focused on traditional media, it established the importance of managing public scrutiny to prevent a total loss of credibility.

Jain et al. (2017) provided a detailed framework for building and maintaining a strong political image following a crisis. Based on focus group discussions and interviews with political analysts, they suggested that bolstering the act of reminding the public of one's positive qualities and 'down-to-earth' nature was one of the most effective ways to reduce the impact of an offense. By highlighting positive, non-political traits, a figure aimed to create a buffer against negative sentiment. These researchers argued that a political image remained highly sensitive and may require constant, positive curation, especially when trust had been compromised by a major public scandal.

In conclusion, academic discussion on political scandals suggested that image repair was a highly strategic process. While traditional theories focused on how politicians interacted with journalists, modern trends showed a shift toward using social media to implement these repair strategies directly. The literature suggested that by focusing on 'bolstering' through positive

lifestyle content, a figure may attempt to shift public attention away from controversy. There remained however a gap in the literature on how specific algorithmic tools, such as hashtags, were used to amplify these repair tactics in a modern digital environment.

2.4 Conceptualising the Soft Power

This study proposed to conceptualise the soft power strategy in content generation with other key concepts such as parasocial interaction to see how audience members interacted with content through comments, hashtags and sharing of videos. This included how emotional appeal worked well through different types of content generation that reflected hard power and soft power content types. Hard power was the use of coercion, official authority, or institutional tools to influence or compel specific behaviours (Wilson, 2008). In domestic politics, this rarely involved military force; instead, it was exercised through legal actions, the court system, and the state's capacity to impose punishments or sanctions (ibid.). In contrast, soft power, a term introduced by Nye (1990), was the ability to get what you wanted through attraction and persuasion rather than through threats or payments. It relied on the appeal of a figure's personality, political ideals, and cultural presence to shape how others thought and felt.

While these two forms of power may have seemed like opposites, academic literature suggested they were deeply connected in a 'layered' approach to power. Bilgin and Elis (2008) argued that focusing solely on visible hard power (such as legal charges) ignored the more subtle ways power influenced public preferences. In a political crisis, Hard Power acted as a coercive catalyst the pressure of official legal action created an urgent need for the political figure to repair their reputation. As noted by deLisle (2020), political actors often blended these types of power because Hard Power created the initial urgency that pushed a figure to launch a Soft Power response to protect their image. Essentially, the "stick" of the law made the "carrot" of digital attraction a strategic necessity for political survival.

In the modern media environment, relying solely on Hard Power (such as formal legal defenses) often failed to sustain a politician's legitimacy because the public may have viewed such force as aggressive or disconnected. Smith-Windsor (2000) explained that traditional divisions of power were often too simple for real-world situations, which were messy and unclear. While Hard Power could officially punish a politician, it could not force the public to like or trust them.

Soft Power survived because it operated in the "court of public opinion" through non-coercive attraction. Jones (2020) noted that in societies with strict controls, citizens often used digital platforms to bypass official messaging. This allowed Soft Power to thrive; while the legal system (Hard Power) focused on punishment, Soft Power focused on humanizing the figure through relatable content, making it a more durable tool for long-term political survival.

This transition from official crisis to personal recovery was highly relevant in today's digital era, where traditional authority was often challenged by emotional and digital branding. The primary mechanism for this shift was called Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Dibble et al. (2016) and Cohen and Holbert (2018) explained that when politicians used social media to share intimate, personal moments, they created a political parasocial relationship. This emotional bond could become so strong that supporters might prioritize their personal loyalty to the figure over the rational facts of a legal crisis.

The concept of political parasocial relationships was a crucial mechanism within media psychology that explained how a political figure could utilize Soft Power to mitigate the effects of a Hard Power crisis, such as legal or political setbacks. Drawing from the work of Dibble et al. (2016), the process began with PSI the momentary feeling of intimacy experienced during media exposure which, through repeated exposure to personal and intimate content, developed into a long-term parasocial relationship, including in the political context. This emotional bond shifted the supporter's foundation for political evaluation away from rational political logic

toward emotional loyalty and sympathy. Empirical evidence from Cohen and Holbert (2018) confirmed the potency of this strategy, demonstrating it as a stronger predictor of political support and voting behavior than traditional factors like policy positions or party identification, thus highlighting its real-world political consequence. Furthermore, Patlollu (2023) established that this process was not accidental; the cultivation of PSI was a strategically designed digital approach, where political figures intentionally leveraged personal storytelling and intimate framing across media platforms to generate this crucial emotional capital.

Furthermore, the rise in "political influences" changed how Soft Power was exercised. Casero-Ripollés (2020) and Riedl et al. (2023) highlighted that politics now took place in a hybrid sphere where personal and promotional content blended together. By adopting influencer strategies such as authenticity and emotional storytelling, politicians could bypass traditional media "gatekeepers" and speak directly to a young, responsive audience. This suggested that Soft Power may serve as a significant tool for a modern image shift: potentially allowing a figure to recast themselves from a "subject of legal action" into a "relatable human being".

In summary, the literature demonstrated that while Hard Power created the immediate pressure of a crisis, it was often insufficient for long-term image management in a digital world. The survival of a political reputation was argued to be linked to the strategic use of Soft Power to foster emotional bonds with the public. This shift highlighted a need for more research into how individual politicians rather than just states used digital platforms like TikTok to navigate the intersection of law and public perception. Therefore, it was important to investigate types of content that could be considered as soft power in creating a positive image that contributed largely to image repair and political resilience. This study examined the use of influencer collaborations, personalized branding, emotional storytelling, constant interactive engagement, and strategic hashtags, as a means of moving beyond formal press statements. This study also examined how

this type of soft power content may serve as a bridge, connecting personal, non-political content with long-term political survival and image repair.

2.5 Understanding Framing Theory

Framing Theory was a fundamental concept in political communication that explained how messages were constructed to guide the public toward a specific interpretation of an issue. According to Scheufele (2000), framing operated on two distinct levels: media frames and audience frames. Media frames referred to how information was organized and presented by communicators, while audience frames involved how individuals mentally processed and interpreted that information. In a political context, this theory was essential because it suggested that by emphasizing certain traits or lifestyle elements, a politician might have attempted to encourage the public to form a new "frame" or mental picture of them, to potentially overshadow negative narratives from traditional media. However, a major limitation of this early work was its focus on traditional news media rather than the fast-paced, algorithm-driven environment of modern social media platforms.

D'Angelo (2011) expanded on this by suggesting that framing should be viewed as a continuous process rather than a single event. This process included "frame-building," where political elites created specific narratives; "frame-setting," where these narratives were spread through media platforms; and "frame effects," which described the final impact on public opinion. This perspective was highly relevant for studying how politicians acted as strategic communicators who actively built new frames through their personal social media accounts. By choosing to share non-political, informal, or lifestyle-oriented content, they aimed to deliberately shift public attention and emotional responses. While this provided a strong framework, existing research often lacked a focus on how these informal or entertainment-based strategies were specifically used for image repair following a scandal.

Framing was also described as a competition between different political actors to control which story became the dominant one in the public eye. Hänggli and Kriesi (2010) demonstrated that politicians worked hard to push their preferred "counter-frame" into the media to challenge existing negative headlines. In the face of a crisis, a politician might have used digital platforms to offer a narrative that contradicted the official or legal criticism they were facing. By allowing lifestyle or humanizing content to lead their public presence, the intent was to soften and redirect the attention of the audience. However, much of the research in this area was based on traditional newspapers and election campaigns, leaving a gap in our understanding of how celebrity-style content was used specifically for crisis-driven framing.

Finally, Brugman et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of "metaphorical framing," where messages relied on symbolic and emotional cues instead of direct political statements. This type of framing was particularly effective on visual platforms where images of daily life communicated values like being "caring" or "human." These symbolic cues were theorized to function as metaphors aimed at potentially replacing a damaged or negative political image with a more relatable one. While this research offered deep insights, it often relied on controlled experiments, and the study sought to explore how these strategies were applied during real-world scandals.

In summary, while existing literature provided a strong foundation for understanding how framing worked, there was a clear research gap. Most studies had focused on traditional media or election cycles rather than the use of entertainment and lifestyle content as a potential strategy for image restoration. This highlighted the need for further investigation into how political figures might have utilized visual storytelling and symbolic frames on modern platforms to navigate the fallout of a scandal and to reshape their public identity.

2.6 Theoretical Framework: Framing Theory

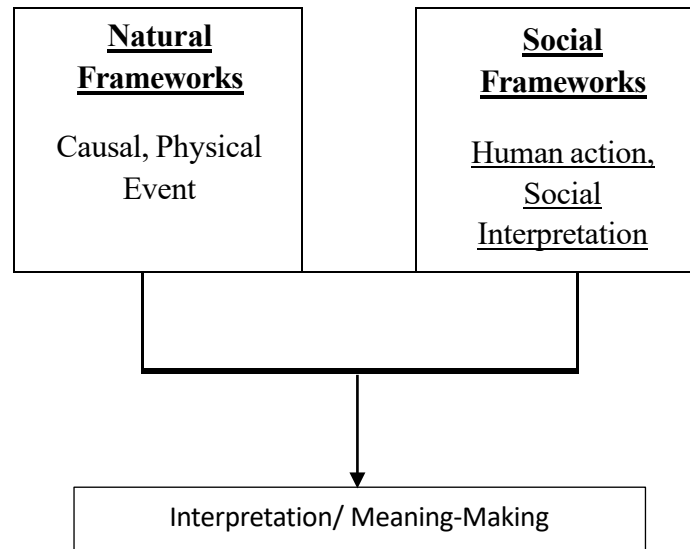


Figure 1: Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis 1974 (Primary Frameworks)

Note. The concept of framing is drawn from the seminal work of Goffman (1974) on the organization of experience

The theoretical foundation of this study utilised Framing Theory as a conceptual framework to examine the potential ways media messages may shape public perception towards issues and scandals. The foundational concept of the frame was introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) in his work, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Based on figure 1, Goffman's concept was micro-sociological, defining frames as internal 'schemata of interpretation' that resided within the individual's mind, functioning as principles of organization intended to enable people to make sense of social events and determine what was 'going on'. In this context, frames were cognitive structures that helped individuals classify and understand social reality, distinguishing between activities perceived as merely physical occurrences and those interpreted as products of human intent. His primary focus centred on the internal, psychological mechanism through which an audience might interpret and locate meaning in their immediate environment (Zaklama, 2025).

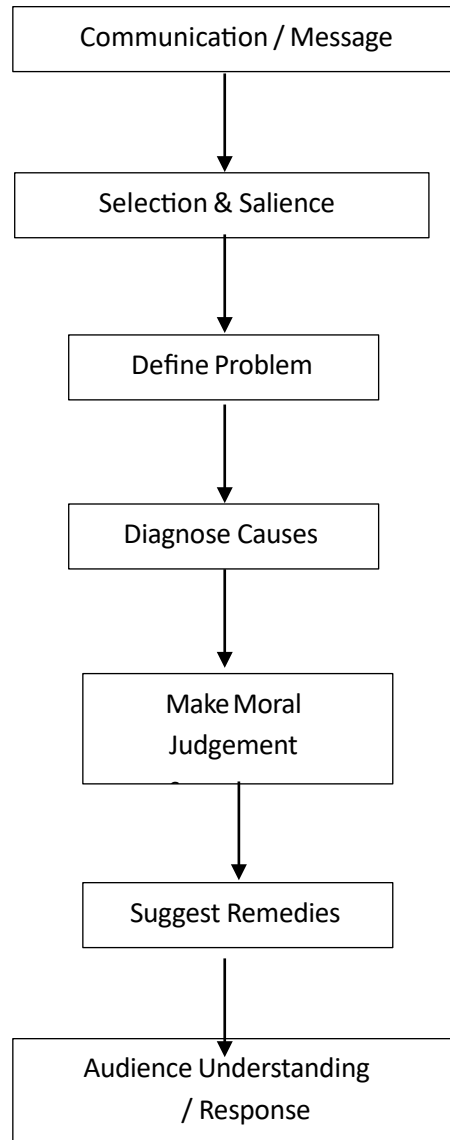


Figure 2: Robert Entman's Framing Model 1993

Note. Adapted from the four functions of framing outlined by Entman (1993).

Conversely, Robert M. Entman (1993) provided an operational definition that moved the theory into the realm of mass communication and political effects, clarifying a ‘fractured paradigm’ (refer to figure 2). Entman defined framing as the act of selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text to promote a specific interpretation. Entman structured the application of media frames around four core functions

embedded in the media message: defining the problem, diagnosing the causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies.

This research adopted Entman's (1993) framing concept over Goffman's because the study involved a systematic content analysis of 'frames in the text', specifically the hashtags and video content on TikTok. While Goffman's (1974) Frame Analysis provided a broad, sociological understanding of how individuals organized their everyday experience, Entman's model was media-centric and empirically verifiable, providing clear, operational categories (the four functions) that were utilized to analyse how the media sought to construct reality and was therefore highly suitable for qualitative measurement of specific messages. In this study, this research used Entman's four functions to systematically analyse Syed Saddiq's TikTok content. Specifically, the study coded the video content and text to examine how the Problem (the legal crisis/image damage) was potentially defined, what the content diagnosed as the Causes of the problem (e.g., political attack vs. personal error), what Moral Judgment the video sought to imply about his character (e.g., innocence, dedication, or humility), and what Remedies (calls to action or policy support) were proposed to the audience. This research then conceptualized the Soft Power strategy as the attributes used within the content to build these frames. For example, the use of personal branding, emotional storytelling, and interactive engagement were categorized as Soft Power mechanisms, and the study investigated how these mechanisms may have been employed to shape the Moral Judgment and Remedy functions of the frame, ultimately exploring the potential link between non-political content to the long-term political goal of image repair.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to Research Methodology

Qualitative research is a systematic approach to social inquiry that focused on developing an in-depth understanding of social phenomena. It was particularly defined by its emphasis on the underlying "qualities of entities" being studied and was therefore valued as a means of conducting studies that necessitated "deep thrust, humanistic adjustment and rich interpretation" of data (Njie & Asimiran, 2014, p. 35).

This methodology is essential for exploratory research, seeking to answer questions of how and why, rather than how much. It moved beyond mere numerical data by employing methods that allowed researchers to investigate social processes and practices to fully uncover the "meaning of such interaction" (Njie & Asimiran, 2014, p. 35). Ultimately, the goal of qualitative research was to capture the complex, context-specific reality from the perspective of the actors involved (Hignett & McDermott, 2013).

This thesis proposed implementing a qualitative methodology because it was deemed a suitable method for exploring the latent meaning, strategic intent, and persuasive power embedded within the political messages on TikTok. This was vital for achieving the study's key objectives: first, the qualitative method was intended to allow the research to use Entman's four framing functions to interpret how the Sympathy Frame was strategically constructed. Secondly, it was intended to assist in interpreting how this construction may facilitate a potential Image Shift by attempting to transform the political figure's image from one of corruption to one of martyrdom. Finally, the qualitative analysis of the audience comments was intended to assist in identifying and exploring potential psychological evidence of Parasocial Interaction (PSI).

A sole quantitative methodology was considered less appropriate for this study because its fundamental focus on statistical enumeration and measuring manifest content did not fully align with the interpretive demands of the study's core concepts. The quantitative approach excelled at counting easily observable data, such as the total number of video views or the frequency of a hashtag, but this approach did not sufficiently explain the critical how and why behind the communication effects. For instance, counting the frequency of the hashtag did not reveal how it functioned as the frame's Suggested Remedy or why it generated an emotional response in the audience. Furthermore, the core concepts of Moral Judgment and the formation of the illusory bond of PSI relied on affective and rhetorical subtleties interpreting whether the politician was framed as a "corrupt official" or a "persecuted martyr." These subtle narrative shifts and psychological outcomes could not be reduced to numerical values or statistical correlations, which might have resulted in a superficial statistical report that limited the study's ability to develop an explanatory model for the Image Shift and the generation of political soft power.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study was fundamentally rooted in Textual Analysis, which served as the overarching qualitative methodology. Textual Analysis was the systematic method used to deeply describe, interpret, and critically understand the underlying characteristics, messages, and themes within communication texts, going beyond surface-level summary. This study proposed to employ this method by utilizing Framing Analysis as its core analytical technique to investigate the proposed shift in Syed Saddiq's public image from a scandal frame to a soft power frame on the TikTok platform. The analysis was applied by systematically examining the selected TikTok posts including video content, captions, and associated hashtags as the primary texts. This involved developing a methodological codebook to categorize and interpret linguistic and visual cues (framing devices) to examine how they emphasized either the negative (Scandal) or positive (Soft Power) narratives. Ultimately, this systematic application of

Textual Analysis was intended to examine the potential influence of these framing strategies in the broader political context and explore the extent to which they contributed to the politician's intended image shift.

3.3 Data collection

The coding sheet was proposed as a systematic instrument to be developed for the Content Analysis of Syed Saddiq's TikTok videos. The analysis process was divided into two phases to ensure methodological rigor. The second phase, Phase 2: Inductive Coding of Manifest Content, involved analysing the raw textual and visual data to identify specific expressions and emerging themes that related to the theoretical codes. This dual approach was designed to ensure the study remained theoretically grounded while being sensitive to the unique content found on the TikTok platform.

The first instrument, the Deductive Coding Sheet (Table 1), was grounded in Robert Entman's (1993) Framing Theory and Joseph Nye's concept of Soft Power. This sheet focused on latent meanings, categorizing how the subject defined problems, diagnosed cause, and utilized personal branding to project soft power. By using these predefined theoretical constructs, the study could measure the strategic intent behind the political messaging.

Code	Theme	Short Explanation
F1	Define Problem (Entman)	This coded how the video identified or named the core issue or crisis requiring public attention.
F2	Diagnose Causes (Entman)	This coded what the video attributed as the source of the problem, including blame or responsibility (e.g., external attack or internal error).

F3	Make Moral Judgment (Entman)	This coded the ethical assessment the video implied about the politician's character, highlighting values like innocence, dedication, or humility.
F4	Suggest Remedies (Entman)	This coded the proposed solution or action the video promoted to resolve the issue or what the audience should have done next.
S1	Personal Branding (Soft Power)	This coded content that focused on non-political, relatable aspects of the politician's daily life to build a connection.
S2	Emotional Storytelling (Soft Power)	This coded the use of personal narratives and affect to elicit empathy, connection, or a strong emotional response from the viewer.
S3	Interactive Engagement (Soft Power)	This coded content that explicitly requested or facilitated direct involvement and dialogue with the audience (e.g., Duets, Q&A).
S4	Influencer Use (Soft Power)	This coded collaborations with non-political figures who had high public trust or reach to borrow their credibility.

Table 1: Deductive Coding Sheet (Theoretical Constructs)

To complement the theoretical analysis, the Inductive Coding Sheet (Table 2) was used to capture “manifest content” the literal, visible elements of the videos. This included the specific hashtags used, visual metaphors, and the emotional tone of the delivery. Together, these instruments provided a comprehensive toolkit for transforming raw video data into quantifiable and qualifiable themes for analysis.

Code	Theme	Short Explanation
T1	Key Hashtags	This coded the specific, frequently used text tags that summarized the video's theme and aided in its discoverability.
T2	Visual Metaphor	This coded recurring visual elements or props used to represent a concept (e.g., hard work, humility, or the crisis itself).
T3	Tone & Affect	This coded the dominant emotional presentation conveyed by the politician through their speech and body language (e.g., sincere, energetic, or serious).
T4	Specific Action	This coded observable, repeated behaviors or policy actions mentioned in the video that directly related to solving problems or addressing the crisis.

Table2: Inductive Coding Sheet (Manifest Content)

Phase	Core Theme/Frame	Defined Time Period (Approximate)	Justification/Key Focus
Phase 1	Scandal/Crisis Framing	July 2021 – October 2022	This focused-on content dominated by negative narratives, corruption charges, and legal proceedings, establishing the baseline crisis image that the Soft Power strategy sought to counteract.
Phase 2	Soft Power/Image-Shift Framing	November 2022 – November 2023	This focused-on content promoting positive narratives, youth advocacy, and personal resilience, as well as the strategic leveraging of public figures (e.g., Bella Astillah) to humanize the politician and generate favourable social media virality.

Table 3: Phased Analysis Periods and Core Framing Focus

The collection of data was essential because it had to capture and compare the two key periods of the politician's public image management. Purposive sampling was used, meaning

only TikTok posts that were highly relevant to the research topic and timeframes were deliberately selected, rather than taking a random sample. This was intended to ensure the content selected aligned with the Scandal and Soft Power themes. Data collection continued until saturation was reached, which meant stopping when reviewing new posts yielded no new or different types of framing strategies.

The analysis was divided into two distinct time periods, which were Phase 1: the Scandal or Crisis Framing Period (July 2021 – October 2022). This initial period focused on the time when the politician faced his most serious public challenges, starting with the first corruption charges in July 2021 and ending when the court required him to formally defend himself in October 2022. The aim here was to analyse content to investigate the presence of a negative public image. The study examined whether these TikTok posts utilised crisis-related narratives, concentrating on themes of legal accountability and financial misconduct. By analysing this data, the study sought to establish a baseline the ‘Scandal’ frame against which to potentially contrast later image-shift efforts.

Next was Phase 2: the Soft Power and Image-Shift Framing Period (November 2022 – November 2023). The second phase began immediately after the court’s decision and covered the critical period of public engagement designed to rebuild his reputation. The content sampled here was analysed for potential positive framing efforts (Soft Power). These included posts highlighting his work on youth advocacy, political reforms, and themes of personal strength. Crucially, this phase included analysing content where the politician strategically partnered with well-known public figures, such as Bella Astillah. The study investigated whether these appearances were used to humanize his persona, generate viral positive media coverage, and whether they served to divert public attention away from the legal issues. This two-phase method was designed to enable a robust, comparative Textual Analysis of the shift in framing on the TikTok platform.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

Phase	Sample Size	Unit of Analysis (Content Component)	Specific Content Examples to be Checked/Coded for the Thesis
Phase 1: Scandal Frame	20 Posts	Video Content & Tone (The visuals and audio)	Examples: Video settings showing court houses or serious press conferences; use of sombre or anxious background music; clips emphasizing distress; screen captures of severe news headlines (e.g., “Guilty Verdict,” “CBT Charges”).
		Caption/Text Overlay (Linguistic Content)	Examples: Captions using judgmental or moralizing language (e.g., “betrayal,” “dishonesty,” “accountability”); emotional appeals from critics; textual summaries of court proceedings or charge details.

		Associated Hashtags	Examples: #SyedSaddiqCBT, #Corruption, #CourtCase, #ArmadaFunds, #MoneyLaundering, #DuitRakyat, #Guilty.
Phase 2: Soft Power Frame	20 Posts	Video Content & Tone (The visuals and audio)	Examples: upbeat, aspirational, or motivational music; clips showing community outreach, charity work, or fitness activities; strategic presence of popular figures such as Bella Astillah; bright and dynamic editing style reflecting youth aesthetics.
		Caption/Text Overlay (Linguistic Content)	Examples: captions promoting resilience (e.g., ‘I will continue to fight,’ ‘New brand of politics’); highlighting legislative action (e.g., ‘Undi18’); personal anecdotes about struggle; calls for political participation.
		Associated Hashtags (Framing	Examples: The key focus on the #BASS (Bella Astillah Syed Saddiq) elements, alongside #SSWarrior,

		Mechanism)	#MUDA, #YouthPower, #Reform, and #Resilience.
Both Phases (40 Videos)	Comments Section (Audience Engagement)	Audience Sentiment:	Example: The study examined the top 5 most engaged comments on each of the 40 posts. The coding determined whether the audience validated the presented frame (e.g., “He is clean,” “He is a good role model”) or challenged/rejected the frame (e.g., “Stop lying,” “Focus on the jail time”).

Table 4: Sampling Strategy and Units of Analysis by Phase

The methodological strength of this thesis depended on using a carefully chosen purposive sample. Purposive sampling referred to a group of non-probability sampling techniques where a researcher deliberately selected units of the universe to constitute a sample on the premise that the investigator's knowledge about the population could be leveraged to select elements that representatively characterized the population (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In essence, purposive sampling was an intentional and strategic selection procedure that relied on the researcher's expert judgment to select cases that specifically aligned with the research question, rather than selecting cases at random (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In this study, the purposive sampling method was a widely

used method where the researcher played a very important role. The study proposed selecting 40 TikTok posts that included 20 posts for the first phase and 20 posts for the second phase (refer to Table 4). This selection strategy was intended to ensure the data remained highly specific and relevant to meet the research questions requirement. Purposive sampling continued until saturation was reached, that is, until sufficient data were obtained to answer the research questions.

The total sample was split into two equal groups to allow for a direct, rigorous comparison. Phase 1 and Phase 2 were analysed to explore visual cues, narrative, hashtags, music, collaborations (influencer), captions and comments, and how they reflected the gravity of the situation in both phases. The accompanying caption and text overlay were coded for language that explicitly linked the politician to the charges, often using moralising terms (e.g., ‘betrayal,’ ‘dishonest’). Associated hashtags such as #Corruption and #MoneyLaundering were identified and tallied to investigate how critics and the public categorized this negative content over positive ones. For Phase 2, captions and text overlays that emphasized resilience, political reform, and youth empowerment, which presented a positive side, were analysed. Hashtags that signified Soft Power framing, such as #BASS (Bella Astillah Syed Saddiq), #teambass, #bellaastillah, #syedsaddiq, and positive markers like #SSWarrior, were analysed in detail.

Audience Engagement (Comments): Subsequent to coding the text and visuals, the top five most engaged comments for all 40 posts were analysed. Ultimately, this step aimed to examine whether the politician’s framing strategy, whether crisis-focused or soft-power-focused, appeared to resonate with public sentiment. This systematic and comparative approach was designed to ground the findings in a deep examination of both the message and its potential reception.

3.5 Expected Outcome

This research sought to investigate how the politician may have adapted his messaging strategy on TikTok during a difficult time. The study sought to identify potential differences in the way the videos were framed (using Entman's ideas) and the kinds of hashtags that were used when he was dealing with the scandal (Phase 1) versus when he was pushing a positive, personal image (Phase 2).

The results were intended to provide insights into how politicians may utilise non-traditional tools like personal stories, collaboration, and fun content (Soft Power) on platforms like TikTok to fix their reputation after a crisis. This study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding political communication and the mechanisms of image repair within the context of short-form video platforms

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of the findings from the study on Syed Saddiq's public image on TikTok. The discussion began by examining Phase 1: The Scandal Period, which looked at how TikTok content was framed during his legal crisis to show a negative public image. Following this, the chapter explored Phase 2: The Soft Power and Image Restoration Period, where the focus shifted to how lifestyle content and celebrity collaborations were used to rebuild his reputation. The entire analysis was driven by Robert Entman's Framing Theory, which served as the main theory of this study. This primary framework was used to show how specific messages were selected to influence public perception by defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. After the individual video analysis, the chapter discussed how the overall media narrative changed from a "judicial crisis" into a story of personal resilience. Finally, the chapter conceptualized the use of Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI). It is important to note that these were used only as supplementary theories to support the main findings. They helped explain how attraction and a sense of "friendship" were created between Syed Saddiq and his audience, which assisted the main framing process in moving the public focus away from his legal troubles toward a more humanized image.

4.1 Phase 1: The Scandal Period

This phase focused on the period immediately following the High Court verdict on November 9, 2023, and extended through August 2024. The discussion in this section examined the "Scandal Frame" that surrounded Syed Saddiq as a convicted public figure facing serious legal consequences. To conduct this analysis, a total of 20 TikTok videos were selected and examined. These videos were broken down into three specific portions: the visual and audio elements, the text overlays and captions, and the audience engagement through top comments. The primary framework used to analyse these portions was Robert Entman's Framing Theory, which served as the main theory to identify how the legal crisis was defined and presented. Additionally, Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI) were applied as supplementary theories to discuss how early attempts at image restoration were supported or hindered by the emotional connection between the subject and the audience during this time.

