



Asia News Network

10 Years

Werner vom Busch & Dr. Susanne Rentzow-Vasu
(Editors)



(c) Copyright 2008 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Singapore

Editors
Werner vom Busch
Dr. Susanne Rentzow-Vasu

Publisher
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
34 Bukit Pasoh Road
Singapore 089848

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior consent of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

ISBN 978-981-08-2168-5

Design and Layout
TimeEdge Publishing Pte Ltd
10 Anson Road
15-14 International Plaza
Singapore 079903
www.tepub.com

Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Foreword	vii
Asian Media in Changing Times – An Overview	1
The Story of the ANN	19
Inside Scoop – A Day at the ANN’s Bureau Bangkok	39
From Seven to Twenty – Breaking Down Barriers	49
The ANN at its 10 th Anniversary – Achievements and Aspirations	155
The Who’s Who of the ANN	171
10 years of ANN in pictures	185
Bibliography	209



Acknowledgements

Just like the newspaper network described in these pages, this book has been put together by many helping hands. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the members, friends and partners of the Asia News Network who have willingly shared their experiences to help us write the ANN's story.



Foreword

Heraklits “War is the Father of all Things” would be a rather bellicose beginning of a foreword to this book. But if I rephrase it: “Crisis is the beginning of many things” I think it would be about right.

The Chinese character for “crisis” consists of two different meanings: one means “danger” and the other “chance”.

So in the middle of the 1997 Asian economic crisis editors of various Asian newspapers were meeting at a Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung organized conference in Bangkok with my predecessor, Thomas Stehling.

The mood was amiable, in spite of the looming economic meltdown around Asia and, later, the rest of the world. In these troubled and strange times the idea of the “Asian News Network” was born. The reasons were clear. To have more and better reporting about Asia; to create a network of mutual help and assistance amongst major, English-written newspapers in Asia and to enhance cross-Asian dialogue.

If we look back today we have to admit, as journalists and in all modesty, Asian News Network has been an Asian success story. What started out as a small enterprise in the midst of a crisis is, today, the biggest-- and certainly the most active news network in Asia, if not the world. With a daily circulation of 14.5 million issues and a reach of approximately 50 Million people throughout Asia. Once only seven members, ANN has today 20 member papers cover all of South, South-East and East Asia. “We know Asia Better” is not just an advertising motto, it is the reality.

But how does reality become permanent? If we wanted to avert the destiny so elaborately described on the tombstone of John Keats “*his name was writ in water*”,

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years

we have to use the marble of our times: the printed word. It is the written book that delivers us from being buried by the sands of time; that has described so many great events. Thus we decided that 10 years on after ANN's birth was a great opportunity to create a memorial which will withstand the onslaught of time.

Thus this book "10 Years ANN." Through this simple volume we can look back to how it all began and read what the main players had to say about ANN. Step by step we can retrace the growth of this network until the present day. The book records who joined and when, what was said and decided at some of the board-meetings held all over Asia and when some important decisions by the ANN board were implemented. It has been, indeed, a rather rapid rise. During those 10 years ANN nearly tripled its membership, started an E-Paper and then a full weekly magazine, called "*Asian News*". In 2008 a contract with Deutsche Press Association [dpa] was signed. Dpa now receives about 50 ANN stories a day, giving dpa an amazing coverage of Asia and enabling ANN contributed stories to be published around the world.

I believe Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has given its support to a great and worthwhile endeavour.

This book will become a reference book for scholars researching and writing their doctoral thesis and for newspapers wanting to form their own successful enterprise.

Finally let me add one important ingredient which has contributed enormously to the success of ANN: It is the spirit of friendship and assistance that has prevailed throughout the last 10 years, carefully and skillfully tended and rekindled time and again by our Executive Director, Khun Pana Janviroj. It has been this spirit that has helped us all surmount the considerable obstacles that sometimes stood in the way of our success. It is this spirit of friendship and collegiality I know will prevail until such time that ANN celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Werner vom Busch
Director
Asia Media Programme
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Singapore

Asian Media in Changing Times

– An Overview

Creating and sustaining a professional network of any kind is never an easy feat. A lot of time, patience and resources are required to synchronise and fine-tune the sometimes clashing objectives of members, to ensure all parties are working towards a common goal.

Building a successful network amongst the leading English language (and local language) newspapers across Asia, has been particularly difficult. Asia is arguably one of the most diverse regions in the world and home to a breathtaking mixture of ethnicities, languages and religions, along with a broad spectrum of political and economic systems ranging from absolute monarchies and military governments, to one-party systems and developing democracies. The region's diversity presents journalists across Asia with very different political and economic realities, which they have to reflect on in their work, not only to do justice to their readers but also to their roles as journalists in largely developing countries.

And if the heterogeneity of Asia wouldn't pose enough of an obstacle to the creation of a pan-Asian news network, the nature of the profession itself is far from a prime candidate for sharing. On the contrary, to this date, the quintessence of successful journalism remains exclusiveness. Nonetheless, in March 1999 the editors-in-chief of seven leading newspapers from countries as diverse as Vietnam and India, Singapore and Indonesia came together in the Thailand capital, Bangkok, to sign a Memorandum of Agreement and founded

the Asia News Network (ANN).

In the first decade of its existence the Asia News Network put to rest any doubt that cooperation between newspapers and across borders is possible - instead it is thriving. The expanding network currently comprises 17 English language and three Asian language newspapers, from 17 Asian countries. It provides a tool for news exchange and a pan-Asian magazine with news from its members, market reports, currency information, and weather news via its website. The network's collective group of newspapers boast a total daily circulation of more than 15 million copies with a combined readership of 50 million people.

Most importantly, ANN has greatly strengthened the Asian perspective of Asian news by providing readers with a view that is different from the traditional Western-centred coverage of Asia. Indeed, as will be shown in this book, allowing Asian media to emancipate itself from the traditional dominance of Western news wires in the coverage of regional affairs has been the main motivator for its creation and ultimately the reason for its success. At the same time, the thriving interaction and cooperation among network members is fostering better understanding among countries with often strained bilateral ties.

This book documents the development of the remarkable achievement by revealing the rationale and mechanisms behind this unique model of pan-Asian cooperation, introduces the network's members and explores what the future has in store for the ANN. Of course, a network like this does not appear out of nowhere. Many factors came together in a unique grouping which allowed the ANN to take form.

The first chapter traces the historical circumstances at the time of the network's inception, beginning with a short summary of the Asian values debate which gained particular prominence in the 1990s, and its implications for Asian media. It also sketches out the rapid changes in the media market, all of which provided an impetus for the creation of Asia's leading news network. Once the wider context has been set, this book will turn its attention to our protagonist, the ANN, and retrace its early years.

Of Values, Crises and New Challenges

Although the story of the ANN does not begin until 1999, cooperation amongst most of its key players goes back much further. Everyone who observes the friendly banter between the group's management of highly-regarded and experienced professionals during their annual board meetings, cannot fail to notice their relationships are based on mutual respect that has grown out of longstanding personal friendships. As members of a tightly knit circle of Asian journalists and media practitioners, they had raised the idea of closer cooperation amongst their respective newspapers on many occasions before 1999. Following months of exchange, in the midst of a regional economic crisis, it took the helping hand of their partner and supporter, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), to provide the final push for developing a cooperating organisation.

To appreciate how personal ties transformed into professional cooperation we have to spend a little time studying the wider historical setting in which the ANN was conceived. Firstly, the political discourse – now famous as the 'Asian values debate' – which dominated political chambers, university campuses and news rooms from Singapore to Malaysia and China in the 1990s, riding on a wave of regional economic growth, political maturity and blossoming cultural confidence. Secondly, the Asian currency crisis of 1997, which threatened to unravel the region's remarkable economic success, questioned the Asian approach to securing economic progress, and plunged newspapers into financial disarray. And thirdly, the onset of the digital age which presented printed news media with its as yet strongest rival, the internet.

Let us turn our attention first to the political climate at the time of the ANN's inception - in particular Asia's emerging self-understanding as a culturally distinctive entity with an equally distinctive approach to economic growth and socio-political order. This cultural awakening influenced the nature of the region's relationship with Europe and the United States and gave rise to the concept of 'development journalism'. The latter saw the role of the press as supporting, rather than questioning, official strategies of nation-building and economic development and was a stabilizing factor in the safeguarding of a nation's social harmony.

The backdrop for all these developments was provided by the industrialisation and economic growth which Asian countries enjoyed from the 1970s onwards. The Asian miracle economies, led by South Korea, Taipei, Hong Kong and

Singapore, writes Singapore's Kishore Mahbubani, grew more rapidly and more consistently than any other group of economies in the world. Between 1960 and 1990 they averaged a remarkable 5.5 percent annual per capita real income growth and out-performed every economy in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and even the OECD economies' average growth rate of 2.5 percent¹.

With the implementation of aggressive economic development programmes across Asia, the region steadily turned into one of the largest global exporters. Economic progress was accompanied by the beginnings of a democratisation trend in the region. In the Philippines, the people power revolution of 1986 toppled the administration of Ferdinand Marcos after allegations of widespread cheating in the presidential elections. A similar fate befell the authoritarian 'New Order' Administration of Indonesia's President Suharto who was forced to resign in 1998. Communist Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia introduced economic and political liberal reform programmes in the 1980s and 90s. And Singapore began a process of renewal with the appointment of a new Prime Minister who succeeded the country's founding father, Lee Kuan Yew, in 1990.

The maturing confidence of Asian countries in the legitimacy of their largely paternalistic approach to economic growth and social harmony² was further accelerated by developments in the international system during the last decade of the 20th century. The sudden end of the Cold War conflict marked the end of the bi-polar world order and reshuffled the main players in the international system. For Europe and the United States, the outcome of over 50 years of ideological stand-off translated into an unprecedented level of confidence in the universal validity of liberal democracy and human rights, which they set out to export to other parts of the world. For the relatively young but increasingly confident nations of Asia, Western rhetoric sat uneasily with their shared historical experience of colonialism³ which had left a profound impact on Asian perceptions of national identity. As evident in the consensus-based working mechanisms of the 40 year old Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)⁴, this perception has led to a fierce commitment to the doctrine of state sovereignty as a symbol of national independence and international stature.

Ironically, while the end of the Cold War signified the conclusion of an ideological confrontation, it also further manifested Asia's ambivalent relationship with the West. Clearly, the heterogeneous countries of the region each pursued their own separate strategy; nonetheless, the general concern was that Europe was seeking to maintain its past position of superiority by attempting to impose

its values on Asia, in particular with the contended issue of human rights⁵ and the role of the media in society. Asia retorted by further manifesting its claim to a distinctly Asian approach to political and economic organisation with an Asian version of press freedom and journalistic mandate that paid homage to the region's cultural distinctness, in particular its affinity with Confucianism. Press freedom, it was argued, is relative and contingent upon the social, cultural, religious and political fabric of a society. With press freedom seen as an earned moral right, development journalism puts emphasis on the media to act responsibly and with a view to the common good⁶.

An emotional debate followed between those who believed in an assortment of distinctly Asian traits, those who refuted the idea of Asia's cultural exclusiveness⁷, and those who suspected the idea was primarily serving as a tool to justify the staying power of authoritarian regimes⁸. It is important to note that despite its "anti-Western tinge", the Asian values debate largely concerned an intra-Asian debate. It very much reflected the attempt of the region's young nations and their leaders to come to grips with issues of regional community, the dynamics of modernisation and the seemingly unstoppable process of Westernisation. Furthermore, much of the Asian values debate was and is, about finding equilibrium with the West. Kishore Mahbubani, one of the most prominent voices in the Asian values debate, refers to a switch in Asian minds that has taken place over the past decade or so in his apt summary of the situation: "For centuries, many Asians believed that the only way to progress was through emulation of the West. [...] The mental switch that is taking place in Asian minds today is that they do no longer believe that the only way to progress is through copying; they now believe they can work out their own solutions."¹⁰

Asian News For Asia

In the midst of this political discourse, the idea of pan-Asian cooperation between the region's leading English language newspapers was beginning to take shape. At the centre of these informal discussions was the idea of a news exchange mechanism which, it was hoped, would create a source of comprehensive, insightful, fair and truthful reporting on Asian affairs. Ultimately, both Asian and international readers would benefit from this Asian view on Asian affairs.

As will be shown later in this book, the creation of the ANN was very much the result of the shared vision of a group of dedicated and resourceful individuals.

However, what allowed the idea to become a reality was their ability to correctly anticipate the impact the Asian values debate would have on the media sector, and to respond to it.

Indeed, in parallel to Asia's economic awakening, Asia has seen unprecedented changes in journalism practice. Leading amongst these has been the ongoing struggle for recognition of Asian journalism as being equal to its Western counterpart yet better suited to the regional and cultural idiosyncrasies of Asia. This effort initially gained external stimulus through the 1970s international debate on a new communication order, which revolved around issues of imbalance in global communication.

In Asia, the debate culminated in the creation of a non-aligned news pool set up in 1975 "to counterbalance the political bias and cultural prejudice of the Western wires and syndicated news services".¹¹

*"It was a natural extension of de-colonization. The Western media did ignore large tracts of the world, or covered them only when some disaster struck or Western interests were in some ways affected. Bias was rife and the media naturally catered in the first place to the news interests of their Western clients rather than those of the developing countries which had no alternative sources of international news."*¹²

A similar attempt was made at an international level when a UNESCO Commission proposed to create a 'New World Information and Communication Order' (NWICO) in its 1980 report entitled "Many Voices, One World". The study made recommendations on how to make global media representation more equitable stating that:

*"Unfortunately, in today's world communication has all too frequently become an exchange between unequal partners, allowing the predominance of the more powerful, the richer and the better equipped. Discrepancy in power and wealth, by its own weight or by deliberate action, has an impact and influence on communication structures and communication flows. Herein lay many of the underlying causes of the inequalities, disparities and imbalances so characteristic of international communications, in particular between industrialized and developing countries."*¹³

Although both initiatives largely disappeared without leaving a major impact, the controversial ideas appeared in the midst of increasing criticism by developing

nations on the one-way flow of information and its Western bias. As the content of information was largely created by developed countries it was felt that a “false and distorted” image of the developing world not only misrepresented developing countries to the international community, but also towards their own societies.¹⁴

The global communication debate greatly enhanced Asian awareness of Western domination in global communication and contributed to a growing demand for a higher profile for Asia in the news. The debate intensified further in the context of the Asian values debate.¹⁵ Journalists across the region were deliberating whether Asian media should continue to follow in the West’s shadow or carve out a distinct niche for itself that was better in tune with the cultural uniqueness of Asia and hence better suited to the region’s striving for economic prosperity and political stability.

Proponents of Asian values had argued that family, stability and collective economic success took priority in Asian culture, above individual rights.¹⁶ Similar points were now being made about Asian media which was seen as dominated by its Western counterparts both in terms of the one-sided direction of news flow and the normative thinking about the role of journalism in the wider political and economic future of Asian nations.

The concept of development journalism that arose from these initiatives was meant to serve the development of Asian countries and stood in contrast to dominant Western ideas of the role of the media. In sharp contrast to Western preferences for an adversarial press independent from government, Asian media was seen to counter-balance press freedom with responsibility and to take on a supporting role in the government’s efforts at economic growth and political progress. According to Singaporean media scholar, Xu Xiaoge, Asian values in journalism are “basically normative, stating what the press should be and do in society in order to maintain the social, cultural and political values that society upholds”.¹⁷

Whether or not we share a belief in the theoretical underpinnings of the development journalism approach, everyday reality sees Asian media confronted with one obstacle that remains as acute today as it was three decades ago. Given the dominance of Western news wires in the news market, Asians rarely receive direct news about their Asian neighbours but largely depend on Western news wires as intermediaries.¹⁸

The dominance of Western wires is easily explained by the affluence of Western countries compared to the largely developing nations in Asia.¹⁹ More

recently, globalisation is playing its part in manifesting the dominance of Western ideals in the international arena, including the Western media model. Observers fear that the dominance of Western news wires in terms of capacity and resources makes the quest for non-biased reporting on international and Asian affairs an uphill struggle. As recently as 2007, at the annual conference of the Boao Forum for Asia, Liu Jiang, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Xinhua News Agency*, remarked that the developed world continues to dominate the international news market by referring to the world as “a slope on which information flows downward from developed countries to developing countries and regions.”²⁰ What is problematic about this situation, writes Hao Xiaoming, is that Western journalists adopt the same journalistic approach when dealing with Asia that they employ in their coverage of domestic politics. Yet while the controversial, sensationalist approach of Western media may be appropriate for coverage of domestic politics, he argues, the same cannot be said for coverage of Asian affairs. The reason, the author argues, is the availability of a multitude of sources to balance out or complement coverage on domestic issues while the lack of similar information on Asian affairs leaves the Western audience with a one-sided picture of reality.²¹

In addition, there are other more mundane reasons for what is perceived to be biased coverage of Asia by Western journalists.²² Firstly, the need to produce stories that correspond to the demands of editors and readers are often influenced by domestic politics such as changes in the bilateral ties between the journalist’s own country and the country he or she is reporting on. Secondly, lack of expert knowledge about the country that a journalist may report on and their limited language skills, results in one-dimensional coverage. Thirdly, time pressures faced by foreign journalists who are sent abroad to cover breaking news events allow inadequate time for the necessary background research to verify their stories. This point is made by Indonesia’s former Minister of Information, Prof M Alwi Dahlan, who argues that poor knowledge about Asia and Asian affairs and widespread lack of interest in Asia, are responsible for one-dimensional reporting.²³

To be fair, the depiction of Asia in the West is becoming more accurate, partly because globalisation and technological advances have “multiplied the channels of Asia’s exposure to the West, and vice-versa”.²⁴ Historically, the distance of Asia from the West coupled with what Emil Bologaita, calls ‘excessive ethnocentrism’ and the sheer heterogeneity of the region itself might have been reasons for misleading depictions of Asia in the West. Asia today has become one

of the most heavily visited places and fastest growing regions in the world. As globalisation encourages the West to understand Asia better – be it only to target the Asian consumer – there is an increased need for access to information about the region.²⁵ Pan-Asian cooperation in the form of the Asian News Network has, undoubtedly, helped to rectify the skewered image of Asia in the news while giving Asian journalism its rightful place in the international media market.

As has been said, many factors came together which enabled the ANN to come into being in 1999. The final push came from an unexpected and disastrous development which threatened to wipe out the region's economic progress of previous decades, and rocked the fundamental belief in the legitimacy of the Asian values-based approach to economic and political development. In 1997, a dramatic fall in Thailand's annual growth rate and devaluation of the Baht currency was followed by an Asian financial crisis that spread across the region like wild fire, impacting on many Southeast Asia countries. Most of the region suffered from fluctuating currencies, devalued stock markets and asset prices, and a precipitous rise in private debt. Asian newspapers were affected by the crisis as all businesses were. To deal with the financial losses incurred, many newspapers had to lay off staff which in turn led to a shortage in journalists who could report on developments in the different parts of the region. At the same time, the strength of the dollar compared with weakened local currencies meant that news wires became extremely expensive. Short of money to send journalists to neighbouring countries, Asian newspapers could not afford to buy news stories from the wires services and could not send journalists to investigate issues because of shortage of money.

To add insult to injury, news stories were being written by foreign journalists about a deeply Asian event. Ravindra Kumar, Editor-in-Chief of India's *The Statesman* explains, "the thinking was that a Western reporter just walking into Singapore or Bangkok, three months on the job was becoming an expert on the crisis, which we understood much better, and we were being forced to carry his copy".

New Challenges to Print Media – The Internet

Besides their impact on the role of the media in relation to governments, economic prosperity and political progress also produced socio-cultural changes across Asian societies that have affected the demands of Asian news consumers. In particular,

economic progress has brought about an expanding middle class that wants to gain greater access to information on political decisions and also expects more participation in politics. Just like any other industry, newspapers have to meet the demands of their customers in order to stay competitive and profitable. This task has become even more challenging with the advance of new media which entered the arena in the final decade of the 20th century²⁶. Electronic publishing, digital television and the internet have transformed the media landscape completely.

Today, the internet is steadily becoming the number one networking tool allowing users all around the world to communicate with one another and to become directly involved in the news business. According to a 2007 survey of Internet World Stats, one fifth of the world population is already connected to the internet. Of the total number of over 1.3 billion users, almost 39 percent live in Asia. This figure represents a huge increase of almost 350 percent in the period 2000 to 2007. With over 210 million users, China leads the Top 10 Asian Internet countries, followed by Japan with 87.5 million and South Korea with almost 35 million users. When these figures are compared with the populations of the respective countries, South Korea scores an impressive 71.2 percent of population penetration followed by Japan with 68.7 percent. Malaysia and Singapore score equally impressive figures with 60 percent and 53.2 percent of their respective populations having access to the net.

Nonetheless, a note of caution needs to be added here as Asia remains a region of stark contrasts, in particular with regard to levels of economic development and living standards. Large parts of the population in countries such as Pakistan, India, Cambodia and Laos remain excluded from the World Wide Web. This is detrimental to the economic development of these countries and the freedom of information for its citizens.

Large numbers of Asians are already in a position to generate content and contribute to news and information. As a result, newspapers today have to compete with their many counterparts and increasingly with diversified media and non-media news providers. Competition comes, for example, in the form of new English language online news sites that provide in-depth coverage and specialist information on issues ranging from human rights in Myanmar to the state of the media in Indonesia. However, compared to their European and American counterparts, Asian newspapers have not experienced the same adverse effects of competition from online news sources but the need to reform their strategies and adapt to a structural shift in the way readers approach news is

just as acute. This shift has been facilitated by the new media's unique ability to provide an avenue for interactivity in an imaginative public domain that often is, or at least appears to be, less limited by accountability and regulations than mainstream media is.

The traditional flow of information which used to be one-way is now augmented by feedback channels which encourage interaction between the user and the content. Hence, new media has opened up a host of opportunities for so-called 'bloggers', citizen journalists or general users, to contribute to an avalanche of media content. And as public forum discussions gain increasing momentum and appeal, online news has an incontestable advantage over the traditional broadsheet as it is efficient and highly interactive.

The democratisation of information as a result of new media has compelled news readers to engage in and exploit this technology. By the end of 2005, China had an estimated 16 million bloggers (almost one-third of all internet users) and predictions are that this trend will continue with the growth of internet access and new services. Besides the interactivity, diversity and plurality of information sources that new media provides, its accessibility is also a strong pull factor. As online news and information tends to be free of charge and easily accessible on the Web, young people today do not see the need to pay for newspapers to get their news. Instead, they access free *newspaper* websites or surf Google News, where they can select from a myriad of information sources.

Intensifying competition resulting from digitalisation, and increasing market liberalisation in developing countries across Asia, is forcing traditional newspapers to change their business models in order to survive. As we have seen, changing socio-economic, political and cultural trends across the region are changing the profile of news consumers and their expectations of news providers. Both phenomena have played a considerable role in the initial formation of the ANN and continue to influence its vision and direction.

