

Paywalls for  
independent  
media in  
authoritarian  
states:  
Are they  
sustainable?

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## EXTRACT

This essay examines what kinds of revenue models would be effective for independent news outlets operating in authoritarian environments where freedom of the press is curtailed. I characterise being 'independent' as being willing and able to remain politically AND financially independent of any political entities whether they be in the government or not. Compared to liberalised countries, ruling governments in authoritarian states often use a combination of political and financial methods to control the press.

I looked at three online news outlets, Malaysiakini in Malaysia and Hong Kong's Initium Media and Hong Kong Free Press, to learn how they managed to sustain themselves while operating in media environments classified as partly-free. My study attempts to see whether the experiences of these three can help other independent news sites struggling in repressive countries. The focus will be on how these outlets used different subscriber and reader-contribution systems as a source of income to overcome the shortage of revenue coming from advertisements.

My analysis will draw on interviews with the managers of these three sites, senior officials and editors of other media organisations, journalism scholars and the published work of other experts. I will also draw on my own observations and experiences as a senior writer for eight years in a free-access independent news site in Malaysia, The Malaysian Insider. I will not just recount the success stories of what methods worked and the challenges they faced, but to also come up with some recommended best practices that outlets working in partly free media environments can use.

I cannot stress enough however, that there is no one-size fits all approach that works for everyone. The successful experiences told here are also due to the unique conditions of their individual societies as well as their own efforts. I will also share stories of independent news outlets that failed to get enough financial support from their readers and which were forced to close down.

Even managers at big brands such as the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times have told me that their success with their own subscription systems did not mean that they have solved the puzzle of sustainable journalism in the digital age. "No one's really cracked the problem. Because you'll never know whether your system will work in the next three years," a WSJ senior editor told me.

But there are lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of these three and other successful online news outlets that can be instructive and useful for others struggling to sustain critical, impartial reporting in un-free places.

## INTRODUCTION

On May 9, 2018 Malaysians made world history in two ways - they ended the reign of the longest political party to rule a post-colonial country and they elected the oldest prime minister on the planet at the age of 93. The 'Barisan Nasional' (BN) or National Alliance coalition had governed Malaysia uninterrupted since the Southeast Asian nation won independence from Britain in 1957. But for Malaysians, the 14<sup>th</sup> general election was also chance to make a break with a history of corruption, abuse of power, economic stagnation, authoritarianism, race and religious politics and a stifled public sphere.

The results of the 14<sup>th</sup> general election (GE14) showed that a majority of Malaysian voters bought into the message of the new Pakatan Harapan (PH) or Alliance of Hope government. PH had promised to wipe out corruption, reform institutions such as the police, election commission and the courts, to end identity politics and to guarantee greater civil liberties.

But GE14 was not just a victory for PH. It was the result of the long, hard struggles by civil society groups who nurtured the ideas of good governance, democracy and fact-based politics. It was also a triumph for independent media, who had suffered a long history of intimidation, censorship and economic deprivation in order to spread and popularise those ideas to a sceptical Malaysian public. The principles and ideas expounded by PH were shared by Malaysia's independent news organisations who lived for the day when freedom of expression and the healthy debate of ideas became the norm for Malaysian society.

Out of all independent media organisations, the GE14 victory was especially significant for Malaysiakini, the country's longest running independent news and current affairs website. Out of the top five professionally-run independent news sites, Malaysiakini or 'Mkini' was singled out for praise for its work by top PH leader and the country's [prime minister-designate Anwar Ibrahim](#). Mkini chief executive officer Premesh Chandran also told Splice Magazine of how the historic polls [were a validation of not just its brand of journalism](#) but its pioneering business model.

Mkini not only persevered against numerous threats to shut it down by the iron-fisted BN regime since it went on line in 1999. Its continued success was evidence that a subscriber model could work in a country where the average household earns US1,600 or HKD13,000 a month. Mkini's consistent ability to beat its competitors, who were news sites offering free access, silenced cynics who said Malaysians would not pay for professional-quality, independent news. Its success was not just a victory for press freedom and expression. It was a win for the idea that even in an authoritarian country, citizens were willing to part with their hard-earned money to fund independent media.