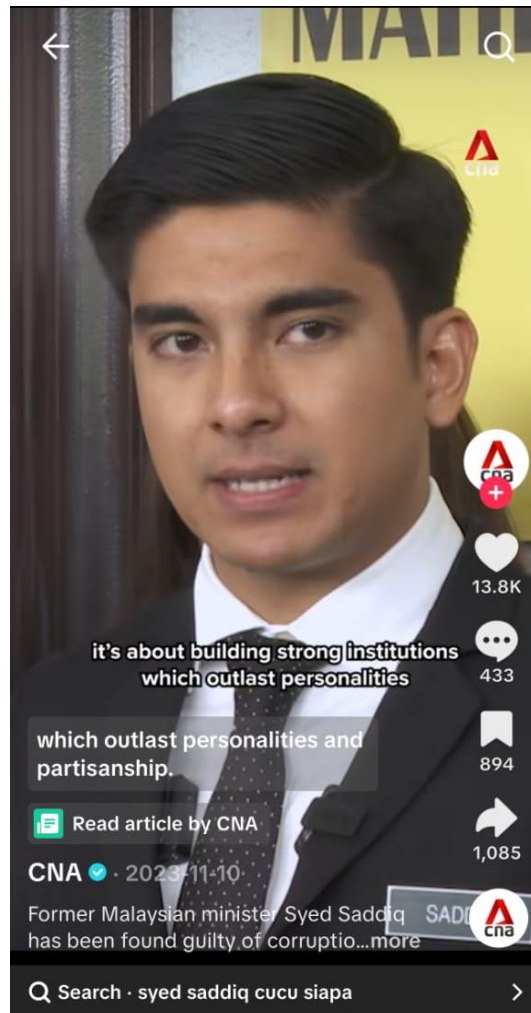


Figure 3: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Corruption Verdict

Source: Channel News Asia (CNA)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	1 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame) [Video]
Date / URL	10 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxkpxbe/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video serves as a journalistic record of the Kuala Lumpur High Court's November 2023 verdict against former Malaysian Minister Syed Saddiq. Visually, the report adheres to the aesthetic of "serious" broadcast

Item	Description / Analysis
	journalism, characterized by high-definition, stabilized footage and a structured graphical layout. The Subject as Protagonist: The imagery focuses on Syed Saddiq's physical presence clad in a formal black suit, signifying professional deference as he moves through the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex (0:01). The frequent use of medium close-up shots captures his facial expressions, specifically moments of visible emotion (0:42), which serve to humanize the legal proceedings. The Media Scrum: Repeated shots of journalists, cameras, and microphones surrounding the subject emphasize the socio-political magnitude of the case (0:22). This visual element reinforces the "historical" nature of the verdict, particularly the then-unprecedented sentencing of a politician to corporal punishment (caning). Archival Intercutting: To provide context, the video intersperses "B-roll" of Syed Saddiq in his previous ministerial and parliamentary roles. This creates a visual juxtaposition between his past political ascension and his current legal precarity. Audio: The audio is a complex mix of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds designed to maintain a factual yet urgent rhythm. Narrative Voiceover: A professional reporter (Steve Lai) provides the central "logos" or logical thread (0:12). His delivery is measured and neutral, typical of Channel News Asia's (CNA) house style, ensuring the legal complexities of the four charges CBT, misappropriation, and money laundering are delivered clearly.

Item	Description / Analysis
	Ambient Naturalism (NAT Sound): Diegetic sounds, such as the rhythmic clicking of camera shutters and the muffled chatter of supporters, create an auditory "sense of place." These sounds elevate the tension, positioning the viewer within the frantic environment of the court grounds. Direct Verbal Testimony: The inclusion of Syed Saddiq's own voice during his post-verdict press conference adds a layer of pathos. He states, <i>"I believe in order to make Malaysia a great country it's about building strong institutions"</i> (0:25). His tone is defiant yet somber, articulating his respect for the court while signaling his intent to appeal, noting, <i>"until I clear my name in the court of law, I think that's a principled decision which I have to hold on to"</i> (0:40).
2.Tone	Grave and Clinical: The video avoids sensationalism, opting for a sober reflection of the judicial outcome. Weight of Precedent: The tone is heavily influenced by the severity of the sentence (7 years and whipping). The reporting treats these details with a specific "legal weight" (0:13), framing the event as a test of the Malaysian judiciary's independence.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Former Malaysian minister Syed Saddiq has been found guilty of corruption. He was sentenced to seven years' jail, two strokes of the cane and a fine of US\$2.1 million. The 30-year-old says he is innocent and intends to appeal. Text Overlay: No text overlay
4. Associated Hashtags	#malaysianews #malaysia

Item	Description / Analysis
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Guilty yet have to clear his name. Nothing seems right her. Politic is so bad." 2. "Can't trust a politician that looks like a kid" 3. "Sadic stop play victim. You did it. Now you reap what you sow." 4. "He play long game + righteous image, win young voters' heart, in 20-30 years' time, they will all support him. Smart guy." 5. "He looks guilty and surely from a connected elite family."
Comment Translation	None

Table 5: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The first video analyzed serves as a formal journalistic record produced by Channel News Asia (CNA) documenting the November 2023 High Court verdict against Syed Saddiq. Visually, the report adheres to a "serious" broadcast journalism aesthetic, utilizing high-definition, stabilized footage to maintain a professional tone. The imagery positions Syed Saddiq as the central protagonist, capturing him in a formal black suit at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex to signify professional deference (0:01). The frequent use of medium close-up shots specifically focuses on his facial expressions during moments of visible emotion (0:42), which serves to humanize the legal proceedings for the digital audience. Furthermore, the socio-political magnitude of the case is emphasized through repeated shots of the "media scrum" a dense crowd of journalists and cameras surrounding him (0:22) while archival intercutting of his past ministerial roles creates a sharp visual juxtaposition with his current legal precarity.

The audio for this video is a strategic mix of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds designed to maintain a factual yet urgent rhythm. Professional reporter Steve Lai provides the logical

narrative thread (0:12), delivered in a measured and neutral style. This is layered with "NAT sound" (natural ambient noise), such as the rhythmic clicking of camera shutters, which heightens the tension of the courthouse environment (0:22). The inclusion of Syed Saddiq's own defiant yet somber voice during his post-verdict press conference adds a layer of pathos; he is heard stating his belief in "building strong institutions" (0:25) and expressing his commitment to "clear my name in the court of law" (0:40).

The overall tone of the video is grave and clinical, avoiding sensationalism in favor of reflecting the "weight of precedent" set by his seven-year prison sentence and corporal punishment (0:13). The caption reinforces this factual framing, detailing his conviction for corruption, the specific jail term, and the US\$2.1 million fine. While no text overlays are used, the associated hashtags #malaysianews and #malaysia position the content within a broader national news context.

The public comments on this video reveal a range of reactions that align with the "Scandal Frame" and the concept of Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Some viewers expressed deep skepticism toward the political and legal system, with one user noting, "Guilty yet have to clear his name. Nothing seems right her. Politic is so bad". Others focused on personal attributes to dismiss his credibility, stating, "Can't trust a politician that looks like a kid". Direct moral judgments were also prevalent, such as the comment: "Sadic stop play victim. You did it. Now you reap what you sow". Conversely, some users interpreted his actions as a calculated strategy, remarking that he was playing a "long game" with a "righteous image" to win over young voters in the future. Finally, class-based biases emerged, with one commenter suggesting he "looks guilty" because he is "from a connected elite family".



Figure 4: Snapshot: First MP Sentenced to Caning

Source: Astro Awani

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	2 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxhxgw8/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: On November 9, 2023, the High Court of Kuala Lumpur sentenced Syed Saddiq to seven years in prison, a fine of RM10 million, and two strokes of the cane (0:25). He was found guilty of four charges:

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Abetting in criminal breach of trust (CBT) • Misappropriation of property • Money laundering This sentence was significant as Syed Saddiq became the first Member of Parliament (MP) in Malaysia to be sentenced to caning for a white-collar crime (0:01). • B-Roll footage: Shots of the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex (0:01) and Syed Saddiq entering the building surrounded by supporters and media (0:34). • Text overlays: Key information like the date, location, and the headline "<i>Syed Saddiq jadi Ahli Parlimen pertama jalani hukuman sebat</i>" are clearly displayed throughout the video. • Sign language interpreter: A small inset window shows a sign language interpreter (0:03), making the news accessible to a wider audience. Audio: The audio consists of a voiceover by a male news anchor who narrates the story in a professional and clear tone. He explains the details of the sentence and compares it to the case of former Prime Minister Najib Razak (0:30), who was not sentenced to caning due to being over the age of 50 (0:40). There is also ambient noise from the court complex, like the sounds of people talking and camera shutters clicking (0:06), which adds to the authenticity of the report. The background music is a subtle, rhythmic beat that maintains a sense of urgency and importance without being distracting.

Item	Description / Analysis
2. Tone	The video maintains a formal and informative tone, typical of a professional news report. It is objective and straightforward, providing the facts of the case and the court's decision without emotional bias.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Ahli Parlimen Muar, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdullah Rahman menjadi wakil rakyat pertama dikenakan hukuman sebatan bagi kes kesalahan jenayah kolar putih. Text Overlay: • 9 Nov 2023 • Malaysia • Syed Saddiq jadi Ahli Parlimen pertama jalani hukuman sebat • Astroawani.com
4. Associated Hashtags	#AWANInews
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Alhamdulillah." 2. "Baguslah untuk menyedari kelakuan kita supaya berhati-hati dan ikhlas buat kerja. Bukannnye menyelewengkan kewanagan organisasi yang diamanahkan kepada kita." 3. "Keputusan hari ini menyampaikan politikus supaya jangan melakukan sebarang kesalahan yang sama atau lebih." 4. "Tahniah abahkau Berjaya simpan mamat ni ke dalam." 5. "Cipta sejarah, MP termuda jatuh hukuman pecah amanah."

Item	Description / Analysis
Comment Translation:	1. <i>"Praise be to God."</i> 2. <i>It is good to be aware of our behaviour so that we remain cautious and sincere in our work. Not misappropriating the organizational funds entrusted to us."</i> 3. <i>"Today's decision serves as a message to politicians not to commit the same mistakes or worse."</i> 4. <i>"Congratulations, 'abahkau' (your father/pops) managed to put this guy away [in jail]."</i> 5. <i>"History made, youngest MP sentenced for criminal breach of trust."</i>

Table 6: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The second video, produced by Astro AWANI, provides a highly formalized journalistic record of the moment Syed Saddiq was sentenced to seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine on November 9, 2023. Visually, the report adheres to traditional news standards, opening with B-roll footage of the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex (0:01) and shots of Saddiq entering the building surrounded by a media scrum and supporters (0:34). A unique visual element in this video is the inclusion of a sign language interpreter in a small inset window (0:03), which emphasizes the "public interest" and accessibility of this specific news event. High-contrast text overlays, such as the headline *"Syed Saddiq jadi Ahli Parlimen pertama jalani hukuman sebat,"* are used throughout to emphasize the landmark nature of the sentencing.

The audio consists of a clear, professional voiceover by a male news anchor who provides a detailed breakdown of the four charges: abetting criminal breach of trust (CBT), misappropriation of property, and money laundering (0:25). To highlight the severity of the punishment, the anchor draws a direct comparison to the case of former Prime Minister Najib Razak (0:30), explaining that Saddiq's sentence included caning because he was under the age of

50, whereas Najib was exempt due to his age (0:40). Ambient natural sounds, such as the persistent clicking of camera shutters and courtroom chatter (0:06), are layered over a subtle, rhythmic beat, maintaining a sense of urgency and historical gravity.

The overall tone is strictly formal and informative, typical of a professional news organization like Astro AWANI. By remaining objective and straightforward, the video frames the event as a significant legal precedent for white-collar crime in Malaysia rather than an emotional or personal narrative. The caption reinforces this by labeling him as the first representative to face such a sentence, while the hashtag #AWANInews anchors the content firmly in the domain of hard-power reporting.

The public comments for this video highlight a significant shift toward moral judgment and the erosion of his previously "untouchable" youth leader image. Many reactions align with the Scandal Frame, with users expressing a sense of justice being served through religious or moral lenses, such as "Alhamdulillah" (Praise be to God) or comments advising politicians to remain "sincere in our work" and avoid "misappropriating organizational funds." There is also evidence of political polarization; for example, one user congratulated "abahkau" (a colloquial reference to a rival political figure) for successfully putting Saddiq away. Finally, some viewers focused on the "historical" downfall, noting with cynicism that he had "made history" as the youngest MP to be sentenced for a breach of trust. These comments demonstrate that during Phase 1, the "Hard Power" of the judicial verdict effectively silenced his "Soft Power" influence, replacing emotional attraction with public demands for accountability.



Figure 5: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq's Family Raya Glambot

Source: Syed Saddiq (Personal Social Media / TikTok)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	3 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	10 Apriln 2024 https://www.tiktok.com/@syedsaddiq/video/7356094432397053191
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video features various family members in a series of slow-motion, stylized "glambot" shots, which are popular on social media. Each clip highlights a different personality trait or humorous moment within the family: "Terpaling masak masa raya" (The one who cooks the most during Raya): Features a woman, likely his mother, showcasing a table full of traditional Malay dishes (0:02).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• "Kuat makan" (Loves to eat): Shows a man in a black baju melayu playfully patting his stomach (0:06). • "Bertabah lah wolfie" (Be patient, Wolfie): Features a man holding a somewhat reluctant-looking black cat, Wolfie (0:10). • "Favourite Child" / "Paling Handsome" / "Bijak belaka": Syed Saddiq himself strikes a confident pose with humorous text overlays (0:18). • "Mini love tak menjadi" (The mini love heart failed): Shows an older couple attempting to make a heart shape with their hands, but not quite getting it right (0:26). Audio: The audio is the heartbeat of this video and sets the mood instantly. • Modern Pop/Electronic: It uses a high-energy track with a strong beat. The music is designed to sync with the "pops" and "slides" of the camera movements. • Non-Verbal Storytelling: There is no talking. The music does all the emotional work, telling the viewer, "This is a happy, high-energy celebration." • Fast-Paced: The rhythm keeps the video moving quickly, making it feel short, snappy, and perfect for social media.
2. Tone	The tone is funny and celebratory. It's meant to show the human side of a politician by featuring his family and their quirky personalities. It is Wholesome and Trendy, using the "Glambot" style to feel modern and "cool" rather than stiff or political.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Raya glambot trend with my family ✨ Text Overlay: • Terpaling masak masa raya 😊 (0:02)

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Kuat makan 😊 (0:06) • Bertabah lah wolfie 🐺 (0:10) • Favourite Child 🧒 / Paling Handsome 😊 / Bijak belaka 🧐 / Semua yang baik saya punya 🌈 (0:18) • Mini love tak menjadi 🐺👉 (0:26)
4. Associated Hashtags	#selamathariraya
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Bila nak beraya dalam jail YB? Sebat jangan dilupa.” 2. “Bila nak masuk dalam?” 3. “eh dah keluar penjara?” 4. “Next year raya behind bars. enjoy first yb.” 5. “So disappointed with you Syed. I thought you were different from other politicians. Clean politics for a better Malaysia. Anyway, Selamat hari raya.”
Comment Translation	1. "When are you going to celebrate Raya in jail, YB? Don't forget the caning." 2. "When are you going inside [prison]?" 3. "Oh, you're out of prison already?" 4. "Next year's Raya will be behind bars. Enjoy yourself for now, YB."

Table 7: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The third video, posted by Syed Saddiq himself, utilizes a popular social media trend the "Glambot" shot to feature his family during the Hari Raya celebrations. Visually, the content shifts from the formal courtroom to a domestic, high-energy environment. The video highlights various family members in stylized, slow-motion clips: his mother showcasing traditional dishes (0:02), a relative playfully patting his stomach (0:06), and a man holding a reluctant cat named

Wolfie (0:10). Syed Saddiq appears toward the end, striking a confident pose with humorous text overlays identifying him as the "Favourite Child" and "Paling Handsome" (0:18). The video concludes with an older couple attempting, and failing, to make a "mini love" heart shape with their hands (0:26).

The audio is central to the video's high-energy and celebratory tone. It features a modern pop/electronic track with a strong beat that is synchronized with the camera's pops and slides. There is no verbal dialogue; instead, the music performs the "emotional work," framing the scene as a happy, wholesome family celebration meant to show the "human side" of the politician.

Despite the video's lighthearted and trendy tone, the public reaction highlights the immense difficulty of shifting out of the Scandal Frame during this phase. While the video itself attempts to use Soft Power through personal branding and relatability, the comments section reveals that the audience was not yet ready to engage in positive Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Instead of reciprocating the festive mood, the top comments remain hyper-focused on his legal troubles and the "Hard Power" of the judiciary.

The breakdown in PSI is evident in the direct and cynical nature of the feedback. Viewers asked pointed questions like, *"When are you going to celebrate Raya in jail, YB? Don't forget the caning"* and *"Oh, you're out of prison already?"*. Even well-wishers expressed deep moral disappointment, with one user stating, *"So disappointed with you Syed. I thought you were different... Anyway, Selamat hari raya"*. These findings illustrate that during Phase 1, even "wholesome" or "cool" content was largely filtered through the lens of the scandal, with the public's demand for legal accountability and "clean politics" overriding the intended soft-power resonance of the family-oriented post.



Figure 6: Snapshot: High Court Justifies Sentence

Source: Vanakkam Malaysia

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	4 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	29 November 2024 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxBkbpq/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video reports on the High Court's decision to uphold the sentencing of Syed Saddiq, specifically focusing on the justification of the penalties. The visual narrative is structured as a formal news broadcast, utilizing a clean, digital layout with high-contrast text to emphasize the gravity of the legal outcome.

Item	Description / Analysis
	The Sentence Breakdown: The report explicitly lists the four charges: abetting criminal breach of trust (CBT), misappropriation of property, and two counts of money laundering (0:10). Visually, the video utilizes a split-screen or overlay technique to present the specific penalties seven years in prison, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane ensuring the viewer absorbs the severity of the "deterrent" sentence (0:18). Historical Context: The report highlights the landmark nature of the case, identifying Syed Saddiq as the first politician in Malaysian history to be sentenced to whipping for white-collar crimes (0:01). It explains the legal nuance regarding his age; while high-profile figures over 50 are exempt from corporal punishment, Syed Saddiq's age at the time of sentencing (30) made the sentence applicable under current laws (0:35). Audio: The audio is clinical and devoid of emotional manipulation. Narration: The video features a steady, professional voiceover that delivers the facts with a measured pace, ensuring the legal terminology is clear. Unlike social media trends, there is an absence of upbeat music; instead, a subtle "news bed" (low-intensity rhythmic track) plays in the background to maintain an atmosphere of importance and urgency (0:05). Ambient Sound: Underneath the narration, viewers can hear the "courtroom buzz" and the distinct clicking of professional camera shutters as Syed Saddiq moves through the High Court complex, grounding the report in real-time journalistic coverage.

Item	Description / Analysis
2.Tone	Stern and Objective: The tone is strictly formal, matching the gravity of a significant judicial proceeding. There is a perceptible sense of "historical weight" to the reporting, framing the High Court's decision not just as a punishment for one individual, but as a judicial statement intended to serve as a warning to other public officials.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: 7-years jail sentence and canning for 'PublicFigure' Syed Saddiq justified says High Court Text Overlay: • 29 Nov 2024 (0:01) • 7-year jail sentence and canning for 'Public Figure' Syed Saddiq justified say High Court • Vanakam Malaysia • www.vanakammalaysia.com
4. Associated Hashtags	#latest #vanakammalaysia #7-yearjail #sentence #canning #PublicFigure #SyedSaddiq #justified #HighCourt #trendingmalaysia #malaysiatamilnews #fyp #vmnews #foryoupage
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Proceed with sentence." 2. "Ambik kau." 3. "Salah tetap salah." 4. "So finished his political carrier." 5. "So young So Muda So corrupter and want to be some kind of leader for the Malaysian."

Item	Description / Analysis
Comment	1. "Take that!"
Translation	2. "Wrong is still wrong."

Table 8: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The fourth video, produced by *Vanakam Malaysia*, serves as a formal journalistic record of the High Court's decision to uphold the sentencing of Syed Saddiq. Visually, the report utilizes a structured digital layout with high-contrast text to emphasize the gravity of the legal outcome. The visual narrative explicitly details the four charges: abetting criminal breach of trust (CBT), misappropriation of property, and two counts of money laundering (0:10). Through split-screen techniques and overlays, the video presents the specific penalties seven years in prison, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane ensuring the audience absorbs the severity of the "deterrent" sentence (0:18). A key historical context highlighted is Saddiq's status as the first Malaysian politician sentenced to whipping for a white-collar crime, noting that his age (30) made him eligible for corporal punishment, unlike older high-profile figures (0:35).

The audio for this report is clinical and professional, maintaining a "stern and objective" tone consistent with a significant judicial proceeding. A steady voiceover delivers facts with a measured pace, supported by a subtle "news bed" track that maintains an atmosphere of importance and urgency (0:05). Background "courtroom buzz" and the clicking of professional camera shutters ground the report in real-time journalistic coverage, reinforcing the "historical weight" of the High Court's decision as a judicial statement intended to warn other public officials.

The tone is strictly formal, framing the legal outcome as a necessary consequence within the Scandal Frame. The caption "*7-years jail sentence and canning for 'Public Figure' Syed Saddiq justified says High Court*" reinforces this factual anchoring. Associated hashtags like #7-

yearjail, #caning, and #justified further categorize the content as a serious news update on political corruption and judicial accountability.

The public comments reveal a deep-seated demand for accountability and a further breakdown of Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Reactions such as "*Salah tetap salah*" (Wrong is still wrong) and "*Ambik kau*" (Take that!) demonstrate a rejection of any soft-power attraction in favor of moral judgment. Other comments, such as "*So finished his political carrier*" and observations about him being a "corrupter" despite his youth, illustrate how the "Scandal Frame" effectively overshadowed his reformist persona, characterizing him as a figure of disgrace during this peak period of hard-power scrutiny.



Figure 7: Update: Court of Appeal Sets Date for Syed Saddiq's Appeal

Source: NST TV

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	5 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 December 2024 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxSDyfp/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video reports that the Court of Appeal has scheduled March 19 and 20, 2025, to hear Syed Saddiq's appeal against his 2023 conviction and sentence.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Context: He is appealing the seven-year jail term, RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane originally handed down by the High Court. • Procedural Update: The court set a final deadline of March 4, 2025, for both the prosecution and defense to submit their written arguments (0:22). • Footage Details: The video shows a mix of Syed Saddiq smiling and waving to supporters (0:01), alongside more solemn clips of him during press conferences and legal proceedings (0:11). It also features a shot of a supporter holding a sign that says "Solidariti Bersama Syed Saddiq" (0:25). Audio: The audio is designed to be easily understood and provides a clear narrative of the legal timeline. • Voiceover: A female narrator delivers the news in clear, articulate English. Her pace is steady, ensuring that specific dates like March 19 are communicated effectively (0:04). • Background Music: A constant, rhythmic electronic track plays throughout. It is more upbeat than standard news beds, giving the report a modern, high-tech feel while remaining serious for a legal story. • Sound Effects: A brief, punchy sound effect is used during the transition to the final NST TV graphic (0:28).
2.Tone	Formal and Balanced: The tone is straightforward and professional. As a standard news update, it avoids sensationalism and focuses on the timeline and facts of the judicial process. It captures a sense of "measured energy," showing a poised Syed Saddiq preparing for his next legal battle without the high-emotion intensity of the original sentencing day.

Item	Description / Analysis
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: The Court of Appeal has fixed March 19, 2025 to hear Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's appeal against his sentence and conviction of corruption. Text Overlay: • NST TV (0:01) • Appellate Court to hear Syed Saddiq's appeal on March 19 (0:30)
4. Associated Hashtags	#NSTTV
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Joining the Greatest of all thieves in Kajang." 2. "Senyuman terakhir sebelum kena sebat." 3. "Ting Tong Ting Tong lama kes hilang senyap."
Comment Translation	1. "The last smile before the caning [begins]." 2. "Ding Dong Ding Dong, the case disappeared and went silent for a long time."

Table 9: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The fifth video, produced by *NST TV*, reports on the Court of Appeal's decision to schedule March 19 and 20, 2025, to hear Syed Saddiq's appeal against his 2023 corruption conviction. Visually, the report combines a variety of tones: it opens with a shot of a smiling Syed Saddiq waving to supporters (0:01), juxtaposed with more solemn archival clips of him during previous legal proceedings and press conferences (0:11). A key visual detail is the shot of a supporter holding a "Solidariti Bersama Syed Saddiq" sign (0:25), which highlights the lingering presence of his base despite the legal pressure. The video also notes a critical procedural deadline: March 4, 2025, for both sides to submit their written arguments (0:22).

The audio is designed for clarity and a modern feel, featuring a female narrator who delivers the legal timeline in a steady, articulate pace (0:04). Unlike the clinical "news beds" of earlier reports, this video uses a constant, rhythmic electronic track that is more upbeat, giving the report a sense of "measured energy" rather than pure crisis. A punchy sound effect is used during the final transition to the NST TV graphic (0:28), reinforcing the digital-first nature of the reporting.

The overall tone is "Formal and Balanced." It avoids the high-emotion intensity of the original sentencing day, focusing instead on the factual facts of the judicial timeline. The caption "*The Court of Appeal has fixed March 19, 2025 to hear Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's appeal...*" and the text overlay "*Appellate Court to hear Syed Saddiq's appeal on March 19*" anchor the video as a professional news update.

Public comments for this video reveal that despite the "measured" tone of the report, the breakdown of Parasocial Interaction (PSI) remains severe. Viewers continue to frame his situation through the lens of the Scandal Frame, with comments such as "*Joining the Greatest of all thieves in Kajang*" and "*Senyuman terakhir sebelum kena sebat*" (The last smile before the caning begins). Others expressed cynicism regarding the slow pace of the legal system ("*Ting Tong Ting Tong lama kes hilang senyap*"). These reactions demonstrate that the "Hard Power" of the initial conviction continues to dominate public perception, with the audience remains skeptical of his reformist image as he prepares for his next legal battle.

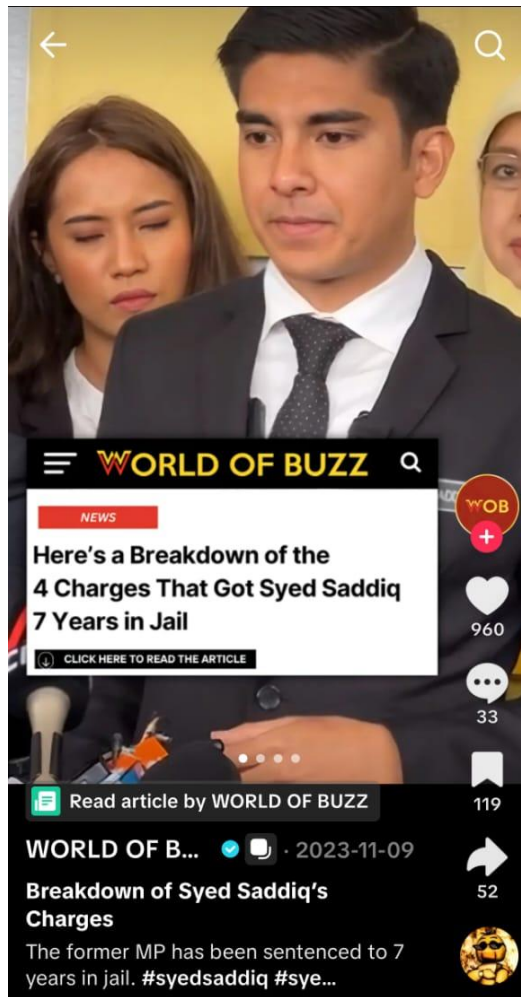


Figure 8: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Acquitted of All Charges

Source: World of Buzz

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	6 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmo4SyLn/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video serves as an informative news summary, utilizing a "listicle" format to explain the four specific charges that led to Syed Saddiq's seven-year prison sentence. The visual narrative is structured around three primary legal violations:

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Abetment of Criminal Breach of Trust (CBT): The video notes Saddiq was found complicit regarding the misappropriation of RM1 million from the party's wing fund in March 2020 (0:05). • Misappropriation of Property: The second charge involves the dishonest misappropriation of RM120,000 from an account belonging to ARMADA Bumi Bersatu Enterprise (0:12). • Money Laundering: The final two charges concern the transfer of RM100,000 (totaling two transactions of RM50,000) believed to be proceeds from unlawful activities (0:18). Imagery: The video uses a combination of "on-the-scene" footage of Syed Saddiq outside the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex and static, text-heavy overlays. The somber imagery of the politician emphasizes the gravity of the legal proceedings. Large, clear typography is used to highlight the specific Penal Code sections (Section 406 and 403) and the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) (0:22). Audio: The audio is characterized by a minimalist but rhythmic approach. Instead of a traditional voiceover, the video utilizes a repetitive, rhythmic vocal "stinger" (an "Ah-ah-ah" sound) that syncs with the transition of text blocks (0:08). This serves as a psychological cue that new information is being presented. There is a lack of complex background music, keeping the focus on the gravity of the text.
2.Tone	Objective and Factual: The tone is strictly reportorial. It avoids sensationalist adjectives, opting instead for precise legal terminology. Given the high-profile

Item	Description / Analysis
	nature of the case and the severity of the 7-year sentence, the tone remains heavy and respectful of the legal process, positioning the information as a matter of public record.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: The former MP has been sentencing to 7 years in jail. Text Overlay: • WORLD OF BUZZ (0:01) • Here's a Breakdown of the 4 Charges That Got Syed Saddiq 7 years in jail. • Click Here To Read The Article (0:28)
4. Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #syedsaddiqluarkerajaan #mp #muda #worldofbuzz #wobnews
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "yep yep hurray yep yep hurray." 2. "Now investigate the Muda members before too." 3. "Why catch small fish? What about the siphon money to offshore with billion? Penny wise pound foolish indeed"
Comment Translation	None

Table 10: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The sixth video, produced by the digital outlet *World of Buzz*, shifts the narrative from broad journalistic reporting to a structured, "listicle" summary of the four specific charges against Syed Saddiq. Visually, the narrative is organized into three distinct legal violations: abetment of Criminal Breach of Trust (CBT) involving RM1 million (0:05), dishonest misappropriation of RM120,000 (0:12), and two counts of money laundering totaling RM100,000 (0:18). The video effectively uses "on-the-scene" footage of Saddiq outside the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex

juxtaposed with static, text-heavy overlays. The use of large, clear typography to highlight specific Penal Code sections (Section 406 and 403) and the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) (0:22) serves to anchor the viewer's attention on the technical gravity of the crimes rather than the politician's personality.