Undoubtedly, the internet is proving to be a formidable challenge for newspapers for several reasons. Firstly, in reflection of technological advancements the web has become more receptive to advertising²⁷. With the increase in newspapers' internet readers, advertisers have realised that, unlike with newspapers, they can target specific readers and also reach them at specific times of the day or week²⁸. The subsequent shift of advertisement budgets away from print media towards the new media is causing a strain on newspaper finances. To combat this trend, the industry has adopted a proactive strategy,

and well-established newspapers are spending more on developing their own websites. Reports show that these sites are growing alongside non-traditional news outlets, albeit at a slower rate. Indeed, newspapers in Asia and in other regions are increasingly using their editorial, advertising and marketing resources to adapt to the recent challenges, by focusing primarily on the exploitation of opportunities offered by the internet.

Overall though, findings confirm the common assumption that the internet is redistributing the news audience in a way that is pressurising traditional news organisations. Most importantly, the internet reduces the influence of geography on consumers' choice of a news source. Rather than having to rely on news sources that are locally available, readers can today pick their news according to their taste from a national or international selection.

Closely connected to the fight for advertising revenue is the struggle to retain readership. A recent study by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University examined trends in internet-based news traffic in the United States of America²⁹. The study concludes that as rapid changes in technology have made the web more reader-friendly, more and more people are turning to the internet in their search for daily news. In December 2007, 37 percent of all internet users in the United States used the net to obtain news. Obtaining news ranked third in a list of the most popular internet activities, following closely behind the use of email (60 percent) and the use of search engines for research purposes (41 percent)³⁰.

The increase in broadband access in Asian countries, led by South Korea, Japan and Singapore, combined with the improvement of infrastructure and regulatory issues in as yet 'unconnected' countries can be expected to have similar affects on Asian consumers when it comes to sourcing news. To date though, newspapers still feature highly for Asian news consumers. A 2007 survey of the World Association of Newspapers revealed that seven out of ten of the world's 100 best selling daily newspapers were published in Asia and circulation sales in Asia – contrary to other big news markets such as the United States or Europe – were still increasing.³¹ With improving demographics, including rising literacy and disposable incomes, economic expansion, continued growth in key print advertising and the emergence of national newspapers, both India and China remain strong growth markets for newspapers.

Once again though, it needs to be pointed out that there are development gaps amongst Asian countries.

Serving the Needs of News Consumers in Modern Asia

With a plethora of news providers available nowadays, the limitations of what newspapers can offer are becoming more obvious. This problem is exacerbated by the changing dispositions, expectations, preferences and lifestyles of news consumers. In Asia, economic progress and political liberalisation are producing a new group of news readers whose lifestyles are more mobile and whose outlook is increasingly cosmopolitan and participatory. In general, three main attributes appear to affect news consumers in their choice of media source, namely the convenience of news gathering, the credibility of content and community perspectives.

Surveys analysing the behaviour of readers across the globe uniformly indicate that obtaining news online is widely seen as fast and easy: two commodities that are of great value to modern day consumers. However, the dramatic rise in news providers also appears to make consumers more wary of unreliable sources. The good news for print media is that, with greater access to an immense amount of information, readers have more need for credible news sources which are dedicated to verifying information and putting it into context.³² Building the reputation and protecting the brand of a newspaper is an important print media strategy for attracting new readers and retaining existing ones.

In Asia, the choice of news source is also influenced by a less tangible but immensely powerful third factor, namely the emergence of a regional identity. Benedict Andersen's famous theory of 'imagined communities' as the constructed identities of nation-states is probably most apt for understanding the evolving concept of a common Asian identity and diaspora. Nations, he claims, are imagined political communities based on a shared feeling of affinity and a common discourse based on a set of shared ideas and values.³³

In Asia, this common discourse is rooted in the shared experience of colonialism and its aftermath, combined with a common aspiration for economic and political progress and modernisation. Equally important as a defining aspect of an Asian identity, is a shared belief in the legitimate role of the state in facilitating economic development and stability. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis the process of Asian regional integration gathered momentum and led to a shared goal for the creation of an East Asian Community. Increasing economic and political interdependence in the course of globalisation also gave new impetus to a regional integration process which culminated in the signing of

an ASEAN Charter in 2007, which is hoped will turn the grouping into a more coherent regional actor.

Regional identity formation is not restricted to the Asian continent. The process of European integration which began to take shape in the early 1950s is equally concerned with the conception of a feeling of supranational belonging that unites the citizens of the European Union's current 27 member states. On behalf of the European Commission, the Eurobarometer programme³⁴ has been probing into the national sentiments of European citizens since the 1970s, while the Commission itself has been championing the cause in numerous programmes and policies. ASEAN, too, has recognised that a sustainable East Asian Community must ensure that people living in the region identify both with the concept itself and with each other. In 2006, the members of ANN conducted a joint survey which revealed that over 60 percent of interviewees identified with their ASEAN neighbours.³⁵ Undoubtedly though, both organisations have a long way to go before a truly regional identity unites their respective peoples.

It is likely that the outcome of the competition between old and new media, which news consumers in Asia currently witness, will be determined in part by the degree to which each media type succeeds in becoming the vehicle for communicating an Asian identity. In view of this opportunity and challenge, online editions of leading newspapers across the region have begun to cater to the expectations of this evolving community of Asian nations. The latter also includes Asia's large migrant community which is spread across the globe and shares a strong desire to stay in touch with events and current affairs in their home region.

Summary

At the beginning of a new millennium, newspapers across Asia are confronted with an array of challenges. As globalisation pressures require Asian countries to seek closer integration of their national economies, the media has the potential to play an important facilitating role by increasing mutual awareness amongst Asian nations. Equally important is the need to improve Asia's international visibility, and do justice to its growing economic and political standing by adding Asian voices and perspective to international interpretations on regional development. At the same time, political and social transformations within Asia itself need a professional media that is capable of supporting further progress.

To fulfil this role, the media industry requires journalists who have the professional skills to make sense of a rising flood of information from a wide range of sources. Moreover, Asian countries require an economic and legal framework that allows journalists to freely and critically report on issues of national and regional concern. In short, Asia needs a media that is capable of meeting the demands of its increasingly inquisitive, participatory and cosmopolitan news consumers. In view of the seemingly unstoppable march of new media, print media cannot afford to waste any time. Already, newspapers see both their readership and their advertising revenues shrinking in the face of the powerful internet. And while inadequate economic structures may, for the time being, slow down the latter's advance into the local media market of some countries, in the region's more advanced nations the battle between print media and new media is already in full swing.

As will be shown in the remainder of this work, the successful experience of the ANN demonstrates that the key to developing a sustainable Asian version of journalism, which pays tribute to the diversity of the region while also empowering Asian people, may very well lie in cooperation.

Endnotes

Thanks also to Sri Ranjini Mei Hua, Graduate of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, for her much appreciated research support.

- 1 Mahbubani, K 1998: 22.
- 2 Singaporean media scholar Xu Xiaoge identifies the following principles as Asian values; group orientation, filial piety, hard work, placing community or nation above individuals, emphasis on duties over rights, emphasis on responsibility over freedom, emphasis on education, social stability, harmony and respect for authority. While he acknowledges that these values are universally shared, he maintains that they are more widely shared among Asian countries than the West (Xu, X 2005: 1.)
- 3 Barr, M D 2000: 314.
- 4 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August

1967 in Bangkok by the five original Member Countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 8 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999. The ASEAN region has a population of about 500 million, a total area of 4.5 million square kilometres, a combined gross domestic product of almost US\$ 700 billion, and total trade of about US\$ 850 billion (ASEAN Secretariat, 2006).

- 5 In the Bangkok Declaration of 1993, ministers and representatives of Asian states went as far as to question the definition of Human Rights as given in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, contesting that “While human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of [...] national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds”. Instead, nations should be free to choose the system of governance that best serves their economic development. Human rights campaigns, it was argued, are but an attempt to assert Western moral superiority and political hegemony over non-Western nations. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1993)
- 6 Xu, X 2005: 52.
- 7 Many critics pointed to the heterogeneity of the Asian region claiming that a region so different cannot possibly share a common set of values. Others, however, argued that despite the cultural, political, religious and economic diversity of Northeast and Southeast Asia, in particular, both are meaningfully a region with the societies of the former culturally linked to Confucianism while the countries of Southeast Asia are tied together by ASEAN’s efforts to create an economic entity and a regional identity (Sheridan, G 1999: 5-6.).
- 8 The debate was further clouded by the many purposes the concept was invoked for. In their heydays, Asian values were identified as the driving force behind Asia’s economic success, referred to in response to Western criticism of Asian affairs, invoked as legitimisation of political regimes, and cited in protection of values, considered necessary for good government, from Western influence (Han Sung-Joo 1999: 3). The concept gained additional notoriety given its instrumentalisation by some of Asia’s leaders for their respective domestic agendas. In Indonesia, for example, Asian values were invoked as a form of ‘Developmentalism’ with the claim that until prosperity is achieved democracy remains an unaffordable luxury (Thompson, M R 2004: 1085). High growth rates were explained as the result of core Asian principles including hard work, frugality, discipline and teamwork within a disciplined, i.e. authoritarian, regime where decision-making is based on consensus and strong leadership. In Malaysia and Singapore, by contrast, the

Asian values' discourse was an attempt to justify the staying power of authoritarian regimes after economic development had been achieved.

- 9 Sheridan, Greg 1999: 2-3.
- 10 Mahbubani, K 1998: 23.
- 11 Bowring, P (2005, November 23).
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems 1980: 34. It needs to be mentioned that the report identified the inequality of communication flows in various relationships including within Western regions themselves where "some more powerful countries still dominate the news scene."
- 14 Ibid: 37.
- 15 Hao, X & Datta-Ray, S K (Eds) 2006: v.
- 16 Evans, K 2007: 2.
- 17 Xu X 2005.
- 18 Datta-Ray, S K 2006: 52.
- 19 As regards the dominance of the Western news model, Sunanda Datta-Ray notes that many leading newspapers such as Singapore's Straits Times, The South China Morning Star and The Times of India are colonial legacies that inherited a set of Western-based journalistic traditions and practices (Datta-Ray, S K 2006: 50).
- 20 Luan, S (2007, 22 April).
- 21 Hao, X 2002: 158.
- 22 Hao, X 2002: 159-160.
- 23 Dahlan, M A 2002: 181.
- 24 Bologaita, E 2002: 169.
- 25 Bologaita, E 2002: 172.
- 26 The "golden age" of print media spanned roughly 30 years from 1890 to 1920 until technological advancements gave rise to competing forms of news media. Radio news entered the media scene in the 1920s quickly challenging the newspaper's role as the primary purveyor of news and information. Not only did radio manage to integrate different sections of society into one audience thus multiplying potential target audiences, it was also able to reach audiences that were previously excluded, for example the illiterate. In particular, the need for constantly updated news coverage during World War II propelled the popularity of radio in Western countries to new heights. Nonetheless, even the novelty of radio was short-lived as increasing availability of television sets to ordinary citizens in the 1950s meant the

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years

arrival of yet another competitor in the news business. Given the uniqueness of this form of mass communication with its combination of both sound and picture, its popularity quickly soared. Further enhancing the appeal of television as a news medium was the development of communication satellite technology in the 1960s. This enabled news reports from around the world to be transmitted directly to a network broadcast centre, enabling instantaneous, live reporting of major world news and events.

- 27 According to a survey conducted by the Interactive Advertising Bureau and PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2007, internet advertisement revenues in 2006 for the US alone totalled US \$ 16.9 billion which represents an increase of 35% over 2005. (Interactive Advertising Bureau (2007)
- 28 John Berthelsen (2003)
- 29 Joan Shorenstein Center (2007)
- 30 Pew Internet and American Life Project (2007)
- 31 World Association of Newspapers (2007)
- 32 Committee of Concerned Journalists (2006)
- 33 Anderson, Benedict (1991)
- 34 Eurobarometer is a series of surveys periodically performed on behalf of the European Commission to produce reports on public opinion within the member states of the European Union (see http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm).
- 35 Chachavalpongpun, Pavin (2006)

The Story of the ANN

What makes the ANN such an interesting and hugely important project is the different experiences each member brings to the table. This, in turn, provides enormous potential for ANN members to learn from each other on how best to go about meeting today's challenges. In 2008, the network unites twenty leading newspapers whose work is determined by diverse economic and political realities, by different official interpretations as to what role and function the media should play in society and correspondingly, by different legal parameters. The ANN is unique in that it offers a common space where these member newspapers can compare and contrast their different approaches to challenges and where they can learn with and from, each other. Ultimately, it is the common framework of the ANN that allows them to pool their resources in the battle to remain relevant in a changing media landscape, by creating a professional, responsible and ethical press across the entire region.

With a Little Help From a Friend – The Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

Most things are obvious in hindsight. The same goes for the creation of the Asia News Network. The quick version of the story of the ANN goes as follows.

Asia's leading news network was 'born' at Frankfurt Airport on a cold autumn day in late 1998, to a group of Asian editors returning from a conference

organised by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in Germany. There and then they decided to offer news consumers an unmatched and truly pan-Asian view on regional events by setting up a unique mechanism for sharing news. The rest, as they say, is history. But let us rewind a bit. First of all, I think all parties involved in the ANN will agree that it is impossible to identify one single factor as the reason for its creation. In the late 1990s, as we have seen, editors-in-chief lacked resources to send their reporters to every far flung corner of the vast Asian continent, so economic calculus played a role.

With Western reports dominating international discourse on the causes of the Asian crisis, the shared vision of emancipating Asian media from the traditional dominance of Western news wires in the coverage of regional affairs, played an equally important role. Similarly, no person alone can be credited with ‘fathering’ the idea of an Asian newspaper network. Instead, it took a group of like-minded individuals to meet at the right time and under the right circumstances. They bounced the idea back and forth for a while and developed mutual respect and trust in the process. Only then was the ‘hatchling ready to fly’. All ANN members that were interviewed for this work enthusiastically agreed that the results would not have been the same had the Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung not played the part of the all-important ‘incubator’. In reflection of the foundation’s central role in the inception and creation of the ANN, we will firstly take a closer look at its media programme.

The Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung opened its doors in Manila in 1996. Under the guidance of its first director, Mr Thomas Bernd Stehling, the primary objective of the programme was to support Asia’s fledgling democracies in their development. The programme was, and continues to be, specifically concerned with offering a helping hand to Asian media to empower it to play a supporting role in the economic and political advancement of its respective countries. Supporting the rise of a free, responsible and professional press remains a key priority of this initiative.

When the programme began in the mid-1990s, a lot of work needed to be done. For its first director it was particularly striking that at a time when the region’s economies were booming – and later on, when they faltered – few Asian journalists had the necessary professional expertise in business journalism to convey the implications of these economic developments to their readers. The immediate consequence was a lack of information originating from within Asia; a void that was quickly filled by Western news sources. Similarly, the onset of a

process of political liberalisation across Asia met many journalists unprepared for the expectations of their increasingly inquisitive readers who demanded to know the details of political decisions.

Responding to this acute need for increased professionalism, the programme began to offer training opportunities to working journalists almost as soon as it opened its doors. It is indicative of the approach of the KAS that these training opportunities were always organised and conducted in cooperation with Asian partners: first in cooperation with Press Institutes in Southeast Asia and later also with those in the Asia Pacific. This aspect of the programme has been so well received that it remains a core element of the foundation's activities in the region. Specialist seminars, workshops and conferences address questions of journalistic best practice relating to reporting on the multitude of issues the region is currently facing. Such issues range from globalisation pressures, to environmental concerns, issues of regional integration, and threats of maritime piracy and terrorism. Besides conveying specific content and improving professional skills, these training initiatives also seek to harmonise journalistic standards in the region. The latter is particularly important for the press so they can offer adequate support for economic and political efforts to integrate Asia.

The foundation and its partners celebrated many success milestones in the development of their cooperation. In the year 2000, for example, the Konrad Adenauer Asian Centre for Journalism (KAACFJ) at the distinguished Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines opened its doors. This Centre is dedicated to fostering a free, viable and responsible press in Asia that will nurture the public discourse essential to an informed practice of citizenship and democracy. Its three main priorities are the promotion of excellence and professionalism in journalism, the continued professional growth of Southeast Asian journalists through training and education, and the goal of unity among Southeast Asian nations¹.

It is easy to see how the work of the KAS helped to create the framework and conditions for a pan-Asian news network. As has been said, the ANN was the idea of many people who shared a similar vision. I take the liberty here to say that the directors of the Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung played the role of matchmakers by bringing these like-minded people together.

Immediately after his arrival in Manila, Thomas Stehling began an almost non-stop round of individual visits to get to know the people he would work

with for the next five years. “My personal ambition”, he said, “was first and foremost to become a friend and a colleague to my Asian partners, supporting and advising them in their own efforts rather than imposing someone else’s ideas on them.” Very quickly he became convinced that the greatest contribution the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung could make to Asian efforts for strengthening the role and status of the media was to offer a platform where stakeholders could come together, exchange ideas and build sustainable cooperation. Werner vom Busch, who took over the directorship of the KAS Regional Media Programme Asia in 2003, whole-heartedly endorsed the personal approach of his predecessor. He too, spends a fair amount of time on the road, visiting the various network members to solve problems in face-to-face meetings and offering advice on how to carry the network forward. The philosophy that underlines the foundation’s involvement in the ANN is simple - for the regional media to be free, ownership has to firmly rest in the hands of Asian journalists and media practitioners. Moreover, it requires these very people to dictate the speed and direction of the regional media’s development.

Under the leadership of all its directors, the KAS Regional Media Programme Asia has traditionally focused on providing a common space for journalists from different countries to come together. The idea is that journalists from countries with a strong and independent press can lend a helping hand to their less experienced colleagues. The desired effect will be a steady advance of journalistic standards and working conditions in the entire region. Over the years, the foundation has managed to bring together even seemingly irreconcilable partners. Thomas Stehling recalled the turmoil the programme stirred up in 1996, when a workshop brought together Christian and Muslim journalists in the Philippines only shortly after a peace agreement had finally ended years of violence in Mindanao. His verdict is that these and many other events would never have happened had it not been for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung showing itself to be a trustworthy and reliable facilitating partner.

The Birth of the ANN

The same trust and reliability allowed for an equally unique initiative – the ANN – to blossom from an ambitious dream, into a successful reality. The first concrete steps towards the creation of a network of leading newspapers in Asia were taken at an informal meeting of Editors-in-Chief from across Asia, on the

Philippine island of Palawan in early May 1998. The meeting was organised by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and leveraged on the strong friendship and professional cooperation between the Asian participants. Together, they discussed the development of a more permanent network amongst themselves as individuals, and among their respective publications. The core idea of the network was to increase awareness of regional developments amongst Asian readers.

As most newspapers lacked the financial resources to hire foreign correspondents, the free exchange of news stories between Asian newspapers constituted a viable alternative. It was hoped the pooling of news would reduce the dependency on non-Asian news agencies which were seen to lack a distinctly Asian perspective. This dependency on non-Asian news agencies challenged the shared vision of all members to provide authentic Asian news for their Asian readerships. As explained by Isagani Yambot, Publisher of the *Philippine Daily Enquirer*: “The idea of creating an Asian News Network was prompted by the desire to have comprehensive coverage of Asian news, news about Asia from the Asian viewpoint.” Concurring, Tran Mai Huong, Editor-in-Chief of *Việt Nam News*, explains: “News coverage about Asia is dominated by the Western media. We wanted to optimise coverage of news events in the region and improve the coverage of Asian affairs by Asian media.” Adds the President of Thailand’s leading English language paper, *The Nation*, Pana Janviroj: “We recognized that nobody is actually doing a proper job of pan-Asian coverage. So when you package the content together you have something unique [...]”

These ideas were further developed during the first Asia-German Editor’s Forum which took place in Manila a couple of days after the meeting in Palawan, and brought together almost 160 editors, journalists and political decision-makers. The forum coincided with the Philippine general elections and included a televised Presidential Candidate’s Forum which was shown primetime on nationwide television. The Editors-in-Chief of Asian newspapers, all of which would be joining the ANN a year later, asked the candidates a range of critical questions touching on such heated issues as corruption and good governance. The openness of the debate, remembers Thomas Stehling, was a real eye-opener for those colleagues who worked under much stricter conditions, exposing them to different models and styles of journalism without applying any kind of pressure. As would be shown over the coming years, by offering different examples of alternative roles the media can play in Asian societies, the ANN has supported further maturing of the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in Asia.

Informal discussions continued after all participants had returned home and with each telephone call and email correspondence the idea of a news network grew stronger and began to take shape. Finally, the first ever organisational meeting of the Asia News Network took place in the Thai capital Bangkok, in March 1999. During this first meeting participants discussed the principles and operating mechanisms of the network, before signing the Memorandum of Agreement on 19 March 1999.

The founding members of the ANN – *The Statesman* from India, *The Jakarta Post* from Indonesia, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and *The Star* from Malaysia, *The Straits Times* from Singapore, *The Nation* from Thailand, and *Việt Nam News* from Vietnam – assured each other of the right to print news stories, commentaries, feature stories and pictures, free of charge. It was agreed that each member should contribute five stories from their next unpublished edition to a common pool of news stories to which all members had access.

The members also assured each other they would credit the original source of each article taken from the news pool. Despite very different political, economic and social conditions the member newspapers agreed to set up a daily news exchange mechanism. This decision was based on the realisation that, in the interests of their readers and with a view to increasing their competitiveness, the harmonisation of professional standards and the quantity and quality of reporting on their respective neighbouring countries, had to be increased.

Cooperation quickly opened up a range of opportunities including staff exchanges, joint training programmes, reporting on regional issues such as the fight against corruption, and joint business strategies. As membership of the ANN reduced dependency on news wire services, the network also contributed to maintaining the financial security of ANN members. In addition, the availability of various national viewpoints allowed for the comprehensive coverage of Asian affairs. To ensure the smooth operation of the new network each member appointed an ANN coordinator. The founding members also established a Governing Board and appointed a central coordinator from within their own ranks. Pana Janviroj of *The Nation* became the ANN's first Chairman. Finally, they invited the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung to take on the role of a clearing house.

All network members wholeheartedly agree that without the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the ANN would not have come into existence. This was not because of a lack of commitment amongst the newspapers but stemmed

from the need for a neutral facilitator who could perform the multiple tasks of mediating between the interests and viewpoints of the different parties, offer advice and direction when faced with an impasse, and who could help with the nurturing of the emergence of a common vision based on mutual trust. According to Pana Janviroj: “In order for all this to work we needed a middle person; someone with total neutrality who can bring people together.” Adds Felix Soh of *The Straits Times*: “Had it been an American organisation I think we would not have participated. I think it’s a European-German kind of chemistry. And KAS really knows when to step aside and let us make the decision.”

The cooperative approach adopted by the network has fostered a remarkably strong sense of togetherness, to the point that ANN members describe themselves as a family unit. This sense of unity could only develop on the basis of regular intensive dialogue and exchange in the form of initiatives and projects organised by the foundation. In addition, both Thomas Stehling and the Regional Media Programme Asia’s current director, Werner vom Busch, have dedicated considerable time to individual meetings with the network’s different members. It is the personal touch that has most certainly been a key to establishing the community – getting to know the viewpoints and mandate of every member newspaper, as well as the professional and personal circumstances of their respective ANN liaison partners, continues to be vital to the ANN’s success story.