## Semi-free and not-free

The world's 160-odd countries may be divided by national borders, political parties, rates of development, culture and language. But what almost every country on the planet has in common is that they have internet access for their citizens. The only difference is how much of the internet citizens are allowed to access. And it is in this contested space that independent media entities are fighting for a presence.

Like Malaysia prior to its 2018 election, there are about 27 out of 65 countries where the internet is classified as 'partly free' by think tank [Freedom House](#). This is based on how each country scores on three categories, 'obstacles to access', 'limits on content' and 'violations of user rights'. The ratings are made on how government policies and actions in those three areas.

In Freedom House's 2017 report, about 14 of the 27 partly free countries have [high internet penetration rates](#) possibly because their governments believe that this is necessary for economic growth. But these countries still scored badly due to among others censorship by the government and the spread of misinformation.

Freedom on the web is closely correlated with freedom of the press since any media organisation that wants to remain relevant these days has to have a presence of the internet. The internet and the attendant presence of social media have become the distribution channel for dissidents and independent journalists who want to evade censors. These professional journalists and individuals fight online to bring their fellow citizens news and views that are different and that often challenge their government's narrative. Even states classified as not free such as Turkey and Russia, have brave independent news outfits. As said by one media investor to the [Center for International Media Assistance \(CIMA\)](#), there's a huge amount that can be published even in markets that are semi-free.

Independent news sites operating in these environments are constantly embroiled in wars of attrition with their ruling politicians who attempt to muzzle them through the use of repressive laws. In Malaysia, these take the form of laws such as Printing and Presses Act (which regulates newspapers), the Sedition Act (which curtails dissent) and the Communications and Multimedia Act (which regulates online content). Its one reason why Malaysia scores 69 on Freedom House's [Freedom of the Press 2017](#) rankings and is classified as 'not free'.

Another pernicious method of intimidation is political pressure on businesses to not advertise on independent news sites. This is how ruling politicians through their business links with media owners ensure that news outlets remain friendly to them. Independent news organisations critical of the ruling regime find it difficult to attract ads. This occurred in both [Mkini](#) and its rival [The Malaysian Insider](#) and has crippled their ability to make an income. It was because of

this financial constraint that Mkini first started its subscription model.

## **PART ONE**

Starting in 1999, Mkini pioneered professional, online independent news in Malaysia at a time when almost every news outlet was controlled by the nation's ruling regime. Started by two ex-journalists Steven Gan and Premesh Chandran, from national daily The Sun, the site immediately took off. The country was going through a period of political upheaval called '[reformasi](#)' and the internet, which was uncensored, was where Malaysians went to for critical, non-partisan news. Mkini's popularity grew as more and more Malaysians became connected to the internet and the site continued to publish voices that challenged the ruling regime's narrative. "The more Malaysiakini was threatened and censored, the more they reinforced their reputation as a credible news source, and a brave one," Zaharom Nain, professor of media and communications studies at Nottingham University-Malaysia told me.

Unlike its bigger and richer rivals in the pro-regime mainstream media, Mkini gave space to government critics from the Opposition parties and civil society groups. "In an environment where Malaysians were starving for credible news, Mkini was a godsend," said Zaharom. "Middle class Malaysians had had enough and were looking for alternative, more critical, accounts of what was happening to the country. They found it in Malaysiakini".

Even after other independent new sites started cropping up after 2008, they were unable to unseat Mkini's dominant position due to long lead time it had to build and sustain its brand. After years of operating from a rented store front, the firm now has its own building and employs about 80 staff. It draws in [1.18 million unique visitors per month](#).

In May, at the height of the general election season, Mkini was the top news site in the country according to the [Malaysia Digital Association](#). Over [17 million](#) tuned into the site to track the election results on May 9. In May, Mkini had beaten out bigger, wealthier rivals who were linked to the BN (Astroawani, The Star, Berita Harian) and other similarly sized independent outlets (Free Malaysia Today, Malaymail Online). The rank reflects the high credibility Malaysians accord to its political and current affairs coverage.

### **Why and how it worked**

Studies on Malaysiakini's success point to two almost equally important aspects of the website – its reputation of providing professional, independent news and its business model. As said by Zaharom, increasing political consciousness among Malaysians created a demand for news that challenged the government's narrative. Mkini was able to tap into this demand

and because it was the only professionally run outlet between 1999 to 2008, it had a near monopoly over this growing market.