The audio employs a minimalist and rhythmic approach tailored for rapid social media consumption. Instead of a traditional narrative voiceover, the video utilizes a repetitive vocal "stinger" an "Ah-ah-ah" sound that synchronizes with the transition of text blocks (0:08). This functions as a psychological cue for the audience to process the new information. The absence of complex background music maintains a heavy, reportorial tone, positioning the information as a matter of public record and ensuring the focus remains on the severity of the seven-year sentence.

The overall tone is objective and factual, avoiding sensationalism in favor of precise legal terminology. The caption *"The former MP has been sentencing to 7 years in jail"* and the text overlay providing a breakdown of the charges reinforce the "Scandal Frame" by focusing exclusively on the legal downfall. The hashtags, such as #syedsaddiqluarkerajaan and #wobnews, further categorize the content as a political crisis update.

Public comments for this video highlight a significant breakdown in Parasocial Interaction (PSI) and reflect deep public cynicism. While some users reacted with mockery ("yep yep hurray"), others demanded further investigations into his political party, stating, *"Now investigate the Muda members before too"*. Interestingly, a "small fish" narrative emerged in the comments, with one user questioning the fairness of the judiciary: *"Why catch small fish? What about the siphon money to offshore with billion?"*. These reactions demonstrate that during Phase 1, the "Hard Power" of the judicial verdict created a polarized audience; while some sought moral accountability for the individual, others used the scandal to express a broader distrust in the entire political landscape.



Figure 9: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq's RM1.9 Million Asset Debate

Source: TikTok Social Commentary (Independent Content Creator)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	7 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	11 August 2024 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxu7xRe/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a fast-paced political "expose" by speaker Harun Mohd Shah, who uses visual evidence to question the transparency of Syed Saddiq. Suspicious Asset Growth: The speaker highlights a sharp increase in Saddiq's declared net assets, rising from RM722,000 in 2020 (0:51) to RM1.9

Item	Description / Analysis
	million in 2022 (1:00). He frames this RM1.2 million jump as suspicious given his time as an MP. • Proof-Oriented Visuals: The video constantly overlays official asset documents from MACC (0:51) and news clippings from Malaysiakini (0:58) to back up cited figures. • Dynamic Graphics: Bold text "1.9 JUTA" and red boxes highlight specific figures on screen to emphasize the "scandalous" nature of the growth (0:52). • Direct Delivery: The speaker maintains a confrontational, "truth-telling" presence with sharp hand gestures and direct eye contact (0:01). Audio: The audio is authoritative and insistent. • Vocal Style: The speaker uses a rhetorical style, asking how such wealth was amassed so quickly to lead the audience to a skeptical conclusion (0:32). • Background Music: A dramatic, rhythmic background track with heavy bass plays throughout, creating an atmosphere of "uncovering a secret" or "exposing the truth."
2.Tone	Skeptical and Confrontational: The tone is critical and aimed at casting doubt on the legitimacy of Syed Saddiq's asset growth. The delivery is direct, intended to provoke discussion regarding political accountability and financial transparency.
3.Caption& Text Overlay	Caption: Aset Syed Saddiq bernilai 1.9 juta Text Overlay: • Aset Syed Saddiq bernilai RM 1.9 Juta 2022? (0:01) • RM200,000 (0:05)

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #mbselangor #amirudinshari
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "2 tahun penjara dan 2 sebatan tengah tunggu dia." 2. "Tunggu masa sahaja rotan menunggu..." 3. "Syed Saddiq kayuh basikal pun menipu. Yang lagi kelakar duit parti pun masuk akaun ASB dia. Itu yang sangkut di Mahkamah" 4. "Bahaya @syedsadiq muda-muda pandai curi duit armada, bila keluar pati kantoï pula." 5. "Budak MUO ini tak boleh pakai."
Comment Translation	1. "2 years of prison and 2 strokes of the cane are waiting for him." 2. "It's only a matter of time; the rattan [cane] is waiting..." 3. "Syed Saddiq even cheated while cycling. What's even funnier is that party funds went into his ASB account. That's why he got caught/stuck in court." 4. "Syed Saddiq is dangerous; so young yet already skilled at stealing Armada [party youth wing] money, and when he left the party, he got busted." 5. "This Muo kid is useless."

Table 11: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The seventh video, featuring speaker Harun Mohd Shah, utilizes a fast-paced, confrontational visual narrative to question the legitimacy of Syed Saddiq's asset growth. Visually, the speaker highlights a significant jump in Saddiq's declared net assets, rising from RM722,000 in 2020 (0:51) to RM1.9 million in 2022 (1:00). To frame this growth as "suspicious," the video employs proof-oriented visuals, constantly overlaying official MACC asset documents and news clippings from *Malaysiakini* (0:51, 0:58). Bold dynamic graphics, such as "1.9 JUTA"

in red boxes, are used to emphasize the "scandalous" nature of the figures, while the speaker maintains direct eye contact and aggressive hand gestures to project an air of "truth-telling" authority (0:01, 0:52).

The audio is authoritative and insistent, designed to lead the audience toward a skeptical conclusion. The speaker uses a rhetorical style, asking pointed questions about how such wealth was amassed so quickly while serving as an MP (0:32). This is supported by a dramatic, rhythmic background track with heavy bass, which creates an atmosphere of "uncovering a secret" or "exposing the truth".

The tone is overtly skeptical and confrontational, intended to provoke public discussion regarding political accountability. The caption "*Aset Syed Saddiq bernilai 1.9 juta*" and text overlays like "*Aset Syed Saddiq bernilai RM 1.9 Juta 2022?*" serve to immediately anchor the video in financial controversy (0:01).

Public comments for this video indicate that the "Expose" successfully reinforced the Scandal Frame and further eroded Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Viewers reacted with increased hostility, with some predicting his imprisonment ("*2 years of prison and 2 strokes of the cane are waiting for him*") and others accusing him of dishonesty in his personal branding ("*Syed Saddiq even cheated while cycling*"). One comment explicitly linked the asset growth to his court case, stating, "*What's even funnier is that party funds went into his ASB account. That's why he got caught*". These reactions illustrate that during Phase 1, external "truth-telling" content like this expose effectively broadened the scandal beyond the courtroom, characterizing Saddiq as a "dangerous" and "useless" figure who had betrayed his reformist image.

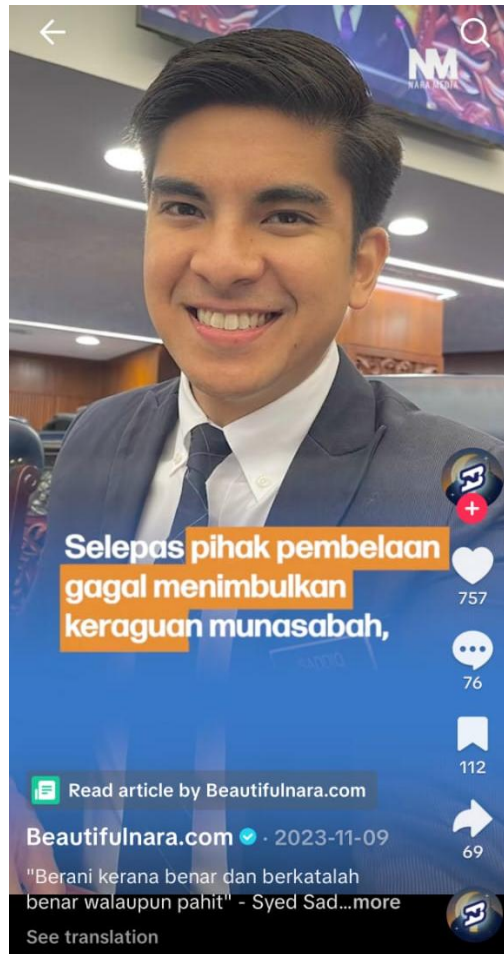


Figure 10: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Responds to Charges

Source: Nara Media

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	8 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmx9GKxu/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video provides a journalistic summary of the Kuala Lumpur High Court's decision, finding the Muar MP guilty after the defense failed to raise reasonable doubt (0:00).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• News Montage: The visuals blend professional reporting with footage of Syed Saddiq entering court (0:03) and interacting with supporters (0:05). • Informative Overlays: Key facts are detailed via on-screen text, specifying the RM1 million involved in the criminal breach of trust (0:24) and RM120,000 in misappropriated funds (0:36). • Protagonist Portrayal: The video captures a range of emotions, from professional stoicism in court to visible distress during press conferences (0:26). Audio: • Narration: A clear, professional voiceover in Malay provides the chronological sequence of the court's findings (0:03). • Atmospheric Music: The background score is melancholic and slow, featuring heavy piano or string arrangements that emphasize the gravity of the conviction. • Live Sound: Ambient noise from court surroundings, such as camera shutters and crowd murmurs, adds "real-time" urgency.
2.Tone	Somber, Serious, and Informative: The tone maintains the objective weight of a news report while layering in an emotional undertone by highlighting the personal impact of the verdict.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: “Berani kerana benar dan berakatalah benar walaupun pahait”- Syed Saddiq Text Overlay: • Nara Media (0:00)

Item	Description / Analysis
4. Associated Hashtags	#sembangentertainment #trendinnewsmalaysia #syedsaddiq #armada #amlamuar #pecahamanah #wangharam
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Habislah suara anak Muda.” 2. “Satu je nak cakap padan muka” 3. “Tulah seronok cari salah orang lain salah sendiri tak nak tengok padan muka.” 4. “Terbaik hakim yang sangat hebat dan tepat.”
Comment Translation	1. "There goes the voice of the youth." 2. "I only have one thing to say: serves you right." 3. "That's what happens when you enjoy finding faults in others but refuse to look at your own; serves you right." 4. "Excellent; a very great and accurate judge."

Table 12: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The eighth video, produced by *Nara Media*, provides a comprehensive summary of the Kuala Lumpur High Court's decision to find Syed Saddiq guilty after the defense failed to raise reasonable doubt (0:00). Visually, the report utilizes a "News Montage" that blends professional reporting with footage of Saddiq entering the court complex and interacting with supporters (0:03, 0:05). Informative overlays are used to detail the financial specifics of the conviction, highlighting the RM1 million involved in the criminal breach of trust (CBT) and the RM120,000 in misappropriated funds (0:24, 0:36). A notable aspect of the visual narrative is the portrayal of the protagonist; the video captures a spectrum of emotions, moving from professional stoicism in court to moments of visible distress during subsequent press conferences (0:26).

The audio for this report is designed to emphasize the gravity and personal impact of the verdict. A clear, professional Malay voiceover provides a chronological sequence of the court's findings, while the background score a melancholic and slow arrangement featuring heavy piano or strings adds a layer of emotional weight (0:03). Ambient live sound, including the murmurs of the crowd and the constant clicking of camera shutters, adds a sense of "real-time" urgency to the report.

The overall tone is "Somber, Serious, and Informative," maintaining the objective weight of a news bulletin while highlighting the personal consequences of the conviction. The caption "*Berani kerana benar dan berkatalah benar walaupun pahit*" (Brave because of the truth and speak the truth even if it is bitter) anchors the video in Saddiq's own defiant rhetoric. The associated hashtags, such as #amla, #pecahmanah (CBT), and #wangharam (money laundering), further categorize the content within the legal and political crisis.

Public comments for this video reflect a deep polarization in Parasocial Interaction (PSI). While some supporters expressed grief over the potential loss of a youthful political voice ("*Habislah suara anak Muda*"), the dominant sentiment was one of moral satisfaction or "Schadenfreude". Reactions like "*Satu je nak cakap padan muka*" (Only one thing to say: serves you right) and praise for the judge's "accurate" decision ("*Terbaik hakim yang sangat hebat dan tepat*") illustrate how the Scandal Frame effectively neutralized Saddiq's soft-power appeal for a significant portion of the audience. This video encapsulates the peak of the Phase 1 crisis, where the "Hard Power" of the judiciary redefined his public image through a lens of legal and moral failure.



Figure 11: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq’s 7-Year Sentence Reaction

Source: mStar

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	9 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxQdHN7/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video provides a journalistic account of the sentencing of Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, the Member of Parliament for Muar and President of MUDA. Following a high-profile trial, the High Court of Malaysia found him guilty of four charges: abetting CBT, misappropriation of property, and money laundering.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Political Context: The video opens with shots of Syed Saddiq within the Malaysian Parliament, establishing his status as a lawmaker (0:01). • The Legal Battle: High-intensity footage shows him navigating throngs of journalists and supporters outside the courthouse (0:07). The presence of "Berani Kerana Benar" placards highlights the high emotional and political stakes (0:16). • Humanizing Elements: The montage includes domestic-style scenes of Syed Saddiq arriving at court with personal bags (0:27) and interacting with security personnel (0:34), serving to humanize him while facing a life-altering crisis. • Symbolism: Close-ups of him in traditional courtroom attire and walking through the formal halls of justice emphasize the gravity of the institution and his transition from lawmaker to defendant (0:32). Audio: • Vocal Delivery: The narrator utilizes a formal, journalistic tone typical of Malaysian news reporting. The delivery is rhythmic and somber, ensuring that the legal statistics 7 years jail, RM10 million fine, and 2 strokes of the cane are clearly communicated. • Background Score: A dramatic, percussive musical bed runs throughout. The tempo is brisk, evoking a sense of urgency and tension that mirrors the fast-moving nature of the legal proceedings. • Natural Sound (SOT): Ambient noise from the crowd and the constant shutter of cameras provide "on-the-ground" authenticity, placing the viewer in the middle of the media frenzy.

Item	Description / Analysis
2. Tone	Objective yet Dramatic: While the script adheres to factual reporting of the court's decision, the editing style leans into the "fall from grace" narrative. By balancing technical legal terms with intimate footage, the video communicates the intersection of personal life and public accountability.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Didapati bersalah atas empat pertuduhan...Syed Saddiq dihukum penjara 7 tahun denda RM10 Juta! Text Overlay: No text overlay (relying on the journalistic montage and visual storytelling).
4. Associated Hashtags	#sembangentertainment #beritaditok #viral #fyp #syedsaddiq
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Kaya Sudah." 2. "Kaki Sakau patut rakyat susah" 3. "Dah salah terima sahajalah." 4. "Selamat bercuti." 5. "Do not sympathise, he stole people's money yet he dares to speak about dignity. It doesn't matter even if this was initiated by the government. He's guilty"
Comment Translation	1. "[He's] already rich." 2. "A 'sakau' addict (habitual thief/looter), no wonder the people are struggling." 3. "Since you're in the wrong, just accept it." 4. "Have a nice holiday."

Table 13: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The ninth video, produced by *mStar*, provides a formal journalistic account of the sentencing of Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, the MP for Muar and President of MUDA. Visually, the report opens with strategic shots of Saddiq inside the Malaysian Parliament (0:01), establishing his status as a high-ranking lawmaker before juxtaposing this with high-intensity footage of him navigating a media frenzy outside the courthouse (0:07). The presence of "Berani Kerana Benar" (Brave Because of the Truth) placards highlights the high emotional and political stakes of the day (0:16). To humanize the subject during this life-altering crisis, the montage includes domestic-style scenes, such as Saddiq arriving at court with personal bags and interacting with security personnel (0:27, 0:34). Close-ups of him in formal courtroom attire walking through the halls of justice emphasize the gravity of the institution and serve as a visual metaphor for his "fall from grace" (0:32).

The audio is characterized by a formal and somber tone typical of Malaysian broadcast news. The narrator uses a rhythmic delivery to ensure that the heavy legal penalties seven years in jail, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane are clearly communicated to the viewer. This is supported by a brisk, dramatic percussive background score that evokes a sense of urgency and tension. Ambient natural sound (SOT), including the constant clicking of camera shutters and the murmurs of the crowd, provides "on-the-ground" authenticity, placing the viewer directly in the center of the media scrum.

The overall tone is "Objective yet Dramatic," balancing factual reporting with an editing style that emphasizes public accountability. The caption "*Didapati bersalah atas empat pertuduhan....Syed Saddiq dihukum penjara 7 tahun denda RM10 Juta!*" directly focuses on the severity of the punishment. The associated hashtags, such as #beritaditiktok and #viral, categorize the content for mass digital consumption.

Public comments for this video indicate a significant breakdown in Parasocial Interaction (PSI), with much of the audience rejecting Saddiq's reformist image in favor of a "thief" narrative.

Reactions included accusations of corruption (*“Kaki Sakau patut rakyat susah”*) and dismissive remarks about his impending prison term (*“Selamat bercuti”*). One commenter explicitly urged others not to feel sympathy: *“Do not sympathise, he stole people’s money yet he dares to speak about dignity... He’s guilty”*. These findings suggest that by Video 9, the Scandal Frame had become the dominant lens through which the public viewed Saddiq, effectively neutralizing his political soft power during Phase 1.



Figure 12: Snapshot: Legal Review of the Syed Saddiq Verdict

Source: AATV News (Sembang Kopi AA Live)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	10 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	11 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxXbwTm/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a social media-style news commentary titled "Sembang Kopi AA" (Coffee Talk AA). It features a casual panel discussion set in an outdoor cafe or garden environment (0:01). • Primary Subject: An elderly gentleman (identified as Datuk Kamaruddin) acts as the main commentator, dressed in an orange shirt (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• On-Screen Graphics: The video includes large title headers at the top (0:01) and dynamic, colorful subtitles that pop up in sync with the speech (0:06). • Static Info Box: A permanent blue information box at the bottom details the specific legal sentence: 7 years prison, RM10 million fine, and 2 strokes of the cane (0:01). • Composition: The camera focuses primarily on the speaker, with other participants visible in the frame, creating a "roundtable" atmosphere (0:01). Audio: • Vocal Delivery: The audio is dominated by a single, clear voiceover from the main speaker. His voice is crisp and authoritative, making the complex legal explanation easy to follow (0:01). • Speech Content: The speaker explains the technicalities of the court's decision. He highlights that the sentence is mandatory for those under 50 and notes that "representation letters" are no longer applicable after a High Court verdict (0:32). • Background Ambience: There is a faint outdoor ambient sound, but it remains secondary to the primary speech (0:15).
2.Tone	Serious and Analytical: The tone is serious, yet delivered in an informal setting. It strikes a balance between a casual chat among friends and a stern legal lecture. There is a sense of gravity regarding the subject matter, transitioning into a moralistic warning toward the end regarding the consequences of corruption (0:36).

Item	Description / Analysis
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Ulasan Peguam Datuk Kamarudin mengenai YB Syed Saddiq yang telah dijatuhkan hukuman penjara 10 tahun, denda RM10 juta, 2 sebatan. Text Overlay: • Sembang Kopi AA • Live • 11 November 2023 • Ulasan Peguam Datuk Kamaruddin mengenai YB Syed Saddiq... (0:01)
4. Associated Hashtags	#kamaruddinpeguam #ulasan #YbSyedSaddiq #kesmahkamah #saddiqsakau #aatvnews #infromasiurban #misikemanusiaan #viral #viralnewsmalaysia #tular #beritatiktok #trendingnewsmalaysia #trending #AizatAshraf #sahabatbosskay #sahabatAA #aurasifu #circleshahrina #sahabatwanii #pahangtiktok #selangortiktok #kembalikannajib #BarisanNasional #FELDA #rindudsn #rindunajibrazak #DemiNajib #PulangkanNajib #bebasnajib #bebasnajibrazak #keadilanbuatnajibrazak
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Pencuri mestilah dihukum" 2. "Tahniah Tahniah diatas hukuman tersebut Tahniah" 3. "Kalau salah terima je la hukuman...mungkin itu satu teguran untuk lebih amanah dan mempunyai jati diri yang kuat. Senang je jangan jadi hamba duit." 4. "Sekiranya SS tak mampu bayar 10 juta tu bagaimana ya?"
Comment Translation	1. "A thief must be punished." 2. "Congratulations, congratulations on the sentence, congratulations." 3. "If you are wrong, just accept the punishment... perhaps it is a reminder to be more trustworthy... don't be a slave to money."

Item	Description / Analysis
	4. "If SS is unable to pay that 10 million, what happens then?"

Table 14: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The tenth video, a social media-style news commentary titled "*Sembang Kopi AA*" (Coffee Talk AA), features a casual yet authoritative panel discussion led by an elderly gentleman, Datuk Kamaruddin (0:01). Visually, the video utilizes an outdoor garden setting to create a "roundtable" atmosphere, though it remains anchored in legal gravity through a permanent blue information box at the bottom detailing the sentence: seven years in prison, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane (0:01). Dynamic subtitles sync with the speech to ensure clarity for the viewer (0:06).

The audio is dominated by the crisp and authoritative voice of Datuk Kamaruddin, who explains the technicalities of the High Court's decision (0:01). He specifically notes that caning is a mandatory sentence for male convicts under 50 and clarifies that "representation letters" are no longer applicable once a verdict has been rendered (0:32). The delivery strikes a balance between an informal chat and a stern legal lecture, concluding with a moralistic warning about the consequences of corruption (0:36).

The overall tone is "Serious and Analytical," positioning the judicial outcome not just as a legal fact but as a moral lesson. The video's caption reinforces this by framing the content as a professional legal review of Syed Saddiq's sentencing. The extensive use of associated hashtags, ranging from #kesmahkamah to #saddiqsakau and even #bebasnajib, places the video within a broader Malaysian political discourse of accountability and partisanship.

Public comments for this video further illustrate the successful embedding of the Scandal Frame, with the audience largely endorsing the punitive measures. Viewers expressed a sense of justice, with comments such as "*A thief must be punished*" and "*Congratulations on the*

sentence". Others viewed the verdict as a necessary ethical correction, advising, *"If you are wrong, just accept the punishment... don't be a slave to money"*. These reactions confirm that during Phase 1, analytical content like Video 10 served to solidify public perception of Saddiq as a "thief," effectively overriding his previous image as a reformist youth leader.

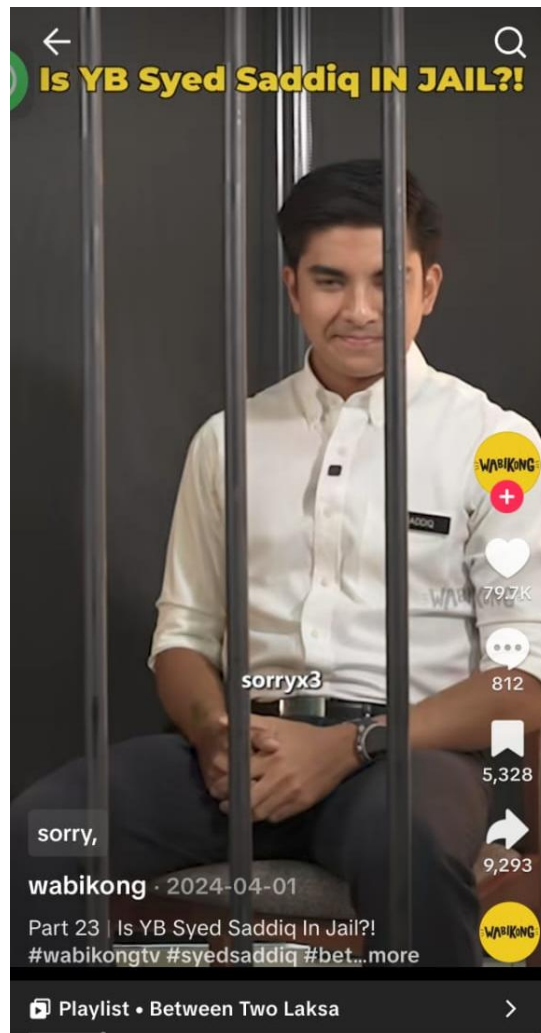


Figure 13: Snapshot: "Is YB Syed Saddiq In Jail?!"

Source: Wabikong (Interview Segment)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	11 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	1 April 2024 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxV44CF/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video features a satirical, high-concept interview between a host (Sai, dressed in a green shirt) and Syed Saddiq, designed as a parody of the western "Between Two Ferns" format.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The "Jail" Visual: The segment opens with a deliberate visual gag where Syed Saddiq is seated behind a set of black bars (0:01), directly mocking his real-world legal sentencing. The host acts shocked, asking "Who did this?!" and "removes" the bars, which are revealed to be a simple cardboard prop (0:02). This serves to immediately disarm the tension surrounding his conviction through slapstick irony. • The Studio Setting: The environment is a standard, low-budget studio for the "Between Two Laksa" show (0:06). Syed Saddiq is dressed formally in a white shirt and "Saddiq" name tag (0:02), maintaining his "Yang Berhormat" persona even as the host aggressively roasts him. • Interactive Body Language: The visual comedy relies on the contrast in energy; the host is highly animated and expressive with his hands (0:09), while Saddiq maintains a "straight-man" composure, often breaking into a "knowing" smile or a lighthearted shrug (0:11) to show he is a willing participant in the joke. Audio: • Linguistic Style: The dialogue is snappy and multilingual, heavily featuring "Manglish" (a blend of English and Malay) which resonates with a local, younger demographic (0:14). • Vocal Contrast: The host's voice is performative and loud (0:02), creating a comedic foil to Saddiq's calm, measured, and characteristically "political" tone (0:15).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Subtitles & Cues: Large, bold subtitles are used to emphasize key punchlines (0:01). • Key Moments: The audio highlights moments of extreme irony, such as when the host apologizes for his staff's "lack of manners" in putting the guest behind bars (0:05) and the "Between Two Laksa" jingle (0:06).
2. Tone	Satirical, Irreverent, and Self-Deprecating: The tone is light-hearted but bites at the reality of the situation. It uses the sensitive topic of imprisonment as fodder for a comedy sketch. Because Syed Saddiq participates willingly, the tone feels like a strategic attempt to "humanize" his image by showing he can take a joke regarding his own legal downfall.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Is YB Syed Saddiq in Jail? Text Overlay: No text overlay (except for the subtitles and "Wabikong TV" branding throughout).
4. Associated Hashtags	#wabikongtv #syedsaddiq #betweenwolaksa
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Tak tersinggung ke YB?" 2. "Yb was too stunned to speak" 3. "So he is out of jail?" 4. "Dia tu sooner akan masuk lokap dan disebat" 5. "Syed Saddiq is lalang."
Comment Translation	1. "Don't you feel offended, YB?" 2. "He will be entering the lockup and be caned soon."

Item	Description / Analysis
	3. "Syed Saddiq is a fence-sitter/opportunist."

Table 15: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The eleventh video features a high-concept, satirical interview between Syed Saddiq and a host (Sai) for the show *"Between Two Laksa,"* a parody of the Western *"Between Two Ferns"* format. Visually, the segment opens with a deliberate gag where Saddiq is seated behind black bars, directly mocking his real-world legal sentencing (0:01). The host acts shocked, asking *"Who did this?!"* before removing the "bars," which are revealed to be a simple cardboard prop (0:02). This visual irony is designed to immediately lower the high-stakes tension surrounding his conviction through slapstick comedy. Throughout the roast, Saddiq maintains his "Yang Berhormat" (Honorable) persona while often breaking into a "knowing" smile, signaling his status as a willing participant in the joke (0:02, 0:11).

The audio is characterized by snappy, multilingual dialogue, heavily featuring "Manglish" (a blend of English and Malay) to resonate with a younger, local demographic (0:14). The host's loud and performative vocal style acts as a comedic foil to Saddiq's calm, measured, and typically "political" tone (0:02, 0:15). Key punchlines are emphasized with bold subtitles, particularly during moments of extreme irony, such as when the host apologizes for the "lack of manners" in putting a guest behind bars (0:01, 0:05).

The tone is "Satirical, Irreverent, and Self-Deprecating," using the sensitive topic of imprisonment as fodder for comedy. By participating in the sketch, Saddiq strategically attempts to "humanize" his public image, demonstrating that he can engage with his legal downfall with a sense of humor. The caption *"Is YB Syed Saddiq in Jail?"* leans into this curiosity while the #wabikongtv and #betweentwolaksa hashtags frame the content firmly as entertainment.