Understanding the reasons behind a member’s reluctance for the adoption of certain proposals allows the foundation representative to suggest viable compromises and to keep the process on track. Equally important is the personal level of their cooperation. The importance of personal trust cannot be underestimated when it comes to convincing such different members to ‘throw their lot into a common hat’. It is even more important for eradicating any suspicions about the intentions a German foundation might harbour in its engagement in the region. “An issue like this cannot be addressed through intellectual debate”, says Thomas Stehling, “but you need to develop trust in each other as people.” Forming friendships and creating personal trust have been the most challenging but also the most rewarding parts of setting up the network, recalls Stehling.

As the legal and political conditions for the media differed dramatically between some of the network’s members, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung’s Regional Media Programme Asia also sought to ensure development took place

at a speed that was comfortable to all. As such, the harmonisation of professional standards and the expansion of news exchange were seen as a necessary first step. More fundamental issues such as harmonising legal frameworks for journalistic work and strengthening freedom of speech could not be rushed or imposed by a favourable majority onto their network partners. Unanimity in all decisions has been another fundamental principle of the network.

Cooperation Between Networks – The Partnership of ANN and Star Alliance

The story of the ANN would be incomplete without mentioning the support the network received from what might at first appear to be an odd partner for a newspaper network - the Star Alliance network of airline companies. The world's largest airline alliance was founded around the same time as the ANN, in 1997, and shared many of the sentiments of its journalist colleagues on regional developments. "When we held our first meeting," explained Christian Klick, "we did not join because we wanted to become sponsors. We came to the first meeting to exchange ideas." The Vice-President of the company's corporate office recalled his excitement upon hearing about the idea for a pan-Asian newspaper network. "When I was told about the idea I said, 'this is exactly the same thing we are doing, just in another area of industry. Let's see how it is done in the newspaper business and maybe we can share some of the things that we have experienced in founding Star Alliance.'" In his view, there are not many differences between newspapers and airlines. "When it comes to forming an alliance, there isn't so much difference. We just share the experience of what goes right and what goes wrong."

Being able to learn from the experience of Star Alliance has been an invaluable benefit for the ANN. "One of the first things you will have to acknowledge, and you have to make sure that everybody knows," Christian Klick advised the group of journalists early on, "is that no-one will lose their identity. Only then are you able [...] to come to the table." "Never start to equalise. Never start to standardise in an area where you don't want to standardise, where you want to keep your ego. That is the secret to a success story, because you know where the boundary is, and you are carefully enhancing your cooperation without trying to push for something that everybody knows goes too far."

The Secret(s) to the ANN's Success

Another reason for the network's success is that its partners are not in direct competition with each other, as they serve primarily their own domestic audiences. Furthermore, as explained by *The Statesman's* Ravindra Kumar, competition between them is curbed, as generally only limited foreign investment in newspapers is allowed in most Asian countries. However, what does unite them is the strong competition each of them faces from influential foreign media. Newsstands from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur and New Delhi carry an array of international papers and magazines, each vying for a larger share of the local readership.

The competition with Western news agencies can be identified as one of the main reasons for the creation of the network. According to Tran Mai Huong, Editor-in-Chief of *Việt Nam News*, "News coverage about Asia is dominated by the Western media. We want to optimise coverage of news events in the region and improve the coverage of Asian affairs by Asian media." *Việt Nam News* joined the network "as a way to learn and develop [...] and provide an effective way to compete with Western media in an era of globalisation." Only as a unit, it was felt, could Asian newspapers ensure their competitiveness with Western media. Only by offering their readers an alternative perspective to the mainstream – an authentic Asian view on regional affairs – could Asian media stand its ground.

Zhu Ling, Editor-in-Chief of *China Daily*, is of the view that the founding members of the ANN wanted to "leverage the combined strengths of the best professional newspapers in the region, and improve the news coverage of Asia." By joining the network, his paper hopes to "share the resources of ANN publications, interact and provide a view that is different from the Western-centred coverage of Asia." However, the perceived advantages of joining the network are not restricted to access to resources but also include access to a much larger readership that could otherwise not be reached. Zhu Ling sees the contribution of his paper to ANN as helping ANN readers understand what is happening in China.

Guiding Principles – Consensus and Tolerance

To compare the ANN to ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), may be somewhat far-fetched. Nonetheless, the Asia News Network has the same penchant for the 'ASEAN way' that is often mentioned in reference to the

working methods of the region's most influential international organisation. Having turned 50 in 2007, ASEAN continues to hold on to consensual decision-making and the core principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its ten member states. Only recently, in November 2007, did ASEAN agree to give itself a minimalist Charter in an effort to ensure its future efficiency and to protect its role in the region in view of a changing geopolitical landscape.

Similar to ASEAN's rudimentary institutional structure, the ANN has remained remarkably unstructured with only a Memorandum of Agreement acting as a semi-legal basis. Decisions are made by consensus and implementation relies on the voluntary compliance of all members. Ravindra describes the arrangement as a 'gentlemen's agreement' and emphasises the 'family outlook' all ANN members share. As expressed by Kuik Cheng Kang of Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily*: "The cooperation depends on goodwill. But there is also a need. In the past we were dependent on wires, now we can exchange news directly. So we can get the news and photos faster. [...] If we need any angles on one incident, we can just tell our fellow friends in the other countries, that we want them to write something for us. It is our advantage to have such cooperation."

Decisions are taken in an informal manner and often in informal settings. According to Philip Golingai, Editor of the ANN, located in the network's offices in Bangkok, "I think one of the reasons why ANN is so successful is because of its loose structure. There are just meetings and that's it. They [Editors-in-Chief of the member newspapers] let it go. And if we need help then somebody will ask somebody for something, but it's very loose actually." As stated by the Editor of *The Star* in Malaysia, Dato Ng Poh Tip, "I think one of the reasons why ANN is so successful is because nobody is trying to dominate another person". Felix Soh shares this assessment. "No-one is trying to dominate the organisation. The moment someone tries to dominate, you will alienate the rest."

The management of the network reflects the cooperative spirit of the alliance. Each year a different member of the ANN Board puts on the leadership hat to guide the network for the next 12 months, independent of the size or political leanings of their newspaper. As explained by Felix Soh: "[T]he rotating chairmanship is a fabulous idea [...] everybody gets a chance to run it. [...] Every year we change." Similarly egalitarian is the decision-making process in the network. "We do it by consensus," says Ravindra Kumar. "We don't have votes [...] we say okay, this year let's fix it."

Friendship is the Key

Undoubtedly, the decision for these twenty newspapers to come together under the umbrella of the ANN was economically motivated and guided by a sense of political purpose. However, what makes the network truly unique is that it is more than just a joint business venture – true friendship is what drives it. Certainly, many a day and night has been spent discussing business matters but the personal level of their cooperation has always been as important.

Thomas Stehling nostalgically remembers table tennis matches on the fringes of official visits to China and surprise recitals of German folk songs during a trip of the ANN Board members to Hamburg. Clearly, the strength of the network is firmly rooted in the compatibility of the personalities of its members. Indeed, the seven founding members of the ANN were friends and professional partners long before they decided to pool their resources and take their cooperation to the next level. “I think first of all, the personalities involved are quite important,” says Felix Soh. “We are actually friends for a long time. We are actually friends first, and members of ANN later. I mean we are friends and we have differences.” He added with a wink, “Suthichai [Saeyoon Suthichai, Group Editor-in-Chief of *The Nation*] whenever he talks about Singapore he will talk about Singapore being a repressed police state, I mean everybody says that. Suthichai wants to ambush me in an interview where he asks me a question...” He continued: “Personalities are very important... and I think we tolerate each other’s...” Ravindra Kumar quipped, “Idiosyncrasies? Yes, yes!” His Singaporean colleague replied, “We have got to have this tolerance of each other.”

Unity in Diversity – Diversity in Unity

While ANN has greatly strengthened the Asian perspective of Asian news, the members of the network are quick to point out that there is no uniform Asian perspective of regional events but instead an array of divergent views. For example, consider the views of Saeyoon Suthichai: “You know we never call each other and say ‘why did you write that, why don’t you write this?’ Never! Never! Never! And that is the secret of our success.” In agreement, Dato Ng Poh Tip: “[B]ecause we’re different countries and different papers, we treat each issue differently. And then if you are one of the other [ANN member] newspapers, you can choose

whose views you want. Or you can have both or three, you know, all together. So you have a wide range of views. Even though ANN has an Asian voice, it's actually Asian voices." Choi Nam-hyun, Editor-in-Chief of *The Korean Herald* shares similar views. "When you're talking about Asian views, it's not unified. For example, the South Korean newspapers, the Japanese newspapers, the Chinese newspapers – all have different editorials in one issue. But to carry them at the same time, this will never happen in a vernacular paper but it happens in the Asia News Magazine, that kind of mixture is a little beauty of the ANN."

As Saeyoon Suthichai explained, "the editors of the various papers are by no means always in agreement over how a particular event should be interpreted. It is important for all members to present to their readers the different facets of Asia which sometimes means that editorials or news stories taken from the ANN pool may oppose the opinion expressed in the paper's own pieces."

According to Pana Janviroy, "[W]e want to show our readers, that you get a variety of ideas in our papers." Nonetheless, Prateek Pradhan acknowledges that the media is not above politics when it comes to dealing with strained bilateral ties between different member countries. "If you are using a story about Pakistan from an Indian newspaper that is incorrect. That is [...] politically wrong." However, he stressed the need for editors to assess the situation and see what is in the best interest of the paper and the readership. "That is where I believe the editorial discretion comes in [...] It's not mandatory to cover all the news that you get [from the ANN pool]. So it's your choice. And you have to be smart enough to understand all these things."

When asked whether close cooperation between the different papers of the ANN members had resulted in the emergence of some form of best practice for journalism, Ravindra Kumar is of the view that, "I don't think it's conscious, but I think sub-consciously it does happen. If you see somebody's design or presentation style working better than somebody else's. And there is a tendency to absorb. [...] We are not trying to create a uniform set of rules or styles or standards. We're not doing that. But subconsciously, I think [...] anybody would like to pick up good practices. [...] And we have the advantage here... if we see somebody doing a very good design job we might request that person for help." Adds Felix Soh: "There is always this opportunity for passing of expertise, sharing of expertise."

Cooperation with the network has also resulted in bilateral arrangements between individual partners, for example, *The Straits Times* and *The Jakarta*

Post, as Felix Soh explained. Felix Soh also added, “[...] *China Daily* is going to send people down to the *Straits Times*, all its directors in all its departments on attachment. We welcome this and it is happening.” Pana Janviroj also offered other examples: “There have been more bilateral relations, for example, *China Daily*’s Monday business section has been carried by *The Nation*, just between the two papers. *The Star* has also signed an agreement with *China Daily*, because our readers want to know more about China. So apart from the Asian network, ANN has also created these bilateral relationships.”

The members of the network agree that mutual respect and respect of each other are the secrets behind the network’s success. Christian Klick summarises his perception of the network as follows: “I believe one of the first things you’ll have to acknowledge, and you have to make sure that everybody knows, is that he will not lose any of his identity. Because only then, are you able [...] to speak to each other, to come to the table. [...] Never start to equalise. Never start to standardise in an area where you don’t want to standardise, where you want to keep your ego. [...] And that is a success story, because you know where the boundary is, and you’re carefully enhancing your cooperation without trying to push for something that everybody knows already [...] goes too far [...]”

Shigefumi Takasuka, Assistant Editor of the Japanese paper, *The Daily Yomiuri*, referred to the different perceptions of press freedom in the ANN member countries and stated, “[...] each country has different levels of freedom. And if we start discussing about it, the organisation will not work. So we need a lot of tolerance and understanding for each other. But I believe our goal is of course, freedom of press. But we do it in an Asian way, slowly and depending on the situation of the country.”

Milestones in ANN’s History

The ANN started out as a vision. It took the dedicated work of many partners across Asia to turn this vision into a reality. Undoubtedly, dialogue and cooperation in the framework of the foundation’s Regional Media Programme Asia played their role. It was in this framework that the idea began to mature and to take shape. Even more importantly, personal interaction in a plethora of seminars and conferences helped build a solid foundation of mutual trust and respect. It has been a remarkable feat given the broad spectrum of political and economic systems that have come together under one umbrella in the ANN, let alone the

strained bilateral ties between some of the member countries. For Felix Soh of the *Straits Times*: “If you look at it politically, all the countries in Asia have issues with each other. China has issues with Japan, Japan has issues with South Korea, Malaysia has issues with Singapore, Thailand has issues with Singapore, everybody has issues with everybody. But as journalists in ANN, we can get along.”

Immediately after the ANN was officially founded, its members set out to identify professional solutions to the divergence in journalistic standards between their papers. Ravindra Kumar explained: “If you see somebody’s design or presentation style working better than somebody else’s there is a tendency to absorb. [...] We are not trying to create a uniform set of rules or styles or standards. But anybody would like to pick up good practices. [...]” His Singaporean colleague added: “There is always the opportunity for sharing of expertise.”

Besides the dedication to achieving professional excellence across Asia, the alliance made full use of the news exchange mechanism to realise its vision of providing a truly Asian perspective of regional affairs. Significant events throughout the region at the time of its inception – particularly, in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand – fully justified the network’s *raison d’être*. Following President Suharto’s resignation in 1998, the onset of the *Reformasi* era boosted democratic processes in Indonesia, which eventually led to the first direct presidential elections in 2004. At the same time, the crumbling of the Thai Baht set off an economic landslide that affected most of the region and further accelerated political transition. Malaysia, in the meantime, held general elections amidst the highly controversial trial and sentencing of its former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim.

The news exchange mechanism gave ANN members a competitive edge over their competitors, allowing them to provide their readers with an Asian perspective of these events as they unfolded. According to ANN Editor, Philip Golingai, “My news will always be more instant [than that of journalists outside the ANN network]. ANN is an alliance of 20 newspapers from 17 countries who share news. That’s the unique thing about it.” To further cement their competitive edge, ANN members also opened their own facilities, material and resources to their fellow colleagues who visited a member country to cover an event. “Once we had become ANN, any of our reporters can go to any of these countries and walk into the office of a member paper,” noted *The Nation*’s Suthichai. Moreover, he added, “you’ll be welcomed, you’ll have a computer to work on, you can send pictures, you can ask them to contact people for you, get sources, and

everything.” In 2000, *The Nation* went one step further and announced that it would set up a weekly ANN page in its Saturday edition, featuring stories from the network members.

The actions of Thailand’s premier English language paper were soon followed by other network members. On average, the space each member dedicates to the publication of ANN stories has doubled over the last nine years. Of course, the mechanism was not without its teething problems. Further fine tuning, in particular regarding the exchange of time sensitive information, has taken place over the years. Given the adverse political or economic circumstances in some member countries, this was not always easy. The ANN’s Indonesian member, for example, began facing difficulties in recruiting staff when foreign investors began flooding into the country following the fall of Suharto. With many foreign investors setting up on-line information services on the internet, local newspapers had difficulty competing for staff.

Nonetheless, alongside their board meetings the ANN coordinators meet regularly to iron out any hiccups in their daily cooperation. “At the operational level, the interaction is between coordinators that are nominated by each of the newspapers, and they are in regular touch on the news. There are several other layers of interaction between our papers which have come about as a result of ANN”, explained Ravindra Kumar. In 2002, the group agreed to increase the number of stories under the daily news exchange mechanism to eight – five general news items and three business news stories.

Spurred on by the objective to achieve a truly pan-Asian perspective on regional affairs, the network quickly decided to further expand the scope of its cooperation beyond the daily news exchange. At the first planning meeting in July 1999, it was agreed to complement the daily news exchange with special reports on regional issues that would appear in the format of a monthly supplement. Furthermore, each member paper would identify public figures in politics, society, business and media, to be portrayed jointly in all papers under the heading, ‘Young Leaders of Asia’. In parallel, an annual ‘Young Leaders Forum’ would offer a joint platform to address the challenges of the 21st Century and profile the ANN as a key provider of pan-Asian news.

With the advent of telecommunications carriers and others offering pan-Asian news on a single website, then ANN Chairman, Pana Janviroj, in 2000 proposed establishing ANN’s own Asia News Portal. While some Asian news portals, *Asia Times Online* and *Asiaweek* for example, were already in existence,

most of their writers were westerners and offered what was seen to be a skewed interpretation of regional events. By filling this void, ANN had a unique opportunity to profile itself as an exclusive source of Asian news and an efficient and professionally run newspaper alliance.

From the beginning, the news portal has served two purposes. Firstly, it acts as a working tool for all members to better manage daily cooperation. A coordinator manages the website and coordinates the content by daily conferencing with the designated ANN sub-coordinators at each newspaper. The same person also liaises with foreign newspapers who tap into ANN as a news service. Secondly, the portal advances ANN's goal to make Asian voices better heard, by providing internet users worldwide with easy access to insightful news and analyses on regional matters. Importantly, rather than competing with the websites of each member paper, the portal adds a pan-Asian layer to the work of its members.

Following the generous offer of ANN's Thai member, *The Nation*, a newly-created secretariat moved to Bangkok and started work on the portal with an initial crew of three people – one website designer seconded from *The Nation*, one editor from *The Star* and a third journalist from an additional ANN member paper. The ANN News Portal was launched with a press conference at the Foreign Correspondent's Club in Hong Kong in October 2002, to a packed international audience and received mention in the international press including *International Herald Tribune* and *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

It is important to mention that many of the activities of the network, at least initially, would not have been feasible without the generous financial support of its sponsors, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Star Alliance and Holcim². Ensuring the financial security and sustainability of the ANN has been a continuous concern to the network. As early as 1999, ANN made first steps towards a common business approach by studying possibilities for joint advertising. Cooperation within the network expanded to include journalists, the exchange of news and common business strategies under the member newspapers' management. The business group, founded in 2000, brought together ANN editors, publishers and directors, and now jointly manages the network's finances. At the same time, media management seminars have added an additional group of media practitioners to the group of people cooperating with the network.

Felix Soh was keen to stress that interaction within the ANN takes places at several levels and is not restricted to the editor level. "I think this is the first time

that [...] Asian CEOs got together and they really understood each other [...] they become good friends through ANN. Otherwise they will just meet each other in bilateral situations. [...] So that to me is many layers of alliances. It's not one layer, it is several layers." In agreement, Pana Janviroy added: "From the top, right down to the journalist and photographer [...]."

Over the following years, the ANN secretariat that was initially set up to take charge of the news portal, transformed into the ANN news bureau. ANN members quickly set their sights on publishing a weekly news magazine. The Asia News Magazine was officially launched in February 2006. Prior to the launch of the magazine, the editorial team had honed their skills by producing the *AsiaNews* e-paper which first appeared on the website as a PDF file. News of the ANN's Stiftung, the launch of its news portal and of its magazine was met with worldwide admiration and requests for membership from newspapers across Asia, Europe and the United States came flooding in.

Expanding the size of the network became an additional focus of the ANN and took place in parallel to the expanding scope of cooperation. Successive expansions of the ANN have been carefully considered, each time with the objective of further enhancing the potential of the network while also safeguarding the harmonious working relations within the group. "What typically happens is that when we have our annual meeting, we look at expanding the frame by, let's say, one or two," maintained Ravindra Kumar, "and then, you know people who are in that region, they play a lead role in identifying the right kind of organisation. There must be a fit. You see so far, whether through accident or design, it has been a very harmonious network, and we have not had any major scraps or anything. We want that to continue and we want people committed to this."

The ANN was able to welcome *The Korea Herald* and *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* into its fold in 2000 – only one year after cooperation began³. In June of the same year, the ANN Board met in Beijing to welcome *China Daily* as an official member of the network. The accession of China's leading English language paper signified access to the region's most important market. It also added a new dimension to the network's joint goal of harmonising standards of journalistic practice. With the joining of *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Daily Yomiury* on 1 June 2001, ANN's representation in the East Asia sector was complete. In 2002, the group was joined by *The Dawn* (Pakistan), *The Island* (Sri Lanka), and *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh). With these three new members, the alliance

managed to close an important gap and include members from the important South Asian region in its ranks.

In 2006, the network admitted *Vientiane Times* and the *Kathmandu Post* while *Rasmei Kampuchea* of Cambodia, as the youngest member of the ANN, joined the network as its 17th member in March 2008. Within a span of only nine years, the ANN has grown from seven to twenty members that today publish a combined print edition of 15 million newspapers, with an estimated 50 million readers reading the ANN member newspapers on a daily basis.

The ANN has exceeded all expectations. The intensity and range of cooperation in the ANN and the level of trust that has developed amongst all its members, is phenomenal – especially when their different political backgrounds and mandates are considered. It is doubtful that the same results could have been achieved had the network not been allowed to develop and grow at its own pace and expand at the initiative of the members themselves. When the Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung began its work in 1996, the sentiment in the region's media scene was a mixture of confidence in Asia's political and economic progress and the strength of its cultural values on the one hand, and frustration over the influence of primarily American news agencies on public opinion, particularly Asia's elites, on the other hand.

The ANN continues to contribute positively to wider development trends in Asian media. By improving professional standards it has helped to further profile Asian media as an equal competitor to its Western counterparts. By creating close linkages between newspapers from different countries it helps to foster a common regional identity, creates greater awareness about regional developments amongst Asian readers, counterbalances and complements information on Asia, and reduces dependency on Western news wires.

Finally, the ANN has been particularly beneficial for those countries that by themselves may not have had the opportunity or resources to address lacking journalism standards or inadequate legal frameworks. As an Asian initiative it possesses a level of legitimacy that cannot be matched by projects under foreign leadership and which has allowed it to pull along its less advanced and more reclusive members⁴.

Endnotes

- 1 Apart from offering onsite seminars and workshops, the KAACFJ also offers a Master's Degree in Journalism, diploma courses in online and radio journalism and also short courses on topics such as investigative reporting, media and politics. In the future, the KAACFJ is also set to launch a diploma course in photo-journalism. To this date, the Centre remains the region's first long-distance learning programme of this kind. Here, journalists have the opportunity to further hone their skills up to the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism without having to give up their day-time jobs. Besides addressing insufficiencies in journalistic training, the regional media programme also contributes to improving inadequate legal frameworks which undermine press freedom. Most importantly, it has proved instrumental in the establishing of new Press Institutes as well as independent and self-regulating Press Councils across Asia, including in Thailand, Hong Kong and Cambodia.
- 2 Holcim is one of the world's leading producers of cement and aggregates. The company is one of the supporters of the ANN project.
- 3 *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* replaced *Manila Times* which left the network following a change in ownership.
- 4 It was in the framework of the ANN that Burmese participants were able to participate in discussions with their Asian counterparts on standards of journalistic practice and gain exposure to practices in neighbouring countries.



Inside Scoop – A Day at the ANN’s Bangkok Bureau

The ANN news bureau is located in an impressive looking office tower in Bangkok that is home to *The Nation Multimedia Group*. Located on the sixth floor, the network’s office looks decidedly small in comparison to the vast premises of *The Nation* just across the corridor. When I arrive at the office it is Tuesday morning and I am greeted by the sight of six journalists perched in front of their computers, busily adding the final touches to the next edition of the news magazine. A seventh colleague, I am told, is using the computer facilities of their host next door to finish the layout of next week’s cover. As it turns out, Tuesday is the weekly deadline before the magazine goes to print and everybody is rushing to get it done in time. Talk about ideal timing!