But even Mkini's dominance could only be maintained if it had a sustainable business model. Mkini's founders' experiments in generating and collecting revenue and their use of technology to deliver content were what cemented its edge. When it was started in 1999, the site's content was free and it ran on advertising revenue. But in 2001, after operating for three years, advertising revenue started to fall due to the dot.com bust. "At the time, advertising was clearly not working out. So we had a choice to either go subscription or basically close down," said Prem in the Splice Magazine interview.

The result was pivotal. It allowed the site to derive income by building a relationship with its readers based on shared values – that readers who truly believed in Mkini's independent journalism should help fund the site. "The idea there was: Who really wants Malaysiakini to survive? We felt our readers were our strongest backers," Prem told Splice.

Mkini uses what has been termed a "soft" paywall where some content is free while the rest is available to subscribers. The site publishes in four languages and only the English and Chinese content are behind a paywall. Readers are able to access the first three or four paragraphs of a story before needing to subscribe in order to read the rest. Content in Bahasa Malaysia, the country's national language, and Tamil, used by some Malaysians of South Indian descent, is free. The decision to keep its Bahasa Malaysia content free allowed its journalism to [reach a wider audience](#) since it is the country's most widely spoken language, Prem said.

When it was first started in 2002, an annual subscription cost MYR100 or (USD 26 at the 2002 exchange rate) according to a paper by [Media Development Investment Fund](#). This is roughly the equivalent of seven to eight lattes at the local Starbucks. Although the thought of paying for news was alien to Malaysians, Mkini managed to get 1,298 subscribers in the first year according to MIDF, increasing to 5,000 by 2007. It was in 2008 that Mkini more than doubled its subscriber base to 12,000 as Malaysians clamoured for independent news ahead of that year's general election. In late 2014, the number of subscribers was 16,039, according to the [CIMA](#) study.

Mkini's revenue model allowed it to remain financially independent of politicians and tycoons, said editor-in-chief Gan told CIMA. Subscriptions also allowed it to survive as ad revenue dwindled. In contrast, a rival site The Malaysian Insider, which was owned by The Edge Media Group, was [shut down in March 2016](#). The free access site, which had also been harassed by the regime, was shuttered due to commercial reasons.

According to the MIDF, between 2008 to 2012 subscriptions, advertising and project grants comprised 40.6%, 33.5% and 18% of revenue respectively. But starting in 2010, advertising

overtook subscriptions as the largest source of revenue, according to CIMA.

Zaharom argued that support for Mkini from subscribers was a manifestation of their feelings towards the ruling regime. “The pay wall, while risky, also made many readers respond positively because they were angry with the regime and saw their support of Malaysiakini as support for the underdog and a symbolic slap in the face of BN.”

## PART TWO

So can Mkini’s model work for other media operating under similar semi-free environments? What would it take to convince citizens living under repressive regimes to fund professional, critical journalism?

Can it work in an environment such as Hong Kong, which, like Malaysia, has a huge middle class and is experiencing greater threats to press freedom?

Certainly Mkini’s success is due to certain specifics of the Malaysian context. But its experience provides some lessons for similar media outfits labouring under the same restrictions it did.

Mkini’s experience resembles that of two online sites in Hong Kong, Initium and the Hong Kong Free Press. This suggests that pay walls and reader-funded models can offer hope for other independent journalists and editors battling state censors and struggling with ever decreasing ad revenue.

In its 2017 report, Freedom House gave [Hong Kong a press freedom score of 42](#) – a three point decline over the previous year. The think tank classifies it as partly-free. A 2018 public and media survey by the [Hong Kong Journalist’s Association](#) showed that the state of press freedom has eroded in the past 12 months. Some 73 per cent of journalists who responded said press freedom had gone backwards while public respondents gave a rating of 47.1 out of 100, the lowest score since the survey was started in 2013. Respondents said pressure from the Chinese government and self-censorship were among factors that undermined press freedom in Hong Kong.

Despite Hong Kong’s vibrant and mature advertising market, huge media players such as the South China Morning Post and small, insurgent sites Initium say that advertising is an unstable source of income. Gary Liu, a digital advertising expert who is now SCMP’s chief operating officer said that the value of digital ads is at best, 20% of their print counter parts. “Even though I come from the digital ads industry, I can tell you (relying on digital ads) is not a sustainable model for quality journalism,” Liu said in a September talk at the HKBU.