Public comments, however, suggest that while some viewers were curious about his reaction (“*Don't you feel offended, YB?*”), others remained rooted in the Scandal Frame. Critical reactions included reminders of his actual legal fate (“*He will be entering the lockup and be caned soon*”) and accusations of political opportunism (“*Syed Saddiq is a fence-sitter/opportunist*”). This indicates that while the satirical strategy provided a brief "humanizing" break, the dominant public narrative during Phase 1 remained focused on legal accountability and character skepticism.



Figure 14: Snapshot: Astro Awani News Breakdown of the initial verdict in Syed Saddiq's corruption case

Source: Astro Awani

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	12 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxpUuPr/
1. Visual& Audio	Visual: This is a formal news bulletin from Astro AWANI that serves as a factual anchor for the "Scandal Frame," documenting the serious legal consequences of the charges against Syed Saddiq.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Breaking News Announcement: The video opens with a stark, high-contrast "TERKINI" (Breaking News) graphic (0:01), explicitly listing his guilt in criminal breach of trust, misappropriation of property, and money laundering. • Studio vs. Courtroom: The visual narrative alternates between the controlled environment of the news studio (0:05) and on-site footage of the Kuala Lumpur High Court (0:23). This juxtaposition emphasizes the transition from legal theory to reality. • Contrast in Composure: Outside the court complex, Syed Saddiq is seen surrounded by a dense crowd of supporters and media (0:24). Despite the gravity of the 7-year jail and caning sentence, he appears remarkably composed, which the reporter notes as a contrast to the judicial findings. • Legal Focus: The visuals support the reporting on the specific funds involved those of the Bersatu youth wing (ARMADA) and the defense's failure to raise reasonable doubt. Audio: • Professional Delivery: News anchor Fahmi Izzuddin delivers the report in a clear, rapid-fire, and strictly formal Malay (0:05). His neutral tone is designed to convey authority and objectivity, devoid of the satire found in other media. • Urgency Cues: A rhythmic, low-volume "news ticker" background track runs throughout the studio segment (0:08), maintaining a sense of ongoing national importance.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Ambient Atmosphere: As the scene shifts to the court, the audio captures the chaotic ambient noise of camera shutters and muffled crowd reactions (0:24), grounding the viewer in the live event. • Judicial Citations: The audio includes specific mentions of Justice Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid's verdict, providing a direct link to the authority of the court.
2. Tone	Authoritative, Objective, and Consequential: The tone is heavy and serious. As a formal broadcast, it lacks any comedic elements, focusing entirely on the historic nature of the conviction specifically that Saddiq is the first politician sentenced to caning for white-collar crime.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Lumpur finds MP Muar Syed Saddiq guilty of four charges related to ARMADA funds after the defense failed to raise reasonable doubt. Text Overlay: • "TERKINI" (Breaking News) (0:01) • "SYED SADDIQ DIDAPATI BERSALAH..." (Syed Saddiq found guilty...) (0:01) • Date: 9 NOV 2023 (0:01)
4. Associated Hashtags	#AWANInews
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Susah zaman sekarang nak jadi orang jujur" 2. "POLITICIANS Can't BE TRUSTED" 3. "I feel shame... once politician always a politician."

Item	Description / Analysis
	4. "Hahahaha akhirnya." 5. "Muda-muda dah pecah amanah."
Comment Translation	1. "It is difficult to be an honest person these days." 2. "Finally [expressed as laughter]." 3. "So young, yet already committed a breach of trust."

Table 16: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The twelfth video, a formal broadcast from Astro AWANI, documents the historical legal outcome of the case against Syed Saddiq. Visually, the report opens with a high-contrast "TERKINI" (Breaking News) graphic, explicitly listing his guilt in criminal breach of trust (CBT), misappropriation of property, and money laundering (0:01). The narrative alternates between the controlled news studio and on-site footage at the Kuala Lumpur High Court, emphasizing the transition of the legal process from theoretical charges to reality (0:05, 0:23). Despite the gravity of the sentence which includes seven years in prison and caning Saddiq appears remarkably composed while surrounded by media and supporters outside the court complex, a point of contrast noted by the reporter (0:24).

The audio features a rapid-fire, strictly formal delivery by news anchor Fahmi Izzuddin (0:05). His neutral and authoritative tone is designed for objectivity, distinctly lacking the satirical elements seen in other media formats. A rhythmic, low-volume "news ticker" background track maintains a sense of national urgency during the studio segment (0:08). As the footage shifts to the courthouse, the audio captures the chaotic ambient noise of camera shutters and muffled crowd reactions, grounding the report in the live event (0:24).

The tone of the video is "Authoritative, Objective, and Consequential," focusing entirely on the historic nature of the conviction specifically that Saddiq is the first politician sentenced to

caning for a white-collar crime. The caption reinforces this by detailing that the High Court found the Muar MP guilty on four charges after the defense failed to raise reasonable doubt. The use of the single hashtag #AWANInews reflects the video's function as a standard journalistic record.

Public comments (PSI Analysis) for this video reflect a deep sense of disillusionment and skepticism toward the political class. While some commenters expressed a loss of faith in honesty (“Susah zaman sekarang nak jadi orang jujur”), others directly labeled politicians as untrustworthy. There were also reactions of mockery (“Hahahaha akhirnya”) and criticism regarding his age (“Muda-muda dah pecah amanah”). These findings indicate that the Scandal Frame in Phase 1 effectively transitioned the public's view of Saddiq from a symbol of youthful hope to a representative of institutional failure.



Figure 15: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq's 2023 Conviction Details

Source: SPRM Malaysia

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	13 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmxt1x6P/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: This concise news report, distributed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (SPRM), captures the pivotal moments surrounding the High Court's guilty verdict.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The "Calm" Protagonist: The video tracks Syed Saddiq as he navigates the court premises. Despite the severity of the verdict, he is seen interacting politely and smiling at supporters and the public, many of whom are filming him on their smartphones (0:01). • A Strategic Poise: Saddiq is shown shaking hands with his legal team and colleagues (0:10). His body language giving a "thumbs up" (0:04) and maintaining eye contact projects an image of professional composure and "calm defiance" rather than a disgraced official. • Institutional Gravity: The camera follows his entourage through the "Mahkamah Tinggi Jenayah" (High Court of Criminal Cases) (0:12), using the somber architecture of the court to contrast with his upbeat demeanor. • Finality through Branding: The video concludes with a splash screen for the MACC (SPRM) (0:32), featuring the agency's logo and the slogan "<i>Rasuah Dihina, Maruah Dibina</i>" (Corruption is Despised, Dignity is Built), framing the conviction as a triumph of institutional integrity. Audio: • Factual Voiceover: A steady, formal male voiceover in Malay provides a clinical breakdown of the judicial decision. • Technical Details: The narrator outlines that the court found him guilty of four counts involving the misappropriation of ARMADA (Bersatu youth wing) funds and money laundering.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Judicial "Failure": The narration emphasizes that Judge Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid made the ruling specifically because the defense failed to establish reasonable doubt by the end of the proceedings. • Historical Sentence: The audio clearly lists the historic punishment: 7 years in prison, 2 strokes of the cane, and a fine of RM 10 million. • Procedural Status: It clarifies that the court granted a "stay of execution" (0:28), explaining for the public why the politician remained at liberty despite the prison sentence.
2.Tone	Reportorial yet Polarizing: The tone is strictly informative, yet it creates a stark psychological dissonance. There is a heavy tension between the audio's announcement of a "7-year prison sentence" and the visual of Saddiq smiling and greeting people. This frames the subject as either a resilient fighter or a politician detached from the gravity of his crimes, depending on the viewer's bias.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Syed Saddiq dijatuhi hukuman penjara 7 tahun, 2 sebatan dan denda RM10 juta selepas didapati bersalah terhadap kesalahan pecah amanah, salah guna harta dan penggubahan wang haram. Text Overlay: Dynamic Malay subtitles appear throughout, mirroring the voiceover to ensure the legal charges are readable even without sound (0:01-0:32).
4. Associated Hashtags	#sprmmalaysia #rasuahdihinamaruahdibina

Item	Description / Analysis
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Terlalu nak tunjuk hero.ni akibat nya.” 2. “Nampak baik je budak ni” 3. “Orang muda nak cepat meletu.” 4. “Dah salah nak rayuan lagi.”
Comment Translation	1. "Wanted to act like a hero too much. This is the consequence." 2. "This kid looks as if he is kind." 3. "Young people want to become successful too quickly." 4. "Already found guilty, yet still wants an appeal."

Table 17: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The thirteenth video, distributed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (SPRM/MACC), captures pivotal moments following the High Court’s guilty verdict. Visually, the report follows Syed Saddiq as he navigates the court premises, maintaining a "strategic poise" despite the severity of the ruling (0:01). He is seen interacting politely with supporters and providing a "thumbs up" to the public, projecting an image of "calm defiance" rather than a disgraced official (0:01, 0:04). The camera tracks his entourage through the "Mahkamah Tinggi Jenayah" (High Court of Criminal Cases), using the somber architecture to contrast with his upbeat demeanor (0:12). The video concludes with an SPRM splash screen featuring the slogan "*Rasuah Dihina, Maruah Dibina*" (Corruption is Despised, Dignity is Built), framing the conviction as a triumph for national integrity (0:32).

The audio features a steady, formal male voiceover providing a clinical breakdown of the judicial decision. The narrator details that the court found Saddiq guilty of four counts involving the misappropriation of ARMADA funds and money laundering. Crucially, the narration emphasizes that the ruling was made because the defense failed to establish reasonable doubt by

the end of the proceedings. The audio clearly lists the historical sentence seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine while also clarifying that a "stay of execution" was granted, explaining why the politician remained at liberty following the verdict (0:28).

The tone is "Reportorial yet Polarizing," creating a psychological dissonance between the heavy prison sentence mentioned in the audio and the visual of Saddiq smiling and greeting the crowd. This framing allows viewers to perceive him as either a resilient fighter or a politician detached from his crimes, depending on their existing bias. The caption and dynamic Malay subtitles ensure the legal charges are clearly communicated, even to viewers watching without sound (0:01-0:32).

Public comments (PSI Analysis) reflect this polarization, with some viewers criticizing his perceived arrogance (*"Wanted to act like a hero too much. This is the consequence"*) and others noting his youthful ambition (*"Young people want to become successful too quickly"*). Some commenters expressed confusion over his continued public presence despite the verdict (*"Already found guilty, yet still wants an appeal"*). Collectively, Video 13 reinforces the Scandal Frame by grounding the narrative in institutional authority and the specific technical failures of the defense during Phase 1.



Figure 16: Snapshot: Legal Grounds for the Whipping Sentence

Source: New Straits Times (NST TV)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	14 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQYA8kp/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: Produced by New Straits Times (NST), this report documents the historic court ruling where Syed Saddiq became the first Malaysian politician sentenced to whipping following a corruption conviction.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Courthouse Arrival/Departure (0:01 - 0:17): Syed Saddiq is seen navigating through a dense swarm of reporters, photographers, and supporters outside the Kuala Lumpur High Court. Despite the severity of the situation, he maintains a smiling and positive appearance. At one point, he gives a broad smile and a firm thumb-up directly to the cameras. • Supporter Presence (0:18 - 0:20): He is surrounded by people carrying signs with slogans such as "<i>Berani Kerana Benar</i>" (Brave Because of Truth). • The Statement (0:21 - 0:38): The second half shows a formal press conference where Syed Saddiq speaks from a podium. He remains composed and professional throughout his address. Audio: • English Narration: The narrator explains that Syed Saddiq was found guilty of corruption and highlights the landmark whipping sentence. It also mentions his intent to appeal at the Court of Appeal. • Syed Saddiq's Speech (Malay with English Subtitles): He states he accepts the decision of the judge and High Court "with an open heart". He emphasizes his duty as a lawmaker to place trust in the nation's judicial institution. He notes that after consulting lawyers, he will file an appeal to ultimately clear his name.
2.Tone	Balanced Gravity & Resilience: The news framing provides a serious, historical context to the conviction. However, Syed Saddiq's personal tone is one of grace and determination. He does not appear defeated; instead, he projects an image of a leader who respects the law but is committed to fighting for his reputation.

Item	Description / Analysis
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: According to Section 289 (c) of the Criminal Procedural Code (CPC) #whipping is a #mandatory sentence for criminal breach of trust charges with exceptions granted for special circumstances such as women and individuals aged 50 years and above. Text Overlay: • NEW STRAITS TIMES • Syed Saddiq first politician to face whipping sentence • KUALA LUMPUR • NST TV
4. Associated Hashtags	#NSTTV #whipping #mandatory
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Nak tengok dia nangis nanti." 2. "Kacau duit rakyat must not be given a chance to appeal" 3. "Lost all hope in Malaysia." 4. "Smiling." 5. "Tu la suruh duduk diam tak nak."
Comment Translation	1. "I want to see him cry later." 2. "Those who mess with the people's money must not be given a chance to appeal." 3. "That's what happens; he was told to stay quiet, but he didn't want to."

Table 18: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The fourteenth video produced by the *New Straits Times* (NST), this report documents the historic court ruling where Syed Saddiq became the first Malaysian politician sentenced to

whipping following a corruption conviction (0:01). Visually, the video captures Saddiq navigating a dense swarm of reporters and supporters outside the Kuala Lumpur High Court (0:01-0:17). Despite the gravity of the situation, he maintains a positive appearance, offering a broad smile and a firm "thumbs-up" directly to the cameras (0:17). He is also seen surrounded by supporters carrying signs with slogans such as "*Berani Kerana Benar*" (Brave Because of Truth) (0:18-0:20).

The audio includes an English narration that emphasizes the landmark whipping sentence and mentions Saddiq's intent to appeal. In a formal press conference following the verdict, Saddiq speaks with composure, stating that he accepts the judge's decision with an "open heart" while affirming his duty as a lawmaker to trust the judicial institution (0:21-0:38). He clarifies that after consulting with his legal team; he will file an appeal to clear his name.

The tone of the video is a balance of "Gravity & Resilience". While the news framing provides a serious and historical context to the conviction, Saddiq's personal demeanor projects grace and determination rather than defeat. The caption provides further legal context, noting that under Section 289(c) of the Criminal Procedural Code (CPC), whipping is a mandatory sentence for criminal breach of trust, with exceptions only for women or individuals over the age of 50.

Public comments (PSI Analysis) for this video show a stark divide in perception. Some viewers expressed a desire to see him "cry" or argued that those convicted of misappropriating public funds should not be allowed to appeal. Others reflected on the state of the country, stating they had "lost all hope in Malaysia". These reactions indicate that while Video 14 documents his attempt to frame himself as a resilient leader, the Scandal Frame of Phase 1 continued to fuel intense public scrutiny and skepticism regarding his character and the judicial outcome.



Figure 17: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Slapped with Severe Sentence

Source: Vanakkam Malaysia News

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	15 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQYtwXX/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: • Infographic Overlay (0:01): The video opens with a summary text graphic stating the verdict: "9 Nov 2023: Syed Saddiq slapped with 7 years' jail, 2 strokes & RM10 mil fine for CBT & money laundering."

Item	Description / Analysis
	• News Anchor (0:02): A Tamil-speaking presenter provides the primary report, establishing a professional and grave context. • B-Roll & Public Life (0:27 - 0:45): Footage transitions between Saddiq interacting with supporters and university graduation clips, grounding the news in his public persona. • Press Conference (0:52): Shows Saddiq at a podium, speaking calmly to a bank of microphones (including CNA and Astro Awani). Audio: • Tamil Narration: Details the specific charges and the historic nature of the corporal punishment. • Syed Saddiq's Speech (0:53): In Malay, he calls the judiciary the "last bastion" for the people and confirms his plan for an immediate appeal. • Ambient Sound: Professional news stingers and rhythmic background music maintain a breaking news urgency.
2.Tone	Serious & Journalistic: The objective distance of the Tamil broadcast highlights the historical gravity of the "caning" sentence. Saddiq's own demeanor is portrayed as respectful yet defiant.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Syed Saddiq slapped with 7 years jail, 2 strokes & RM10 mil fine for CBT & money laundering. Text Overlay: • 9 Nov 2023 • Syed Saddiq slapped with 7 years jail, 2 strokes and RM10 mil fine for CBT & money laundering

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Vanakkam Malaysia News
4. Associated Hashtags	#latest #vanakammalaysia #SyedSaddiq #slapped #7years #jail #2strokes #RM10mil #fine #CBT #money #laundering #trendingnewsmalaysia #malaysiatamilnews #fyp #vmnews #foryoupage
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Only god can save Malaysia.” 2. “Money death body also wake up.” 3. “Give a bit take a lot.” 4. “Semua menteri pun sama.”
Comment Translation	1. “All the Ministers are the same.”

Table 19: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The fifteenth video, a report from *Vanakkam Malaysia*, documents the historic sentencing of Syed Saddiq in November 2023. Visually, the report opens with a high-contrast infographic overlay summarizing the verdict: seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine for CBT and money laundering (0:01). The visual narrative transitions from a professional news studio to footage of Saddiq interacting with supporters and clips of university graduations, which serves to ground the grave legal news in his established public persona (0:02, 0:27-0:45). During a press conference shown in the video, Saddiq is seen speaking calmly to a bank of international and local media microphones, including CNA and Astro AWANI (0:52).

The audio features a Tamil-speaking presenter providing the primary report, which highlights the specific charges and the historic nature of the corporal punishment. In a Malay speech included in the broadcast, Saddiq refers to the judiciary as the “*last bastion*” for the people and confirms his intention to file an immediate appeal (0:53). Professional news stingers and

rhythmic background music are used throughout the audio to maintain a sense of breaking news urgency.

The tone is "Serious & Journalistic," with the objective distance of the Tamil broadcast underscoring the historical gravity of the "caning" sentence. Saddiq's own demeanor is portrayed as respectful yet defiant, emphasizing his commitment to the legal process. The caption and text overlays reinforce the factual details of the conviction and the branding of the news outlet.

Public comments (PSI Analysis) for this video reflect a broader societal skepticism and cynicism. Commenters expressed a sense of hopelessness regarding the country's state (*"Only god can save Malaysia"*) and generalized criticism toward the political class (*"All the Ministers are the same"*). Other comments touched on the influence of money in politics (*"Money death body also wake up"*). These reactions demonstrate that the Scandal Frame in Phase 1 effectively linked Saddiq's individual legal crisis to a larger narrative of systemic political distrust among the public.



Figure 18: Snapshot: Public Commentary on the Verdict

Source: TikTok Social Commentary

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	16 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQM6udk/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual:

Item	Description / Analysis
	• News Graphic Overlay (0:01): The video features a man positioned in front of a Siakap Keli headline stating: "Syed Saddiq sentenced to seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine." • Performative Grief (0:01 - 0:12): The subject, wearing a white skullcap (<i>kopiah</i>), uses a "crying filter" and theatrical sobbing to appear devastated by the "fall" of his idol. • Satirical Pivot (0:13): The filter suddenly vanishes. The man breaks into a smug, knowing smile, addressing the camera directly to signal that the initial sadness was a facade. Audio: • Mournful Piano: A slow track plays during the "crying" segment to heighten the parody. • The Mockery (0:05): He laments, "I thought he was clean... he was our idol," before mockingly asking for the "Walatoks" (Saddiq's supporters). • The Realization (0:14): The music stops as he declares the Unity Government is the "best for the people."
2.Tone	Mocking & Triumphant: The tone is sharply sarcastic. It mimics melodrama to parody the reaction of Syed Saddiq's supporters before shifting to a celebratory stance on political accountability under the "Kerajaan Perpaduan."
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Syed Saddiq di Dapati Bersalah, penjara tujuh tahun...Penyokongnya insaf dan sebar. Text Overlay: No text overlay (aside from the background news graphic).

Item	Description / Analysis
4. Associated Hashtags	#anwaribrahim #syedsaddiq #penjara7tahun #10juta #pakatanharapan #perikatannasional #pas #barisannasional #kerajaanperpaduan #moveitlah #tiktokmalaysia #shouldbeme
5. Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Dia tolong simpan sat duit Armada." 2. "Kecik-kecik dah pandai menyakau." 3. "Selamat bercuti Syed." 4. "Semoga jadi orang baik...berani buat berani tanggung."
Comment Translation	1. "He was just helping to 'keep' the Armada funds for a moment." 2. "So young, yet already so skilled at looting." 3. "Enjoy your 'vacation,' Syed." 4. "I hope you become a better person... if you're brave enough to do it, be brave enough to face the consequences."

Table 20: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The sixteenth video represents a departure from formal journalism, utilizing a mocking and triumphant tone to address the judicial outcome. Visually, the video features a man wearing a white skullcap (kopiah) positioned in front of a *Siakap Keli* news headline detailing Syed Saddiq's sentence of seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine (0:01). The subject initially displays "performative grief," using a crying filter and theatrical sobbing to mimic a devastated supporter (0:01-0:12). However, in a "satirical pivot" at 0:13, the filter vanishes, and the man breaks into a smug smile to signal that his sadness was a facade.

The audio supports this parody through a mournful piano track that heightens the initial melodrama. During the crying segment, the man mockingly laments, "*I thought he was clean... he was our idol,*" before specifically targeting Saddiq's supporters, referred to as "*Walatoks*"

(0:05). The music stops at 0:14 as he shifts to a celebratory stance, declaring that the Unity Government is the "best for the people".

The tone of the video is "Mocking & Triumphant," parodying the emotional responses of supporters to highlight political accountability under the current administration. The caption, *"Syed Saddiq di Dapati Bersalah, penjara tujuh tahun... Penyokongnya insaf dan sedar,"* suggests that the conviction should serve as a wake-up call for his followers. The extensive list of associated hashtags, including #anwaribrahim, #pakatanharapan, and #kerajaanperpaduan, further aligns the content with pro-government narratives.

Public comments (PSI Analysis) for this video continue the theme of mockery. Commenters used sarcasm to describe the misappropriation of funds (*"He was just helping to 'keep' the Armada funds for a moment"*) and criticized Saddiq's age (*"So young, yet already so skilled at looting"*). Others mockingly wished him a good "vacation" in prison. These findings illustrate how the Scandal Frame in Phase 1 was amplified through social media satire, effectively "memifying" the serious legal situation to further damage Saddiq's public image.



Figure 19: Snapshot: Social Media Sentiment & Reaction

Source: TikTok / Social Media Screenshot (User: @adiismail0608)

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	17 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQDs4j1/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: This video serves as a primary example of "remix culture" in Malaysian political discourse, where serious judicial outcomes are "memified."

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Breaking News Aesthetic (0:01): The video uses a static graphic from the portal <i>Oh Bulan!</i> featuring a formal headshot of Syed Saddiq. A bold "TERKINI" (Latest News) banner is visible, creating an initial impression of authoritative reporting. • Information Overlay (0:01): Text explicitly details the sentencing: 7 years' jail, RM10 million fine, and 2 strokes of the cane. • Juxtaposition (Throughout): The somber, static image of Saddiq in a suit acts as a "canvas" for a high-energy audio track, creating a jarring cognitive dissonance between the legal gravity and the presentation style. Audio: • Rhythmic Folk-Pop: The audio features a fast-paced, Southeast Asian folk-pop track (likely Thai or Mor Lam influenced) characterized by rapid percussion and upbeat, frantic vocals. • Celebratory Tone: The "party" atmosphere of the music directly contradicts the heavy reality of a prison sentence, suggesting a mockery of the situation or a celebration of the verdict by the content creator.
2.Tone	Satirical & Irreverent: The tone is designed to provoke amusement or political agreement by stripping the news of its formality. It uses "Digital Irony" to mock the subject's "fall from grace," engaging younger audiences through meme-based dissent.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: MP Muar. Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman disabitkan bersalah... Padan muka. Adapun Sg Buloh juga habuannya. Uraaaaaaaaaa

Item	Description / Analysis
	Text Overlay: • OHBULAN! • TERKINI • Syed Saddiq dikenakan hukuman 7 tahun penjara, denda RM10 juta dan 2 kali sebatan.
4.Associated Hashtags	#fyp #MuarKoyak #WalaunPNKoyak
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Sila letak jawatan penyamun." 2. "Patutla kaya raya. Geng sakau juga, kan dah terbongkar." 3. "Akhirnya." 4. "Hero la sangat ahirnya." 5. "Jahid ni kebal yer."
Comment Translation	1. <i>"Please resign, you robber."</i> 2. <i>"No wonder he's filthy rich. Part of the 'sakau' (looting) gang too; well, now it's been exposed."</i> 3. <i>"Finally."</i> 4. <i>"So much for being a 'hero' in the end."</i> 5. <i>"This Zahid guy is 'bulletproof' (invincible), huh?"</i>

Table 21: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

Based on Video No. 17 represents a shift from formal journalism to user-generated "remix" content, where serious judicial outcomes are repurposed for digital mockery. Visually, the video utilizes a "Breaking News" aesthetic, featuring a static graphic from the portal *Oh Bulan!* with a formal headshot of Syed Saddiq and a bold "TERKINI" (Latest News) banner

(0:01). Text overlays explicitly detail the sentencing: seven years in jail, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane. The visual narrative creates a jarring cognitive dissonance by using Saddiq's somber, professional image as a "canvas" for a high-energy, irreverent audio track.

The audio is the driving force of this dissonance, featuring a fast-paced, rhythmic Southeast Asian folk-pop track (likely Thai or Mor Lam influenced) characterized by frantic vocals and rapid percussion. The "party" atmosphere of the music directly contradicts the gravity of the legal sentencing, suggesting a celebratory tone regarding the verdict or a deliberate mockery of the subject's "fall from grace."

The tone is "Satirical & Irreverent," stripping the news of its traditional formality through "Digital Irony." By using meme-based dissent, the content creator engages younger audiences and portrays the subject as a disgraced figure. The caption "*MP Muar. Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman disabitkan bersalah... Padan muka*" (Serves you right) and the hashtag #MuarKoyak reinforce this intent to provoke amusement or political agreement at the subject's expense.

Public comments for this video further highlight the breakdown of Parasocial Interaction (PSI), as viewers used the "Scandal Frame" to solidify a "thief" narrative. Reactions were overtly hostile, with comments like "*Please resign, you robber*" and "*No wonder he's filthy rich... part of the 'sakau' (looting) gang too*". Others mocked his previous status as a youth icon, stating, "*So much for being a 'hero' in the end*". Interestingly, some comments redirected the frustration toward political double standards, noting that other politicians seemed "bulletproof" in comparison. Collectively, Video 17 demonstrates how Phase 1 utilized digital humor and "remix culture" to cement a negative public image, making it a strategic necessity for Saddiq to eventually transition toward the humanizing content of later phases.



Figure 20: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Walks Free

Source: Sinar Daily

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	18 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQDH8sK/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: Produced by Sinar Daily, this video is a text-heavy, high-impact update intended for rapid consumption on social media.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Humanizing Distress (0:01): The video uses a medium-close-up of Syed Saddiq. He is captured with a hand to his head and a furrowed brow, a visual cue that emphasizes the psychological exhaustion and the "weight" of the landmark verdict. • Breaking News Format (0:02 - 0:10): High-contrast, white sans-serif text appears against a dark background, listing the penalties: 7 years' jail, RM10 million fine, and 2 strokes of the cane. This format ensures legibility for mobile users. • Absence of Motion: The use of a still, emotive image rather than B-roll focuses the viewer's attention entirely on the severity of the sentence. Audio: • Electronic Urgency (0:01 - 0:10): The video lacks a voiceover, relying instead on a rhythmic, mid-tempo electronic background track. • Repetitive Hook: A consistent melodic loop provides a sense of finality and momentum; characteristic of breaking news content designed for "sound-on" or "silent" scrolling.
2.Tone	Serious & Objective: The tone is clinical and reportorial. By stripping away interpretive commentary, the video allows the "Scandal Frame" to be set purely by the gravity of the legal facts and Saddiq's visible distress.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Visit www.sinardaily.my for more stories. Text Overlay: • SD (Sinar Daily Logo) • Syed Saddiq sentenced to 7 years jail, RM10 million fine, 2 strokes of cane.

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#Syedsaddiq #CBT #MoneyLa
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	No top comments analyzed.
Comment Translation	None

Table 22: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The video number 18 produced by *Sinar Daily*, this video is a text-heavy update designed for rapid social media consumption. Visually, the content avoids complex B-roll in favor of a single, powerful image: a medium close-up of Syed Saddiq with his hand to his head and a furrowed brow (0:01). This specific visual choice serves to humanize his distress, signaling psychological exhaustion and the literal "weight" of the landmark verdict. This emotive imagery is contrasted with high-impact, white sans-serif text overlays against a dark background, which list the specific penalties: seven years in jail, a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane (0:02-0:10). By using a still image rather than motion, the video forces the viewer to confront the severity of the sentence without distraction.