While everybody else is typing away on their computer keyboards I take my time to survey the grounds. The tables and shelves are laden with newspaper snippets and brightly coloured copies of the latest editions of the *AsiaNews* magazine. Coffee cups are perched precariously on top of news stacks. Dominating the common area, where the team gathers to brainstorm, is a big whiteboard covered in multi-coloured scribbles. After closer inspection it turns out to be the detailed outline of the next edition. Arrows indicate which team member is in charge of each section. Nonetheless, despite the orderly planning, the ANN bureau is a tightly-knit team of equals and everyone is quick to lend a hand in order to keep the operation going. “*The ANN bureau is more like a colleagueship body,*” clarifies Deputy Editor, Yasmin Lee Arpon, who has been working as one of ANN’s permanent staff since October 2002. “*Everyone does everything and we*



Size doesn't matter! The small ANN takes care of the ANN website and produces the weekly magazine. The office goes into overdrive each Tuesday when the next edition of *AsiaNews* is finalised.

divide our tasks equally amongst us.” As the longest serving staff member, Yasmin has witnessed the network’s membership grow in numbers over the years – and the tasks of the news bureau along with it. Yasmin’s colleague, Jofelle Tesorio, explains the daily routine of the ANN bureau to me. The two main responsibilities, she explains, are the Asia News Portal and the *AsiaNews* magazine. All hands on deck are needed to upload the steady stream of incoming stories which the team receives from the twenty ANN members. After the website is updated, the team gets to work on the magazine, choosing and editing stories for the next issue and finalising the layout.

Supervised by Khun Pana

Janviroj, ANN’s Executive Director and President of Bangkok’s *The Nation*, the team receives general directions on the structure and content of the magazine and the website from all the editors of the 20 network member newspapers, and the director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung’s regional media programme. On a daily basis, however, the ANN team deals with the photo coordinator and the story coordinator of each member newspaper. The latter contribute eight stories each day to the joint news pool. The ANN team, in return has the task of fitting together the different news stories they receive from their members to form one topical and coherent pan-Asian jigsaw that is current and edgy.

Every Wednesday the team comes together in an editorial meeting where they pitch stories to be covered in the magazine - most importantly, the cover story. As the website gets updated on a daily basis with new stories arriving from the member

papers, the team in Bangkok keeps a close eye on how a particular story develops to determine which topic will be most current and most important when the magazine appears the following week. The editorial team takes great care to ensure each edition reflects the diversity of Asia including the different opinions within Asia and amongst its members. “We cover every country where we have members so we give a pan-Asian perspective,” says Jofelle Tesorio. “That is the strength of the magazine and that is the strength of the website,” she adds.

Once they have identified the topics and angles, they contact their colleagues in the news rooms across Asia to ask for additional coverage or photos. Each ANN team member is also responsible for the packaging of the

news section he or she is assigned to in terms of layout and photo coverage. Occasionally, members of the ANN team also write their own stories for the magazine. However, given the small size of the team, at present there is not always enough time for them to do so, although they are hoping to further expand this aspect of their work in the near future.

The magazine is published every Friday and is then sent on to its subscribers and the ANN member offices. The biggest bulk of the 10,000 copies strong magazine is distributed via one of the network’s main partners, Star Alliance, which presents a copy of *AsiaNews* to all business class travellers on flights between Asia and Europe. Due to the high costs of shipping the magazine to countries



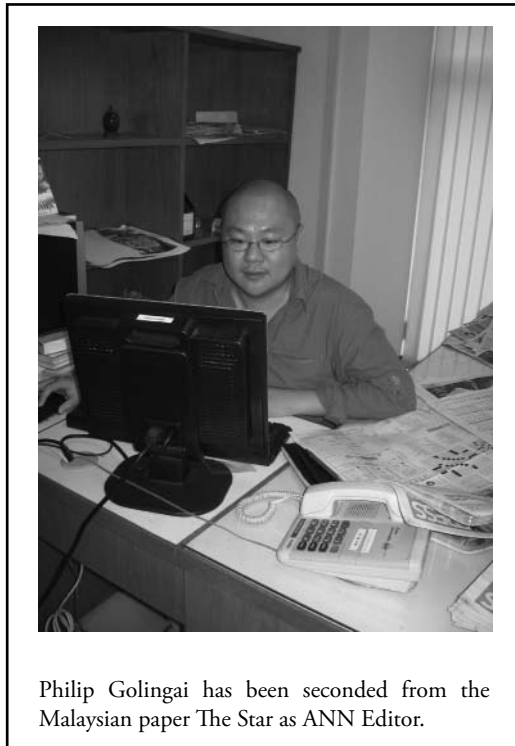
As pan-Asian as the network itself: the ANN team!

From left to right: Assistant Editor Syed Nazakat from India, Deputy Editor Yasmin Lee Arpon from the Philippines, Editor Philip Golingai from Malaysia, Assistant Editor Phonekeo Volankhoun from Laos, Assistant Editor Jofelle Tesorio from the Philippines, and Assistant Editor Rupak D Sharma from Nepal

outside of Thailand, it is currently only available for purchase at newsstands in Bangkok. Nonetheless, *AsiaNews* is available online while the network members are also planning to widen availability of the printed version.

The ANN editorial team in Bangkok is enthusiastic about the idea of raising the circulation numbers of the magazine and making it available for purchase at newsstands throughout the region. Deputy Editor, Yasmin Lee Arpon, points to the positive feedback the team receives even from outside the region, including Europe and the United States. Often, she explains, they receive enquiries for subscriptions which are then handled on a piece by piece basis. The team even gets requests from news agencies outside Asia to run some of their stories. While *AsiaNews* is currently not competing with any of the other Asian magazines, Deputy Editor, Yasmin Lee Arpon, notes that, “*some people feel that we are filling the void that Asiaweek left behind*”. *Asiaweek* ceased publication in 2001 after over 25 years of regional coverage. About the strength of the ANN magazine, Arpon says: “*We are making the most of our resources and these are some of the best resources because our member newspapers are among the best in the region.*”

The ANN magazine was launched in February 2006, explains Yvonne. Before that, the young team honed their editing skills by producing the *AsiaNews* e-paper which first appeared on the website as a PDF file on 21 January 2005. The website was established in 1999, long before the magazine, and receives around 5000 hits per day. Both products target mainly professionals, academics



Philip Golingai has been seconded from the Malaysian paper *The Star* as ANN Editor.

and business leaders who are interested in Asian affairs. However, through special feature stories the team also seeks to reach out to young Asians. Fittingly, the first



Deputy Editor Yasmin Lee Arpon has been in the ANN office since 2002.

ever ANN magazine focused on Asian newsmakers and carried a picture of Japanese Princess Aiko on its cover because, “*we wanted something fresh and we felt that she represented something very young from the region.*”

As I flick through several heavy folders full of backdated ANN magazines she hands me, I can see for myself how this pan-Asian publication has evolved. What gives the magazine its edge is its blend of different and sometimes opposing opinions on regional affairs. “*It gives you different views from different countries*”, says Yasmin Lee Arpon and, she continues, “*it is not always the same people writing the same opinion pieces.*”

Her colleague, Rupak D Sharma, adds: “*The magazine’s edge is that the news is written by local journalists. Obviously, a person living in that country knows about it better than anybody else.*” By offering the reader different Asian perspectives on regional affairs the magazine lives up to its tagline: ‘We know Asia better’.

Upon its creation in 1999, the members of the new network agreed to set up operations at the headquarters of *The Nation* in the Thailand capital of Bangkok, and for an editor to be seconded from *The Star* of Malaysia. The ANN team currently has seven members of staff, three of whom are permanent ANN employees. However, the ANN functions as a medium for news exchange that fosters closer collaboration amongst its members, and also attempts to contribute to capacity-building in Asia by developing a model of best journalistic practice through collaboration and staff exchanges. The agreement between the network members also entails a provision that encourages all members to send staff to the Bangkok office to support the operations for a period between six months and one year. “*It’s like a quid pro quo,*” says Yasmin, “*we learn a lot from our members*

and I hope they also learn from us.” In particular, for colleagues from countries where the media is still in the infant stages of development, working alongside others in the ANN team is a valuable educational experience that directly benefits the member newspapers in question. No fewer than three of her colleagues are currently working at the office under the network’s attachment programme. One of them is Assistant Editor, Phonekeo Volankhoun, who has been working for the *Vientiane Times* since 1997 and joined the ANN team in November 2007. “Here I can observe how they work in other countries,” he says of his time in Bangkok. “The



The ANN attachment programme allows Asian journalists to learn from each other and further hone their professional expertise. The picture shows Assistant Editor Syed Nazakat from India (left) and his Laotian colleague Assistant Editor Phonekeo Volankhoun.

ANN”, he says, “has been particularly beneficial for small countries such as Laos as it offers a unique opportunity to present itself to its Asian neighbours.”

After his return to the *Vientiane Times* he adds, he will urge his colleagues to follow suit and also spend some time with the ANN’s pan-Asian team.

His colleague, Rupak D Sharma,

is just as enthusiastic about the exchange programme. A business reporter at *The Kathmandu Post* in Nepal since 2002, he joined the ANN attachment programme in 2007 and plans to stay in Bangkok for one year. The exposure to other journalistic styles and the opportunity to build a network of professional contacts is what makes work in the ANN team so interesting for him. “As a Nepalese paper”, he explains, “the *Kathmandu Post’s* natural concern is the country’s relationship with India and journalists spend considerable time covering bilateral ties.” “We don’t know much about the other parts of Asia,” he says. “When I was in Nepal I used to write for the local crowd, now I write for people all over Asia.”

To improve the attachment programme even further, Yasmin Lee Arpon proposes a formal debriefing session before journalists return to their home papers, to evaluate the programme. *“An evaluation,”* she says, *“would help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and allow the ANN to tailor the exchange programme to the specific needs of future participants.”* Jofelle Tesorio, too, enthuses about how her work with the ANN has changed her professional and personal outlook. *“When you work in a certain community,”* she explains, *“your perspective is narrow but when you go out [...] you realise that the things happening around the region are basically what happens inside your own country too.”* The magazine



Jofelle Tesorio has worked as a journalist for the Philippine Daily Enquirer and editor of *Bandillo ng Palawan*. She also holds an MA in journalism from Konrad Adenauer Asian Center for Journalism (KAACFJ) at the distinguished Ateneo de Manila University.

seeks to make readers aware *“that there are things happening outside their own country”* and to sensitise them to the effects of globalisation and regionalisation. Through the work of ANN, she is convinced: *“The Asian media has improved a lot. Our members get stories from their partners that are written by local experts. Gone are the days when newspapers would rely on wire agencies. Of course, they still use them but you can see the progress there. Our members are using a lot of stories from their partners. This is a big development for Asian media.”*

When I leave the ANN office I have newfound respect for this group of young journalists who dedicatedly work towards uniting and strengthening Asian media. Given the diverse backgrounds of the network’s 20 members, this is clearly not always an easy task and requires a great deal of sensitivity to the circumstances and mandate of each member. I asked the team about recent

developments in China's policy towards Tibet and the way the ANN handles an issue like this, which causes very different reactions across Asia. *"We don't seek to segregate," says Jofelle Tesorio, "we present a balanced view."* *"We know that China Daily is a government-owned media so we don't expect China Daily to be critical of the Chinese government,"* she adds matter of factly. *"The ANN,"* she explains, *"lays the groundwork for a democratic discussion. The reader will know that this is what China thinks but this is what others think, too."*

ANN is very much committed to promoting principles of free speech and press freedom. Yet its approach is based on compromise, patience and progress at the speed each member accepts as suitable for its own conditions. The staff exchange model is an integral part of this strategy. Staff exchanges, says Tesorio, create *"better understanding of the region, better understanding of the culture, and better understanding of the media landscape in the different countries [...] different countries have different media landscapes and you cannot enforce one model because they have different political systems."*

The ANN team is convinced the network has the potential to become a crucial instrument in regional integration efforts within ASEAN. *"A key concern,"* says Rupak D Sharma, *"has to be to further promote the network and to ensure that the website and the magazine are accessible to even more people in Asia."* In the future, the ANN team would like to further expand the pan-regional perspective of the magazine by focusing on the interdependency amongst the countries of the region. Indian journalist, Syed Nazakat, who joined the Bangkok team in 2007, hopes the network will in the future consider employing journalists who



Rupak D Sharma is a business journalist for the Kathmandu Post in Nepal.

are attached to the ANN only and research original pan-Asian stories for the website and the magazine. Yasmin adds, *“we want to develop more stories on our own.”* Undoubtedly though, their first priority is to further expand the exchange of stories and to encourage greater interaction amongst the ANN members. *“We want to create stories that do not just reflect what countries do but give a regional overview on certain issues and how they affect all countries.”* Jofelle Tesorio said: *“The future of the ANN is really promising. [...] ANN is very Asian and we think we have a role to play in bringing Asia together in one magazine, in one website, in one organisation. It lays the groundwork for democratic consultation within and among the members. It is good for democracy.”*

Dr. Susanne Rentzow-Vasu



United in Diversity – Introducing the ANN Members

Asia, as has been mentioned, is one of the most diverse regions in the world with a rich tapestry of cultures including some of the world's oldest civilisations. Students of international relations and media studies are equally fascinated by the plethora of political systems and the diverse, vibrant media industry that has sprouted across the region.

To rule out possible misunderstanding, any country's destiny is clearly determined by the specific constellation in which a variety of different factors come together and affect each other. In the Asian context, these factors appear at times very similar yet, as a quick survey of the region testifies, their influence has played out differently for each Asian nation. Most fundamental amongst these common threads are the shared experiences of colonialism and the necessity to build sound political and economic pillars upon which nations can rest, mature and prosper. I do not need to point out here that stark discrepancies in living standards and political freedoms amongst Asian nations indicate different approaches and uneven success in this ongoing quest.

The onset of globalisation brought with it a new set of opportunities and challenges. Access to information and new technology has the potential to advance economic progress and support political liberalisation in developing countries. At the same time, however, international exposure may be interpreted as a threat to indigenous cultures and increase vulnerability to international crises. As is widely documented, the domino reaction to the Thai currency crisis, in 1997, demonstrated dramatically how vulnerable countries are to economic

disasters, even beyond their borders.

On a positive note, the experience of 1997 accelerated the formation of a common regional identity. Asian nations began to join forces in the battle to protect their region's shared interests from a volatile international environment. The experience of the Asian crisis also led to the growing realisation that intra-Asian dialogue and coordination needed to be strengthened and expanded to ensure adequate representation of the region's economic and political needs on the international stage. Undoubtedly, the media can and should play a key role in managing these processes. It has the potential to act as a conduit for the formation of shared interests and a common identity, by facilitating intra-Asian dialogue. Even greater is its potential to support a nation's economic progress and democratic development by providing a platform for national discourse and debate. The internet is steadily making in-roads into Asia and is already dominating media markets in many countries. What unites the print media across the region is an urgent need to carve out a niche for itself that differentiates newspapers from other forms of information and communication.

In parallel to its increasing scope of cooperation, the ANN has also expanded its membership from the seven founding members who joined forces in 1999, to a staggering nineteen newspapers in 2008. Each successive expansion of the ANN has been carefully considered, each time with the objective in mind of enhancing the potential of the network, while safeguarding the harmonious working relationships within the group. *"What typically happens is that when we have our annual meeting, we look at expanding the frame by, let's say, one or two,"* explains *The Statesman's* Ravindra Kumar. In doing so, the ANN Board relies heavily on its members' advice in this delicate process. *"People who are in that particular region [which the Board has identified for expansion] play a lead role in identifying the right kind of organisation"*, Kumar continues. Most importantly, he stresses, *"there must be a fit."* It is obvious from the illustrious names of the ANN member publications that quality and professionalism rank very highly amongst the list of desirable credentials of future members. While the ANN is clearly a joint business venture of the region's top newspapers, the compatibility criteria for new members goes beyond mere publication numbers and includes some form of shared idealism. *"So far, whether through accident or design, the ANN has been a very harmonious network, and we have not had any major scraps or anything. We want that to continue and we want people that are committed to our project and its goals."* With this in mind, expansion of the

network has progressed quickly. In 2000, only one year into the cooperation, the seven funding members of the ANN were able to welcome two regional heavy weights, *The Korea Herald* and *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*¹. In June of the same year, the ANN Board members met in Beijing to welcome *China Daily*, as an official member of the network. The joining of China's leading English language paper was of particular importance for the future of the network, as it signified access to one of the region's most important media markets. It also added an important new dimension to the network's joint goal of harmonising standards of journalistic practice across Asia.

With the joining of Japan's premier papers, *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Daily Yomiury*, on 1 June 2001, further Asian powerhouses were added to the network and ANN's representation in the East Asia sector was complete. Less than a year later, in 2002, the group was joined by *The Island* (Sri Lanka) and *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh) whose membership helped close an important geographical gap in the ANN's reach by including members from the important South Asian region.

In 2006, the network admitted *Vientiane Times* of Laos and Nepal's *Kathmandu Post*, while the *Rasmei Kampuchea* of Cambodia is one of the youngest members of the ANN having joined the network as its 17th member in March 2008. Three months later, in June 2008, Pakistan's *The Nation* joined the network. The last paper to join the ANN for the foreseeable future will be the *China Post* from Taipei, which is currently negotiating its membership with the Board.

As the Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Media Programme Asia proudly declares, successive memberships have eradicated all white patches on the Asian landscape and have turned the ANN into a news network like no other in the region. Within the span of only nine years, the ANN has grown from seven to twenty members with a combined circulation of almost 14 million newspaper copies daily. The sheer number of newspapers the ANN has managed to unite under one umbrella in such a short span of time, is impressive. How remarkable this achievement is becomes even clearer when we considers the heterogeneity of the ANN members.

As will be shown below, each member newspaper works within a different domestic setting composed of its unique cultural heritage, economic and political

1 *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* replaced the *Manila Times* which left the network following a change in ownership.

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years

reality, and legal framework. Despite their diverse backgrounds members are united in their commitment to raise the profile of Asian journalism and to increase its international standing. ANN membership has proven an invaluable vehicle in this quest by bringing journalists from across Asia closer together and allowing them to learn from each other.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh, meaning the "Country of Bengal" in the official Bengali language, is a South Asian country with a population of 159 million people (UN estimate 2007). With a territory of 147,570 sq km, it is among the most densely populated countries in the world. Initially part of British India, the primarily Muslim states of West Pakistan and East Bengal separated from largely Hindu India to become Pakistan in 1947. East Bengal became East Pakistan in 1955 but gained independence sixteen years later and was renamed Bangladesh.

The political system of Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage. The Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) is a unicameral legislature with 300 directly elected members, of which 45 seats are reserved for women. An amendment to the constitution adopted in 1988 established Islam as the state religion. However, despite the religious affinity with the Islamic world, Bangladesh also shares strong cultural links to the speakers of the Bengali language in the Indian part of Bengal. In 1996, an amendment to the constitution provided for the organisation of general elections by a non-partisan caretaker government. However, in January 2007, the caretaker government postponed the parliamentary election and declared a state of emergency, which remains in place.

With a GDP per capita of US\$ 1,400, Bangladesh remains a poor and inefficiently-governed nation. Although 54.2 percent of GDP was generated through the service sector in 2006, nearly two-thirds of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector, with rice as the single most-important product. Garment exports and remittances from Bangladeshis working overseas, mainly in the Middle East and East Asia, fuel economic growth. Major impediments to growth include frequent cyclones and floods, inefficient state-owned enterprises, inadequate port facilities, a rapidly growing labour force that cannot be absorbed by agriculture, delays in exploiting energy resources (natural gas), insufficient power supplies, and slow implementation of economic reforms. Growth has been a steady 5-6% for the past several years.

Media Landscape

Illiteracy in Bangladesh is at an unacceptable high. According to UN statistics, only 47.5 percent of the population aged 15 or older, can read and write. Nonetheless, the local population is tremendously interested in public affairs, and newspaper readership was estimated at 20 million in 2005 (World Newspaper Association).

It is still common in the country's rural areas for papers to be read aloud thus increasing the number of news' recipients.

Bangladeshis listen to a variety of local and national radio programmes and TV stations, of which the state-run *Radio Bangladesh* and *Bangladesh Television* are the main broadcasters. Ninety-eight percent of Bangladeshis speak the national language, Bengali, which is mandatory in all government offices. English is understood by the elite and serves also as an official language. Most of the print media, and radio and television broadcasting, are in Bengali although the small English language press, newspapers and weeklies, have considerable influence. According to Internet World Stats, in 2007, only 0.3 percent of the entire population had internet access.

Print Media

Statistics on the number of newspapers published in Bangladesh, and their circulation, vary with different sources. In addition, most newspapers tend to exaggerate their circulation figures to gain a share of government advertising and a bigger allocation of newsprint. According to official sources, in 2002 the number of daily newspapers was 282, of which 107 were being published from the capital city, Dhaka. The World Newspaper Association reports that 410 paid-for daily newspapers were published in the country in 2006. Individual circulation ranges between 70,000 for the country's leading dailies – *The Daily Star* or the Bengali language paper, *Daily Prothom Alo* – to only a few thousand for the lesser known papers. In 2006, the major national dailies were the English language papers, *The Daily Star*, *The Independent*, *The New Nation*, and *Bangladesh Observer*, and the Bengali language dailies, *Daily Ittefaq*, *Dainik Jugantor*, *Janakantha*, *Muktakantha*, *Prothom-Alo*, and *Ajker Kagoj Bengali*.

The official government-owned news service is *Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha* (BSS). In addition to their own network of correspondents and reporters, most newspapers rely on BSS and private news agencies for ready access to news and information. In line with the country's privatisation policy, state-owned newspapers were closed down in 1997. Subsequently, the print media is privately-owned and has a strong tradition of owner-editorship. The government exerts indirect pressure and leverage on the press through distribution of advertisements that form a major part of newspaper revenue. In general, the media industry has diversified considerably since the 1990s, which coincided with the country's transition to democratic rule. Television is the favourite media among Bangladeshis, especially in cities. State-owned Bangladesh

Television is the sole terrestrial TV channel. While private broadcasters have gained access to the local media landscape, they remain subject to government control and their impact does not reach beyond the country's urban areas.

Press laws

Article 39(2) of the Constitution of Bangladesh provides for freedom of speech, expression and press, albeit subject to “reasonable restrictions” in the interests of “the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency and morality in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.”

The Printing Presses and Publication Act of 1973 states that publication of any newspaper requires prior written approval of the Deputy Commissioner while also barring the printing and publishing of items that might affect the interests of the state and government of Bangladesh. The Special Powers Act (SPA) of 1974 (amended in 1991) made it an offence, punishable by five years imprisonment and/or fine “to print, publish or distribute prejudicial reports.”

Journalists are required to identify all sources of information, while authorities have been granted powers to seize documents and newspapers, to ban publications and to search premises. According to Section 124A of the Bangladesh Penal Code, expressing dissatisfaction against the government is an offence punishable by imprisonment of up to three years. Section 505(b) of the same law rules reports or statements against the state, illegal and punishable by imprisonment. The government also exerts indirect pressure on the media through distribution of advertisements that form a major part of a newspaper's revenue. Following pressure from journalists and civil rights groups, a Right to Information Act is currently under discussion. Media rights organisation, ‘Reporters Without Borders’, has accused the army of targeting journalists, who it says face arrest, maltreatment and censorship.