Initium’s chief editor Lee Chih-Te told me that his experience in Taiwan’s Chinese-language online media industry, the

practice of relying on digital advertising had poisoned the journalism ecosystem in that country in the early 2000s. Since no one had dared start a paywall first, most Taiwanese digital news operations relied on ad revenue.

“When you rely on ads for income, you need to boost your clicks and to boost your traffic, you print sensational news. Because you are trying to be fast you often print mistakes and inaccuracies. In the end everyone complained about the quality of the news in Taiwan, from your reporters, your readers and even the government.”

Initium started off in 2015 offering free news and analysis to a target audience of educated Chinese readers all over the world. Lee said that Initium takes a “classical editorial stance” where “we report on all but don’t support anyone”. During the period of this study Initium ran pieces on the mass surveillance and detention of Xinjiang’s Uighur population, the Hong Kong government’s refusal to grant entry to Financial Times editor Victor Mallet and problems concerning exiled writer Ma Jian’s visit to Hong Kong.

The company ran into financial problems in 2017 said Lee. As advertising was not paying the bills, it informed its readers in March 2017 that it needed to start a subscription service or go bust.

After a successful crowd-funding campaign to build a new website and paywall system, Initium was re-launched in August 2017. It had also shed between up to 70% of its staff and moved to a smaller office. After the paywall, Initium lost between 65% to 68% of its original users said Lee. Page views also went down by about 65% from its free access days. “But I still prefer our situation today compared to before, even with less page views. Because now, we are financially better off”.

After more than a year of putting up a partial paywall, Initium now has 30,000 active subscribers who are termed “members”, said Lee. Between 50% to 45% of total page views come from Taiwan, 35% to 30% from Hong Kong while the rest originate from China and Chinese-speakers in North America. The website is blocked in China due to its critical coverage of taboo subjects in the mainland. “We have a feature in our app which allows readers to download and convert our stories in JPEG format,” Lee said. According to Hong Kong journalists familiar with China’s censorship methods, digital pictures of controversial articles are a favourite way of sneaking over the mainland government’s web blockade.

Initium’s exclusive analyses, features and columns are its main draw and these are behind a paywall. Sections on breaking news and an open discussion group called “round table” are free. A basic subscription is HKD 498 per year or HKD 49 per month, while premium subscriptions which allow access to the Wall Street Journal are HKD 998 per year or HKD 83 per month.

It is headquartered in Hong Kong but has small teams of editors and reporters in China, Taiwan and Europe. Articles

deemed controversial to the mainland government are written from Hong Kong, says Lee.

Although the number of subscribers is slowly growing, Lee is optimistic that it will hit 50,000 in two to three years. "This is the point at which we hope the site would be able to break even." Currently, subscription fees comprise between 95% to 98% of revenue, and pays for half of all operational costs. The other half comes from its original investors.

Despite the fact that Initium still has to rely on investors, Lee says that they are happier after the site started the subscription model. "Now they can spend less on us instead of before and they can spend their money more effectively."

Being able to pay the bills is not the only advantage of the subscription model. Equally important, Lee says, is the relationship that Initium is able to build with its readers and hopefully, its contribution to Chinese journalism as a whole. The model allows Initium to maintain its independence both politically and financially. "Because we are responsible only to our readers. We write for them and not to chase after clicks for advertisers. With subscriptions we basically tell our readers that if you like our writing, then fund us."

"The effect is not just on us but on the environment," says Lee, adding that the focus on quality and analytical writing is challenging an industry accustomed to sensationalism and the misinformation the latter inadvertently creates. "We hope that we can improve the culture of journalism and nurture better readers. Its not just about being self-sustaining. We want to contribute something to the wider environment".

Initium's presence is starting to be felt and the local industry is starting to recognise that. Initium's reporting has won 11 awards from the prestigious Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) despite being in operation for just three years. The website has also won four Human Rights Press Awards.

### **Money for the right reasons**

Even smaller than Initium but just as well known, is the English non-profit website the Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP). It is an online only independent media outlet that aims to be [the most independent and credible English-language news source in Greater China](#). Unlike Initium, HKFP has decided to pioneer a different method of sustaining itself which is arguably just as novel in the Asian media landscape.