The audio supports this sense of digital urgency through a mid-tempo, rhythmic electronic track (0:01-0:10). The video lacks a traditional voiceover, relying instead on a repetitive melodic loop that provides a sense of finality. This audio-visual combination is characteristic of "breaking news" content optimized for mobile users who may be scrolling with the sound on or off.

The tone is strictly "Serious & Objective." By stripping away interpretive commentary or reporter narration, the video allows the Scandal Frame to be established purely through the

gravity of the legal facts and Saddiq's visible distress. The caption directs users to the full story on the *Sinar Daily* website, while the text overlays ensure that the core "hard power" facts of the case CBT and money laundering are the primary takeaways.

While no top comments were analyzed for this specific video, its structure aligns with the previous findings in Phase 1: it functions as a clinical record of a political crisis. Collectively, these 18 videos illustrate a period where the "Hard Power" of the Malaysian judicial system completely dominated the narrative, creating a significant breakdown in Parasocial Interaction (PSI) and leaving little room for Saddiq's "Soft Power" reformist image to resonate with the public.



Figure 21: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq Resigns as MUDA President

Source:NextStep News

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	19 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQAWDm4/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video captures a high-stakes press conference at the MUDA headquarters.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Formal Setting (0:01): Syed Saddiq stands at a podium prominently displaying the "MUDA" logo. He is dressed in a formal suit, maintaining a composed but solemn expression. • Supportive Presence (0:01 - 0:10): He is flanked by party members, including an emotional Amira Aisya, emphasizing the internal weight of the decision. • Direct Communication (0:15): The camera uses steady shots and slight zooms as Saddiq looks directly into the lens, conveying accountability and a sense of responsibility. Audio: • The Resignation (0:01 - 0:12): Saddiq's voice is clear and steady in Malay as he announces his immediate resignation to protect the party's "clean" image . • Environmental High-Stakes (Throughout): The constant clicking of camera shutters and background rustling provide a "breaking news" atmosphere . • Dramatic Underlay: A subtle, building musical track adds emotional gravity to his vow to clear his name in court without political shortcuts .
2.Tone	Solemn, Principled, and Defiant: The tone reflects a leader prioritizing institutional integrity over personal power. While he steps down, his firm stance on the legal battle suggests a refusal to be broken by the conviction .
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Syed Saddiq letak jawatan presiden MUDA Text Overlay: Syed Saddiq letak jawatan.

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#nextstepnews #muda #syedsaddiq
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Game Over." 2. "Bubarkan je la parti ko tu..ketua dah macam ni yang bawah-bawah pun sama."
Comment Translation	1. "Game Over." 2. "Just dissolve that party of yours... since the leader is like this, those underneath [the members] are probably just the same."

Table 23: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

Video No. 19 documents the high-stakes press conference held at the MUDA headquarters following the court's verdict. Visually, the video utilizes a Formal Setting (0:01), with Syed Saddiq standing at a podium that prominently displays the "MUDA" logo. He is dressed in a formal suit and maintains a composed but solemn expression, conveying the gravity of the announcement. A Supportive Presence (0:01-0:10) is visible as he is flanked by party members, including an emotional Amira Aisya, which serves as a visual cue for the internal weight of his decision. The camera work emphasizes Direct Communication (0:15), using steady shots and slight zooms as Saddiq looks directly into the lens to project a sense of responsibility and accountability.

The audio focuses on The Resignation (0:01-0:12), where Saddiq's voice remains clear and steady in Malay as he announces his immediate resignation to protect the party's "clean" image. The Environmental High-Stakes are underscored by the constant clicking of camera shutters, creating a "breaking news" atmosphere. A subtle, building musical underlay adds emotional gravity to his vow to clear his name in court without seeking political shortcuts.

The tone is "Solemn, Principled, and Defiant," reflecting a leader prioritizing institutional integrity over personal power. While he steps down, his firm stance on the ongoing legal battle suggests a refusal to be broken by the conviction. The caption and text overlay, "*Syed Saddiq letak jawatan presiden MUDA*" (Syed Saddiq resigns as MUDA president), reinforce this core message of departure for the sake of the party.

Public comments (PSI Analysis) for this video reflect a more cynical audience response. Comments such as "*Game Over*" and suggestions to "*Just dissolve that party of yours*" indicate that for many viewers, the conviction had already compromised the entire institution he led. This reaction demonstrates the peak of the Scandal Frame in Phase 1, where even a principled resignation was interpreted by some as proof of a failed political project.



Figure 22: Snapshot: The Final Legal Chapter (2026)

Source: Getaran / The Vibes

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	20 (Phase 1: Scandal Frame)
Date / URL	9 November 2023 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmQA3cSm/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: This video uses a dynamic slideshow format common in "fast-news" digital journalism. • The Lead Image (0:01 - 0:03): The video opens with a prominent photo of Syed Saddiq smiling while surrounded by a crowd of supporters and media

Item	Description / Analysis
	outside the courthouse. This creates an immediate ironic contrast with the headline. • Headline Overlay (0:01): A bold purple text box appears at the top: <i>"Dana Armada: Syed Saddiq dipenjara 7 tahun, denda RM10 juta, 2 sebatan."</i> • Publication Details (0:04): Text at the bottom notes the news was updated 8 minutes prior and published at 12:16 PM on Nov 9, 2023. • Detailed Charges (0:06 - 0:10): The slideshow transitions to emphasize that he was found guilty on four specific charges related to the Bersatu youth wing (Armada) funds. Audio: • Upbeat Rhythmic Track: The background music is high-energy and rhythmic. The lack of a voiceover forces the audience to focus on the text, while the "happy" tempo of the music clashes with the heavy reality of the 7-year prison sentence and caning.
2.Tone	Informative with Ironic Tension: While the text is objective and factual, the pairing of a "victory-style" smiling photo with the announcement of a criminal conviction creates a layer of irony, reflecting a public figure attempting to maintain his image during a legal downfall.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Lumpur ini menjatuhkan hukuman penjara tujuh tahun dan dua sebatan serta denda RM10 juta ke atas Ahli Parlimen Muar... Baca berita penuh di getaran.my. Text Overlay:

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Dana Armada Syed Saddiq dipenjara 7 tahun denda RM10 juta 2 sebatan (0:01) • Semasa dikemaskini 8 minit yang lalu diterbitkan pada 09 Nov 2023 (0:04)
4.Associated Hashtags	#getaranmy #syedsaddiq #berita #beritaditiktok
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Wau keputusan yang adil.” 2. “Bagus-bagus rakyat punya la susah..orang atasan kaya raya..semua menteri-menteri ni nak kena siasat.” 3. “Naya kena sebat.” 4. “Ini baru mahkamah majistret... nanti buat rayuan.. lepasla tu.” 5. “Takpa masuk dalam rehat dulu.. keluar nanti boleh jadi menteri lagi.”
Comment Translation	1. "Wow, a fair decision." 2. "Good. The people are struggling while the higher-ups are rich. All ministers should be investigated." 3. "It's a pity about the caning." 4. "This is just the first court... he'll appeal and get off." 5. "Go rest in prison; you can be a minister again when you come out."

Table 24: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 1

The twentieth video produced by *Getaran*, utilizes a high-impact slideshow format tailored for rapid social media consumption and high engagement. Visually, the content opens with an ironically upbeat lead image of Syed Saddiq smiling and waving to a crowd of supporters and media outside the courthouse. This choice of imagery creates a sharp cognitive dissonance when paired with the bold purple headline overlay announcing his sentence of seven years in jail,

a RM10 million fine, and two strokes of the cane. The video further details the four specific charges related to the misappropriation of Bersatu youth wing (Armada) funds, grounding the report in the "Hard Power" of the judicial verdict.

The absence of a voiceover forces the audience to focus entirely on the on-screen text, while the background's high-energy, rhythmic audio track clashes with the solemn reality of the prison sentence, heightening the sense of irony surrounding the politician's attempt to maintain his public image during a legal downfall.

The tone of the video is informative with significant ironic tension, as the objective reporting of the legal facts is juxtaposed with visuals of professional composure. The caption reinforces this gravity by directing viewers to the full report on the *Getaran* portal, while hashtags like #syedsaddiq and #beritaditiktok categorize the event as a trending national crisis.

Public sentiment captured in the comments section reveals a clear breakdown in Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Many viewers celebrated the verdict as a "fair decision," expressing satisfaction that "higher-ups" were being held accountable while ordinary citizens struggled. Others remained cynical, viewing the conviction as merely the first step in a long appeal process or mocking the subject by suggesting he "go rest in prison." Collectively, Video No. 20 illustrates the peak of Phase 1, where the Scandal Frame effectively redefined Syed Saddiq's image from a reformist youth icon to a convicted official in the eyes of a polarized public.

4.2 Phase 2: The Soft Power and Image Restoration Period

This phase focused on the period after the legal crisis, specifically moving from the end of 2024 through the end of 2025. This section discussed how Syed Saddiq's public image shifted toward a "Soft Power" strategy following his successful court appeal and acquittal in June 2025. To analyze this transformation, a total of 20 TikTok videos from this timeframe were selected and examined. Similar to the previous phase, these videos were broken down into three specific portions: the visual and audio elements, the text overlays and captions, and the audience engagement through top comments. The analysis primarily used Robert Entman's Framing Theory as the main theory to explain how the subject was reframed as a resilient and relatable leader rather than a convicted politician. During this discussion, Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI) were applied as supplementary theories to show how lifestyle content, such as his participation in the Ironman Malaysia race and his viral collaborations with celebrities like Bella Astillah, helped create a "friendship" bond with the audience. These supporting concepts explained how the main framing process successfully humanized his image and moved public attention away from his past legal issues.



Figure 23: Snapshot: Parliamentary Advocacy & Call to Action

Source: SyedSaitama

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	1 (Phase 2: Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	14 October 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmns9rr4/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is structured into two distinct halves: • The Passionate Lawmaker (0:01 - 0:08): The video opens with Syed Saddiq in Parliament, wearing a formal suit and tie. He is visibly passionate,

Item	Description / Analysis
	using emphatic hand gestures and a firm pointing motion to drive home his points. • Text Overlays: High-contrast text highlights his urgent message: <i>"Kalau dah ada orang kena rogol"</i> (0:01), <i>"kena buli"</i> (0:02), and <i>"Tak Penting"</i> (0:04). • The Persona Montage (0:09 - End): As the beat drops, the video shifts to stylized photos and clips of him in relatable, high-energy settings, including taking selfies with massive crowds of youth and speaking at press briefings. Audio: • Emotional Dialogue (0:01 - 0:08): The primary audio is the original recording of his speech, where he argues that student safety outranks institutional reputation. • The "Beat Drop" (0:08): A bass-heavy electronic track explodes in volume, perfectly timed with a transition from parliamentary footage to the "sigma" style personality montage.
2.Tone	Authoritative yet Charismatic: The video transitions from a serious, provocative stance on school safety to a modern, "cool" edit style. This is designed to portray him as a leader who is both a principled fighter in the system and a relatable figure to the youth.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: VOTE him in future please! Text Overlay: <i>No significant secondary text overlays beyond the speech highlights.</i>

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #parlimen #buli #fyp
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Aku rasa dia ja yang selalu fight untuk better education system in Malaysia, am I wrong?" 2. "Bagus Syed Saddiq daripada fadhlina." 3. "Kita bagi peluang kepada Syed Saddiq untuk memegang jawatan itu.. yakin dia boleh.. InshaAllah.." 4. "Aku harap Syed Saddiq jadi PM." 5. "Vote for Syed Saddiq!!!!."
Comment Translation	1. "I feel like he's the only one constantly fighting for a better education system in Malaysia." 2. "Syed Saddiq is better than Fadhlina." 3. "Let's give Syed Saddiq the chance... I'm confident he can do it." 4. "I hope Syed Saddiq becomes the PM."

Table 25: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The first analysis of Phase 2, Video No. 1, dated October 2025, represents a sophisticated image restoration effort that blends institutional authority with modern digital aesthetics. Visually, the video is bifurcated into two distinct narratives: it begins with a "Passionate Lawmaker" segment, capturing Syed Saddiq in Parliament utilizing emphatic gestures to advocate for student safety and education reform. This segment uses high-contrast text overlays to highlight provocative keywords such as "*Kalau dah ada orang kena rogol*" (If someone has been raped) and "*kena buli*" (bullied) (0:01-0:07), framing his advocacy as a battle for moral urgency over institutional reputation. As the "beat drops" at approximately the eight-second mark,

the visual narrative transitions into a stylized "Persona Montage," featuring high-energy clips of the subject engaging with massive youth crowds and taking selfies. This juxtaposition is designed to portray him as a "sigma" leader someone who is both a fearless fighter within the system and an accessible, relatable figure outside of it.

The audio strategy mirrors this visual transition to maximize emotional impact. It begins with the original, resonant recording of his parliamentary speech, establishing a foundation of principled leadership and "Hard Power" competence where he argues that student safety outranks school reputation. This then explodes into a bass-heavy electronic track, a common trope in "sigma-style" edits that appeals directly to a younger, social-media-savvy demographic. By synchronizing the beat drop with his interactions with the public, the audio fosters a strong sense of Parasocial Interaction (PSI), effectively humanizing the subject and rebranding his previous legal distress as the struggle of an "underdog" fighting for the common man.

The tone of the video is simultaneously authoritative and charismatic, successfully shifting the conversation from his past conviction to his future potential. The caption "*VOTE him in future please!*" explicitly signals the end goal of this restoration phase: political rehabilitation.

Public sentiment in the comments section indicates a successful recovery of soft power, with viewers labeling him as the only politician truly fighting for a better education system and expressing high levels of confidence in his leadership. Unlike the cynical comments of Phase 1, the discourse here is aspirational, with users calling for him to become Prime Minister and urging others to give him another chance. This video serves as the cornerstone for Phase 2, demonstrating how the intersection of policy advocacy and digital charisma can effectively neutralize the Scandal Frame.

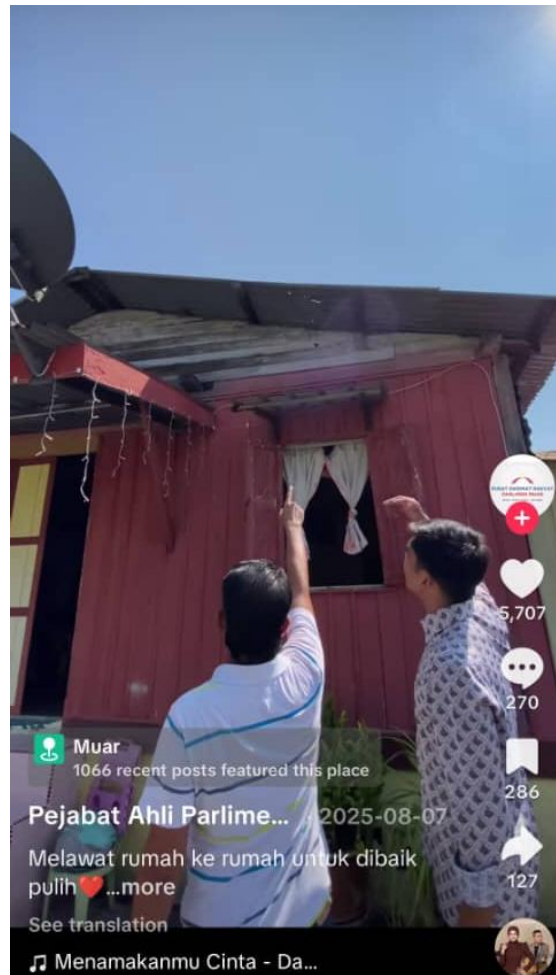


Figure 24: Snapshot: Constituency Work in Muar

Source: Pejabat Ahli parlimen

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	2 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	7 August 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmntPHDB/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video features Syed Saddiq in a patterned batik shirt leading a visit to a dilapidated home.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Inspection of Damage (0:01 - 0:04): Saddiq is seen pointing at severe structural defects, including holes in the ceiling and rusted zinc roofing. • Active Documentation (0:03): A key recurring visual shows Saddiq holding a notebook and pen. This portrays him as an organized leader taking specific notes for action rather than just a ceremonial visit. • Environment (0:05): The interior of the house, featuring outdated wallpaper and worn finishes, emphasizes the residents' need for aid. Audio: • Sentimental Acoustic Soundtrack: The audio is a soft, emotive acoustic song. This choice shifts the viewer's focus from the harshness of "poverty" to the "humanity" and hope of the intervention.
2.Tone	Somber, Earnest, and Compassionate: The video avoids loud campaigning, opting for quiet observation. The slow-motion framing and Saddiq's focused expression frame the visit as a serious community service mission.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Melawat rumah ke rumah untuk dibaik pulih Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #parlimen #muar #fyp
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Mana mamat yang kata yb tak buat kerja sibuk bercinta tu. Meh tengok sini.” 2. “Bakal PM kita.” 3. “YBSS proaktif.”

Item	Description / Analysis
	4. “Orang Muar kekalkan YB SS di parlimen muar. Sangat humble dan bertanggungjawab.” 5. “Other YB should learn from SS for his contribution towards to rakyat.”
Comment Translation	1. "Where is the guy who said the YB doesn't work and is busy being in love? Look at this." 2. "Our future PM." 3. "YBSS is proactive." 4. "People of Muar, keep YBSS... He is very humble and responsible."

Table 26: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The second video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), titled "Melawat rumah ke rumah untuk dibaik pulih," utilizes a blend of grassroots visual cues and emotional audio to rebuild Syed Saddiq's image as a dedicated community servant. The visual narrative is centered on physical presence and active engagement within a domestic, underprivileged setting. From 0:01 to 0:04, the video shows Saddiq leading an inspection of a dilapidated house, where he is seen pointing at structural damage such as holes in the ceiling and rusted zinc roofing. This direct interaction with the "pain points" of his constituents serves to humanize him and ground his political identity in local issues. A significant visual occurs at (0:03) and again at (0:08), where he is depicted holding a notebook and pen, actively documenting the residents' needs. This "active documentation" portrays him as an organized, pro-active leader rather than a distant figure. At 0:05, the camera pans the interior's worn wallpaper and dated finishes, emphasizing the urgency of the aid required. Complementing these visuals is a soft, sentimental acoustic soundtrack that plays throughout the video. This audio choice is designed to shift the viewer's focus away from the harshness of poverty and toward a sense of hope and "humanity" regarding the intervention.

The overall tone of the video is somber, earnest, and compassionate. It avoids the high-energy, aggressive campaigning seen in earlier phases, opting instead for slow-motion framing and focused expressions that characterize the visit as a serious community service mission. The caption, "*Melawat rumah ke rumah untuk dibaik pulih*" (Visiting house to house for restoration), reinforces this humble narrative without the use of distracting text overlays, allowing the imagery of service to speak for itself.

The effectiveness of this image restoration is reflected in the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) seen in the top comments. Viewers directly contrast this "working" persona with previous negative rumors, with one user asking, "*Where is the guy who said the YB doesn't work... Look at this*". Other comments demonstrate a high level of trust and loyalty, labeling him as a "Future PM," describing him as "proactive," and urging the people of Muar to "keep YBSS" because he is "humble and responsible". These responses indicate that the video successfully neutralized the "Scandal Frame" by providing tangible evidence of his commitment to the *rakyat*.



Figure 25: Snapshof of Syed Saddiq 100% attendace to the Parliament

Source:Malaysia&Antarabangsa

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	3 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	30 November 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmnvHKfq/
1.Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a high-octane montage celebrating Syed Saddiq's parliamentary track record and active lifestyle.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Parliamentary Presence (0:01 - 0:03): Clips show Saddiq speaking at the podium in Parliament, alternating between a formal suit and traditional <i>Baju Melayu</i>. • The Data Proof (0:04): A screenshot overlay from a tracking site confirms his 100% attendance (221/221 sessions) and high speech count (614). • Lifestyle & Relatability (0:05 - 0:08): High-energy transitions shift to personal photos: - At a desk with Milo and crackers (the "Everyman" persona). - Summiting Mount Kinabalu (the "Athlete" persona). - Modeling <i>Baju Melayu</i> (the "Brand" persona). Audio: • Fast-Paced EDM Track: A heavy bass electronic track drives the edit. The "beat drops" and rhythmic pulses are synchronized with the visual transitions, transforming political data into a "hype reel."
2.Tone	Celebratory and Energetic: The tone paints Saddiq as a tireless and disciplined leader. It bridges the gap between formal legislative work and a charismatic, modern personal life, designed to appeal to a digital-first audience.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Tak layan parlimen. Tapi tengok pada pencapaian YB Syed Saddiq memang sesuatu: Athlete, Ahli Parlimen, Model brand baju melayu. Dan semua di buat sampai habis... Text Overlay: TAHNIAH SYED SADDIQ KEHADIRAN 100% KE PARLIMEN (0:04)

Item	Description / Analysis
4. Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #parlimen #muar #fyp
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Sibuk lari sana sini, panjat gunung, jadi model, menari, main Ironman.. tapi full attendance. Mmg terbaik" 2. "Da la cri duit sna sni, x rehat.. full kehadiran.. lepaz tu duit tu semua bg balik kat muar.. ya Allah." 3. "Muar tolong kekalkan orang ini." 4. "The real role model." 5. "Syed Syaddiq mencontohi Bella Astillah x kira penat lelah tetap kerja keras.. beginilah contoh pemimpin terbaik"
Comment Translation	1. "Busy running, climbing, modeling... yet full attendance. Truly the best." 2. "Working hard everywhere without rest... full attendance... and gives the money back to Muar. Oh Allah." 3. "Muar please keep this person" 4. "He follows Bella Astillah's example of working hard regardless of exhaustion."

Table 27: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The third video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 30 November 2025, serves as a high-octane "hype reel" that validates Syed Saddiq's professional diligence alongside his high-profile lifestyle. Visually, the video is a fast-paced montage that opens with clips of Saddiq speaking at the parliamentary podium between (0:01 and 0:03), transitioning between formal suits and traditional Baju Melayu to signal both professional and cultural authority. A critical "data proof" overlay appears at (0:04), showing a screenshot that confirms his 100%

parliamentary attendance (221/221 sessions) and a prolific count of 614 speeches. This legislative record is immediately juxtaposed with his "Everyman" and "Athlete" personas from (0:05 to 0:08), featuring him at a simple desk with Milo and crackers, summiting Mount Kinabalu, and modeling for fashion brands.

The audio profile of the video is driven by a heavy-bass EDM track where the rhythmic pulses and beat drops are synchronized precisely with visual transitions. This creates a celebratory and energetic tone, transforming dry political statistics into an exciting narrative of a tireless, disciplined leader. By bridging the gap between formal legislative duties and a charismatic modern lifestyle, the video is specifically designed to appeal to a digital-first audience that values multi-faceted "role models." The caption further reinforces this by highlighting that he is an athlete, MP, and model who "finishes everything he starts," effectively rebranding his busyness as a sign of superior work ethic rather than a distraction.

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments demonstrates a high level of public admiration for his perceived stamina. Viewers expressed amazement at how he manages to remain active in Ironman events, climbing, and modeling while maintaining a perfect attendance record in Parliament, with one commenter noting that he "gives the money back to Muar" despite working without rest. Interestingly, the soft power connection is deepened by fans who suggest Saddiq is "following Bella Astillah's example" of hard work regardless of exhaustion. This sentiment reflects the success of the phase in merging his political identity with the resilient, hardworking narrative of his partner, leading to strong calls for Muar to "keep this person" in office.



Figure 26: Snapshot: Deepavali Contributions in Muar

Source: Team Saddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	4 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	11 October 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSnn36yYv/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a fast-paced compilation of Syed Saddiq distributing Deepavali aid in Muar. • Cultural Representation (0:01): Saddiq is dressed in a traditional red Kurta, signaling respect and inclusivity toward the Hindu community.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Interaction & Aid (0:02 - 0:06): He is seen shaking hands, posing for photos, and engaging with long lines of constituents under community tents. • Gratitude (0:09): The recipients are shown giving a "thumbs up," portraying a successful community outreach effort. Audio: • Festive Musical Backdrop: Vibrant Tamil music with traditional percussion drives the high energy of the video. • Live Sound Bites: Sprinkled throughout the music are ambient sounds of the crowd and snippets of speech, making the viewer feel like part of the bustling event.
2.Tone	Uplifting, Communal, and Energetic: The video strikes a balance between political charisma and heartfelt sincerity, designed as a "boots on the ground" celebration of community spirit.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: YB@Syed Saddiq harini sampaikan sumbangan Deepavali. Kita sambut meriah punya tahun ini. Text Overlay: SUMBANGAN DEEPAVALI PARLIMEN MUAR
4. Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #deepavali #muar #fyp
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Semoga kau bakal jadi PM Malaysia termuda Syed Saddiq" 2. "Bella tak ikut sumbang ke." 3. "Saya suka tengok cara YB SS..tak kira bangsa..semua dia hargai." 4. "Mana princess MS Bella, awesome you guys so sweet." 5. "Pemimpin yang hebat."

Item	Description / Analysis
Comment Translation	1. "Hopefully, you will become Malaysia's youngest-ever Prime Minister, Syed Saddiq." 2. "Didn't Bella join in to contribute?" 3. "I like YB SS's approach... regardless of race... he appreciates everyone." 4. Where is Princess MS Bella awesome you guys so sweet. 5. "A great leader."

Table 28: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The fourth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), titled "Sumbangan Deepavali Parlimen Muar," strategically highlights Syed Saddiq's inclusivity and community-focused leadership during a festive season. The visual narrative emphasizes cultural integration and direct constituent engagement. At (0:01), Saddiq is seen dressed in a traditional red Kurta, a visual cue intended to signal his respect for and solidarity with the Hindu community. Between (0:02 and 0:06), the footage captures him in a high-energy environment, shaking hands, posing for photographs, and interacting with long queues of residents under community tents. (By 0:09), the video showcases recipients of the aid giving a "thumbs up" to the camera, which visually validates the success and positive impact of the outreach effort.

The audio features a vibrant Tamil musical backdrop with traditional percussion that maintains a celebratory energy throughout. Ambient live sound bites of crowd chatter and snippets of speech are layered over the music, creating an immersive atmosphere that makes the viewer feel like a participant in the event.

The video maintains an uplifting, communal, and energetic tone, designed to portray Saddiq as a sincere, "boots on the ground" leader. The caption *"YB@Syed Saddiq harini*

sampaikan sumbangan Deepavali. Kita sambut meriah punya tahun ini" directly tethers his presence to the celebration. A prominent text overlay, "*SUMBANGAN DEEPAVALI PARLIMEN MUAR,*" ensures the purpose of the event is clear to the digital audience.

Public sentiment in the comments reflects a successful Parasocial Interaction (PSI), with followers expressing a deep sense of trust and admiration. Commenters praise his multi-racial approach, with one stating, *"I like YB SS's approach... regardless of race... he appreciates everyone"*. The rebranding of his image is further evidenced by aspirational comments calling him a "great leader" and expressing hope that he will become "Malaysia's youngest-ever Prime Minister". Additionally, some comments playfully ask about his social circle (e.g., *"Didn't Bella join in?"*), indicating that he has successfully transitioned from a legal figure to a relatable "celebrity" politician whose personal life and public service are of high interest to the youth.

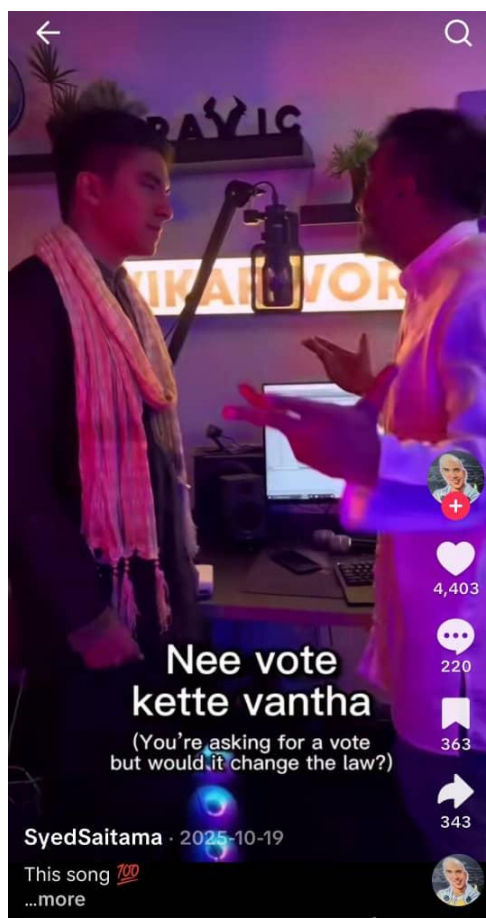


Figure 27: Snapshot: "Dengar Baik" Musical Advocacy

Source: SyedSaitama

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	5 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	19 October 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmnTKcF6/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is set in a professional home studio (Vika World), featuring vibrant RGB lighting and recording equipment (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Attire: Syed Saddiq is wearing a traditional black outfit with a gold-patterned scarf, while his collaborators are in Kurta and Baju Melayu, symbolizing multicultural unity (0:01). • Cinematography & Performance: The camera uses dynamic movements and quick cuts. The creators use aggressive rhythmic hand gestures typical of rap battles (0:15), while text overlays highlight punchlines like "<i>DAPAT EDUCATION!</i>" (0:12) and "<i>FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY!</i>" (0:22). Audio: • The Beat: A modern Hip-Hop/Rap track with a South Asian melodic influence. • Linguistic Delivery: The rap is a multilingual "rojak" of Malay, English, and Tamil. The challengers use a sharp, accusatory tone representing the marginalized Indian community (0:05 - 0:20), while Saddiq responds with a smoother, aspirational delivery (0:25 - 0:33).
2.Tone	Confrontational yet Constructive: It begins with tension as the creators "call out" a politician to his face, then shifts into a collaborative atmosphere proposing a vision of "need-based" rather than "race-based" politics.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: This song. Happy Deepavali to all our dear friends and family! Text Overlay: <i>Key phrases appear as bold typography during the rap, such as "BLACK LISTED!" (0:17) and "MAKE MALAYSIA STRONGER!" (0:32).</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #deepavali #2025 #fyp

Item	Description / Analysis
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Selepas ni rap dengan Bella ya YB happy Deepavali." 2. "Mantap YB jalan tegak terus." 3. "Syed Saddiq berbeza, prihatin, jujur and bijak, beliau layak menjadi PM." 4. "Terbaik YBSS. Hope still love Bella Amin." 5. "Serba boleh."
Comment Translation	1. "After this, do a rap with Bella, okay YB? Happy Deepavali." 2. "Excellent, YB; keep walking tall/keep moving straight ahead." 3. "Syed Saddiq is different, caring, honest, and smart; he is worthy of becoming PM." 4. "The best, YBSS. Hope you still love Bella. Amen." 5. "All-rounder."