With a daily circulation of 50,000 copies and a weekend circulation of 70,000 copies, *The Daily Star* is by far

Bangladesh's number one English language newspaper. According to the paper, the internet edition is currently the most widely accessed Web page by Bangladeshi

nationals living abroad and is frequently quoted in national and international journals, seminars and research papers, as the most trusted and authentic source of news on the country.

Established on 14 January 1991, the privately owned paper came into existence “at a historic time when, with the fall of an autocratic regime, the country was well set to begin a new era towards establishing a democratic system of government which eluded Bangladesh for too long.” (*Daily Star* website). With its main office located in the country’s capital, Dhaka, *The Daily Star* has since added further news bureaus in New Delhi and New York. Among the more than 300,000 readers which consult the paper daily, are members of the business community, decision-makers and the country’s intelligentsia.

The Daily Star joined the Asia News Network in 2000 and has since focused on providing its colleagues with daily news on political and business matters in the country. Besides the daily contributions to the common news pool, the paper also submits commentaries and feature articles for use in the ANN members’ newspapers across Asia. While *The Daily Star* has always taken pride in its regional outlook, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, Mr. Mahfuz Anam, highlights the increased coverage of ANN news in the publication. Easy access to a vast supply of news stories on Asian affairs, including in-depth analyses and photographic material, has provided the paper with a clear advantage, in particular over its competitors, but also in its relationship with foreign news wires. ANN’s contribution to the regional project in Asia is seen to be of great value by Mr. Mahfuz Anam, who explains that better coverage of ANN countries leads to greater knowledge and understanding of complex political, social and economic developments in each country. This in turn may facilitate the emergence of a common communal spirit in Asia.

Negara Brunei Darussalam

Brunei, short for Negara Brunei Darussalam, is located in Southeast Asia on the northern coast of Borneo and is almost completely surrounded by Malaysia. About two-thirds of its 400,000 inhabitants are ethnic Malays (65 percent). While Islam is the country's official religion, freedom of religion is a constitutional right. Historically, Brunei was at its most powerful between the 16th and 18th Centuries, before European influence gradually eroded its dominance in the region. Brunei became a British protectorate in 1888. Internal self-government was reclaimed in 1959 when the country became a constitutional Sultanate with an elected Legislative Council. Soon after Brunei's only elections in 1962, an anti-monarchist rebellion led to the dissolving of the assembly and the declaration of a state of emergency. Since then the Sultan has ruled by decree.

In 1963, Brunei rejected the option of joining the Malaysian Federation and remained a British dependency until 1984. The current 29th Sultan, Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, unites the political roles of Head of State and Government with Minister of Defence and Finance Minister. Although he is advised by several councils and a Cabinet of Ministers, he is effectively the country's supreme ruler. The Sultan is also the guardian of the Islamic state religion. In 2004, the Sultan revived the Legislative Council in a move towards political reform. An amendment to the constitution passed in late 2004 provided for an expanded house with up to 15 elected MPs. However, no date has as yet been set for parliamentary elections.

Brunei's economy is largely based on its large reserves of oil and gas, which are expected to last for another two decades. The country's natural reserves allow for one of the highest standards of living in the world with a GDP per capita of US\$30,058 in 2006 (United Nations Data). Literacy rates in Brunei stood at a high 92.7 percent in 2007 and the country's population is well-educated and well-read. Brunei citizens also enjoy generous state subsidies including free medical care and education, and do not pay income taxes. However, as agriculture is almost entirely absent, the country is heavily dependent on imports for nearly all of its food requirements. In addition, a volatile energy market is a concern to the country's leadership. To reduce dependence on the international energy market, the Brunei government is seeking to diversify the economy by promoting private sector development in other industry sectors, and by promoting Brunei as an investment destination.

Media Landscape

Given the relatively small number of news' consumers in Brunei, local media is limited to only a handful of local newspapers. The *Borneo Bulletin* is the Sultanate's main English language daily, which circulates around 20,000 copies on weekdays and 25,000 on weekends. An additional English language broadsheet daily, *The Brunei Times*, was launched in 2006 and has a more international outlook. It circulates around 5,000 copies. The independent English language daily, *The News Express*, was closed down in 2002. *Media Permata* is a Malay language daily, published by Brunei Press Sdn Bhd, with a circulation of approximately 10,000 copies. *Pelita Brunei*, a free weekly Malay language newspaper is published by the government's Information Department and has a circulation of around 40,000. Foreign newspapers are widely circulated in Brunei, including major editions from neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore, and other countries. According to Brunei's Department of Information, there are four foreign based newspaper agencies in Brunei and one wire agency - Reuters.

Brunei has only one local broadcast media - the government controlled *Radio Television Brunei*. However, foreign television channels are available via cable, lending diversity to the population's information access. According to Internet World Stats, 47 percent of the population had internet access in 2007.

Press Laws

Brunei's print media is almost entirely owned or influenced by the royal family. In general, all media tread very carefully in the reporting on political and religious matters. The Prime Minister's Office is directly responsible for regulating the broadcasting industry and for all matters pertaining to information and media. The events of 1962 left a clear mark on the media industry, as the introduction of emergency powers led to restricted freedom of speech and the press.

In 2001, Brunei introduced the "The Newspaper Act", which codifies existing practice regarding press freedom. Local and foreign media have to register and obtain an annual licence provided by the home affairs minister, and deposit 100,000 Brunei dollars (US\$ 70,000) in a government account (Art. 3A & Art. 3B). Regulations under Art. 4 of the law also allow the government to suspend the publication of any local or foreign newspaper for a period not exceeding six months for offences under the country's "Sedition Act". Journalists deemed to have published or written "false" and "malicious" reports can be subjected to fines or prison sentences of up to three years (Art. 7).



Founded in 2006, *The Brunei Times* joined the media landscape of Brunei Darussalam as an important and independent English language daily, broadsheet newspaper. Privately owned by a group of local businessmen, the paper was introduced at a soft launch on 1 July 2006, in the capital Bandar Seri Begawan. The creation of *The Brunei Times* complements official attempts to further internationalize Brunei and to diversify the local economy in the wake of rising oil exploration costs and depleting energy resources. Fittingly, the maiden issue carried the motto “Fresh Ideas, New Option, Global Vision”. *The Brunei Times* was initially offered on a complimentary basis but today sells around 5,000 copies daily.

Taking care of the future generation of newspaper readers, the paper launched a special programme in 2007 that sees 400 copies sent daily to 31 secondary schools across Brunei Darussalam. Among its readership are government officials, businessmen and members of Brunei’s education system, who appreciate the paper’s focus on news analysis, features, commentaries and op-ed articles on local and foreign happenings, alongside its coverage of business and finance.

Its staff comprises experienced editors from Brunei and abroad, who work alongside local reporters. *The Brunei Times* became an Associate Member of the ANN in 2008 and provides the remaining 18 members of the network with insights on developments in the Sultanate. Mr. Haji Bujang Bin Haji Masu’ut, Group Editor-In-Chief of *The Brunei Times* is sure of the ANN’s positive contribution to deepening regional integration in Asia. “*By providing in-depth coverage of events in their own countries*”, he says, “*writers can help readers in the region empathize with their hopes and aspirations. On a multilateral basis this empathy could lead to sympathy and understanding.*”

Kingdom of Cambodia

Situated in the southwest corner of the Indochina Peninsula, Cambodia is one of the oldest kingdoms in Southeast Asia. Approximately 90 percent of Cambodians consider themselves to be Khmer, descendants of the Angkor Empire that extended over vast expanses of the region. However, throughout its history, Cambodia has been subject to the intense pressures of her two neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam, which led to a long period of decline. With approval of its king, Cambodia became part of French Indochina in 1887 but gained full independence in 1953.

The country fell on hard times during the brutal Communist Khmer Rouge era from 1975 to 1979, during which at least 1.5 million Cambodians lost their lives. In 1979, the regime under Pol Pot was driven from power by the Vietnamese Government. Ten years of Vietnamese occupation and a drawn out civil war followed. In 1991, all Cambodian parties signed the Paris Peace Treaty, which called for United Nations Transitional Authorities in Cambodia (UNTAC) to prepare the country for a general election. In 1993, the elected representatives voted to form a coalition government and to re-establish the monarchy with the king acting as head of state. The fractious first coalition government was replaced in the national elections of 1998, which resulted in a much needed increase in political stability.

General elections took place without major incidences, in 2003. However, it took one year of negotiations between contending political parties before a coalition government was formed. In October 2004, King Sihanouk abdicated the throne due to illness and his son, Prince Norodom Sihamoni, succeeded him. The most recent national elections were held in July 2008.

A United Nations sponsored tribunal for crimes against humanity was set up to charge remaining Khmer leaders and commenced the trial process in 2007.

Cambodia remains one of the world's poorest nations. Both its economy and its political life are still suffering from the civil war that wrecked the country during the latter part of the 20th century. However, since 2004, the economy's growth rate has averaged over 10 percent, with the garment sector and the growing tourism industry driving the growth. Inflation has remained relatively steady and at low levels, not rising above 6 percent since 1998. Cambodia remains heavily reliant on foreign assistance with about half of the central government budget depending on donor assistance. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has increased

12-fold since 2004, as sound macroeconomic policies, political stability, regional economic growth, and government openness towards investment attract growing numbers of investors. In spite of recent progress, the Cambodian economy continues to suffer from the legacy of decades of war and internal strife. Per capita income and education levels are lower than in most neighbouring countries and infrastructure remains inadequate. The economy also has a poor track record in creating jobs. This challenge will only become more daunting in the future since 50 percent of the population is under 20 years of age and large numbers of job seekers will begin to enter the work force each year over the next 10 years.

Media Landscape

Following the onset of democratisation in Cambodia in the 1990s, the country's media industry has been steadily growing. According to the Press Law, newspapers, magazines and foreign news agencies are required to register with the Department of Media, Ministry of Information. With some 200 licensed newspapers, Cambodia has an unusually high number of print media for a population of only 14 million people (United Nations estimate 2007). However, it needs to be noted that due to a lack of funds, only around 25 Khmer language newspapers are published regularly and only eight are published daily. Both major English language newspapers are produced daily. Almost all newspapers are published in the capital Phnom Penh and few reach the approximately 11 million people living in Cambodia's rural areas. In addition, 62.9 percent of the population of 15 years and above is estimated to be not fully literate which further mutes the impact of these publications.

Including regional community-based stations and cable TV stations, there are a total of 38 radio and 66 TV stations in the country. However, television remains unaffordable for the majority of the largely rural population, with only 43 percent of all households owning a television set as of 2005 (World Bank data). Radio, on the other hand, remains the most accessible form of mass media and an estimated 62 percent of the population listens to the radio regularly. Rates are highest in rural areas where literacy levels and television ownership are lowest. There is an estimated 44,000 internet users – 3 percent of the population – and most of them live in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. However, modern information and communication technologies, for many, are outside their financial possibilities. The economic gap between the urban and rural population is strongly reflected in the gap in telephone and internet access.

Press freedom was formally introduced in Cambodia in 1993 under UNTAC. While on paper Cambodia's press is one of the freest in the region, government threats and intimidation are considerable. In 2002, there were nine lawsuits, suspensions and arrests, 13 in 2003, and 19 similar cases in 2004. However, the situation has improved in the last few years and in 2007 no journalist was imprisoned in the country. Nonetheless, the media remains largely unregulated, with extremely loose defamation laws and many papers regularly carrying inflammatory or denunciatory material. A distinct lack of professionalism threatens the media's role as an objective mediator. It is generally understood that most Cambodian journalists have come to their employment with little professional education, although many have been able to attend short-term courses and workshops, supported by, amongst others, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Low salaries make journalists vulnerable to bribery for the coverage of certain events or the propagation of particular political sentiments.

There is a close link between politics and the media in Cambodia. With the exception of the newspapers that are run by foreign owners, most newspapers are affiliated to political parties or individuals and, with few exceptions, radio and television have been retained in the hands of various government institutions. Strict licensing ensures that the country's six private television stations remain close to the ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP) while the seventh station is owned directly by the government. However, while Cambodia has yet to fully embrace its official commitment to press freedom, the government has recently begun to relax its stance towards the media.

Lack of professionalism continues to cause problems, sometimes even with the country's international relations, particular its bilateral ties with Vietnam or Thailand. The most common complaints concern defamation, inaccuracy, failure to observe the rules of journalistic confidence, and poor editing. Fairness and balance are also editorial issues, as are false or dubious claims in advertising material. Greater professionalism of journalists has been encouraged by the active role played by media groups and journalists' associations such as the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ), which is sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in demanding an improvement in journalistic performance.

Press Laws

The Ministry of Information is responsible for media policy and legislation, public service broadcasting, media relations and monitoring, and ICT development.

Within the ministry, the Department of Audio Visual Management issues licences for print media, radio and television, and oversees and regulates the operation and use of radio and television licences. It has not yet formulated policies regarding information technology and the internet, or broadcasting law.

The 1993 Constitution guaranteed freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and human rights. The Press Law was adopted in 1995, and the Criminal Code (an interim penal code written by UNTAC) was introduced in 1993. (In Article 62 of the code journalists could face a 1 month to one year jail term if found guilty of defamation and if the story threatened public disorder or national security). On 26 May 2006, the National Assembly decriminalized defamation, but the penalty for defamation is still from \$250 to \$2,500.

The general situation for the media in Cambodia is freedom with minor restrictions. Press freedom has improved substantially compared to 15 years ago and there is no systematic repression of the press, regardless of its political alignment. However, journalism remains a dangerous profession in this country, with journalists facing suspensions, intimidation, threats, arrests and killings.

Over the last five years, there has been a steady increase in media sources, although many local media companies depend financially on patrons or parties (who require loyalty). The major obstacles to free media coverage are government officials and Article 12 of the Press Law, which deals with national security. There is no clear definition of national security, but that term can be easily used as a pretext to accuse or jail journalists the government does not like. However, laws in almost every sphere of the state are not being implemented and Article 12 has not been used in an obsessive manner.

Freedom of the press has improved markedly in Cambodia since the adoption of the 1993 Constitution. Article 41 provides for freedom of expression, press publication and assembly for all Khmer citizens, subject to elusive restrictions including “the rights of others”, “the good traditions of the society”, as well as “public law and order and national security.” Journalists and media practitioners have been calling for an amendment to the article in question but so far the government has appeared unwilling to clarify the exact scope of these restrictions.

The “Law of the Regime of the Press” was adopted by the National Assembly on 18 July 1995. It assured the freedom of press and freedom of publication in conformity with the constitution. Article 3 enshrines the independence of the press by prohibiting pre-publication censorship. Publication of official

information is sanctioned in Article 4 “if such publication is fully true or an accurate summary of the truth”, with some exceptions including the reporting on secret meetings of the National Assembly.

While the press has rights of access to information in government held records, information that may endanger the country’s national security or its relations with other countries is excluded. Failure to comply with these rules will result in the penalisation of employers, editors and journalists, with a fine between 5,000,000 and 15,000,000 Riel, “without yet taking into account of due punishment according to Criminal Law”. Furthermore, “the Ministries of Information and of Interior shall have rights to confiscate immediately the offending issue of the press” and “to suspend the publication for a period which shall not exceed thirty (30) days” (Article 12). The terms ‘national security’ and ‘political stability’ are a great concern to journalists since these security concerns are often used to justify serious punishment and imprisonment. The proposed amendment to the Press Law therefore refers to a clearer definition of national security and political stability. It seems that the vague character of the law is in the interests of the government because it allows for huge latitude about media politics. And it at least imposes pressure on the journalists, who in some cases prefer self-censorship to reporting the facts.

In addition, Cambodian journalists are given the right to establish Press Associations, whose primary task is to establish a code of ethics and to ensure the media’s “respect for truth and for the rights of the public to the truth”. Article 8 of the Press Law requires registration of editors and printing details, with the Ministry of Information prior to publication - failure to do so is penalised with a fine. The publication of material that may incite public unrest is punishable with a fine between 1,000,000 and 5,000,000 Riel (Article 11).



Rasmei Kampuchea – literally Light of Cambodia – is one of the youngest associate members of the ANN having joined the network as its 17th member in March 2008. Published in Cambodia’s national language, Khmer, it is also ANN’s third vernacular paper.

Established on 9 April 1993 and based in Phnom Penh, the privately-owned paper has a daily circulation between 15,000 and 20,000 copies and a daily readership

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years

of between 150,000 and 200,000 people (government officials, diplomats and the general public). The editor of the paper's political section, Mr. Serath Nguon, is enthusiastic about *Rasmei Kampuchea's* membership in ANN and is planning to allocate more space to the coverage of Asian news provided by his new ANN colleagues. The network, he hopes, will prove instrumental in making Asia's voice heard internationally while also providing a platform for Asian values. *Rasmei Kampuchea* aims to support ANN in becoming a leading Asian News Agency and a key provider of Asian news for international clients.

The People's Republic of China

China is the world's most populous country with 1.33 billion people. It has a land area of 9.6 million square kilometres and shares its borders with Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, India, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam. The Han Chinese is the majority ethnic group (91.9 percent) and the diverse ethnic minority groups include the Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu and Mongol. Although China is officially an atheist state, the major religions professed by the people are Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. The official language is Mandarin, although many dialects are spoken across the nation.

With one of the world's longest continuous histories as a single civilization, written records of China's past (chronicling the Shang Dynasty) can be traced as far back as 13th century BC, although archaeological findings show evidence of habitation dating 1.27 million years ago. China was first unified under Qin Shi Huangdi, marking the beginning of imperial China, which ended with the overthrow of the Qing dynasty by the Kuomintang (KMT) in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China. However, differences among the revolutionaries soon led to a civil war between the KMT and the Communist Party of China (CPC) which resumed after a brief truce, during the Japanese invasion in World War II. Eventually, the KMT was ousted by the CPC and forced to flee to Taiwan.

On 1 October 1949, the People's Republic of China, based on an autocratic socialist system, was established under the leadership of Mao Zedong. 'The Great Leap Forward' implemented by Mao Zedong in the 1950s hampered China's economic growth and cost the lives of millions, while the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) tightened the CPC's grip on the everyday lives of the people through a reign of terror. Later, economic reforms implemented under Deng Xiaoping and his successors saw significant improvement in economic growth, which led to rising standards of living.

China currently has one of the world's fastest growing economies. Nevertheless, the CPC retains full political control and state structures remain subordinated to the party.

Since Deng's economic reforms in the late 1970s, China's economy has gradually shifted from a centrally planned system, largely impervious to international trade, to one that is more market-oriented with a growing private

sector. China's impressive economic record is reflected in a GDP growth averaging 9.5 percent over the last two decades. China was also the world's second largest economy in purchasing power parity terms in 2007, although its per capita GDP remains relatively low. In 2007, annual inflow of direct foreign investment reached US\$75 billion, while more than 5,000 domestic Chinese enterprises established direct investments in 172 countries and regions around the world. However, some of the economic challenges the Chinese government faces include securing energy supplies for the future, grappling with a rapidly ageing population, reforming the agricultural sector, and creating jobs for tens of millions of workers.

Media Landscape

Under the authoritarian rule of the CPC, the media is harnessed by the state as a tool for public education, propaganda and mass mobilization. Prior to the 1930s, the media in China was allowed freedom to flourish, which included the publication of Western-style newspapers. However, strict media censorship was enforced in the 1930s by the KMT. Later under the CPC, the media effectively became an arm of the central government. With Deng's open-door policy and cuts in state subsidies for the media in the 1970s, the press regained some of its autonomy. However, the Tiananmen incident in 1989² dashed all hopes of developments towards a liberal media environment when the state reverted to press restrictions. China's leaders continue to keep a tight rein on the media today although some effort is being made towards deregulation. In the meantime, pressure for the liberalisation of the industry continues to mount, especially in the face of rapidly growing social unrest and an expanding market-oriented economy.

Print Media

Literacy rates in China are high at 90.9 percent (United Nations 2007). According to the World Association of Newspapers in 2005, newspapers were read by 60.6 percent of adults with those aged 19-40 making up 83 percent of the audience. Of

2 In May 1989, thousands of pro-democracy protesters had occupied the square calling for political reform and the resignation of the communist leadership. The protest was violently squashed by Chinese government troops in early June causing the death of over 10,000 people.

the 1,926 newspaper titles published at the end of 2004, 438 were controlled by the Communist Party of China (CPC), 958 were departmental organs, and 530 (28 percent) were market-oriented. There were more than 370 daily newspapers under the umbrella of the public service media in 2006, namely: the *People's Daily*, the mouthpiece of the CPC Central Committee; 31 daily papers such as the *Beijing Daily*, Shanghai based *Liberation Daily* and Guangzhou based *Nanfang Daily*, propagating the views of the CPC provincial committees; 31 daily papers such as the *Nanjing Daily*, Wuhan based *Yangtze Daily*, and the *Guangzhou Daily*, disseminating the views of the CPC district committees; and more than 310 daily papers such as the *Wuxi Daily*, the *Suzhou Daily*, and the *Zhongshan Daily*, reporting the points of view of the CPC district committees. The total number of paid-for daily papers increased from 975 in 2001 and peaked at 1,035 in 2003, before dropping to 954 in 2005. Of these, 77 are national editions and 877 regional and local ones.

There were only two free daily papers in 2005, up from one in 2004. The total paid-for non-daily papers stood at 977 titles in 2005, down from 1,014 titles in 2000. Of these 977 titles in 2005, national editions accounted for 143 titles while regional and local ones totalled 834. Although the total number of daily papers sold in 2005 decreased to 86.3 million in 2005 from 117.1 million in 2004, the sales revenue from all paid-for newspapers increased from 97.9 million Yuan in 2004 to 171.5 million Yuan in 2005.

The top three paid-for daily papers in 2006 were the *Xinhua* News Agency with a circulation of 3,163,000 copies, followed by the *People's Daily* (2,770,000 copies) and the *Yangtze Evening Post* (1,768,000 copies). *Xinhua* New Agency is state-owned and the *People's Daily* is the mouthpiece of the CPC Central Committee. In 2006, *Xinhua* claimed the right as the sole agency entitled to sell news, photographs and film to the Chinese media ('Reporters Without Borders').

Government and party officials have exclusive access to an internal publication reporting controversial issues, written in the style of high quality investigative journalism. These reports are compiled by senior journalists at *Xinhua* and other media organisations. Foreign commentary and news are also translated for the elite within the government and party.

By 2007, the majority of China's media was not subsidized by the state. As a result, newspapers have had to rely more on advertising to generate revenue. This is facilitated by the influx of foreign advertising agencies to China, attracted by

the country's rapid economic growth. In 2005, the advertising revenue earned by paid-for daily newspapers was 25,600 million Yuan, down from 26,500 million Yuan in 2004, but significantly higher than 15,770 million Yuan in 2001.