HKFP was the [first Hong Kong outlet](#) to do crowd funding. It still sources income through public donations. When it was first launched in 2015, its founders led by chief editor Tom Grundy asked for HKD150,000 in donations. "The public responded by giving half a million. People would just come up to use and give us money, sometimes even winning lottery tickets", Grundy told me during a visit to HKFP's offices. In 2016, [HKFP raised over HKD 1 million](#) from direct donations.

HKFP is one of the few news outlets that publishes its audited accounts and [annual report](#) on its site so that the public knows how each cent is spent. According to its 2017 annual report, 86% went to pay the salaries of its five permanent staff and freelancers.

According to the 2017 annual report, the money has allowed HKFP to garner 26.5 million page views since its 2015 launch and become no. 2 on social media among all English Hong Kong news outlets. It has also published over 10,000 comment and news pieces in under three years.

Grundy says the site has no plans to shift to a paywall model as it would limit its reach. "Only about 10% of Hong Kong residents read English. If we put up a paywall it would limit our market even further. We don't want to limit our news to a select elite but to the masses." A paywall would also contradict its mission statement of being a non-profit. "Our readers don't mind donating to us as long as they know we are spending wisely and that they are doing it for the right reasons".

## **THE TAKEAWAYS**

Mkini, Initium and HKFP are some of the lesser known and recent examples of successful news sites that showed how different subscriber models can work in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian environments. Other examples include The Standard in Thailand and the Mekong review according to Hong Kong Baptist University journalism lecturer Dr Judith Clarke.

Their stories show that it's not just global brands such as the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times who can attract financial support. But their experiences do not mean that the subscriber model can be automatically adopted by any news outlet.

Singapore, for instance, is classified as ['not free' in Freedom House's 2017 Freedom of the Press](#), with a score of 67 - two points better than Malaysia. It has one of the most affluent, well-educated societies in the non-Western world. In theory, such a big politically-literate audience could support the growth of news outlets that were independent of the government-controlled media.

But the experiences of [The Middle Ground and Inconvenient Questions](#) showed this not to be the case. Although there may have been high demand for independent news, there were not enough readers who wanted to fund the production of such content. In the end, these two websites were forced to close down due to a lack of funding.

Despite a crowd funding campaign in 2016, The Middle Ground had only about 200 patrons when it decided to wind down about a year later. These supporters gave it about S\$3,000 per month, far short of the S\$15,000 per month it had hoped to raise.

Speaking to Today Online, TMG founder Bertha Henson said the Singaporean public's attitude towards paying for news was an obstacle to sustaining the site. "People should not expect professional work for free. If it's going to be free, then it should be more of a hobby, than something of a professional level."

So how can a news site in a semi free country that wants to be politically independent replicate the successes of Mkini, HKFP, Initium and the others mentioned here? What can they learn from these experiences and what are some of the best practices that can aid them?

[Aurelija Gackaitė](#) in her study on revenue models for news outlets recommended several principles for any site which wants to charge readers for content. Her recommendations paralleled some of the current practices in Mkini, Initium and HKFP.

### 1. Keep operating costs low

This is the most fundamental practice in Mkini, Initium and HKFP. For about two thirds of its nearly 20 years, Mkini had a very lean editorial team comprising of between 10 to 12 reporters across its three language sites. Its [top management](#) also do not take home fat pay checks.

While Initium maintains tiny teams of between one to three reporters and editors in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, it sources up to two thirds of its exclusive content from free lancers who are paid on a per-story basis. Initium editors also often do double-duty as writers, said chief editor Lee.

HKFP has a permanent staff of four and is also reliant on freelancers for much of its content. It also relies on countless [tech, accounting and editorial volunteers](#). HKFP does not have its own office and works out of a co-working space, while some of its equipment was donated by the public.

### 2. Be as honest and transparent with readers on aims and operations

Gackaitė cites this principle as being of top importance for sites using subscriber and supporter models. Telling readers on the onset why they need to pay for the news is 'highly important because it relates to news users' psychological level of emotions'. In short, it builds trust between reader and news provider.