Table 29: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The fifth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), set in a professional home studio (Vika World) on 19 October 2025, presents Syed Saddiq engaging in a multicultural rap collaboration that highlights inclusive, "need-based" politics. The visual setting features vibrant RGB lighting and professional recording equipment, creating a modern and youthful aesthetic. Syed Saddiq is dressed in a traditional black outfit accented with a gold-patterned scarf (0:01), while his collaborators wear Kurta and Baju Melayu (0:02), visually symbolizing Malaysian multicultural unity. The cinematography uses dynamic movements and quick cuts, with creators employing aggressive rhythmic hand gestures common in rap battles. At 0:12, text overlays emphasize punchlines such as "DAPAT EDUCATION!" and at 0:22, "FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY!".

The audio is driven by a modern Hip-Hop/Rap track with South Asian melodic influences. The linguistic delivery is a "rojak" of Malay, English, and Tamil. Between 0:05 and 0:20, the

challengers use a sharp, accusatory tone to represent the perspectives of the marginalized Indian community, while Saddiq responds from 0:25 to 0:33 with a smoother, aspirational delivery.

The tone is confrontational yet constructive, beginning with the tension of creators "calling out" a politician to his face before shifting into a collaborative vision for Malaysia. The caption simply reads, *"This song. Happy Deepavali to all our dear friends and family!"*. Bold typographic text overlays appear throughout the rap to highlight key phrases, such as "BLACK LISTED!" at 0:17 and "MAKE MALAYSIA STRONGER!" at 0:32.

Public sentiment in the comments highlights a strong Parasocial Interaction (PSI), where followers view Saddiq as a "serba boleh" (all-rounder) leader. Supporters praise his versatility and character, with comments such as *"Syed Saddiq is different, caring, honest, and smart; he is worthy of becoming PM"*. Other users encourage his forward momentum, stating, *"Excellent, YB; keep walking tall"*. Similar to previous videos in this phase, some commenters playfully reference his personal social connections, suggesting he should perform a rap with Bella Astillah next, further cementing his image as a relatable and charismatic cultural figure.



Figure 28: Snapshot: A Glimpse of Personal Life (2026)

Source:Bae

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	6 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	22 May 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmnE7Fe4/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The clip features a playful interaction between Syed Saddiq and celebrity Bella Astillah. • The Banter (0:00 - 0:07): Saddiq is seen in "work mode," signing books, while he begins teasing Bella for wearing sunglasses indoors (0:07).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Performance (0:03 - 0:06): Bella leans into the bit, performing with her glamorous look in shades while Saddiq maintains a bewildered, analytical expression. • The Reaction (0:12 - 0:15): When Bella delivers her punchline, Saddiq appears to "freeze" for a second, staring half-horrified and half-impressed while Bella giggles. Audio: • The Setup (0:07 - 0:11): Saddiq's voice is clear and articulate as he questions the logic of indoor sunglasses. • The Punchline (0:12): Bella's voice drops into a dramatic tone for the line: "<i>Sebab you lah cahayanya</i>" (Because you are the light). • The Sound Effect (0:13): The transition to the song "<i>Sempurna</i>" serves as a universal social media cue in Malaysia for a romantic/cheesy moment, peaking as the camera zooms in on Saddiq's face.
2.Tone	Lightheartedly Chaotic: The video showcases the dynamic of a logical figure (Saddiq) being dismantled by a "shamelessly cheesy" friend (Bella), making the politician feel authentic and relatable.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: <i>No caption</i> Text Overlay: <i>Key dialogue appears as text, such as "YB: You nak pakai spec indoor kenapa" (0:07) and "YB: Dia nak jadi apa popstar" (0:12).</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #bass #fyp

Item	Description / Analysis
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Geram betullah dengan 2 orang ini.” 2. “Kahwin Cepat.” 3. “Hahahah tu la yb suka dengan Bella sebab Bella selalu buat lucu.” 4. “Dr kalau overdose vitamin BASS boleh affect urine tak.” 5. “So when’s the wedding la.”
Comment Translation	1. "These two are really making me restless." 2. "Get married quickly." 3. "Hahahah, that's it; the YB likes Bella because Bella is always being funny." 4. "Doctor, if I overdose on Vitamin BASS, will it affect my urine?"

Table 30: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The sixth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 22 May 2025, features a viral interaction between Syed Saddiq and Malaysian celebrity Bella Astillah, shifting the focus from political formalities to a relatable, humanized personal life. The visual narrative is built on a "work vs. play" dynamic. From (0:00 to 0:07), Syed Saddiq is shown in "work mode," focused on signing books, while he begins teasing Bella for wearing large sunglasses indoors. Between (0:03 and 0:06), Bella leans into the performance, showcasing her glamorous look in shades while Saddiq maintains a bewildered, analytical expression. A key comedic beat occurs from (0:12 to 0:15), where Saddiq appears to "freeze" with a look of half-horror and half-impression following Bella's punchline, while she giggles in the background.

The audio supports this comedic setup. From (0:07 to 0:11), Saddiq's voice is clear and articulate as he questions the logic of wearing sunglasses inside. At (0:12), the punchline is delivered as Bella's voice drops into a dramatic tone for the line: *“Sebab you lah cahayanya”*

(Because you are the light). Immediately at (0:13), the song "Sempurna" begins to play; this is a universal social media cue in Malaysia for romantic or "cheesy" moments, peaking as the camera zooms in on Saddiq's reaction.

The video adopts a lightheartedly chaotic tone, showcasing the juxtaposition of a logical public figure being dismantled by a "shamelessly cheesy" friend. While there is no official caption, the text overlays highlight the dialogue, such as "*YB: You nak pakai spec indoor kenapa*" at 0:07 and "*YB: Dia nak jadi apa popstar*" at (0:12).

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments section reveals that the audience has fully embraced this "rebranded" persona. Many users focus on the "chemistry" between the two, with comments such as "*Geram betul lah dengan 2 orang ini*" (These two are really making me restless) and multiple calls for them to "*Kahwin Cepat*" (Get married quickly). Others highlight how Bella's humor makes the YB more likable. One notable comment uses the term "Vitamin BASS" (a portmanteau of Bella and Syed Saddiq), asking if an "overdose" would have side effects showing that the public has even created their own "fandom" terminology for this.

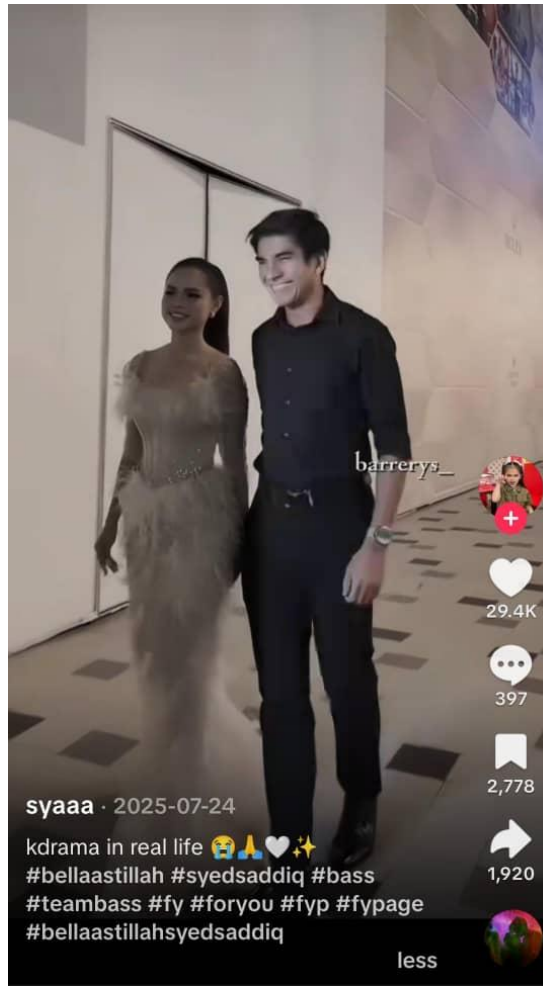


Figure 29: Snapshot: A "KDrama" Moment

Source: Syaa

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	7 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	24 July 2024 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmWJVEHv/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video captures a high-profile "red carpet" moment at a luxury event launch featuring politician Syed Saddiq and actress Bella Astillah (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Fashion: Bella wears a glamorous, white feathered gown (0:01), while Saddiq opts for a sharp, minimalist all-black outfit, creating a "power duo" contrast (0:01 - 0:03). • Interaction: The pair walks in stride, sharing smiles and brief glances in a polished, professional manner (0:02 - 0:04). Slow-motion editing is applied throughout to emphasize their elegance (0:01 - 0:05). Audio: • The Song: A slowed-down, reverb-heavy pop track replaces all-natural ambient noise (0:01 - 0:05). • Impact: This creates an atmospheric "bubble" effect, isolating the subjects and focusing the viewer's attention entirely on their interaction, making the moment feel more cinematic and significant (0:01 - 0:05).
2.Tone	Sophisticated and Aspirational: The video leans into "shipping" culture by presenting the encounter as a glamorous, storybook-like moment, shifting from a standard event clip to a romanticized cinematic highlight.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: kdrama in real life Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#bellaastillah #syedsaddiq #bass #teambass #fyforyou #fyp #fypage #bellaastillahsyedsaddiq
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "ahli politik + artis." 2. "Both stunning." 3. "Her face, proud that him just by her side." 4. "Romeo and Juliet."

Item	Description / Analysis
	5. “Macam hero heroin dalam novel...perfect.”
Comment	1. "Politician + Artist."
Translation	2. "Just like the hero and heroine in a novel... perfect."

Table 31: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The seventh video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), captioned "kdrama in real life," represents the peak of Syed Saddiq's digital image restoration by successfully pivoting his persona from a "convicted politician" into a "celebrity-style national icon."

Visually, the video captures a high-profile "red carpet" arrival at a luxury event launch featuring Syed Saddiq alongside actress Bella Astillah at (0:01). The visual strategy utilizes high-fashion contrast; Bella wears a glamorous white feathered gown while Saddiq opts for a sharp, minimalist all-black outfit, creating a "power duo" aesthetic from (0:01 to 0:03). Polished cinematography, including steady walks and synchronized strides, is enhanced by heavy slow-motion editing from (0:01 to 0:05) to emphasize the duo's elegance and make the encounter feel more cinematic.

The audio strategy is central to creating this romanticized atmosphere, as a slowed-down, reverb-heavy pop track replaces all-natural ambient noise from (0:01 to 0:05). This intentional removal of "real-world" sounds (like camera shutters or crowd chatter) creates an atmospheric "bubble" effect, isolating the subjects and forcing the viewer's attention entirely onto their interaction, which makes the moment feel significantly more intimate and scripted than a standard event clip.

The tone of the video is sophisticated and aspirational, leaning heavily into digital "shipping" culture. By explicitly choosing the caption "kdrama in real life," the content frames the real-world encounter as a fictionalized, storybook moment, moving the subject away from

the "Scandal Frame" of Phase 1 toward a new, charismatic "hero" archetype. The video maintains this clean, high-end aesthetic by having no text overlay, allowing the imagery to dominate. This shift is further reinforced by the associated hashtags like #bellaastillah, #syedsaddiq, and the portmanteau #bass, which target entertainment-focused fanbases.

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments section confirms a complete transformation in public perception. Followers have moved past legal skepticism, instead describing the pair with examples like "Romeo and Juliet" and "hero and heroin dalam novel" (hero and heroine in a novel). The audience now views the subjects through the lens of pop culture, with comments such as "ahli politik + artis" (politician + artist) reflecting a newfound appreciation for Saddiq's "stunning" public persona. By the end of this video, the soft power strategy has effectively neutralized previous judicial associations, rebranding the subject as a relatable and highly sought-after cultural figure.



Figure 30: Snapshot: A Shared Stage (2026)

Source: Julia

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	8 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	31 March 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS9MNjAP9/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video captures Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah as brand ambassadors for "Prima Valet." The Interaction (0:01 - 0:13): Astillah begins a formal address but experience a "stage shyness" moment, leading her to laugh and cede the floor to Saddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Setting (0:01): The backdrop is neutral with white drapes and a minimalist floral arrangement. • Attire: Astillah is in a monochromatic lace gown , while Saddiq wears a bronze Baju Melayu with a traditional sampin and songkok. • Kinesics (0:07 - 0:11): High levels of rapport are visible; Astillah conceals her face while laughing, and Saddiq uses open hand gestures consistent with public speaking. Audio: • Vocal Delivery (0:01 - 0:13): High-fidelity vocal capture using handheld microphones. The dialogue is in "Manglish," blending formal Malay with English expressions. • Humor (0:12): Saddiq uses self-deprecating humor to manage the transition after Bella's lapse.
2.Tone	Convivial and Egalitarian: The atmosphere shifts from a rigid corporate presentation to an authentic social interaction. Saddiq’s rhetorical strategy of using humor serves to humanize both figures as approachable.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: <i>No caption</i> Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #primavalet
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Bella Nampak nervous speechless.tapi SS pandai betul cover untuk Bella."

Item	Description / Analysis
	2. "Kita memang dijodohkan Bersama,sehati serta sejiwa." 3. "Sweetnya BASS berdua ni." 4. "Kuatnya kuasa cinta." 5. "BASS all the way."
Comment Translation	1. <i>"Bella looks nervous and speechless. But SS is really good at covering for her."</i> 2. <i>"We are indeed destined to be together, one heart and one soul."</i> 3. <i>"These two BASS are so sweet together."</i> 4. <i>"How powerful the force of love is."</i>

Table 32: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The eighth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), recorded on 31 March 2025, features Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah in their shared capacity as brand ambassadors for "Prima Valet," effectively humanizing the politician through a candid and unscripted social interaction. Visually, the video captures a professional event set against a minimalist backdrop of white drapes and floral arrangements at (0:01), where Astillah is dressed in a monochromatic lace gown and Saddiq wears a traditional bronze Baju Melayu. The core of the visual narrative occurs between (0:01 and 0:13), documenting a moment of "stage shyness" where Astillah begins a formal address but loses her train of thought, leading her to laugh and cede the floor to Saddiq. This interaction highlights a high level of rapport and positive kinesics from (0:07 to 0:11), as Astillah playfully conceals her face while laughing and Saddiq utilizes open hand gestures to maintain control of the presentation.

The audio strategy complements this visual authenticity through high-fidelity vocal capture that records the duo's dialogue in "Manglish," a relatable blend of formal Malay and English expressions from (0:01 to 0:13). A pivotal moment occurs at (0:12), when Saddiq uses

self-deprecating humor to manage the transition following Bella's lapse, demonstrating his quick-witted nature and protective stance toward his collaborator. This specific audio cue is the primary driver of the video's convivial and egalitarian tone. The atmosphere is convivial because it transforms a rigid, scripted corporate launch into a lively and friendly human moment, particularly at (0:07) when Saddiq breaks his professional "mask" to share a genuine laugh with Bella. Simultaneously, the tone is egalitarian as seen at (0:12); Saddiq does not adopt the persona of a superior "YB" or authority figure, but rather acts as a peer and supportive teammate. By using humor to bridge the gap between himself and the audience, he replaces the "cold" image of a politician with a "warm," approachable persona. The video maintains a clean aesthetic by including no caption and no text overlay, allowing the natural chemistry between the two figures to serve as the primary message. This intentional lack of additional branding emphasizes the goal of building organic trust through soft power.

The success of this approach is deeply reflected in the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) found in the top comments, where viewers have moved entirely away from political criticism. Fans praise Saddiq for being "really good at covering for her" and project romantic narratives onto the pair with comments like "destined to be together" and "how powerful the force of love is." By utilizing the fan-generated ship name "BASS," the audience signals that they now view Saddiq as a charismatic celebrity figure whose perceived "heart and soul" connection with a popular artist has effectively superseded his previous political scandals. This combination of #syedsaddiq, #bellaastillah, and #primavalet hashtags ensures the content reaches a broad, lifestyle-oriented demographic.



Figure 31: Snapshot: Family Approval & "Romeo & Juliet"

Source: xtra.com.my / Social Media Highlight

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	9 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	03 March 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmWMERYT/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a screen recording of a TikTok Live session featuring Syed Saddiq's brother and his mother in a split-screen format (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Overlay: A headline from Xtra is superimposed on the screen, praising Bella Astillah and comparing the relationship to "Romeo & Juliet" (0:01 - 0:08). • Subjects: The brother (left) wears glasses and smiles frequently (0:01 - 0:03), while the mother (right) speaks directly to the camera in a black hijab (0:04 - 0:07). A photo of Saddiq and Bella is pinned in the center for context (0:01). Audio: • Conversation: The brother mentions a fan asking if "YB" (Saddiq) is falling in love (0:01). • Mother's Observation: She notes his unusual newfound dedication to activities like climbing mountains and swimming "from one end to another" (0:04 - 0:06). • Comparison (0:07): Both laugh as they conclude he has reached a "next level" of energy, likening him to Romeo.
2.Tone	Light-hearted and Playful: The tone is one of familial teasing and affection. The mother's descriptive language paints Saddiq as "smitten," making the session feel like a relatable piece of "family gossip" shared with the public.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Wahhh, ini nampaknya satu keluarga dah restu hubungan Bella Astillah dengan Syed Saddiq Text Overlay: Pernah Berbual 15 Minit, Ibu Syed Saddiq Puji Bella Astillah Baik, Lembut & Ada Rupa Paras - "Hubungan Mereka Seperti 'Romeo & Juliet'"

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#fyp #xtra #beritaditiktok #sembangentertainment #syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #hubungan #mereka #seperti #romeo #dan #juliet
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Kalau YB on denga Bella, saya sanggup tukar alamat pergi megundi kat perlimen Muo.” 2. “Sporting la this family...i like the way teacher@Mother of SS says about BASS relationship.” 3. “Nak jadi orang Muolah bole mengundi nak tengok Syed Saddiq.” 4. “Ibu YB sangat sporting.” 5. “Mama restu dah.”
Comment Translation	1. <i>"If the YB is officially together with Bella, I'm willing to change my address just to vote in the Muar constituency."</i> 2. <i>"I want to become a Muar resident so I can vote and see Syed Saddiq."</i> 3. <i>The YB's mother is very 'sporting' (easy-going/supportive)."</i> 4. <i>"Mama has already given her blessing."</i>

Table 33: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The ninth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 03 March 2025, marks a significant strategic move by involving Syed Saddiq’s immediate family to validate his new public narrative through an intimate and unscripted TikTok Live session. Visually, the content uses a screen recording of a split-screen format featuring Saddiq’s brother and mother, which immediately creates a sense of domestic authenticity. A prominent news headline from Xtra is superimposed on the screen from (0:01 to 0:08), explicitly comparing the relationship between Saddiq and Bella Astillah to "Romeo & Juliet," while a photo of the pair is pinned in the center at (0:01) to provide immediate context for the viewers. The brother is seen smiling frequently at

(0:01), while the mother speaks directly to the camera from (0:04 to 0:07), adding a layer of maternal sincerity to the broadcast.

The audio analysis of the conversation reveals a carefully managed yet natural dialogue that transitions from a fan's question about whether Saddiq is falling in love at (0:01) to a detailed observation from his mother. Between 0:04 and 0:06, she notes his unusual newfound dedication to intense physical activities like climbing mountains and swimming "from one end to another," which she attributes to his high spirits.

The recording culminates at (0:07) with both family members laughing as they conclude that Saddiq has reached a "next level" of energy, effectively cementing the "Romeo" persona through familial testimony. This creates a light-hearted and playful tone, mimicking a piece of "family gossip" that humanizes the politician and makes his personal life feel like a relatable, storybook romance rather than a calculated political move.

The accompanying caption "*Wahhh, ini nampaknya satu keluarga dah restu hubungan Bella Astillah dengan Syed Saddiq*" serves as a definitive public statement that his family has officially sanctioned the relationship. This narrative is further bolstered by the text overlay, which details the mother's praise for Bella's kind and gentle nature after a 15-minute conversation. By utilizing hashtags like #sembangentertainment, #syedsaddiq, and the specifically split tags for #romeo and #juliet, the post ensures high visibility within lifestyle and entertainment circles.

This strategy is clearly reflected in the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) of the top comments, where users describe the mother as "sporting" and express a willingness to change their voting address to Muar just to support the couple. The widespread sentiment of "Mama restu dah" (Mama has already given her blessing) indicates that the audience has fully accepted this soft-power rebrand, viewing Saddiq as a charismatic and family-oriented leader.



Figure 32: Snapshot: "Before and After Falling in Love"

Source:Syaaa

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	10 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	10 July 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmWhSE2B/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video uses a "personality shift" narrative split into two phases:

Item	Description / Analysis
	• "He before fall in love" (0:01 - 0:10): Features professional, authoritative clips of Syed Saddiq in the Malaysian Parliament (Dewan Rakyat) wearing sharp suits and face masks while speaking intensely. • "He after fall in love" (0:11 - 0:29): The tone shifts to bright, candid imagery. He is shown laughing uncontrollably, posing in traditional Baju Melayu, and interacting playfully with Bella Astillah, including making heart signs and sharing jokes. Audio: • Structure: The audio is a high-pitched, sped-up "nightcore" remix of a pop song. • Transition: At the midpoint, the music becomes more rhythmic and melodic to sync with clips of him laughing, enhancing the "wholesome" and upbeat vibe.
2.Tone	Playful and Romanticized: This "fan-cam" style content aims to make Saddiq appear more relatable and charming. It uses light-hearted irony to suggest that personal joy has transformed his "stern politician" persona into a joyful, almost shy personality.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: <i>No Caption</i> Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellastillah #bass #teambass #foryou #fy #fypage #bellaastillahsyedsaddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Dulu Rawr! Sekarang meow meow." 2. "I am from Philipines and love Bella so much. I just want to ask here is he in politics..." 3. "I think this is the first time YB fall in love..." 4. "Dengan yang Bella je dia macam tu, dengan yang lain masih garang." 5. "Seriously someone need to do a novel out of this love story."
Comment Translation	1. "Used to be 'Rawr!' Now [he's] 'meow meow'." 2. "He's only like that with Bella; with everyone else, he's still fierce/stern."

Table 34: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The tenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 10 July 2025, utilizes a "personality shift" narrative to rebrand Syed Saddiq from a stern political figure into a relatable and charming individual. Visually, the content is divided into two distinct emotional segments: the first phase, spanning (0:01 to 0:10), features professional and authoritative clips of Saddiq in the Malaysian Parliament, wearing sharp suits and face masks while speaking with intensity. This is contrasted sharply in the second phase from (0:11 to 0:29), where the imagery shifts to bright, candid shots of him laughing uncontrollably, posing in traditional Baju Melayu, and interacting playfully with Bella Astillah through heart signs and shared jokes.

The audio structure supports this transition by using a high-pitched, sped-up "nightcore" remix of a pop song, which shifts its rhythm at the midpoint to become more melodic. This rhythmic change is synchronized with clips of Saddiq laughing (0:16), which serves to enhance the overall "wholesome" and upbeat vibe of the video. This specific editing style creates a playful and romanticized tone, typical of "fan-cam" social media content. By using light-hearted irony, the video suggests that a newfound personal joy has transformed his "stern politician" persona

into a joyful and almost shy personality, making him appear more approachable to a younger demographic. The video intentionally contains no caption and no text overlay, allowing the visual transformation to speak for itself while encouraging organic audience participation through hashtags like #bass, #teambass, and #bellaastillahsyedsaddiq.

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments section proves the effectiveness of this narrative, with viewers adopting metaphors such as "Used to be 'Rawr!' Now [he's] 'meow meow'" to describe his softened image. Comments noting that he is "only like that with Bella" further solidify the romantic narrative, with some fans even suggesting that the story is compelling enough to be turned into a novel. This total shift in perception indicates that the "Soft Power" strategy has successfully moved public focus from political controversy to celebrity-style fascination.



Figure 33: Snapshot: The "Kitsui" Campaign

Source: Team BA'SS Official

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	11 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	29 June 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmWSLqA5/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is set against a vibrant pink backdrop, featuring Bella Astillah in a shimmering pink beaded gown and Syed Saddiq in a white blazer over a soft pink t-shirt (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Action: Bella spins happily (0:02), and they engage in flirty dialogue. After she delivers her punchline, she playfully ducks out of the frame, leaving Saddiq visibly blushing with animated pink cheek filters (0:07). Audio: • Dialogue (0:01 - 0:07): Bella expresses her happiness. When Saddiq asks why, she replies, "Sebab shooting dengan you" (Because I'm shooting with you). • Music & Effects: A soft, upbeat acoustic track plays throughout. A subtle "sparkle" sound effect triggers at the end to emphasize Saddiq's blushing reaction (0:07).
2.Tone	Wholesome and Flirty: The video adopts a "K-drama" style, focusing on a cute, romanticized connection between the two. The use of filters and sound effects solidifies its lighthearted and humorous nature.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: @Kitsui Malaysia Text Overlay: Kitsui
4. Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #foryoupageofficial #teambass #sweetcoupleBASS #teambassoffic #repostedvideo #fypage
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Aku baru bercerai ni. Jangan sampai aku kahwin balik haaa." 2. "<i>Aku dah boleh imagine nanti Syed Saddiq jadi president in future then Bella wife kepada President..Macam Movie Ainun Habibi.</i>" 3. "Bahagia Bella dengan Saddiq Sekarang." 4. "Her inner child is healing aww." 5. "Rugi Alif..tak pandai menilai permata."

Item	Description / Analysis
Comment Translation	1. <i>"I just got divorced. Don't make me want to get married again, haaa."</i> 2. <i>"I can already imagine Syed Saddiq becoming President in the future and Bella being the President's wife.. Just like the movie Habibie & Ainun."</i> 3. <i>"Bella is happy with Saddiq now.."</i> 4. <i>"Wasted Alif.. didn't know how to appreciate a gem."</i>

Table 35: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The eleventh video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), released on 29 June 2025, adopts a stylized "K-drama" aesthetic to emphasize a cute and romanticized connection between Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah. Visually, the content is set against a vibrant pink backdrop, featuring Bella in a shimmering pink beaded gown and Saddiq in a sophisticated white blazer over a soft pink t-shirt to create a cohesive, romantic color palette. The primary action occurs from (0:01 to 0:07), where Bella spins happily and the two engage in a flirty exchange. After delivering a playful punchline, Bella ducks out of the frame at (0:07), leaving Saddiq visibly blushing, a reaction humorously highlighted by the use of animated pink cheek filters and a subtle "sparkle" sound effect.

The audio layer reinforces this playful atmosphere through an upbeat acoustic track and scripted dialogue that captures the duo's chemistry. When Saddiq asks why she is so happy, Bella replies, *"Sebab shooting dengan you"* (Because I'm shooting with you), further leaning into the romantic narrative from (0:01 to 0:07). This contributes to a wholesome and flirty tone, where the use of filters and editing techniques solidifies the video's lighthearted nature. The video also serves as promotional content for Kitsui Malaysia, as indicated by the caption and text overlay, yet it maintains its primary focus on building the "BASS" (Bella and Saddiq) brand through hashtags like #sweetcoupleBASS and #teambassoffic.