Internet

An increasing number of Chinese are gaining access to the internet. At the end of 2005, there were more than 100 million internet users (World Association of Newspapers). Data from the World Bank showed that there were 85 internet users per 1,000 people in 2005, a significant jump from 18 in 2000. People with personal computers also increased from 16 per 1,000 people in 2000 to 41 per 1,000 people in 2005. According to the Internet World Stats, China is ranked first among Asian countries, with 210 million internet users in 2007, up from 22.5 million users in 2000. However, in view of its large population, this translates to only 15.9 percent of the population with internet access in 2007.

The internet is closely monitored by the state. 'Reporters Without Borders' labelled China as "the world's most advanced country in internet filtering". While the state used to target websites and chat rooms, blogs and video exchange websites are currently more closely monitored. For example, filters are used to block "subversive" word strings in blogs, and moderators are employed to "clean up" blog content.

Broadcast Media

The broadcast media is very popular. 'Reporters Without Borders' observed that hundreds of millions of Chinese own radios that give them access to international stations such as the BBC. However, their broadcasts are jammed. Television is also a rapidly expanding sector. China has more than 700 national and local stations and around 2,000 cable stations. However, the market is dominated by the government broadcaster, CCTV. Although satellite TV is available, it is only accessible to foreigners and officials. Some tourist hotels air CNN and BBC but the broadcasts are subject to censorship.

Press Laws

The rights of the media are not enshrined in China's 1982 Constitution. Although Article 25 states that "[c]itizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration", this is not enforced in practice.

Regular meetings are held by government officials, with editors of influential papers, to clarify the stories the state wants reported and unreported. Taboo issues include the Falun Gong movement, China's policies towards Taipei and Tibet and the questioning of the CPC's legitimacy. Journalists are often fined or jailed for critical reports. They are also subject to physical attacks by security forces and businessmen. 'Reporters Without Borders' was of the opinion that journalism had become the third most dangerous job in China after mining and the police. Other methods employed to silence reporters include defamation suits. Foreign reporters have to register with the Information Department of the Foreign Ministry which reserves the right to approve and reject applications. Those who succeed are closely monitored.

In 2006, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council (China cabinet) introduced guidelines for the National Cultural Institution Reform which identified two groups of media. The first is public service media, which encompasses print and broadcast media subordinated to the CPC, the People's Press House which publishes the works of the CPC leaders, and publishing houses for minorities and handicapped persons. The second group pertains to commercial media such as the *China Chemical Industry News*, the *China Water Resources News* and the *China Petroleum News*. Although this category of media is allowed to run like a business, it is also intended to function as an organ of central government.

The decision to be classified as public service or commercial media is solely the prerogative of the government. While most media and publishing houses, all distribution companies and other media-related organisations, are to be transformed into commercial media, it is still uncertain which types of newspapers are targeted (other than the CPC's daily papers). Nevertheless, under a pilot programme, three newspapers in Beijing (*China Securities Journal*, *China Information World*, and *Machinery and Electronics Business*) and one in Chengdu (the *Computer News*) are undergoing business restructuring with this goal in mind. Although the government aims to transform all CPC newspapers into public service media, many are instead aiming for the commercial route that would allow for profit maximization.

Newspapers are required to be registered and attached to a government ministry or other state-sanctioned organisations. Foreign ownership of shares in domestic daily newspapers is also restricted. Officially, foreign capital is excluded from: industries that publish, produce, distribute and import books,

newspapers, periodicals, audiovisual products and electronic publications; news agencies; radio stations, TV stations, and radio and TV transmission networks; industries producing, publishing, issuing and broadcasting TV programmes; film production and distributing industries; and industries showing video tapes. Nevertheless, there are instances of foreign companies investing in these industries through forming local partnerships. Some magazines have also succeeded in publishing Chinese editions of international titles.



China Daily, founded in June 1981, has the widest print circulation of any national English language paper in

China. Over one million people read the 250,000 copies the paper publishes daily. Of these, almost one third of the copies are available abroad in more than 150 countries and regions. On top of that, almost 10 million people access the paper's website every day. The paper's readership profile includes expatriates and sophisticated nationals, for example, diplomats and government policy makers. Amongst the paper's overseas subscribers are government officials, members of parliament, international organisations and multinationals, as well as academics. The state controlled *China Daily* has its main office in the capital Beijing, with news bureaus in major Chinese cities, Hong Kong and several foreign capitals. The paper describes its mission as a commitment "to helping the world know more about China and the country's integration with the international community." (*China Daily* website.)

China Daily is regarded as one of the country's most authoritative English media outlets and an important source of information on Chinese politics, economy, society and culture. Often called the "Voice of China" or "Window to China", it also sees itself as an important source of information on world affairs for its Chinese readers. *China Daily* joined ANN in 1999 and has been active in exploring new opportunities for cooperation within the network. On behalf of ANN, the paper launched and managed Asia's first regional photo contest as well as a connected photo website.

The ANN coordinators at *China Daily* provide their colleagues with news and insights into developments in the region's rising economic and political giant

while also seeking to deepen the understanding of their own readers on China's place within the region, by drawing ANN stories from the shared news pool. According to the paper's Deputy Managing Director, Mr. Zhou Li, the paper's Asian perspective is set to intensify in the future. With easy access to in-depth and expert analyses, and commentaries on developments throughout the region, the paper already possesses a unique competitive advantage and is able to add extra layers to the news stories which it obtains through the wire service. "Participation in ANN", he says, "keeps ANN members informed about economic and political developments in the region and the ANN member countries, which in turn helps to build a common identity among the Asian people."

Republic of India

With a population of 1.1 billion, India is the second most populous country in the world. The Indian subcontinent is bordered by the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Gulf of Mannar, Indian Ocean, and the countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The nation's cultural diversity is evident, with over 2,000 ethnic groups and every major religion represented in the country. While the national census of India does not recognize ethnic or racial groups within the country, the major religious groups according to the 2001 census are Hindus (80.5 percent), Muslims (13.4 percent), Christians (2.3 percent), Sikhs (1.9 percent) and other religions making up the remaining 1.9 percent. Although English is the most important language for national, political and commercial communication, Hindi is the national language. The linguistic diversity of the subcontinent is reflected in the other 21 official languages, such as Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi and Urdu.

Prior to European colonization, India had a rich historical heritage dating as far back as the Indus Valley civilization between 3300 and 1700 BC. Its culture was enriched by successive empires and kingdoms that ruled the region where Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam were introduced. By the 19th century, the British had assumed political control over most of India. Independence movements against the British go back to the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and mass campaigning against British rule gathered momentum from the 1920s, led by leaders such as Mohandas Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

India gained independence in 1947, with the division of the subcontinent into the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. However, communal, caste and regional tensions persisted, such as the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and widespread Hindu-Muslim violence with the abolition of the Babri mosque by Hindu extremists, in 1992. Nuclear tests carried out by India in 1998 led Pakistan to conduct similar tests, which is a source of continuing concern over the stability of the region.

India is the world's largest democracy. It is a constitutional democracy made up of 28 states and seven union and national territories, and has a bicameral parliament. Despite a fast growing economy and its emergence as a major power in recent years, India still faces challenges such as widespread poverty, overpopulation, environmental degradation, and ethnic and religious conflicts.

Early leaders of independent India perceived colonialism as exploitative.

As a result, the post-independence economic policies inclined towards socialism with a strong emphasis on central planning, a large public infrastructure, protectionism, industrialization and state intervention in labour and financial markets. However, low growth rates led to liberalisation of the Indian economy, starting with encouragement of foreign investments and economic reforms under Rajiv Gandhi's administration in the 1980s. Since the 1990s, the Indian economy has been developing steadily with an annual average growth of 5.8 percent from 1994-2004, 9.4 percent in 2005-2006, and 9.6 percent in 2006-2007.

India's diverse economy comprises a wide range of activities, from traditional village farming to high technology. Its large, well-educated, skilled and English-proficient workforce has provided many international companies keen to outsource work, with expertise and services. A major source of economic growth has been the service sector, although the state recognizes the need to expand the manufacturing sector to sustain current levels of growth. Despite its recent impressive economic performance, India still has to address significant challenges such as the fiscal deficit and government debt, and also the need for better infrastructure. Although poverty has been reduced in the 1990s, the wealth generated has not been evenly distributed. With low average income and literacy levels, India remains one of the largest recipients of World Bank lending.

Media Landscape

India's quest to uphold democracy and at the same time maintain unity among a diverse population divided along religious, linguistic, caste and class lines, has resulted in a constitution that guarantees the right to freedom of speech but with limitations on instances where the sovereignty or stability of the nation is compromised.

Print Media

India is witnessing a robust growth in the print media, driven by a growing middle class, growing literacy rates especially among young people and increasing media liberalisation. According to the World Association of Newspapers, between 2004 and 2006, the combined readership of daily newspapers and magazines, aged 12 years and above, grew from 216 million to 222 million, with more scope for growth. In 2006, the number of titles registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India was 62,483, up from 51,960 in 2002. The registered newspapers are available in English, the 22 official languages, and 100 other languages including

dialects and foreign languages, reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of India.

The English newspaper, *The Times of India*, topped the list of paid-for daily papers in 2006, with a circulation of 2,542,075 copies, followed by Hindi language papers, *Dainik Bhaskar* with 2,181,984 copies and *Dainik Jagran* with 2,111,316 copies. The highest numbers of newspapers were published in Hindi (4,131), followed by English (864), Gujarati (775), Urdu (463), Bengali (445) and Marathi (328).

Mirroring this trend, the top three newspapers by language are led by Hindi newspapers with 76,698,490 copies, followed by the English press with 43,106,816 copies and Gujarati press with 9,844,710 copies. Most print media is privately owned. Of the 8,512 newspapers that submitted their annual statements to the Registrar of Newspapers for India in 2006, 6,686 were owned by individuals, 1,122 by joint stock companies, 260 by societies and associations, 222 by trusts and 150 by firms and partnerships. The central and state governments published only 41 newspaper titles, while the remaining 31 newspapers were owned by cooperative societies and educational institutions.

News agencies in India are generally independent of the government and some of them also employ foreign correspondents. The four dominant news agencies in India are the Press Trust of India, the United News of India, the Hindustani Samachar and Samachar Bhatia. The majority of Indian newspapers, magazines and media outlets are also easily accessible through the internet. However, according to the Internet World Stats, only 5.3 percent of the Indian population had internet access in 2007.

Broadcast media

In the early years of independence, the broadcast media was envisioned by the leaders as a tool to forge unity among a nation divided along various socio-economic and political lines. This objective was facilitated by the national television (*Doordashan*) and radio (*All India Radio*) networks, both of which were state-owned and managed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, whose reporting customarily reflected the government's point of view. Private radio station ownership was sanctioned in 2000 but only authorized entertainment and educational content was allowed. In 2006, several hundred licences for privately-run FM stations were awarded by the federal government. However, only government controlled radio stations are legally permitted to report news over

the radio and the government retains monopoly over AM radio broadcasting.

Until 1990, there were only two government-controlled television channels. However, the penetration of satellite television broadcasts and cable television in the 1990s, which coincided with the country's economic liberalisation programme, ended the state's monopoly. In recognition of the potential appeal and influence of television broadcasts in the 1980s, the government set a target of providing 90 percent of the population with television access by 1990. As a result, access increased from 28 percent of the population in 1983 to over 90 percent by 1990 and by 1994, about 47 million households with televisions were reported (Library of Congress). Under the state's television monopoly, only two channels were broadcast. However, with the advent of satellite and cable television and the end of the state's monopoly in the 1990s, the number of available channels 'mushroomed'. In 2006, there were 40 television channels, 80 percent of which were privately owned (World Association of Newspapers).

Although entertainment programmes command a significant audience, news broadcasts remain popular. The 2007 Annual Report by 'Reporters Without Borders' touted cable news channels as India's leading media with more than 60 million subscribers. Consequently, competition from these stations has brought about changes to *Doordarshan's* programming, to complement its public service channels with new ones which cater to commercial interests. Despite the growing popularity of television, only 32 percent of households in India had televisions in 2005, a slight increase from 30 percent in 2000 (World Bank).

Press Laws

Press freedom is constitutionally guaranteed although with certain limitations. Article 19(1a) guarantees the fundamental right of all citizens to freedom of speech and expression. However, this right is qualified by Article 19(2) which stipulates that "[n]othing in sub-clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub-clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence." Moreover, Article 19(1a) is further undermined by Article 358 which allows for the suspension of provisions of Article 19 during an emergency. However, this has only been enforced once under Indira Gandhi's emergency rule of 1975-1977.

Although the 1923 Official Secrets Act empowers the government to prosecute any person who publishes or communicates information that could compromise the interests of the state, instances of abuse are very rare and no cases were reported during 2006 (World Association of Newspapers).

The press is regulated by the government through the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI) created in 1956. The RNI's responsibilities include: compiling and maintaining a register with particulars about all newspapers published in the country; the issuing of certificates of registration to the newspapers published under valid declaration; and ensuring that newspapers are published in accordance with the provisions of the Press and Registration of Books Act.

The plethora of print media available across the country ensures the proliferation of a diversity of views. Press freedom and the maintenance and improvement of the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India are facilitated by the Press Council, established by the Press Council Act of 1978. Its functions include: (i) helping newspapers and news agencies to maintain their independence; (ii) building up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists; (iii) keeping under review any development likely to restrict supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance; and (iv) concerning itself with aspects of ownership of newspapers and news agencies which may effect the independence of the press.

Although the Indian press on the whole enjoys a large degree of press freedom, there are concerns that journalists face threats from personalities and organisations they expose or are critical of. 'Reporters Without Borders' reported in 2006, that at least 65 journalists faced assaults or received threats from criminals, company heads, political militants and even police officers, and two journalists were murdered while doing their job.

The end of the state monopoly of broadcasting media in the 1990s saw the flourishing of both radio and television. The Prasar Bharati (Indian Broadcasting) Act of 1990 was enacted to check the excesses of political parties in manipulating the contents of official media. However, there is still a certain degree of government regulation by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. According to its official website, the Ministry is "vested with the responsibility of formulating policy guidelines for efficient dissemination of news and views by the media units. Although media units enjoy functional autonomy, the Ministry co-ordinates, assists, supervises and monitors the activities of the various units under its administrative control for efficient operations. The various media units use

different programme formats keeping in view the needs of the target audience.” Currently, there is on-going debate surrounding the Broadcasting Bill’s regulation of television broadcast content, and limits on foreign equity in the industry.

The Statesman

Founded in Kolkata in 1875 and directly descended from *The Friend of India* (founded in 1818), *The Statesman* is one

of India’s oldest English language newspapers. Based in the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal, the paper also has a large number of news bureaus across India including New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Siliguri, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Lucknow. The Delhi edition of *The Statesman* began publication in 1931. *The Statesman Weekly* offers readers a compendium of news and views from the Kolkata and the Delhi editions. Printed on airmail paper, the latter is particularly popular with the sizeable number of readers outside India.

According to an Indian Readership Survey of 2002, *The Statesman* is the leading English newspaper in West Bengal and boasts a daily readership of 800,000 people. In the highly competitive Indian media sector, the privately-owned paper ranks fourteenth amongst the long list of English language and vernacular papers that are published on the Indian subcontinent. With a circulation of 185,000 copies on weekdays and 235,000 copies on Sundays, the paper reaches out to India’s top decision-makers, intellectuals, civil servants and academics. Throughout its long history the paper has vigorously defended its independence and prides itself on providing objective coverage of events and dedication to “the relentless pursuit of the truth often at considerable cost to itself.” (*The Statesman* website.)

With India proving itself as an increasingly influential player in the geopolitical landscape of Asia, the paper does its best to respond to the growing demand for information on developments in the subcontinent. Five members of its team are involved in supplying ANN with daily news on Indian affairs, as well as analyses of Indian, regional and global events. With more credible and Asia-oriented stories available from its ANN members, *The Statesman* in return, sets aside considerably more space for the coverage of Asian affairs since joining the network as a founding member in 1999, and today dedicates as much as four

pages to news analysis from across Asia.

“*The Statesman*, like all Indian newspapers”, notes Editor and Managing Director Mr. Ravindra Kumar, “previously looked to the West. After joining ANN an appreciation of Asian news and developments is evident in our columns.” Moreover, frequent interaction with fellow editors and journalists from across Asia has had a positive impact on the standard of journalistic work, helping the paper’s journalists to hone their skills. ANN membership has also changed the paper’s relationship with foreign news wires for the better, as the availability of alternative Asian news through the news network allows for a different perspective and thus reduces their reliance on news wires. Cooperation in the Asian news network, Mr. Ravindra Kumar explains, contributes greatly to the process of regional integration in Asia. “The Press”, he says, “is an extension of civil society. If journalists understand each other and each other’s countries better, it follows that their readers too, will have an improved understanding. In a fiercely competitive and upwardly mobile continent, it is important for the regional press to explain issues and defuse tensions.” He adds, “To a significant extent, ANN has met its primary objective of allowing readers to see Asia through Asian eyes. Rarely in a multilateral set-up can such harmonious co-existence be seen. There is a lesson to be drawn from the ANN experience and the most ardent students of this network should be the leaders of the countries these newspapers represent.”

Republic of Indonesia

With over 245 million inhabitants, Indonesia is one of the world's largest nations. Its land area of 1,904,569 square kilometres spreads out over 17,000 islands making it one of the biggest and most archipelagic countries in Southeast Asia. Among its more than 200 ethnic groups, Javanese (45 percent) is the largest, followed by Sundanese (14 percent), Madurese (7.5 percent), and Malays (7.5 percent). Indonesia's Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to five recognised religions, namely Islam (88 percent of the population), Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Early Indonesian history is dominated by Hindu, Buddhist and Arab influences, which are reflected in the country's diverse cultural, linguistic and religious heritage. Europeans began to colonise Indonesia in the early 17th century with the Netherlands finalising its authority in the early 1900s. During the Second World War, Japanese forces defeated the Netherlands and occupied Indonesia from 1942 to 1945. The country declared its independence after Japan's surrender. However, it took four years of intermittent negotiations, recurring hostilities and UN mediation, before the Netherlands agreed to relinquish its colony in 1949. The first 20 years of independence were marked by a political power struggle in which the Indonesian Army played an increasingly powerful role. After a 1965 coup lead by General Soeharto, the military-dominated government sought to unite the various factions by introducing the authoritarian 'New Order' regime and imposing severe restrictions on political and civil rights.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 further magnified persistent political instability, and accelerated a process of political liberalisation which had begun to take shape alongside economic development in the early 1990s. Widespread rioting across Indonesia forced Soeharto to resign in 1998. The late 1990s saw the onset of the '*reformasi*' era and a slow return to democracy. In 2004, Yudhoyono was inaugurated as the first elected president since Indonesia proclaimed its independence. In 2005, Indonesia reached a historic peace agreement with armed separatists in Aceh, which led to democratic elections in December 2006.

Indonesia's economic development has been hindered by domestic instability since the country gained independence in 1949. Under the authoritarian regime of President Soeharto the country saw steady economic growth and rising living standards but was hit hard by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Indonesia still grapples with persistent poverty and unemployment, an inadequate infrastructure,

endemic corruption, a fragile banking sector, a poor investment climate, and unequal resource distribution among its various regions. However, under its current President Yudhoyono, Indonesia has been undergoing significant economic reforms and per capita GDP rose to US\$1302 in 2005. Significant progress has also been made in rebuilding Aceh after the devastating December 2004 tsunami, and the province now shows more economic activity than before the disaster.

Media Landscape

In reflection of the political changes in the late 1990s, the legal framework for media activity in Indonesia has undergone a drastic transformation. The '*reformasi*' era focused on strengthening political and civil rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

Print Media

In 1999, Indonesia's third president, President Habibie, removed the need for publications to acquire a publishing licence. This move marked the introduction of freedom of the press in Indonesia and led to a significant increase in the number of newspapers, tabloids and magazines published in the country. However, due to financial constraints and a saturated market, the number of publications has since stabilised at a lower level.

According to the World Association of Newspapers, a total of 396 paid-for daily newspapers were published in 2000, of which 290 were published at national and 106 at regional and local level. In 2004, the total number had shrunk to 218 paid-for daily newspapers with national editions standing at only 58 while regional and local daily papers rose to 160. In addition, there were 746 free daily papers in 2000 and 349 in 2004. The number of publications represents the wealth of opinions in Indonesia's multicultural and multi-ethnic society. In 2006, the top three Indonesian language papers were *Kompas* with a circulation of 509,000 equalling seven percent of the total readership, *Jawa Pos* with a circulation of 370,000 and five percent of the total readership, and *Rakyat Merdeka* with a circulation of 350,000. Yoder (2003)³ explains that of

3 Yoder, L (2003) "Indonesia" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., p. 447 – 459.

the English language newspapers published in Jakarta, the *Indonesian Observer*, *Indonesia Times* and *The Jakarta Post* are the most influential. There are also several publications catering to the demands of the country's various ethnic minorities, including Chinese-Indonesians. While publications using Chinese characters were previously illegal, these restrictions no longer apply. Many publications, both in Indonesian and in English, have created on-line editions accessible on the internet.

Indonesia's major news agency is *Antara* which was founded as a private agency in 1937 but became the official agency in 1945.

Economic growth, foreign investment, and a growing consumer market have drastically increased advertising spending. In 2004, daily paid-for newspapers earned advertisement revenue of 6,684.0 billion Indonesian rupiahs, constituting an increase of 237.27 percent since 2000 (World Association of Newspapers). Indonesian media does not receive any subsidies such as government advertising.

Broadcast Media

A broadcasting licence is required for the operation of TV and radio stations, mostly for regulating broadcasting frequencies and ensuring technical feasibility. The licence also aims to encourage the establishment of local TV stations to broaden public access. The Indonesian Broadcasting Act of 1996 authorised private corporations to broadcast their own news programmes thus effectively breaking the state monopoly on news, previously held by *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (now a public entity). A large number of private TV and radio stations have since started broadcasting in the country. In 2003, 11 TV stations were broadcasting nationally, ten of which were private television channels and one was state-owned. In addition, a considerable number of local TV stations are operating in Indonesia.

A similar trend applies to radio services. The national radio station, *Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI)* became a public broadcasting corporation in 2000. In 2002, 873 radio stations were operating in Indonesia. This figure is composed of 50 state-owned stations of *Radio Republik Indonesia*, 682 commercial radio stations, eight non-commercial radio stations, and 133 radio stations owned by local governments.

Despite the establishment of new media companies, however, there have been no significant changes in the concentration of ownership in the industry.

Big media groups such as *Tempo Group*, *Gramedia*, and the *Media Group* – some of which have close relations with Soeharto's family – continue to play significant roles. High investment and operational costs are two reasons why only a few business groups can establish and sustain a strong media presence. Television is the most frequently used source of information for Indonesians followed by radio and newspapers. According to World Bank data, in 2005, 65 percent of all Indonesian households had a television.

Internet

According to Internet World Stats, in 2007, only 8.5 percent of the Indonesian population had internet access. Insufficient infrastructure and lack of finance remain the main obstacles to internet access, particularly in rural areas.

The professional standard of the Indonesian media requires improvement. Sensationalism is common, especially in the print media.

Press Laws

Article 28E of Indonesia's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression. Press Law No. 40 was ratified in 1999, annulling the 1966 and 1982 versions previously introduced under President Soeharto. The law eliminates press licensing and removes the ability of the government to ban publications. It guarantees freedom of the press (Article 2), calls for self-regulation through an independent Press Council and also permits correction, clarification and the right of reply. Press Law No. 40/1999 states explicitly that there will be no censorship by any institutions. Notably though, the freedom to express an opinion, either verbally, written or in any other form, is subject to the Indonesian Criminal Code which supersedes the press law.