When Mkini and Initium decided to put up their pay walls they appealed to their readers months ahead schedule and stated explicitly why they were doing it and what kinds of content their subscribers can expect. HKFP stated from the start that they were a non-profit and uploads their annual report and accounts on their web page so that supporters can see where the money goes.

The transparency over the type of news and content that a site commits to producing can also help cement trust with subscribers. The experiences of Mkini and HKFP show that in authoritarian places, outlets that pledge and produce independent and critical journalism are able to harness public disgruntlement towards the ruling regime into support for their sites. Mkini was able to turn the high demand for credible news in Malaysia into a relationship where readers were seen as not only supporting a website but also the ideals of press freedom and freedom of expression.

Gackaité also cites this ability to form a social compact with consumers as a success factor for news sites in free settings such as The Guardian and De Correspondent.

### 3. Providing exclusive content that cannot be had for free

For the non-partisan press in un-free societies, this practice is easier compared to their counterparts in liberal environments. Since the larger, pro-establishment media are unable to provide news that a majority of readers consider credible, independent outlets can easily fill that demand and corner the market. The MDIF study cites this as an important factor for Mkini's success in Malaysia. Mkini's long track of supplying non-partisan news led it to increasing its subscribers during each general election it covered.

But independents cannot slack off and just regurgitate propaganda from the regime's detractors and pass it off as credible news. The tried-and-true fundamentals of good journalism - impartiality, verification of sources, right of reply, engaging story-telling - matter, and are crucial to producing stories that people will want to pay for. In fact, as seen in the Malaysian experience, Mkini had to compete with other independent news sites and political blogs offering a critical take on current affairs. It was only able to maintain its dominant position due to the quality and depth of its reporting.

### 4. Diversifying revenue streams

In liberal environments, news sites are currently supplementing their incomes from other sources instead of relying on reader contributions. These forms of income are aside from advertising, which is still small. News sites operating in authoritarian settings may be constrained in doing this given how ordinary citizens and businesses are reluctant to anger the ruling regime by publicly showing their support. However, it's still important to be creative in experimenting with new ways to generate revenue, says HKBU's Clarke.

For instance, Thai website The Standard, is partially funded by a sister company that offers event management services, she said. Filipino website The Rappler collects funds by asking readers to "tip" for articles they liked. Initium organises speaking engagements with renowned personalities. The Hong Kong site also organises speciality tours around the region

for visitors interested in delving into a country's socio-political landscape.

Also important is choosing the most suitable pay wall model and adjusting it based on reader response, says Gackaitė. "There is no one-size fits all solution for everyone,"

Mkini only charges for its English and Mandarin stories and only then, for those generated by its own reporters. Stories reproduced from news wires are free as are stories in Bahasa Malaysia, whose readers are less affluent. Initium only charges for its analysis and long-reads. The daily news round-ups and discussion stories says chief editor Lee is a way to "attract the non-paying reader to join".

Another crucial consideration is providing payment methods and ways for which readers can easily and securely channel funds to the site. Mkini had also pioneered many of these novel online payment methods at a time when they did barely exist in Malaysia. Security and identity protection is also crucial since consumers in authoritarian states often fear reprisal from the ruling regime.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

At the end of the day says Dr Clarke choosing how to fund a news site is never a straight line and will require constant creativity and the ability to adapt to trends in technology and reader behaviour. This is in addition to evading government censors and security agencies which an authoritarian regime will deploy to silence dissenting voices. This last aspect I believe requires more from the operators of an independent news site than a press outfit operating in a liberal environment and that is the greater sense in their mission.

Quality, non-partisan, critical journalism may be a brand for news organisations in free countries. But going by my experience as a journalist who operated under a repressive setting, those working and running independent news sites have to actually believe in its righteousness and necessity. It is the belief that the country and its citizens can benefit from a free press that keeps one going even as the cops start locking up your colleagues for doing their jobs. It is this belief that allows reporters working in independent news sites to work at half the rates of their counterparts in the larger, richer pro-regime media firms.

Convincing citizens to believe in the same mission is possible Mkini's Prem told [CIMA](#). "People can be persuaded to support independent media. They support the bigger picture. I think our model's success is driven by the cause or sentiment – people need to feel like they need Malaysiakini, democracy and freedom of the press."

After all, even after 61 years of authoritarianism, Malaysians and Mkini showed the world their faith in liberty, democracy and a free press.

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