Public perception, as analysed through Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments, shows a deep investment in this "love story". Viewers have begun to project ambitious future narratives onto the pair, with one commenter imagining Saddiq as a future president and Bella as the "President's wife," comparing them to the iconic Indonesian film *Habibie & Ainun*. Other responses focus on Bella's personal happiness, noting that her "inner child is healing" and expressing disapproval of her ex-husband, Aliff, for failing to "appreciate a gem". This indicates that the audience has fully transitioned from viewing Saddiq through a political lens to seeing him as a romantic lead in a real-life drama, effectively neutralizing past political controversies through celebrity-style fascination.



Figure 34: Snapshot: A Festive "BASS" Dance

Source:Sakura

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	12 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	31 March 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKX73MA/
1.Visual & Audio	Visual: The video features a choreographed dance in a modern, well-lit home foyer with a prominent white pillar and staircase (0:01). Syed Saddiq is dressed in a peach Baju Melayu, and Bella Astillah wears a matching orange Baju Kurung.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Dynamic: The pair exhibits playful chemistry through synchronized movements and consistent eye contact (0:03 - 0:06). • Transitions: The video concludes with a close-up of the pair laughing toward the camera (0:08). Audio: • Style: An upbeat Hari Raya pop song by Hael Husaini. • Lyrics: Includes festive greetings such as "Sayang... Ya sayang" and "Maaf zahir dan batin." The fast tempo and rhythmic percussion drive the dance's timing.
2.Tone	Joyful and Festive: The tone focuses on togetherness and "Raya spirit." For Saddiq, it is "viral-ready" and humanizing, showing him as a relatable figure participating in pop culture trends.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Omg I'm full! Dapat tengok BASS menari bersama pun dah rasa kenyang harini-vitamin paling best! @Bella Astillah @Syed Saddiq. @Hael Husaini ni paling best setakat ni. Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#BellaAstillah #SyedSadiq #bellasyedyes #BASS #trending #fyp #foryou #couplegoals #primavalet
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Wow.ini yang kita tunggu video terbaharu..Selamat Hari Raya kepada Bella&YB serta ahli keluarga." 2. "Aku rasa YB baru sedar yang bercinta itu manis betul. Sehari tak jumpa macam setahun ya YB." 3. "Argghh...they look cute together.miss them!."

Item	Description / Analysis
	4. “Manis-manis dah dapat vitamin raya.” 5. “Lepas rindu dengan bass.”
Comment Translation	1. "Wow.. this is what we've been waiting for, a brand-new video. Happy Hari Raya to Bella & YB and their family members." 2. "I think the YB has just realized that being in love is truly sweet. One day without seeing her feels like a year, right YB?" 3. "So sweet, I've finally gotten my 'Raya Vitamin'." 4. "Finally easing the longing with BASS."

Table 36: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The twelfth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), released on 31 March 2025, leverages festive cultural trends to humanize Syed Saddiq through a choreographed dance alongside Bella Astillah. Set in a modern, well-lit home foyer, the visual narrative features Saddiq in a peach Baju Melayu and Bella in a matching orange Baju Kurung, creating a coordinated and aesthetically pleasing appearance from the opening at (0:01). The pair demonstrates significant playful chemistry through synchronized movements and consistent eye contact between (0:03 and 0:06), culminating in a close-up of them laughing together at (0:08).

The audio for the video is driven by an upbeat Hari Raya pop song by Hael Husaini, which features rhythmic percussion and festive lyrics like "*Sayang... Ya sayang*" and "*Maaf zahir dan batin*". This musical choice establishes a joyful and festive tone, positioning Saddiq as a "viral-ready" and relatable figure who participates in contemporary pop culture trends. The absence of text overlays allows the natural interaction to remain the focal point, while the caption frames the content as a "vitamin" for fans, further promoting the #BASS and #couplegoals narrative.

Audience reception, observed through Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments, reflects a high level of engagement and approval for the duo. Top comments express that viewers have been eagerly waiting for this "brand-new video" and describe the interaction as "sweet," with some noting that Saddiq seems to have "just realized that being in love is truly sweet". By successfully "easing the longing" of the fanbase, the video solidifies Saddiq's transition into a lifestyle and celebrity-oriented public figure, effectively distancing his image from previous political controversies through the lens of shared festive celebration.



Figure 35: Snapshot: The "Superstar" Reveal

Source: Syaheera.s

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	13 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	22 September 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSu2xSARX/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video takes place on the brightly lit stage of <i>Muzikal Lawak Superstar</i>. Host AC Mizal, wearing a vibrant patterned suit, teases Bella Astillah (dressed in a white gown) about looking nervous (0:01 - 0:02). • The Reveal: The camera pans to reveal Syed Saddiq in the audience, dressed in a casual black long-sleeve shirt and laughing along with the joke (0:13). • The "Punchline": A close-up shot focuses on a seat label that simply reads "BELLA," where Saddiq is sitting (0:15).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• Editing: The video utilizes "ship-style" editing with slow-motion effects on Saddiq to emphasize the chemistry (0:13). Audio: • Style: Begins with live production audio (host speaking and crowd cheering). • Transition: Moves into a popular romantic background track typical of "shipping" edits to underscore the playful teasing.
2.Tone	Teasing & Playful: The atmosphere is lighthearted and fan-centric, designed to stir fun gossip without tension. Everyone involved, including the subjects, appears to be enjoying the moment.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Sengih2la semorang harini ek dari siang sampai ke malam vitamin tumpah #bellaastillah #syedsaddiq #BASS #teambass #fyp Bella Astillah dan Syed Saddiq: Momen Rasa Nervous Saksikan momen menarik Bella bersama Syed Saddiq. Apa yang membuat Bella nervous? Temui jawapan di sini. #bellaastillah #syedsaddiq #BASS #teambass Keywords: momen Bella dan Syed Saddiq, Bella Astillah nervous, Syed Saddiq bersama Bella, reaksi Bella dengan Syed Saddiq, vlog Bella dan Syed Saddiq, Text Overlay: <i>No text overlay</i>
4.Associated Hashtags	#bellaastillah #syedsaddiq #BASS #teambass #fyp

Item	Description / Analysis
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Tengok ni! Yb pun ada masa untuk bella... yang takda masa tu semua ALASAN!” 2. “YB makin terkenal di bidang seni.. politik selalu Nampak serius je.” 3. “Terbaik YB Syed Saddiq. 4. “aku repost semua yg brkaitan BASS. 5. “Bagus YB...very humble... Tak sombong... alhamdulillah bagus didikan parents dia.”
Comment Translation	1. "Look at this! Even the YB has time for Bella... for everyone else, 'no time' is just an EXCUSE!" 2. The YB is becoming more famous in the arts/entertainment scene. in politics he always looks so serious." 3. "The best, YB Syed Saddiq." 4. "I repost everything related to BASS Bella and Syed Saddiq."

Table 37: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The thirteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 22 September 2025, transitions the narrative from private family interactions to a public, high-profile entertainment setting. The video captures a moment from the show *Muzikal Lawak Superstar*, where host AC Mizal teases Bella Astillah, who is dressed in a white gown on stage, about her apparent nervousness at (0:01). The visual reveal occurs at (0:13), when the camera pans to the audience to show Syed Saddiq, dressed casually in a black long-sleeve shirt, laughing along with the joke. A significant visual "punchline" is delivered at (0:15), with a close-up shot of a seat label that simply reads "BELLA," where Saddiq is sitting, further fueling the romantic "shipping" narrative through slow-motion editing effects.

The audio shifts from the live production sounds of the host and cheering crowd to a popular romantic background track, which is a common technique in "ship-style" fan edits to underscore playful chemistry. This contributes to a teasing and playful tone, designed to foster lighthearted gossip among fans without any underlying tension. The caption frames this moment as a "vitamin" for the audience, suggesting that seeing the two together brings joy to the fans, and uses keywords like "Bella Astillah nervous" and "Syed Saddiq bersama Bella" to maximize social media reach.

Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments reveals that the public is increasingly viewing Saddiq as an individual who prioritizes personal relationships, with one user noting that "even the YB has time for Bella," contrasting him with those who use "no time" as an excuse. Other commenters highlight his transition from the "serious" world of politics to becoming more prominent in the "arts/entertainment scene," praising him for being humble and well-bred. The enthusiastic reposting of "BASS" (Bella and Syed Saddiq) content by fans demonstrates the success of this soft-power strategy in shifting his public image toward that of a relatable celebrity figure.



Figure 36: Snapshot: Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah attending Anugerah Melodi Terhangat

Source:arniidris_annisa

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	14 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	03 August 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKnJgwX/

Item	Description / Analysis
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video shows Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman appearing together with Bella Astillah at a public stage event. During the moment captured in the clip, Bella Astillah interacts with Syed Saddiq while they are on stage in front of an audience. The video highlights their interaction and the public attention surrounding them. The crowd and presenters react to the moment, making it feel like a lively event segment that focuses on their presence together. Visually, the video is presented in a vertical format, which is commonly used for social media platforms such as TikTok or Instagram Reels. Most of the footage shows Bella Astillah and Syed Saddiq standing on stage with microphones under bright stage lighting (0:01). The background includes event visuals and LED screens, indicating that it is part of a formal programme or entertainment segment. The camera alternates between medium shots of the two individuals on stage and wider shots showing the audience (03:12). On-screen captions are added to highlight certain moments or statements, usually using bold text to attract viewers' attention. The editing style is quick and engaging, focusing on reactions and expressions to make the clip more entertaining for social media viewers. Audio: The audio mainly consists of live conversation and interaction between Bella Astillah and Syed Saddiq during the stage segment. Their voices are captured

Item	Description / Analysis
	through microphones, making the dialogue clear. In addition, audience sounds such as laughter, cheering, or applause can be heard in the background, which reinforces the atmosphere of a live event. The video may also include background music or sound effects added during editing to enhance engagement for online viewers (0:08).
2.Tone	The tone of the video is light, friendly, and slightly playful. The interaction between Bella Astillah and Syed Saddiq creates a relaxed atmosphere that feels entertaining rather than strictly formal. At the same time, because the setting is a public event with an audience, the tone still maintains a level of professionalism and public presentation. This combination makes the moment feel both engaging and enjoyable for viewers watching it online (0:42).
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Wow power peminat #BASS vote kesayangan kita sampai menang @Bella Astillah @Syed Saddiq Dari komen netizen ke pentas anugerah, YB dan Bella buktikan..chemistry tu bukan main-main. Congrats, power couple! Text Overlay: No text overlay
4.Associated Hashtags	#Bella #bellaastillah #syedsaddiq #syed #SelebritigalscoupleTerhangat #YBdanBella #AnugerahMelodi2025

Item	Description / Analysis
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. <i>"YB dah pandai dah main peranan."</i> 2. <i>"Educated couple."</i> 3. <i>"Pasangan yang mantap."</i> 4. <i>"Dah macam kat parlimen yb punya ucapan."</i> 5. <i>"Pasangan yang buat orang tersenyum-senyum sendiri."</i>
Comment Translation:	1. "The YB has already learned how to play his part play the role." 2. "A solid couple." 3. "The YB's speech is just like being in Parliament." 4. "A couple that makes people smile to themselves."

Table 38: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The fourteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 03 August 2025, marks a major milestone in Syed Saddiq's image rebranding as he and Bella Astillah appear at the *Anugerah Melodi Terhangat 2025* (AMT 2025). Visually, the video is a high-energy vertical edit typical of social media platforms, capturing the duo on a brightly lit stage at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) at (0:01). The footage alternates between medium shots of the pair standing with microphones and wide shots of a cheering audience at (03:12), emphasizing the public's massive scale of support. Saddiq maintains a "serious yet relatable" aesthetic, even being noted by media for bringing his signature notebook to the glamorous event, while Bella's interaction with him on stage creates a focal point for the crowd's enthusiastic reactions.

The audio profile of the clip is dominated by clear dialogue between the two subjects, captured through stage microphones, underscored by the ambient roar of laughter and applause from the live audience. At (0:08), subtle background music and sound effects are layered into the edit to heighten online engagement, creating a light, friendly, and slightly playful tone. This atmosphere, particularly evident at (0:42), successfully bridges the gap between Saddiq's professional political background and the entertainment-heavy setting. The interaction feels relaxed and unscripted, yet retains the level of public presentation necessary to maintain his dignity as a leader while making him appear "human" and approachable.

The video's caption explicitly celebrates the power of the fan-base, noting that #BASS supporters voted them to a win: *"Wow power peminat #BASS vote kesayangan kita sampai menang... chemistry tu bukan main-main. Congrats, power couple!"* This confirms that the duo was officially awarded the "Couple Goals Terhangat" title at the ceremony, a significant cultural victory. Associated hashtags such as #AnugerahMelodi2025 and #SelebritigalscoupleTerhangat targeted mainstream entertainment audiences, further distancing Saddiq from the legal "Scandal Frame" of his past.

Public sentiment in the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) of the comments reflects a complete shift in how Saddiq is perceived. One user jokes that he has "already learned how to play his role," while others describe them as an "educated couple" and a "solid couple." A particularly insightful comment notes that his victory speech felt "just like being in Parliament," highlighting how he successfully integrated his political oratory skills into an entertainment context to charm the nation. The recurring sentiment that they are a "couple that makes people smile to themselves" demonstrates that by this stage, the public no longer viewed Saddiq as a controversial figure, but as a beloved protagonist in a romantic national narrative.



Figure 37: Snapshot: Bipartisan Praise (2026)

Source: Oh Adil Media

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	15 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	23 October 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKWYHXC/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video captures Syed Saddiq speaking in the Dewan Rakyat (0:01). He is offering rare praise to Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim for a diplomatic

Item	Description / Analysis
	achievement: hosting both President Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in Malaysia. • Setting: The footage is filmed within the formal parliamentary chamber with distinctive blue seating (0:01 - 0:05). • Central Figure: Saddiq is featured wearing a patterned blue batik shirt (0:01). • Graphics: The video includes official logos for ASEAN 2025 and Malaysia MADANI, along with an inset portrait of PM Anwar Ibrahim (0:01). • Text Overlay: Bold red and yellow banners state: "JARANG-JARANG BERLAKU! YB SYED SADDIQ PUJI PM..." (0:01). Audio: • Primary Speech: Clear, direct audio from Saddiq's microphone as he speaks in a bilingual mix of Bahasa Melayu and English (0:01 - 0:06). • Background Score: A cinematic piano and string arrangement plays underneath the speech to create an "inspiring" tone.
2.Tone	Conciliatory and Diplomatic: Saddiq adopts a respectful and appreciative cadence, acknowledging national benefits over party lines. The framing is nationalistic, presenting the PM's actions as a win for Malaysia as a whole.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: PART 590 “Jarang-jarang berlaku! YB syed saddiq puji PM- satu-satunya pemimpin yang Berjaya satukan negara kuasa besar di Malaysia Text Overlay: JARANG-JARANG BERLAKU! SYED SADDIQ PUJI PM-SATU SATUNYA PEMIMPIN YANG BERJAYA SATUKAN NEGARA KUASA BESAR DI MALAYSIA

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #trendignewsmalaysia #ASEAN #sidangkemuncakasean2025
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “Di sebalik YB Syed Saddiq ada Bella yang matang mengubah dan menghapuskan stress beliau terhadap dunia politik..” 2. “SS ni layak jadi PM di masa akan datang...politik matang.” 3. “Ni baru matang..benda betul dia puji..benda salah dia sembur.” 4. “Lain pula vibe dia sekarang..then before.” 5. “Syed Saddiq semakin disukai ramai.”
Comment Translation	1. Behind YB Syed Saddiq, there is a mature Bella who changes his outlook and wipes away his stress regarding the world of politics." 2. "SS Syed Saddiq is worthy of becoming PM in the future... mature politics." 3. "Now this is mature. if something is right, he praises it; if something is wrong, he blasts them." 4. "His vibe is different now. compared to before." 5. "Syed Saddiq is increasingly liked by many."

Table 39: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The fifteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 23 October 2025, marks a strategic pivot where Syed Saddiq leverages his rehabilitated public image to re-enter the political discourse with a new, authoritative, yet collaborative persona. Visually, the video grounds Saddiq back in his professional element, capturing him speaking within the formal parliamentary chamber of the Dewan Rakyat at (0:01). Dressed in a patterned blue batik shirt rather than a rigid suit, he strikes a balance between traditional leadership and modern

accessibility from (0:01 to 0:05). The screen is layered with high-authority graphics, including the official logos for ASEAN 2025 and Malaysia MADANI, alongside an inset portrait of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. A bold red and yellow text overlay at (0:01) announces the anomaly of the moment: "*JARANG-JARANG BERLAKU! YB SYED SADDIQ PUJI PM...*" (Rarely happens! YB Syed Saddiq praises the PM), signaling a departure from his usual adversarial role.

The audio profile of the video is carefully constructed to heighten the gravity and emotional weight of the moment. It begins with clear, direct audio from Saddiq's microphone as he delivers a bilingual speech in Bahasa Melayu and English from (0:01 to 0:06), offering rare praise to the Prime Minister for the diplomatic achievement of hosting global superpowers. To elevate the impact of his words, a cinematic piano and string arrangement plays as a background score, transforming a standard parliamentary transcript into an inspiring, nationalistic narrative. This combination of visual and audio cues establishes a conciliatory and diplomatic tone, presenting Saddiq as a statesman who is capable of rising above partisan divides for the sake of national pride and benefit.

The caption and text overlay reinforce this narrative of "mature politics," highlighting that Saddiq is the rare leader who can acknowledge the success of a rival when it benefits the country. By framing the Prime Minister's diplomatic feat as a win for Malaysia as a whole, the video positions Saddiq as an objective and patriotic figure. The inclusion of hashtags like #ASEAN and #sidangkemuncakasean2025 ensures the video reaches a politically engaged audience, while the recurring #bellaastillah tag maintains the soft-power momentum built in previous videos.

Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments section confirms that the public perception of Saddiq has undergone a fundamental transformation. Viewers consistently use the term "mature politics" to describe his new vibe, with many noting that "if something is right, he praises it; if something is wrong, he blasts them." Interestingly, the "BASS" narrative continues to permeate his political life, with fans attributing this newfound calmness and maturity to the

influence of Bella Astillah, claiming she has helped "wipe away his stress regarding the world of politics." By the end of this video, commenters are no longer discussing his legal scandals; instead, they are discussing his potential as a future Prime Minister, proving that the soft-power strategy has successfully transitioned him from a "convicted politician" to a beloved and respected national leader.



Figure 38: Snapshot: The "Prefect" Pickup Line

Source: Bella Astillah

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	16 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	03 August 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmK7VG8g/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video features Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah in a brightly lit industrial studio.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Exchange: Bella initiates a series of cheesy pick-up lines, starting with the "Pengawas" line (0:01 - 0:02). • Body Language: Bella is animated and giggly (0:10 - 0:11), while Syed Saddiq starts off genuinely confused complete with an edited "loading" graphic over his head (0:07) before delivering his own counter-line. • Effects: Heavy TikTok-style editing with colorful captions and "blushing" emojis is used to highlight the humor (0:11). Audio: • Dialogue: Raw conversation in a mix of Malay and English. • SFX: Includes "meme-style" sound effects, laugh tracks, and "whoosh" sounds that accompany the on-screen emojis and transitions. • Music: A faint, upbeat instrumental track maintains an energetic vibe throughout the clip.
2.Tone	Lighthearted & Humorous: The tone is flirtatious and casual, framed as a "collab" moment or a playful "pick-up line" challenge between friends.
3. Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Pickup line ke 638 special untuk YB SS Text Overlay: KITSUI
4.Associated Hashtags	#kitsuimalaysia #WhitieSnow #BASS #BellaAstillah #SyedSaddiq
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. “YB SS pembaris lurus YB SS tak reti berbohon & jenis cakap lurus tegak.” 2. “Allah...Kuatkan la kesabran ku sebab ku ak sabar nak tunggu happy ending.”

Item	Description / Analysis
	3. “Jujur sangat YB ni ahahah!” 4. “Cepatlah nikah, kita orang yang layan BASS ni doakan yang terbaik.” 5. “Wahh YB dah mula jujur la.”
Comment Translation	1. "YB SS is like a straight ruler; he doesn't know how to lie and is the type to speak straight and direct." 2. "Oh God... strengthen my patience because I can't wait for the happy ending." 3. This YB is just too honest, ahahah!" 4. "Get married quickly; those of us who follow/enjoy 'BASS' are praying for the best." 5. "Wow, the YB has started to be honest about his feelings."

Table 40: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The sixteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 03 August 2025, continues to dismantle Syed Saddiq's "serious politician" persona by placing him in a relatable, high-energy entertainment context. Visually, the narrative is driven by a series of "cheesy" pick-up lines initiated by Bella Astillah in a brightly lit studio, starting with a "prefect" line at (0:01). The video highlights their chemistry through contrasting body language; while Bella is animated and giggly at (0:10), Saddiq appears charmingly confused, a moment emphasized by an edited "loading" graphic over his head at (0:07). To enhance the comedic value, heavy TikTok-style editing is utilized, featuring colorful captions and "blushing" emojis that appear at (0:11).

The audio reinforces this energetic vibe by blending raw, bilingual conversation with "meme-style" sound effects. These include laugh tracks and "whoosh" sounds synchronized with on-screen transitions, all layered over a faint, upbeat instrumental track that plays throughout the

clip. The tone is explicitly lighthearted, humorous, and flirtatious, carefully crafted to bridge the gap between Saddiq's formal background and a more "human" persona. By using self-deprecating irony such as the "loading" graphic at (0:07) the tone becomes egalitarian and approachable, showing he is comfortable being the "butt of the joke" to engage a younger, lifestyle-oriented demographic.

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments confirms that this tone successfully rebrands Saddiq as a sincere and honest individual. Top comments describe him as a "straight ruler" (pembaris lurus) who is too honest to lie, with viewers finding his genuine reactions at (0:07) to be endearing rather than incompetent. This sentiment has transitioned into a collective "waiting for a happy ending," with fans praying for the couple to "get married quickly." By maintaining a fun atmosphere devoid of political tension, the video successfully converts political followers into personal fans invested in his private happiness.

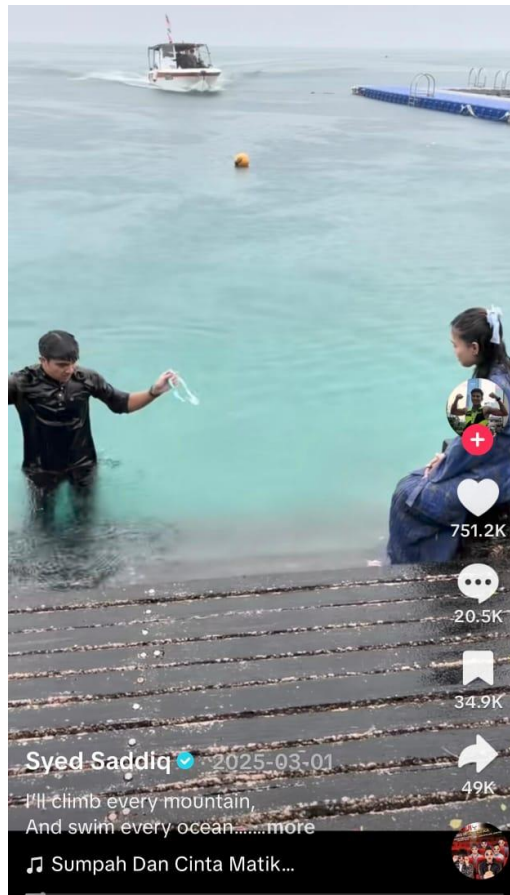


Figure 39: Snapshot: Swimming the "Ocean" (2026)

Source: Syed Saddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	17 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	01 March 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmK3mKv6/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a cinematic montage of Syed Saddiq swimming in open water under rainy skies. • The Start: It begins with Saddiq emerging from turquoise water towards wooden steps where Bella Astillah is waiting (0:00 - 0:02).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Action: The scene cuts to Saddiq jumping off a boat into the sea (0:08) and performing a strong butterfly stroke (0:12), symbolizing struggle and hard work. • The Scenery: Shot at a coastal resort (likely Semporna, Sabah) with wooden chalets on stilts (0:03). The rain creates a moody atmosphere. • The Conclusion: Bella is seen clapping and cheering as he completes his swim (0:00). Audio: • Background Music: Set to "Sumpah Mati" by Aizat Amdan, featuring emotional lyrics about eternal love and devotion. • Sound Effects: Ambient sounds of splashing water and rhythmic heavy breathing emphasize the physical effort.
2.Tone	Sentimental & Resilient: The video uses the "weathering the storm" metaphor. The presence of Bella at the "finish line" adds warmth, framing the clip as a tribute to staying strong through personal or political hurdles.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: I'll climb every mountain, and swim every ocean.... Text Overlay: No text Overlay
4.Associated Hashtags	#bellaastillah #primavalet
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "Tak kahwin tak undi." 2. "YB kalua tak kahwin ni satu Malaysia against you during election,kami memang campur aduk work and personal." 3. "Because of both of them ...this year I choose Primavalet tau."

Item	Description / Analysis
	4. “DISEBABKAN CAPTION YB SWEET, RAYA TAHU KAMI SATU FAMILY PRIMAVALLET! CONFIRM.” 5. “Kalau dah guna lagu-lagu macam ni, Ok sah!.”
Comment Translation	1. "No marriage, no vote." 2. YB, if you don't get married, the whole of Malaysia will be against you during the election; we definitely mix work and personal matters." 3. BECAUSE THE YB'S CAPTION IS SO SWEET, THIS RAYA OUR ENTIRE FAMILY IS WEARING PRIMAVALET! CONFIRM." 4. "If he's already using songs like this, okay, it's official!"

Table 41: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The seventeenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 01 March 2025, utilizes a cinematic and metaphorical approach to strengthen Syed Saddiq’s narrative of resilience through a dramatic montage of him swimming in open water under rainy skies. Visually, the narrative begins at (0:01) with Saddiq emerging from turquoise water toward wooden steps where Bella Astillah is waiting, creating an immediate sense of homecoming and support. Between (0:08 and 0:12), the scene shifts to Saddiq jumping off a boat and performing a strong butterfly stroke, a visual choice designed to symbolize physical grit and the act of "weathering the storm" amidst personal or political hurdles. The video concludes back at (0:00) with Bella clapping and cheering, effectively framing her as his emotional "finish line" and constant support system.

The audio layer reinforces this emotional gravity by using the track "*Sumpah Mati*" by Aizat Amdan, which features lyrics centered on eternal love and devotion. To emphasize the physical exertion of the task, ambient sounds of splashing water and rhythmic heavy breathing are layered into the track, grounding the cinematic visuals in a sense of reality. This creates a

sentimental and resilient tone, where the moody atmosphere of the coastal resort and the rainy weather serve as a backdrop for a tribute to staying strong. The caption, *"I'll climb every mountain, and swim every ocean...."* further leans into this romanticized persona, successfully shifting Saddiq's image from a politician in crisis to a determined and devoted figure.

The Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments section reveals that this "soft" framing is having a direct impact on public loyalty and consumer behavior. Viewers have begun issuing playful yet firm ultimatums, such as "No marriage, no vote," suggesting that they now mix his personal life with his professional suitability. Furthermore, the inclusion of #primavalet in the hashtags has translated into commercial support, with fans stating they chose the brand specifically because of the "sweet" connection shown between the two ambassadors. By utilizing such high-stakes romantic imagery and music, the video has effectively led the audience to conclude that the relationship is "official," thereby cementing a new, favorable chapter in Saddiq's public life.