In November 2006, the Ministry of Information created an agency aimed at preventing online crime among local users. Under the decree, internet cafes are required to provide the identities of internet users to the agency, monthly.

Indonesian journalists have the right to access and participate in all public meetings held by the government and parliament, and can freely report on, or broadcast these events. The press law allows the press to work independently, with the boundaries being set by an ethical code defined by an independent Press Council. There is no restriction in accessing information except in the area of banking and finance where the Central Bank Law imposes certain restrictions. The press law encourages the media to perform investigative journalism - anyone

who violates the law by deliberately hindering or preventing journalists from doing their job may face imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of up to 500 million rupiahs (approx. US\$ 54,000). There are no bodies or commissions that regulate media coverage at a national or regional level as previously conducted by the now-defunct Communications Ministry. While state-owned media remains close to the government, with the emergence of private media, its influence in determining published and broadcast opinion is limited.

As a result of the reform process, freedom of the press has become a more important component of Indonesia's democratisation process. By and large, the media is able to report freely without the blatant censorship and repression that occurred during the 'New Order' era. With the introduction of Press Law N. 40, the legal environment of the media has improved considerably. However, persistent lack of understanding of the function of press freedom amongst Indonesian law enforcers means that journalists do not benefit fully from the legal protection offered by Press Law No. 40. Current dangers to the press include violence and intimidation by non-state actors and the practice of 'envelope journalism'.

The Jakarta Post

With its founding on 25 April 1983, the English daily newspaper, *The Jakarta Post*, set itself two goals: firstly, to improve the standard of English language media in Indonesia and secondly, to bring together four competing media publishers to jointly produce a quality newspaper with an Indonesian perspective. The privately-owned publication strives to present to the Indonesian public, a newspaper of the highest quality that allows its readers to deepen their insights into the workings of the vast archipelago, its people and its government. With a daily circulation of 40,000 copies and a daily readership of over 100,000 readers across Indonesia, the paper has successfully established itself as the country's largest English language daily and is consulted by locals and expatriates alike.

Ten journalists in the paper's headquarters in Jakarta scour the ANN news pool to obtain same-time news stories and photos from their colleagues, while making their own analyses, commentaries and photos available in return. Since joining the news network in 1999, as one of the founding members, the paper's coverage on Asian affairs has increased to an average of two pages, giving it

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years

ample opportunity to publish in-depth stories on current affairs in the region. “Through the publication of ANN stories”, says Chief Editor Mr. Endy M Bayuni, “remaining gaps in the understanding between the peoples of the Asian region may be filled”.

Japan

Located in the Pacific Ocean, Japan is an island country in East Asia comprising over 30,000 islands. Its population of around 127 million people is largely linguistically and culturally homogenous. The country also has one of the world's highest life expectancy numbers, which is causing a shift in its demographical structure and puts pressure on its economic and social systems. Influence from the outside world, followed by long periods of isolation, has characterised Japan's history. In 1603, a military dictatorship ushered in a long period of isolation from foreign influence, in order to secure power. For more than two centuries this policy enabled Japan to enjoy stability and development of its indigenous culture.

Following the Treaty of Kanagawa with the United States of America in 1854, Japan opened its ports and began to intensively modernize and industrialize. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japan became a regional power that was able to defeat the forces of both China and Russia. It occupied Korea, Formosa (Taiwan) and southern Sakhalin Island. In 1931/32 Japan occupied Manchuria and in 1937 it launched a full-scale invasion of China. Japan attacked United States of America forces in 1941 - triggering America's entry into World War II - and soon occupied much of East and Southeast Asia. Since adopting its Constitution in 1947, Japan has maintained a unitary constitutional monarchy, with a largely symbolic emperor and an elected parliament.

As the world's second-largest economy after the USA, GDP per capita in 2006 was US\$33,600. Historically, the primary drivers of Japan's strong economic growth have been: high rates of investment in productive plant and equipment; the application of efficient industrial techniques; a high standard of education; good relations between labour and management; ready access to leading technologies; significant investment in research and development; an increasingly open world trade framework; and a large domestic market of discerning consumers, which has given Japanese businesses an advantage in their scale of operations. Many of these attributes remain relevant to Japan's economic growth. Manufacturing has been the largest and most internationally renowned feature of Japan's economic growth. International trade contributes significantly to the Japanese economy, with exports contributing approximately one quarter of GDP.

Media Landscape

Japan's media landscape boasts several major national daily newspapers, a prestigious financial newspaper, and many regional and local newspapers. In general, the print media scene is extremely stable with the number of daily papers published in the country over the last few years hovering around 106 to 108 (2002 - 2006), of which only one was a free paper. Among the 107 paid-for daily papers, five were published nation-wide while the remaining 102 were published at regional and local level (World Association of Newspapers, 2007). Nonetheless, editorial style and content are often similar to each other. Lyman⁴ credits this "uniformity in editorial posture" to the overwhelming dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party in the country's domestic politics, and a broad consensus on policy.

On average, each daily paper had a circulation of 69,184 copies in 2006, although the actual differences between the individual publications – audited by the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulations – are huge. Japan's biggest paper, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* sold 10,025,000 copies in 2006, followed by *The Asahi Shimbun* with 8,088,000 in the same year. Number three on the list is the *Mainichi Shimbun* with 3,966,000 copies sold (World Association of Newspapers, 2007). All three papers are published in Japanese. *The Daily Yomiuri* is Japan's largest English language newspaper.

Kyodo news agency is linked to international news agencies, and maintains thirty foreign bureaus. Its main competitor in providing general news coverage is *Fiji*.

At 99 percent, Japan has one of the highest literacy rates in the world (United Nations) with an equally high newspaper readership. In 2005, newspapers reached 92.5 percent of all adults (World Association of Newspapers, 2007) with the vast majority of Japanese people reading at least one newspaper every day. At 97 percent, readers aged between 60 to 69 years of age make up the biggest group of newspaper readers. However, even among 15 to 19 year old readers, newspapers had an impressive daily reach of 86 percent in 2006.

Despite huge circulation figures, print media in Japan is facing rising competition from the internet and other media, which affects in particular its

4 Lyman, R B (2003) "Japan" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 500 - 512.

advertisement revenue. In 2005, Japanese individuals spent 26 minutes on an average weekday reading the newspaper, compared with 92 minutes listening to the radio, 89 minutes on the internet, and 199 minutes watching TV (World Association of Newspapers). 99 percent of all households owned a television in 2005 (World Bank).

Internet communications have surged in Japan, with about 94 million people using the internet in 2007, accounting for almost 74 percent of the population (Internet World Stats). There are more than seventy internet service providers, almost all having the potential to connect with customers through telephone lines. However, wireless internet is growing explosively, so at least one third of the users opt for that form of connection. A number of leading newspapers have now developed web capability both in English and in Japanese.

Based on Japan's Broadcasting Law of 1950, which allowed commercial competition, the country's broadcasting scene is diverse with established public and commercial outlets competing for audiences. There are five national terrestrial TV companies, including the public broadcaster, NHK (*Nippon Hoso Kyokai*), which also runs national radio networks. Most of NHK's funding comes from the licence fees paid by viewers. Japanese broadcasting is diversifying rapidly. Millions of viewers now watch satellite and cable pay-TV services, including those provided by NHK. Prominent television networks are the Japan News Network, the Nippon News Network, the All Nippon News Network, and the Fuji News Network. One prominent station leads each of these networks.

Press Laws

Newspapers first appeared in Japan at the end of the mid-19th century feudal era, while the press was formalised only in the early 20th century, following modernizing reforms of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912). The growth of a professional press tradition was further accelerated by the "peoples' rights" movement in the early 20th century. United States occupation after Japan's defeat in World War II mandated free press, albeit with restrictions which have since been lifted. By the early 1950s, the current party system and press tradition entered into a phase of rapid development. Article 21 of the 1948 Constitution of Japan guarantees freedom of speech, press and all other forms of expression. The article states that, "[N]o censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated".

Japan's media scene reflects the supremacy of consensus and cooperation that characterises its political and social life. To a large degree, newspapers aim to avoid confrontation with the government, or their competitors - often going as far as to agree on the days when no publications will be produced.

Nonetheless, Japan's formally free press is restricted by the existence of the press club system. Every official agency in Japan has a press club and allows only those reporters to its press conferences who are also members. As daily briefings tend not to allow questions from the journalists in attendance, government agencies are in a favourable situation of passing information to the press. In addition, government agencies establish the rules for transmitting and publishing the news, with penalties for the publication of unauthorized material administered by the Japanese Newspaper Association. As a result of the press club environment, journalistic potential is being restricted as all journalists generally receive the same information.

読売新聞

Amongst the ANN member newspapers, *The Yomiuri Shimbun* is a giant. According to the World

Association of Newspapers, the 134 year old paper tops the list of the world's 100 largest newspapers, with a daily circulation of over 14 million copies. This makes it the number one newspaper not only in Japan, but in the world, earning it a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records as early as 1978. Headquartered in Tokyo, the privately-owned paper has a total of 379 domestic and international branches and is printed twice a day in several different local editions. With a daily readership of 50 million people, *The Yomiuri Shimbun* is the most influential newspaper in the world's third largest newspaper market.

THE DAILY YOMIURI

Since 1955, Yomiuri has also published *The Daily Yomiuri*,

Japan's largest English language newspaper that carries mainly English translations of *The Yomiuri Shimbun* articles and addresses mostly expatriates and the business community. Both publications have benefited from ANN membership since

joining the network in 2001, in particular in view of rising competition from multimedia. Assistant Editor, Mr. Hidenori Sato, credits his paper's ANN membership with increased opportunities for the exchange of experiences amongst members of his profession, and on ways and means for newspapers to use technological advances to their advantage. Furthermore, cooperation in the network has allowed the paper to dedicate a special section to reporting on Asian affairs every week, for which it relies heavily on material obtained from its ANN colleagues. Mr. Hidenori Sato explains that *The Daily Yomiuri* makes full advantage of the stories and features available through the common news pool, favouring Asian perspectives on Asian affairs over articles available through the news wires. With a dedicated ANN section and with the paper's contribution to the ANN magazine, his paper, he emphasises, aims to contribute to the cooperation and integration of Asian countries.

The Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is located in East Asia on the southern half of the Korean Peninsula. With a land area of 99,260 square kilometres and a population of approximately 49 million people (World Bank, 2006), the country has one of the world's highest population densities. South Korea came into being after World War II, as the result of a 1945 agreement which made the 38th parallel the boundary between a northern zone and a southern zone to be controlled by the Soviet Union and United States of America forces respectively. Elections were held in the United States zone in 1948, for a national assembly that adopted a republican constitution and proclaimed the Republic of Korea.

An attack by North Korean forces in 1950 was countered by the United States Army and led to United Nations invoked military sanctions against North Korea. An armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. However, no official peace treaty has ever been signed between the former combatants.

In protest of the autocratic leadership style of early governments, the 1980s saw the intensification of pro-democracy activities leading to the restoration of direct presidential elections in South Korea. In 1992, Kim Young-sam became South Korea's first civilian elected president in 32 years. The 1997 and 2002 presidential elections and peaceful transitions of power marked another step in the country's transition to an open, democratic system. In 2007, South Koreans elected former business executive and Mayor of Seoul, Lee Myung-bak, as their president. The Republic of Korea has a presidential system of government, with powers shared between the president and a 273 member unicameral legislature.

Since its inception in 1948, South Korea has achieved rapid economic growth with GDP per capita in 2006 standing at US\$22,990 (World Bank, 2006), which is roughly 12 times the level of North Korea's US\$1900 GPD per capita (World Fact Book, 2007 estimate). With average GDP growth of 5 percent per year, South Korea continues to have one of the strongest growth rates of developed countries. In 2004, the country joined the trillion dollar club of world economies. Following three decades of rapid economic growth, South Korea was severely affected by the Asian financial crisis of 1997, but succeeded in implementing a broad reform programme that allowed its economy to quickly recover. Previously focused on heavy industry and the automotive industry, the country's economy today focuses on consumer electronics and the service industry.

Media Landscape

The South Korean press benefits from a highly literate audience with literacy rates estimated at 98.1 percent (United Nations data) and a relatively high newspaper readership. In 2002, 51.3 percent of the nation's households subscribed to daily newspapers (Jae-won Lee, 2003)⁵. Furthermore, with a common language and culture, South Korea is a very homogenous society which provides for a very attractive yet highly competitive media market.

Print Media

According to the Korea Press Foundation there were 168 registered national and local daily newspapers in 2005, many run by family-owned, industrial conglomerates. In the same year, a total of 7,493 periodicals were registered in South Korea. The national daily newspapers are the principal distributors of news in the country. In 2006, 98.4 percent of readers read a national daily, with 98.6 percent of subscribers holding a subscription for a national newspaper (Korea Press Foundation).

All major media groups, including South Korea's national general interest daily papers, are based in the capital Seoul, which is the hub of the country's business, economy, education, culture and arts, transport, and politics. Indeed, 58.7 percent of all national daily papers are distributed in Seoul (Korea Press Foundation). Amongst the country's national daily papers, the *Chosun Ilbo* has the largest daily circulation (2,450,000 in 2001) and is one of the most influential newspapers. This family-owned media group publishes the main vernacular paper, alongside a range of other publications including a weekly and monthly news magazine.

The *Joong-ang Ilbo* has the second-largest daily circulation (2,350,000 in 2001). Previously owned by the *Samsung Group*, it is now independent and family-owned. It also publishes the Korean edition of the *Newsweek* magazine, a general interest monthly magazine and a women's monthly magazine. Also among the top three national daily papers is the family-owned *Dong-a Ilbo* which publishes a monthly and weekly newsmagazine alongside other publications (2,100,000 in 2001).

Besides the general interest national daily newspapers, there are five business-

5 However, subscription figures are estimates as South Korean dailies do not reveal their circulations or participate in the Korea Audit Bureau of Circulation's programmes.

financial and two English language daily papers - *The Korea Times* and *The Korea Herald*. The latter serve primarily the non-Korean community. However, a growing number of Koreans, in particular students, are proficient in English and subscribe to the English language papers.

In 2002, there were also 39 local daily papers in South Korea, published mostly in provincial capital cities and other urban centres, of which the *Busan Ilbo* and the *Daegu Maeil Daily* were the most important. The majority of South Korean local daily papers have very small circulation numbers.

Foreign news is supplied by the *Yonhap News Agency*, which emerged as the country's only press agency following the restructuring of media systems in the 1980s. As it is owned by the country's two leading broadcasting networks, the government has some control over the news agency, in particular the appointment of top management.

The South Korean press draws almost 80 percent of its revenue from advertising, with the remaining 20 percent coming from subscription fees. In reflection of the declining role of the print media in recent years, the newspaper's share of the advertisement market has, however, been steadily decreasing.

In 2006, South Koreans spent 25 minutes per day reading the newspaper compared with 34.4 minutes a decade earlier. In the same year, South Koreans spent 146 minutes watching TV and almost 90 minutes on the internet (Korea Press Foundation).

Broadcast Media

Since 1990, the television market has expanded significantly. Television plays an important role in the country's media landscape with 66 percent of South Koreans considering TV to be the most credible media in 2006 (Korea Press Foundation). Two national networks dominate the television market and command the lion's share of advertising. The *Korean Broadcasting System* (KBS) has twenty-five local stations and the *Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation* (MBC) has nineteen local stations. While both are public, with their own boards of directors, the government has the final say on the appointment of top management. Government control of public broadcasting remains an issue of protest by trade unions and various civil society groups.

South Korea also has one educational broadcasting system (EBS), over forty cable channels and a digital satellite broadcasting service (SkyLife). In 2006, over 1.9 million South Korean households subscribed to satellite TV services (Korea Press Foundation).

The public *Korea Broadcasting System* (KBS) operates six radio networks as well as *Radio Korea International*. Other important radio providers are the public *Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation* and *Seoul Broadcasting System* with various services targeting specific audiences.

Internet

Finally, the internet plays an important role in the information of South Koreans. The country has been a trailblazer for high-speed and wireless internet services and has pioneered the distribution of TV via mobile devices. Most of the nation's media offer online versions with news and other editorial content. According to Internet World Stats, almost 35 million South Koreans, (almost 72 percent of the population), had internet access in 2007. South Korea is ranked 9th highest in the world for its number of internet users.

Press Laws

Generally speaking, the South Korean press enjoys a high degree of freedom. The era of illegal oppression of the press and journalists ended in 1987 when the repressive 'Basic Press Law' was repealed following liberalisation in politics. While there is no censorship of the press by a government agency, journalists at times apply self-censorship in their reporting on North Korea. Outside observers have also criticized pressure tactics used by the South Korean government and the business community to influence reporting. The latter has given rise to the concept of editorial independence which calls on press owners to respect the independence of journalists over personal business interests.

The press in South Korea enjoys a constitutionally guaranteed freedom. Article 21 of the Constitution stipulates that all citizens "shall enjoy freedom of speech and the press" and that 'licensing or censorship of speech and the press [...] shall not be recognized'. Clause 4 of the Article also states that "neither speech nor the press shall violate the honour or rights of other persons nor undermine public morals or social ethics." This clause further states that citizens may request remedy to the damages inflicted upon their reputation and rights, by the press or publications.

In line with this constitutional mandate, various procedural laws have been enacted: the most prominent of such laws are the 'Registration of Periodicals Act' and the 'Integrated Broadcasting Act'. The Broadcasting Act of 2000 ensures freedom and independence of broadcasting and, thereby, seeks the protection of television viewers' interests, a democratic formation of public opinion and the

advancement of national culture.

The provisions of Article 21, Clause 4 of the Constitution have been implemented with the establishment of a 'Press Arbitration Commission', which is the first stop for filing complaints against the press before proceeding to the court. The 'Code of Press Ethics' was first adopted in 1957 and is jointly endorsed by three of the nation's major professional associations: the Korean Newspapers' Association, the Korea News Editors' Association, and the Journalists' Association of Korea. Revised and expanded in 1996, the code and its Standards of Practice are a meticulously detailed statement on ethical issues. The 'Korean Press Ethics Commission' serves as Korea's press council under the guidelines of the 'Code of Press Ethics'. Adhering to the code is voluntary.

There is no formal constraint of the press or licensing of journalists. While South Korea retains the controversial 'National Security Law', which allows the government to censor publications or block access to websites favourable to North Korea, it is rarely invoked.

The 'Governing the Guarantee of Freedom and Functions of Newspapers Act' of 2005, commonly known as 'Newspaper Act', includes a clause under which any daily newspapers with a market share of 30 percent or any three daily newspapers with a combined share of 60 percent, are subject to monopoly regulations under the 'Fair Trade Act'. In June 2006, the Constitutional Court ruled that the clause was contrary to freedom of the press and enterprise. While President Lee Myung-bak, who won the elections in South Korea in December 2007, has pledged to abolish the law, as of 2008 it remains in force.

There is no particular restriction on online news supply, yet the legal status of the internet-based online press is unclear. It is not considered print media or treated as broadcast media. The Constitutional Court ruled in June 2002 that the online press is a medium that enjoys constitutionally guaranteed press freedom.

'Envelope journalism' or 'Chonji' in Korean continues to undermine the credibility of Korean journalism.

The Korea Herald

With over 50 percent of market share, *The Korea Herald* dominates the English language

newspaper market in South Korea. Established in August 1953 and based in

Seoul, the privately-owned paper has a daily circulation of 150,000 copies and is distributed nationwide and in more than 80 countries around the world. Catering mainly to the business community, academics and South Korea's sizeable expatriate community, the paper boasts a daily readership of 240,000 people.

In April 2003, *The Korea Herald* underwent a significant upgrade when it expanded its business and culture sections, while reducing its coverage of politics and sports. The changes marked the first phase in its strategic transition from the nation's leading English language newspaper, to a premier media presence in Asia.

The paper's regional ambitions are reflected in its dedication to Asian news coverage, which has increased noticeably since *The Korea Herald* joined ANN in 1999. The paper now has a dedicated ANN section containing features, commentaries and photos which it receives from its colleagues in exchange for news stories about South Korea. Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Choi Nam-hyun, credits his paper's membership in the network for decreasing reliance on news wires while noting that ANN membership helps his paper to become fully integrated in the Asian community.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a landlocked country bordered by Burma/Myanmar and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, and Thailand to the west. According to United Nations' estimates of 2007, Laos has a population of almost 6.7 million people - almost 70 percent of whom are ethnic Lao, with the remainder composed of various minority cultures.

Laos traces its history to the Buddhist Kingdom of *Lan Xang Hom Khao* (Kingdom of a Million Elephants and the White Parasol), which existed from the 14th to the 18th century. As a result of conflict over royal succession, Laos divided into three smaller kingdoms during the early 18th century. After a period as a French protectorate, the country gained status as an 'independent associate state' in 1949, followed by full sovereignty recognised in the Geneva Agreement on Indochina, of 1953.

Cold war rivalry led to a long civil war that ended officially when the Communist *Pathet Lao* (Land of the Lao) took control of the government in 1975, ending a 600 year monarchy and instituting a strict socialist regime closely aligned to Vietnam. The state is headed by a President, who appoints a Prime Minister to preside over the unicameral, 99 seat National Assembly. The official language is Lao, but French is used in diplomacy, and English and ethnic languages are also spoken.

As one of the few remaining one-party Communist states, Laos began a gradual return to decentralisation and private enterprise in 1986. The new course proved extremely successful and the country succeeded in increasing its GDP per capita from US\$712 in 1987 to US\$2,329 in 2007 (United Nations data). Nonetheless, about 30 percent of Laotians still live below the poverty line. Despite annual growth rates averaging six percent – with the exception of the 1997 Asian financial crisis – Laos' economic development remains plagued by an underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, where almost 80 percent of its population live. In 2006, agriculture accounted for about 40 percent of GDP and provided 80 percent of total employment (World Bank data). Laos is taking steps to join the World Trade Organisation in the next few years and the resulting trade policy reforms are likely to improve the business environment.

Media Landscape

In line with the country's Communist orientation, the media's primary purpose is to support the policies of the ruling Communist Party. The government owns and supervises all media outlets including print and broadcast media.

Print Media

The country's most important daily vernacular newspapers are *Pasason* (The People) with an approximate circulation of 12,000 (World Association of Newspapers, 2004), *Vientiane Mai* (Vientiane Message) with a circulation of around 5,000 copies (Davies, 2003⁶), and *Pathet Lao* (Land of the Lao) with 1,200 copies (World Association of Newspapers, 2004). The main foreign language papers are the *Vientiane Times*, a bi-weekly English language newspaper, *Vientiane Business-Social*, a weekly English language newspaper, and *Le Rénovateur*, a weekly newspaper published in French. The government also issues weekly and monthly publications sponsored by various government branches like the army and the Education Ministry. The main news producer for newspapers, radio and television is the state-owned news agency, *Khaosane Pathet Lao* (KPL).

