

# Malaysian news portal crippled by cyberattacks

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Photo Illustration. Malaysia's top news portal Malaysiakini remained crippled Wednesday, more than 24 hours after cyber attackers struck ahead of hotly contested state elections on Borneo island. Malaysiakini has gained international fame as an alternative source of news

Malaysia's top news portal Malaysiakini remained crippled Wednesday, more than 24 hours after cyber attackers struck ahead of hotly contested state elections on Borneo island.

Steven Gan, its co-founder and chief editor, said the site would continue to report on Saturday's vote in Sarawak state despite the shutdown, which came days after whistleblowing website Sarawak Report was hit by a similar attack.

"I believe the attack is linked to our reporting on the campaigning for the

Sarawak elections and it is no coincidence that this has happened to us three days after Sarawak Report was also attacked," he told AFP.

"We are trying to get our website up and running and we are providing our content for free at the moment as we will continue reporting on what is happening in Sarawak. We will not stop, we will prevail," he added.

Malaysiakini, which gained international fame as an alternative source of news during the rule of former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, earns part of its revenues from subscriptions.

Gan said the "[denial of service](#)" attack began Tuesday morning when the portal's servers were swarmed by massive and coordinated traffic from overseas, forcing it to post its reports on blogsites as well as [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Malaysia's major newspapers and broadcasters are closely linked with the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, but online news portals and blogs have become a lively forum for dissent and debate.

Saturday's polls in Sarawak, a resource-rich but impoverished state, is viewed as a barometer of the BN's popularity ahead of general elections expected to be called by Prime Minister Najib Razak this year.

However, a key issue in the elections is the fate of the state's chief minister Abdul Taib Mahmud, who has headed Sarawak since 1981.

Websites such as Sarawak Report have been publishing articles on the wealth accumulated by Abdul Taib and his family, as well as allegations linking his close friends to the exploitation of resources in the oil, mineral and timber-rich state.

Malaysiakini has been reporting closely on the state election over the last

two weeks and published articles on alleged vote-buying by BN campaigners, as well as the post-election fate of Abdul Taib amid a clamour from critics for him to step down.

Although BN is expected to retain power in Sarawak, where it held 63 of the 71 seats in the state assembly before it was dissolved in March, some analysts say the ruling coalition may lose seats in Saturday's vote.

The opposition is aiming to deny the government a two-thirds majority that effectively allows the BN to pass legislation without any obstruction.

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