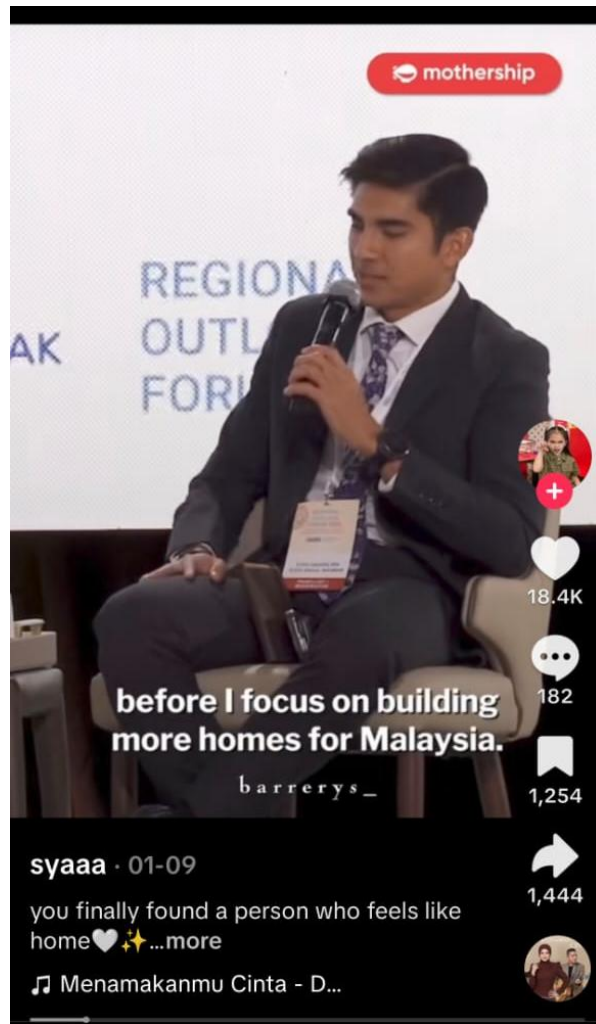


Figure 40: Snapshot: Building a Home (2026)

Source: Syaa

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	18 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	9 September 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKTc19h/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is structured as a narrative of "settling down," combining professional interview clips with intimate, domestic moments.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Premise: It opens with a clip of Syed Saddiq at a formal regional outlook forum where he states, "In 2026, I just want to focus on settling down and building my own home before I focus on building more homes for Malaysia" (0:01 - 0:05). • The Transition: The video then shifts to a stage event where Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah are seen together (0:10). Saddiq mentions that he has his "own plans" that are for "Bella and family to know" (0:09). • The Montage: The bulk of the video features "family-style" clips. You see Syed Saddiq interacting warmly with Bella's children, Ayden Adrean and Ara Adreanna (0:16). They are shown in matching traditional outfits (0:19), at sports events (0:15), and together in casual settings (0:22). • The Conclusion: It presents a cohesive, happy family unit, ending with the group together. Audio: • Speech Samples: Original audio from Saddiq's interviews and stage appearances establishes the narrative of his desire to "settle down." • Background Music: Set to a high-energy romantic ballad with lyrics focusing on someone being "the one." • Ambient Dialogue: Brief snippets of Bella's children interacting with them are included to reinforce the familial theme.
2.Tone	Hopeful & Romantic: By juxtaposing serious political ambitions with tender moments involving Bella and her children, the video creates a "wholesome" atmosphere, emphasizing emotional stability over public duty.

Item	Description / Analysis
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: you finally found a person who feels like home Text Overlay: No text overlay
4.Associated Hashtags	#bellaAstillah #syedsaddiq #bass #fypage #fyp
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "YBSS memang bawa aura baik dalam keluarga Bella and anak-anak." 2. "Entah la. Tengok video yang sepatutnya kita senyum, tapi aku nangis finally bella found her home too,YBSS.." 3. "BASS forever." 4. "I don't know why I love to see them forever." 5. "Bella deserved to be loved. Don't ever look back Bella, biarlah tinggal sejarah hitam."
Comment Translation	1. "YBSS really brings a good aura to Bella's family and her children." 2. "I don't know. Watching a video that should make us smile, but I'm crying because finally Bella found her home too, in YBSS."

Table 42: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The eighteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 09 September 2025, is a narrative-driven montage titled *"you finally found a person who feels like home."* This video strategically juxtaposes Syed Saddiq's serious political ambitions with intimate, domestic moments to create a wholesome, family-oriented image. The visual narrative begins at (0:01) with a clip from a formal regional outlook forum where Saddiq expresses a desire to focus on "settling down and building my own home" in 2026 before focusing on "building more homes for Malaysia". At (0:10), the scene transitions to a stage event where he appears alongside Bella Astillah, hinting at private plans known only to "Bella and family".

The bulk of the video features a montage of "family-style" interactions, highlighting Saddiq's warm bond with Bella's children, Ayden Adrean and Ara Adreanna. These clips show them in matching traditional outfits at (0:19), participating in sports events at (0:15), and sharing casual domestic moments at (0:22). The audio reinforces this hopeful and romantic tone by layering Saddiq's interview speech over a high-energy romantic ballad with lyrics about finding "the one". Brief snippets of ambient dialogue, such as Bella's children interacting with them, are included to further ground the narrative in a familial reality.

This strategic framing has fostered deep Parasocial Interaction (PSI) in the comments, where viewers have shifted from discussing policy to celebrating Saddiq's perceived "good aura" within Bella's family. One top comment expresses an emotional release, stating they are "crying because finally Bella found her home too, in YBSS," while others simply declare "BASS forever". By presenting a cohesive, happy family unit, the video successfully emphasizes emotional stability and personal fulfillment as a prerequisite to public duty, rebranding Saddiq as a relatable family man.



Figure 41: Snapshot: The "Provider" Character

Source:ERA

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	19 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	25 November 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKKRoJR/
1.Visual & Audio	Visuals: The video is a short, TikTok-style clip filmed at a high-end gala dinner or formal reception.

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The Subjects: Focuses on Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah seated next to each other at a banquet table (0:01 - 0:03). • The Action: The visual "hook" occurs when Saddiq is seen carefully peeling food (shrimp) on his plate and placing it directly onto Bella's plate (0:04 - 0:06). • The Setting: Sophisticated atmosphere with elegant table settings and ambient blue/purple lighting (0:01). Audio: • Song Choice: Uses a slowed-down, emotional Malay ballad with romantic lyrics about lasting affection. • Impact: The soft music amplifies the "sweetness" of the visual, framing a simple meal interaction as a romantic gesture.
2.Tone	Lighthearted & Romanticized: The video uses slow-motion effects and intimate focus to evoke a "shipping" reaction, making it feel like a scene from a drama series.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Sweetnya YB @syedsaddiq tolong kopek kan udang untuk @bellaastilah. Nampak character provider tu. Text Overlay: ERA / SWEETNYA YB SYED SADDIQ DENGAN BELLA (0:01)
4.Associated Hashtags	#sharEra
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. "That's how she should be treated. Walau macam mana pun jodoh itu tetap rahsia tuhan."

Item	Description / Analysis
	2. "BASS is one of a kind." 3. "Allah bagi insan yang lebih baik... percaya la setiap tangisan ada pelangi di depan." 4. "Mereka tak peduli, mereka hanya dengan dunia mereka, jangan kacau.. sweetnya YB."
Comment Translation	1. "That's how she should be treated. Regardless, a soulmate remains a secret of God." 2. "Allah [God] gives a better person... believe that behind every tear, there is a rainbow ahead." 3. They don't care about anything else, they are just in their own world, don't disturb them... the YB is so sweet."

Table 43: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The nineteenth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 25 November 2025, continues the romantic narrative by showcasing a tender, domestic-style interaction between Syed Saddiq and Bella Astillah at a formal event. Filmed in a sophisticated setting with elegant banquet tables and ambient lighting, the TikTok-style clip focuses on the two subjects seated side-by-side. The primary visual "hook" occurs between (0:04 and 0:06), when Saddiq is seen carefully peeling a shrimp on his own plate and placing it directly onto Bella's plate, a gesture the caption identifies as "character provider".

The video employs slow-motion effects and intimate camera focus to evoke a lighthearted and romanticized tone, making the interaction feel like a scene from a drama series. This atmosphere is amplified by a slowed-down Malay ballad, which frames the simple act of sharing a meal as a significant romantic gesture. A text overlay by ERA further highlights the "sweetness" of the moment, ensuring the audience does not miss the intended narrative.

This deliberate framing has successfully triggered a "shipping" reaction in the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) within the comments. Supporters have interpreted the gesture as a sign of how Bella "should be treated," with some viewing Saddiq as a "better person" granted by God after her past hardships. Comments like "they are just in their own world" suggest that the audience has fully embraced the couple's private narrative, further distancing Saddiq's public image from political controversy and grounding it in a story of personal affection.



Figure 42: Snapshot: The "Langkah Muar" Ironman Challenge (2024)

Source: Team Saddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
Video No.	20 Phase 2: (Soft Power Phase)
Date / URL	01 November 2025 https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmKEDjCt/
1. Visual & Audio	Visual: The video is a short, celebratory clip from the Ironman Malaysia Langkawi event. It focuses on the arrival of Syed Saddiq at the finish line (0:01).

Item	Description / Analysis
	• The setting: Nighttime at the finish line, illuminated by bright floodlights. The iconic "Ironman" archway is visible, displaying finishing times on a digital screen (0:01) • The Action: Syed Saddiq enters the frame running down the red carpet, carrying the Malaysian flag (<i>Jalur Gemilang</i>). He appears physically exhausted but triumphant (0:03). • The Emotional Peak: After crossing the line, he is immediately embraced by his mother. The camera stays close to capture raw, emotional hugs and the exhaustion of completing the triathlon (0:10) • On-Screen Text: Large text overlays state: "RM 1 juta untuk MUAR!! Tahniah YB Syed Saddiq" (0:01). Audio: • Music: The clip uses an orchestral, cinematic ballad with powerful female vocals to evoke a "hero's welcome" feeling. • Atmosphere: Faint background noise of the finish line announcer and crowd cheers adds authenticity to the live event. • Lyrics: Focuses on themes of destiny, strength, and victory.
2.Tone	Inspiring & Triumphant: It balances the grand scale of an international sporting event with the intimate "human" moment of a son hugging his mother after a gruelling physical feat.
3.Caption & Text Overlay	Caption: Tahniah @Syed Saddiq. Anda sememang nya kebanggaan Rakyat Muar! RM 1 juta kini milik Muar. Text Overlay: RM 1 juta untuk MUAR!! Tahniah YB Syed Saddiq

Item	Description / Analysis
4.Associated Hashtags	#syedsaddiq #bellaastillah #live #ironman #langkawi
5.Top Comments (PSI Analysis)	1. <i>"He's cryin!!! Tolong la rakyat Muar hargai YB anda...he's struggling beberapa kali nak pengsan but still going sebab fikirkan bantuan untuk rakyat dia."</i> 2. <i>"Ya Rabb please protect this man and semua yang dia sayang."</i> 3. <i>"Ya Allah Berilah Kesihatan yang baik kepada YB Syed Saddiq."</i> 4. <i>"Syukur Asbab Bella bawa YB join model Primavalet terus banyak dapat dana berjuta-juta. Bella pembawa magnet rezeki untuk YBSS dan warga Muar #OranBaikAllahSayang #Tahniahybss."</i> 5. <i>"The one and only walk the talk and do everything for his rakyat...salute u YB..."</i>
Comment Translation	1. "He's crying!!! People of Muar, please appreciate your YB... he's struggling and almost fainted several times, but he keeps going because he's thinking about getting aid for his people." 2. "O Lord, please protect this man and everyone he loves." 3. "O Allah, grant good health to YB Syed Saddiq." 4. "Thank God, because Bella brought the YB to join as a Primavalet model, they managed to get millions in funds. Bella is a 'magnet for sustenance' (good fortune) for YBSS and the people of Muar. #GoodPeopleAreLovedByGod #CongratsYBSS."

Table 44: Summary Analysis of TikTok Content – Phase 2

The twentieth video of the Soft Power Phase (Phase 2), posted on 01 November 2025, portrays Syed Saddiq's finish at the Ironman Malaysia Langkawi as a heroic and communal victory. The visual narrative centers on Saddiq crossing the finish line at night under bright floodlights, carrying the Malaysian flag while appearing physically exhausted but triumphant. An emotional peak occurs at (0:10) when the camera captures a raw, close-up embrace between Saddiq and his mother, grounding the grand scale of the international sporting event in a deeply personal "human" moment. Large text overlays and the video's caption emphasize the stakes of the feat, declaring "RM 1 juta untuk MUAR!!" and framing Saddiq as the "pride of the people of Muar".

The audio supports the video's inspiring, triumphant, and deeply emotive tone through an orchestral, cinematic ballad with powerful vocals, creating a "hero's welcome" atmosphere that is further layered with authentic ambient sounds of crowd cheers and the finish line announcer. By balancing the grand scale of the event with the vulnerable moment of a son embracing his mother, the tone shifts from professional highlight to a symbolic victory of character. This high-stakes musical backdrop, combined with the visual of him nearly collapsing at (0:03), projects a tone of self-sacrifice and nationalistic pride, signaling that his struggle is not for personal glory but for the sustenance and aid of his community.

This narrative of physical grit has significantly influenced Parasocial Interaction (PSI), with many commenters expressing deep concern for his health and appreciation for his efforts. Viewers highlighted his struggle, noting he was "almost fainting" but kept going for the sake of his constituents. Interestingly, some fans linked his recent financial success for Muar back to his soft power branding, suggesting that "Bella is a magnet for sustenance" who helped bring in millions in funds through their joint association with brands like Primavalet. Through this framing, the video successfully bridges the gap between Saddiq's personal endurance and his professional efficacy, rebranding him as a "warrior" for his people.

4.3 Theoretical Synthesis: Application of Entman's Framing Theory

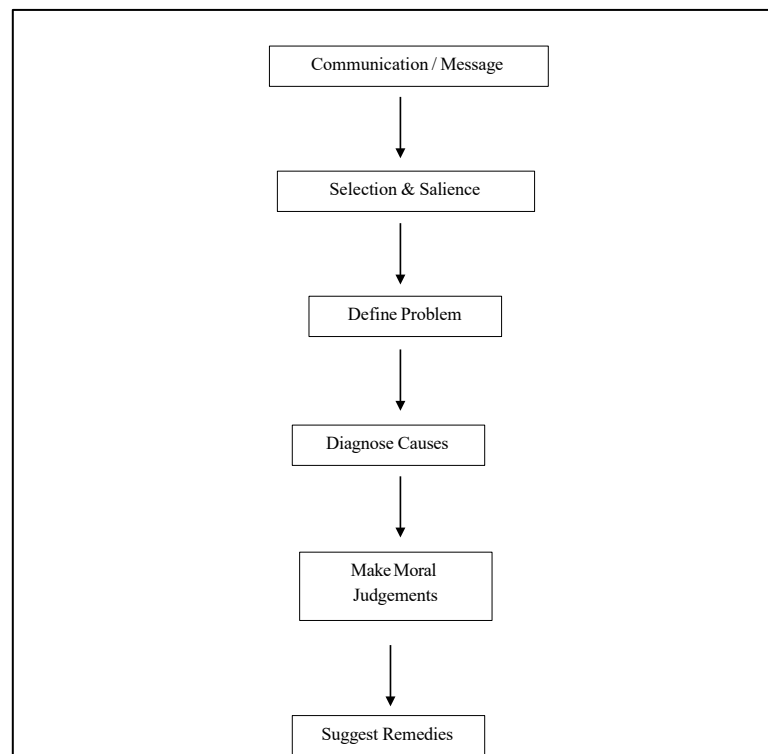


Figure 43: Robert Entman's Framing Model 1993

Based on the analysis in 4.1 and 4.2, it is understood that a political figure's self-identity is not fixed and can be successfully transformed over time using Soft Power. In Phase 1, the subject's identity was defined by "Hard Power" through legal convictions and court proceedings, creating a "Scandal Frame" that portrayed him as a disgraced leader. However, the analysis in Phase 2 showed a strategic shift toward Soft Power, where lifestyle content, physical endurance (Ironman), and celebrity collaborations were used to build attraction. By prioritizing relatability over legal defense, the subject was able to reset his public image and regain a sense of legitimacy among the youth. The transition between these two phases was achieved through the mechanisms of the Entman Framing Theory (refer to Figure 43), which served as the primary framework for this study. The summary of Phase 1 and 4.2 reveals how framing was used to connect the subject's actions to public perception; while Phase 1 focused on the "selection and salience" of legal guilt to create a narrative of corruption, Phase 2 shifted to highlight personal resilience and

"politainment," connecting the subject to the audience through shared values and emotional appeal. This shift proves that by changing what is made most noticeable (salience), a politician can move from a state of crisis to a state of restoration.

According to Entman, there are four functions under his model that guide the framing process: defining the problem, diagnosing the cause, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. These functions were used to break down the TikTok content in both phases. Under defining the problem, the analysis showed a significant shift in how the subject's situation was presented. In Phase 1, the problem was defined as a legal crime and a breach of public trust, focusing on the "Hard Power" of the judicial system. However, in Phase 2, the problem was redefined as a personal struggle and a challenge to serve the people despite external pressures. By redefining the problem from "guilt" to "perseverance," the subject was able to change the starting point of the public conversation. This led directly into diagnosing the cause, where the study looked at the reasons given for the subject's current state. In Phase 1, the cause was diagnosed as personal and legal failure. In Phase 2, the diagnosis shifted toward external political challenges and the subject's dedication to his constituents. This allowed the narrative to move away from individual blame and toward a story of a young leader fighting for his survival and his community, highlighted by his physical dedication in the Ironman Malaysia Langkawi (Video 20).

Under making moral judgments, this function involves evaluating the actions of the subject based on social values, ethics, and community standards. In political communication, it is the process where the media or the content creator signals to the audience whether a person's behaviour is "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad." By emphasizing certain details, the frame guides the viewers to either condemn or sympathize with the figure, effectively shaping the public's ethical stance on the situation. In this study, the process of making moral judgments was clearly visible through the hashtag data collected from the 40 analyzed videos. In Phase 1, there

were 121 hashtags that were politically scrutinizing, such as #Corruption and #Guilty, which acted as a form of digital condemnation and moral "conviction" by the audience. However, in Phase 2, the total number changed to 108 hashtags, which shifted toward "politainment" and lifestyle themes like #Ironman and #BASS. Portrayals of his family-oriented conduct (Videos 11, 12, 18) and measured diplomacy (Video 15) positioned him as a relatable and principled leader. These hashtags functioned as a different form of moral judgment; while the Phase 1 tags signaled disapproval, the Phase 2 tags signaled emotional support and social approval. This proves that TikTok hashtags are effective tools for political communication, as they act as "networked discursive spaces" (Highfield & Leaver, 2017) that frame how an audience should feel. This shift effectively changed the audience's perspective by moving the focus from legal ethics to personal relatability, a change supported by research showing how digital content can bypass traditional media to reshape voter attitudes (Pooi Yin Leong, 2019).

Finally, under suggesting remedies, the frames offered solutions to the defined problems. In Phase 1, the remedy suggested was legal punishment and accountability. In Phase 2, the remedy was public empathy, unity, and support for his community work. This function was supported by the supplementary theories of Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI), which explained how the feeling of "friendship" and attraction made the public more likely to accept the suggested remedy of support rather than punishment. By inviting audiences into "behind-the-scenes" domestic moments with figures like Bella Astillah (Videos 16, 18, 19), viewers were transformed from passive observers into emotionally engaged participants. Following his unanimous acquittal by the Court of Appeal in mid-2025, the narrative successfully repositioned him from a scandalized politician to a mature, socially engaged, and resilient leader. By combining PSI-driven intimacy with Soft Power constructs, the media reframed the subject's story from one of legal scandal to a narrative of resilience, authenticity, and cultural legitimacy, demonstrating the profound influence of strategic framing on public perception.

In summary, the comprehensive analysis of Phase 1 and Phase 2 demonstrates a successful transformation of public identity through the strategic application of Entman's Framing Theory. Phase 1 served as the "Scandal Period," where the legal conviction dominated the narrative, framing the subject through a lens of ethical failure and judicial accountability. However, the transition to Phase 2 proved that a political figure can overwrite a negative legal identity by shifting the "salience" of their content toward Soft Power and Parasocial Interaction (PSI). By moving the focus from courtroom drama to humanized "politainment" such as athletic feats and celebrity interactions the subject successfully redefined the "problem" from guilt to resilience.

The shift in audience engagement, moving from 121 scrutinizing hashtags to 108 supportive ones, highlights that public judgment is not fixed but is shaped by the frames presented on digital platforms like TikTok. Ultimately, this study proves that when a politician combines relatable digital intimacy with a strategic shift in framing, they can bypass traditional media gatekeepers to achieve a complete restoration of their public image. This analysis confirms that the subject successfully moved from being viewed as a scandalized convicted public figure to being perceived as a culturally resonant and resilient leader, illustrating the profound power of media framing in the digital age.

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Video Distribution and Framing Strategies

Phase 1: The Scandal Period (November 2023 – August 2024)

Video Range	Theme	Dominant Frame
Videos 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20	Judicial Verdict & Sentencing: High-profile legal proceedings regarding CBT, misappropriation, and money laundering.	The Scandal Frame: Defining the subject through a lens of judicial crisis and moral judgment.
Videos 3, 11	Failed Image Restoration: Early, largely unsuccessful attempts to use festive or humorous content to pivot from legal issues.	The Scandal Frame: Despite the "light" content, audience interpretation remained anchored in legal scrutiny.
Videos 10, 16, 17, 19	Public Scrutiny & Satire: Media artifacts and audience reactions mocking the subject or calling for accountability.	The Scandal Frame: Reinforcing the subject's identity as a "convicted public figure" facing legal consequences.

Table 45: Categorization of Themes and Framing Strategies in Phase 1: The Scandal Period

During this period, the media narrative was heavily dominated by the "Scandal Frame," which focused almost exclusively on Syed Saddiq's 2023 legal verdict. Media artifacts from

outlets like Channel News Asia and Astro AWANI utilized a serious, formal, and clinical tone to document the historical nature of his sentencing, particularly the unprecedented caning sentence for a white-collar crime. Visually, these videos emphasized the "Subject as Protagonist" in a state of legal precarity, often intercutting footage of his past ministerial roles with his current courtroom arrivals. This framing led to a polarized public reaction where the dominant audience interpretation was one of moral judgment, cynicism, and a focus on judicial accountability. Even when the subject attempted to shift the narrative through "wholesome" family content during Hari Raya, the audience utilizing Parasocial Interaction (PSI) largely rejected these efforts, maintaining a persistent focus on his "convicted" status and upcoming punishment.

Phase 2: The Soft Power and Image Restoration Period (March 2025 – November 2025)

Video Range	Theme	Dominant Frame
Videos 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 15	Charismatic Advocacy: High-energy "sigma" style edits of parliamentary speeches and youth engagement post-acquittal.	Soft Power Frame: Portraying the subject as a dynamic, "connected," and resilient leader.
Videos 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	Grassroots Service: "Behind-the-scenes" welfare visits and community contributions in Muar.	Soft Power Frame: Emphasizing "visionary service" and a "champion of the grassroots" persona.
Videos 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	"Politainment" & Lifestyle: Celebrity collaborations (e.g., Bella Astillah), high-fashion, and physical endurance challenges like Ironman.	Soft Power Frame: Utilizing attraction and celebrity association to rebuild public influence and intimacy.

Table 46: Categorization of Themes and Framing Strategies in Phase 2: The Soft Power and Image Restoration Period

Phase 2 marks a strategic narrative shift toward "Soft Power" and image restoration following Syed Saddiq's June 2025 acquittal. The media framing transitioned from "judicial crisis" to a reconstructed story of resilience and authenticity. This period heavily utilized

"politainment" strategies, where political advocacy was blended with high-production "sigma" edits and lifestyle content to appeal to a younger demographic. Visually, the focus moved away from the courtroom to high-impact events like the Ironman Malaysia challenge and intimate, family-oriented montages that portrayed a cohesive, aspirational persona. Auditorily, the use of bass-heavy electronic "beat drops" and sentimental acoustic tracks helped facilitate an emotional bond with the audience through Parasocial Interaction. This strategic framing successfully repositioned the subject as a mature, socially engaged leader, with public engagement shifting from criticism to admiration and protective sentiment.

4.5 The Strategic Transition: From Hard Power Scrutiny to Soft Power Resonance

The transformation of Syed Saddiq's public persona, as detailed in your research, follows a deliberate trajectory from the rigid structures of Hard Power to the persuasive influence of Soft Power. During Phase 1, the narrative was firmly rooted in Hard Power, defined by the "Scandal Frame" where the state's judicial authority and the weight of a High Court conviction dictated his public identity. In this period, the media focused on legal accountability, moral judgment, and the grave consequences of his seven-year sentence, portraying him as a figure subject to the disciplinary force of the law. This phase elicited a distant and critical audience response, where even early attempts at image restoration such as light-hearted festive content failed because the public still perceived him through the lens of legal crisis and ethical failure.

The process shifted significantly in Phase 2, moving toward a Soft Power framework that prioritized attraction, relatability, and cultural legitimacy over legal definitions. This transition was marked by "politainment" and charismatic leadership, where Saddiq leveraged his personal virtues such as his resilience during the Ironman Malaysia event and his participation in popular culture to rebuild influence. By moving away from the clinical language of the courtroom and toward the emotional intimacy of Parasocial Interaction (PSI), the media reframed his story from one of a "scandalized politician" to that of a "People's Champion." Ultimately, this shift replaced

the Hard Power demand for judicial accountability with a Soft Power "remedy" of emotional support and public appreciation, successfully repositioning him as a mature and resilient leader ready for national responsibility following his acquittal.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated that the media transformation of Syed Saddiq was a deliberate and strategic shift from "Hard Power" scrutiny to "Soft Power" resonance. During Phase 1 (the Scandal Period), the narrative was dominated by a "Scandal Frame" rooted in the state's judicial authority, where the media defined the problem through the lens of the 2023 High Court verdict and legal accountability. This period was characterized by a "grave and clinical" tone that left the public focused on moral judgment and the unprecedented severity of his sentence.

However, a significant finding of this study is how TikTok functioned during this crisis, which challenges existing academic literature. While scholars such as Leong (2019) suggest that social media typically serves as a "shield" for politicians to bypass mainstream gatekeepers, the data in this study proves that TikTok actually amplified the scandal. Due to the platform's interest-based algorithm, the high-velocity news of the verdict reached far beyond Saddiq's core supporters, functioning as a magnifying mirror rather than a protective shield. Furthermore, while the initial data suggested an "image collapse," this research concludes that in the age of short-term digital memory, a scandal is often a temporary peak in a narrative cycle rather than a permanent end. The transition into Phase 2 successfully utilized "Soft Power" constructs such as high-profile celebrity collaborations, educational crowdfunding initiatives for Muar, and the "People's Champion" narrative during the Ironman Malaysia challenge to rebuild his public influence. These pivots functioned as a "digital overwrite," diluting the legal negativity with humanizing content. By replacing distant judicial scrutiny with an intimate, supportive bond through Parasocial Interaction, the media successfully reframed Saddiq's story from one of a "scandalized politician" to a narrative of resilience and authenticity. This restoration was finalized

by his unanimous acquittal in June 2025, which provided the ultimate "Remedy" in Entman's framing model, explaining why his public image remains resilient and positive in the current Malaysian political landscape.

Critical to this digital restoration was the strategic utilization of hashtags in short-form video content, which served as the primary mechanism for anchoring his new brand identity. In political communication, just as in business branding, hashtags are not merely organizational tools but function as "networked discursive spaces" (Highfield & Leaver, 2017) that guide the audience toward a specific moral evaluation. The shift from 121 politically scrutinizing hashtags in Phase 1 to 108 supportive, lifestyle-oriented hashtags in Phase 2 proves that hashtags are vital in transitioning a figure from a state of crisis to a state of recovery. By actively staying in politics while shifting his digital brand toward relatability, Syed Saddiq became a highly resilient political figure. This media integration successfully moved his identity from a "scandalized politician" to a celebrated national figure, demonstrating that hashtag-driven branding and soft-power pivots are essential for creating long-term image resilience in the face of significant "Hard Power" legal challenges.

5.2 Recommendations

To build upon the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for political practitioners and future researchers. For political communicators in Malaysia, it is highly recommended to integrate the "Soft Power" and "Politainment" strategies identified in Phase 2, as these proved significantly more effective at fostering public resilience and legitimacy than traditional defensive legal rhetoric. This study demonstrates that by utilizing hashtags as strategic "brand anchors" in short-form video content, a politician can successfully transition from a clinical legal identity to a culturally resonant brand. This digital branding was clearly validated by the subject's shift from a "Scandal Frame" to a "Recovery Phase," resulting in his status as one

of the most positively covered political figures following his engagement and widespread media exposure on platforms like Astro, Era, and Awani.

While this research successfully mapped the shift in Syed Saddiq's public image, several areas remain for future exploration. First, a longitudinal study should be conducted to determine if a "Soft Power" persona remains durable during an active election cycle. Crucially, future researchers must address whether such an image shift is truly permanent or merely a temporary peak in the short-term digital cycle. Because TikTok's algorithm favours high-velocity trending content, the "Soft Power" frames identified in Phase 2 may function as a temporary "digital overwrite" rather than a total erasure of the past. Since the "Scandal Frame" remains a permanent part of the digital footprint on TikTok, it could resurface with greater intensity during periods of high political stakes. Therefore, second, future studies should investigate the "re-activation" of these suppressed legal frames and how they might clash with a "Soft Power" persona when "Hard Power" political attacks resurface. Third, future studies could employ quantitative sentiment analysis or focus groups to provide a more statistically significant measure of audience shifts, moving beyond the qualitative Parasocial Interaction (PSI) analysis used here. Finally, researchers should investigate the role of specific platform algorithms such as the viral nature of the TikTok "For You Page" versus Facebook's closed echo chambers to understand how these restorative frames and hashtags are distributed across different demographic groups in Malaysia, and whether these algorithms favor the long-term memory of a scandal or the short-term appeal of a "Soft Power" pivot.

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