Literacy rates in Laos stand at a low 68.7 percent of all inhabitants aged 15 and above (United Nations statistics, 2007). According to the World Association of Newspapers, in 2004, newspapers reached only 21 percent of all adults in the country.

Broadcast Media

Laos has 13 state-run radio stations and two state-run national television stations. According to World Bank figures, only 30 percent of all households owned a television set in 2005. Satellite receiving dishes can be used legally in Laos. There is one internet service provider. According to Internet World Stats, 25,000 people had internet access in 2007, constituting only 0.4 percent of the entire population.

Press Laws

While the Lao Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, religion and speech, many observers maintain that in practice the government severely constrains

6 Davies, J B (2003) "Laos" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., p. 549.

freedom of speech. All print and broadcast media in Laos is owned and directly controlled by the government, which issues publication licences. The Mass Media Department of the Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC) decides when and how issues have to be covered and makes sure that all media remains the mouthpiece of the government. It appears that newspapers often print reports received from the official news agency without further investigation or editing. Under the country's Criminal Law, undermining state authority, distorting party policies and spreading false rumours, are criminal offences that carry prison sentences. A draft law which would allow the development of private media has not been implemented. Similarly, no press law has yet been adopted in Laos.

Vientiane Times

One of the network's most recent additions is the Laotian paper, *Vientiane*

Times, which joined ANN as an associate member in 2006. A relatively young newspaper, *Vientiane Times* was first published in 1995, yet quickly managed to establish itself as the country's leading English language daily. Today the paper boasts a daily readership of around 50,000 people and caters mainly to government officials, foreign diplomatic missions, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations and the business community. With a daily circulation of 5,000 copies, the government owned newspaper covers a wide range of news stories and provides information reflecting on government policies and socio-economic developments in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Based in Vientiane, *Vientiane Times* is part of the Lao Press in Foreign Languages, which is a specialised agency of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The press agency is managed by a board of directors and operated by over 60 staff members, including reporters and administrative officials. The paper's Director General and Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Savankhone Razmounry, dedicates five of his staff members to feed local news and articles into the ANN's common news pool. In return, *Vientiane Times* has a regional focus for its news coverage and has even managed to loosen its reliance on foreign news wires by making greater use of stories provided by its partner newspapers in the network – a trend which Mr. Savankhone Razmounry hopes his ANN partners will follow.

Malaysia

Malaysia has one of the most complex, multicultural societies in Southeast Asia. About 60 percent of its 27 million people are Malay Muslims, called *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil). Ethnic Chinese, who follow Christianity and Buddhism, account for 25 percent of the population, while mostly Hindu Indians make up 10 percent of the nation. Ending the dominance of the sultanate of Malacca, the peninsula was taken over by the Portuguese in the 17th century and subsequently ruled by the Dutch and the British. Following Japanese occupation during World War II, the territories of peninsular Malaysia joined together in 1948 to form the Federation of Malaya and eventually negotiated independence from the British in 1957. In 1963, the Bornean provinces of Sabah and Sarawak, together with Singapore, joined the federation to form Malaysia.

The first several years of the country's history were overshadowed by a communist insurgency, an attempted invasion by Indonesia in 1963, and Singapore's secession from the Federation in 1965. Inter-ethnic violence shook Malaysia in 1969 when the Malaysian Chinese Association withdrew from the government. In the ensuing political crisis, the Alliance, which had ruled since independence and consisted of UMNO (United Malays National Organisation), the Malaysian Chinese Association and the Malaysian Indian Congress, was replaced by a broader coalition, the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front), which dominates Malaysian politics to this day.

From 1981 to 2003, Malaysia's parliamentary democracy was headed by former Prime Minister Mahatir, during which time the country achieved a remarkable degree of political stability along with economic and social progress. However, corruption by officials has remained a widespread problem overshadowing also the government of Mahatir's successor, Abdullah Badawi, who lost considerable voter confidence in the recent March 2008 general elections.

Since the 1970s, Malaysia has undergone a successful transformation from producer of raw materials to an emerging multi-sector economy. In 2006, agriculture represented only 8.6 percent of the country's GDP while industry accounted for 49.9 percent (World Bank 2007). In response to the Asian financial crisis of 1997, cuts in government spending and the delay of development projects allowed the economy to recover. Between 1996 and 2006, Malaysia's GDP grew at an average rate of 4.2 percent (World Bank 2007). Under the country's current Prime Minister Badawi, the government is focusing on the expansion of

high technology industries, medical technology and pharmaceuticals. Exports, including oil and gas, remain a significant driver of the economy.

Media Landscape

According to the World Association of Newspapers, a total of 35 national daily newspapers in Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil, were circulated in Malaysia in 2006, reflecting the country's ethnic diversity. Malaysia's geographic peculiarities, especially the straits that separate Peninsular Malaysia from Malaysia on the island of Borneo, explain difficulties in newspaper distribution beyond the capital Kuala Lumpur. In 2005, newspapers reached only 54.7 percent of all adults (World Newspaper Association). Paid-for English language newspapers target primarily urban audiences. Of these, *The Star* had the largest readership in 2007 with 1,031,000 readers. First published in 1971 as a regional newspaper (in Penang), the paper initially moved to Kuala Lumpur to publish nationally and then in 1981, to Petaling Jaya, a satellite city of Kuala Lumpur.

Besides the popularity of its print edition, *The Star* also enjoys the highest number of online readers, with 54,546,651 visits per month to its website in the first quarter of 2008. With 12,741,665 visits per month, the *New Straits Times* was the second most popular Malaysian online newspaper in the same period. The latter boasted a circulation of 140,000 in 2005 and a readership of 319,000 in 2006.

The country's leading Chinese language papers are *Sin Chew Daily* with a circulation of 349,000 and a readership of 1,091,000, and *China Press* circulating 223,000 copies, in 2005. Other important Chinese language daily newspapers are *Guang Ming Ribao* and *Nanyang Siang Pau*. Of the Malay language newspapers, the largest is the morning daily, *Berita Harian*, founded in 1957 in Kuala Lumpur, with a circulation of 231,000 in 2005. The *Harian Metro*, also published in Kuala Lumpur, had a daily circulation of 229,000, while *Utusan Malaysia* circulated 228,000 copies in the same year.

In reflection of their relatively small target audience, the Tamil language newspapers generally have much smaller circulation numbers. The largest of the three national Tamil dailies is *Malaysia Nanban*, which has a readership of 259,000. In addition to the national free and paid-for daily papers, Malaysia's media market also boasts regional newspapers, published in Sabah and Sarawak, as well as numerous periodicals.

Most newspapers subscribe to the service provided by Malaysia's national

news agency, *Pertubohan Berita Nasional Malaysia (Bernama)*, which began operations in 1968. There are also several foreign news agencies with offices in Malaysia, including Reuters, *Agence France Presse (AFP)* and *Associated Press (AP)*.

Broadcast Media

Malaysia's television sector comprises commercial networks and pay-TV operations. Eighty nine percent of all households owned a television in 2005 (World Bank). Around a quarter of them subscribe to the *Astro* multi-channel service. *TV3* is a leading national private, terrestrial broadcaster. State-owned *Radio Television Malaysia (RTM)* operates two television networks, and many of the country's radio services which broadcast in Malay, Tamil, Chinese and English. Other radio stations are eight stations operated by *Airtime Management & Programming* which has over 10 million listeners and *Hot FM* with 4.3 million listeners, which broadcast regularly in Peninsular Malaysia.

Television and radio are important sources of information for Malaysians who spent 66 minutes per day listening to radio and 89 minutes per day watching TV, in 2003. In the same year, Malaysians spent 68 minutes per day reading newspapers (World Association of Newspapers). The internet is also becoming an increasingly important source of information for Malaysian audiences. According to Internet World Stats, 60 percent of the Malaysian population had internet access in 2007, securing the country a spot amongst the top ten Asian internet countries. A large number of newspapers also publish online versions while 'blogging' is becoming increasingly popular.

Press Laws

Malaysia's strict control of the press is largely the continuation of restrictive policies implemented by the British in the 1930s, in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism. According to Article 10(a) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia "every citizen has the right to freedom of speech and expression", which are, however, subject to restrictions which Parliament deems "necessary [...] in the interest of the security of the Federation [...] friendly relations with other countries, public order or morality and restrictions designed to protect the privileges of Parliament or of any Legislative Assembly or to provide against contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to any offence".

Political parties and their investment companies control the major

newspapers in Malaysia, resulting in strong political and economic ties between the government and the media. Under Article 3(1) of the Printing and Publications Act, all domestic and foreign publications and printers must apply annually to the government for a permit. The same act enables the Minister of Home Affairs to revoke any publication licensees deemed: “likely to be prejudicial to public order, morality, [or] security”; likely to “alarm public opinion”; or likely to “be prejudicial to [...] national interest” (Article 7(1). If the Minister refuses to grant or renew a permit, no legal remedy or judicial review is available. “Any decision of the Minister [...] to suspend a licence or permit shall be final and shall not be called in question by any court on any ground whatsoever,” and “[n]o person shall be given an opportunity to be heard with regard to [...] suspension of the licence or permit” according to the act (Article 13A - 13B). Foreign journalists working in Malaysia are required to register with the Home Ministry, as well as to furnish the Ministry of Information with details about their professional and personal background before receiving a government issued pass.

The Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA) requires certain internet and other network service providers to obtain a licence. While internet access is freely available, the government recently announced its intention to closely monitor the content of internet web sites and blogs that publish “seditious material” as defined in Article 3 of the Sedition Act.

Similar to the print media, electronic news also falls under government control. The Malaysian Parliament approved the Broadcasting Act in December 1987, giving the Minister of Information the authority to monitor and control all radio and television broadcasting. The minister can likewise revoke any licence held by a private company deemed to have violated the provisions of this act. The May 2002 version of the Malaysian Advertising Code of Ethics for Television and Radio controls the content of commercials and advertisements to conform to the norms and traditions of the country’s society.

The Official Secrets Act, the Printing Presses and Publications Act, criminal defamation laws, The Internal Security Act, and The Sedition Act, limit freedom of the press in Malaysia. The latter prohibits public comment on issues defined as sensitive, such as racial and religious matters. The Ministry of Information also has the authority to ban imported and domestic material that may threaten national security and racial harmony. The government frequently invokes the law for the suspension or closure of newspapers, the removal of editors from office, or the banning of books.



Malaysia is represented in the Asia News Network by two newspapers. With a daily circulation of over 309,000 copies on weekdays and almost 325,000 copies on Sundays, *The Star* is Malaysia's leading English language paper with a readership of over one million people. Founded

on 9 September 1971, the paper is based in Petaling Jaya on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia with news bureaus in each of the 13 Malaysian states and the Federal Territories, as well as London, New York, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok. A founding member of the ANN, *The Star* plays a crucial role in the network and by agreement, seconds one of its staff members to the network's office in Bangkok to take on the role of ANN Editor. Dato' Ng Poh Tip, the Group Editorial & Education Adviser, has been part of the ANN from the beginning when *The Star* joined the newly created network in 1999. She was then the Group Chief Editor. "Since becoming a member", she explains, "the paper has dedicated more space to the coverage of Asian affairs, both in its daily news pages and in the feature and magazine sections." In addition, one page is exclusively committed to the coverage of ANN stories in the paper's Sunday edition. "The ANN news exchange", says Dato' Ng Poh Tip, "promotes a better understanding of issues as seen from local perspectives and, therefore, a greater understanding among Asians."



The second member paper from Malaysia is *The Sin Chew Daily* which was also the first vernacular language paper to join ANN. The Chinese language publication

was founded on 15 January 1929 and has established itself as a leading national newspaper in Malaysia. With its headquarters based in Petaling Jaya in the Malaysian state of Selangor, the paper also has news bureaus in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, and in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh. The privately-owned paper has a daily circulation of 400,000 copies with intellectuals, politicians

and business people representing the core of its daily readership of around 1.25 million people. Foreign readers can either subscribe to the newspaper or access its website, which is published in both Chinese and English. *Sin Chew Daily* joined ANN in 1999 as the first non-English paper. Since then the focus of the paper has shifted towards a more comprehensive coverage of regional affairs with four instead of previously three pages, dedicated to Asian affairs. “ANN membership”, explains Editor-in-Chief Mr Pook Ah Lek, “has allowed the paper to use more stories originating from member newspapers as an alternative to the wire services”. Nonetheless, while the network is steadily increasing the self-reliance of ANN members, the wire services are still necessary for the coverage of breaking news. Overcoming the time delay that is inherent in the current system of news exchange is one of the primary challenges the network’s members are seeking to address. Mr Pook Ah Lek sums up the benefits of almost one decade of ANN membership as having a better insight into the affairs of the various member countries which in turn allows for more balanced reporting on Asia in order to counter the biased reports carried by the wire services.

Nepal

The South Asia state of Nepal borders on China's Xizang Autonomous Region (Tibet) in the north and India in the south, east and west. The country was an absolute monarchy from 1959 until 1990 but has undergone significant political change since then. Under the 1990 Constitution, Nepal became a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch. Following elections in 1991, the government embarked on unpopular economic reforms which caused civil and political unrest. The resulting domestic strife culminated in the 1996 insurgency led by the Maoist United People's Front with the aim of overthrowing the monarchy. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in 2006, formally ended a decade of political violence. The agreement planned Constituent Assembly elections to be held by June 2007 and for the King to lose all formal authority. In January 2007, the major political parties agreed to an interim constitution that would guide Nepal's transition to democracy in the lead up to new elections. An interim government consisting of members of the major political parties, including the Maoists, was formed under Prime Minister Koirala. The peace agreement also called for the newly created Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. During the Constituent Assembly elections held in April 2008, the Maoists made considerable gains.

With an estimated per capita income of only US\$339, Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Almost one-third of its population lives below the poverty line. Agriculture is the foundation of the economy, accounting for almost 40 percent of the country's GDP (World Bank 2007). Over 80 percent of Nepal's population live in rural areas. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agricultural produce. Security concerns relating to the Maoist conflict have led to a decrease in tourism - a key source of foreign exchange. Despite the country's economic potential, in particular in hydro-electricity, foreign trade and investment remain hampered by its technological backwardness, poor infrastructure, domestic instability and susceptibility to natural disaster. However, the government has taken successful steps to restructure the economy by introducing measures such as tax reform, privatisation of public enterprises, dismantling of trade barriers, liberalising the foreign exchange system and fostering the industrial potential of the country, particularly for export-oriented industries. Nepal has been a member of the WTO since 2004.

Media Landscape

Almost half of Nepal's approximately 1,550 news publications are based in Kathmandu, of which approximately 60 are daily newspapers. Nepal has both government-run and private publications. However, even private newspapers rely on sponsors rather than advertisement revenue, with many journalists also being affiliated to political parties. Editorial positions are at times political rather than merit appointments.

Kantipur is one of the first private newspapers published in the Nepali language, with a circulation of 117,000 in 2002, according to the World Association of Newspapers. The same private publishing house, Kantipur Publications, also produces *The Kathmandu Post*, the number one English language daily in the country that publishes nationally. *The Rising Nepal* is published by the government's Gorkhapatra Corporation in the English language. *Gorkhapatra*, a government-owned daily paper published in Kathmandu since 1901, is Nepal's oldest newspaper. Other English language papers include *The Himalayan Times* and the weekly *The Nepali Times*. Many Nepalese magazines are printed in English, including *The Nepal Traveller*, designed for distribution to tourists, the weekly *Nepal Press Digest* and the bimonthly *Himal*. Nepal's main news agency is the state-run *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* (National News Agency) which releases mostly government speeches. According to United Nations data, the literacy rate in Nepal is a low 48.6 percent (2007), which greatly hinders access to information. In addition, poor infrastructure limits print media distribution outside of the capital. Most Nepalese have access to information via radio. The government-run *Radio Nepal*, was established in 1950 and broadcasts to all of Nepal except the Himalayas. A number of private stations have emerged since the government began issuing licences to private FM radio stations in 1998. The latter are, however, not permitted to air news and political bulletins.

Television is dominated by the state-run Nepal Television Corporation (NTV). There are also several private channels including Kantipur TV, Image Channel TV, Channel Nepal, and Avenues TV. However, in 2000, only three percent of all households had a television (World Bank, 2005) with many households in rural areas lacking electricity.

Internet access in Nepal is limited by lacking infrastructure and related expenses. According to Internet World Stats only 310,000 people, representing 1.1 percent of the population, had internet access in 2007.

Press Laws

Comparably rigid media control in Nepal stems from the regulations passed under the monarchy, including the 1962 National News Agency Act, which prevented the creation of private news agencies. In 1965, the Print and Publication Act stated that the government could order cessation of media considered harmful to public interests. In 1975, a second Print and Publication Act forbade criticism of Nepalese royalty and government.

In the wake of the 1990 democratic revolution some of the strict media controls were reduced, yet journalists continue to face legal punishment for reporting on issues the government deems controversial. The 1991 version of the Print and Publications Act provided for the licensing of publications and the granting of credentials to journalists while also stipulating penalties for violating these requirements. The act prohibits publication of material that, among other things, promotes disrespect towards the King or the royal family (14a); that undermines security, peace, order, or the integrity or sovereignty of the Kingdom (14c); that creates animosity among persons of different castes and religions (14d); or that adversely affects the good conduct or morality of the public (14e). (World Association of Newspapers, 2004; The 1991 Print and Publication Act).

The 1990 Constitution of Nepal guaranteed press freedom, freedom of expression, and the right to information. Similarly, the preamble of the Interim Constitution of 2007 expresses official commitment to full freedom of the press, an independent judiciary and the rule of law. In Article 12, the document guarantees freedom of expression to every citizen while granting the opportunity for “reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Nepal, or which may jeopardize the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes, religions or communities, or on any act of defamation, contempt of court or incitement to an offence; or on any act which may be contrary to decent public behaviour or morality”.

The 2003 Journalist Code of Conduct Act defines the task of journalists and the media as, amongst others, protecting and promoting press freedom (3 (1)), safeguarding and enforcing the right to information (3 (3)), imparting true, factual, impartial as well as balanced information in order to achieve the goal of professional journalism (3 (4)), and recognising the right to privacy (3 (6)). The act prohibits journalists from carrying out acts that undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Nepal’s multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, that jeopardise harmonious relations, that contain acts of defamation or

contempt of court, or that are contrary to decent public behaviour or morality (4 (1)). However, the constitutional guarantee of press freedom and freedom of expression can be overruled by other legal provisions, such as the Public Security Act, which greatly diminishes the protection of journalists in the country.



Nepal has a large number of national, regional and local Nepali language

papers. It also boasts three national English language daily newspapers, of which *The Kathmandu Post* has established itself as the one with the largest circulation, at 45,000 copies daily. The paper was founded in 1993, only two years after press freedom became enshrined in the amended Constitution of Nepal and, along with *Kantipur*, became the first private newspaper in the history of the country. Headquartered in the capital Kathmandu, today the paper also has news bureaus in New Delhi and Qatar. Its 225,000 daily readers reflect a wide range of Nepal's society - from decision-makers and business people to expatriates and ordinary citizens. The paper is also available to the many Nepalese who live away from home, in print at newsstands abroad and via its website. Since joining the Asian News Network in 2006, the paper has focused on providing its partners with domestic news that is of regional and global importance. "In return", says the paper's Editor, Prateek Pradhan, "the paper picks stories and pictures from the common news pool to further increase the Asian content of its reporting." "The Kathmandu Post", says Prateek Pradhan, "has been an ardent supporter of democracy and press freedom. The [ANN] membership has further strengthened its confidence."

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Modern Pakistan emerged from the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947. Originally composed of two parts, the ewing of the country became present day Bangladesh in 1971, following the third war between India and Pakistan over the disputed Kashmir territory. Although some progress has been made in recent years, the dispute is ongoing. In the 61 years since Pakistan's founding, its political climate has been overshadowed by alternating periods of civilian and military rule. In October 1999, Pakistan came under military rule again with the coup leader, General Musharraf, pledging to revive the country's fortunes. Besides economic challenges Musharraf has also been confronted with an increasing polarisation between Islamist militancy and the modernising secular wing of Pakistani politics. At parliamentary elections in February 2008, President Musharraf's supporters were defeated and the opposition Pakistan People's Party nominee, Yusuf Raza Gillani, became prime minister. Decades of internal political disputes, low levels of foreign investment and the costs of ongoing military confrontation with India, have hampered Pakistan's economic development. In 2007, GDP per capita stood at US\$2,600. Despite some efforts at expanding its industry, Pakistan's economy remains dominated by agriculture with almost half of the labour force depending on employment by the agricultural market.

Media Landscape

Pakistan boasts a strong and lively press. This is in spite of frequent government attempts at controlling press freedom. Newspapers, in particular, play a central role in public life and provide an important platform for public debates on issues of national concern.

Print Media

Since the early 1990s, all newspapers have been privately-owned. Pakistan's media landscape displays enormous diversity which, in turn, mirrors the country's ethnic and linguistic diversity. The country's 168 million people speak more than twenty languages between them. Nearly half of all Pakistanis (48 percent) speak Punjabi, followed by Sindhi (12 percent), the Punjabi variant Siraiki (10 percent), and Pakhtu or Pashto (8 percent). Although Urdu is the official national language, it is spoken as a native tongue by only 8 percent of the population.

According to data collected by the Statistical Department of Pakistan, in

2006 the country's media landscape was composed of a total of 1,464 newspapers and periodicals. Of this number, 1,236 were published in Urdu. Their focus tends to be on national events that are of concern to the general public. The 133 English language publications, instead appear to target the educated elite and provide wider coverage of foreign news. In 2007, the average circulation of Urdu language daily papers in Pakistan was 7,564,250, compared with 1,206,557 in English and 1,003,289 in Sindhi. While circulation rates have increased over the past decade, the country's low literacy rate of 49.9 percent (UN data, 2007) coupled with the urban orientation of the press, and the high price of newspapers, prevent circulation rates from rising further.

According to the World Association of Newspapers, the most successful among Pakistan's numerous publications is the Urdu language daily, *Daily Jang*, with a circulation in 2006 of 775,000 copies and a readership of almost four million. The same publishing house, 'Jang Group', also publishes the Urdu language *Daily Awam Karachi* and *Daily Inquilab Lahore*, as well as several English language daily papers including *The News* (approximate daily circulation of 120,000). 'Pakistan Herald Publications Ltd.' publishes the country's most successful English language daily, the *Dawn*. In 2005, this paper had a daily circulation of 138,000 copies and a readership of 159,000. Number three among Pakistan's most powerful publishing houses is the 'Nawae-Waqt Group', which publishes *Nawa-e-Waqt* and also started *The Nation*, an English language daily. Other significant English language daily papers are *Pakistan* (125,000 copies) and *Express* (87,000). Foreign magazines and newspapers are also available across Pakistan.

The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) is the government's own news agency and the official carrier of international wire service stories to the local media. An alternative news source exists in privately owned Pakistan Press International (PPI). Foreign news bureaus include *Reuters*, *Agence France-Presse* and *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, all located in the capital of Islamabad.

Most newspapers in Pakistan are heavily dependent on advertising revenue for income. Government advertising, in particular, continues to be vital to a papers' financial sustainability. The latter includes commercial advertising by the public sector and by government ministries, as well as regulatory notices issued by government departments and public utilities. This financial dependency gives the government considerable leverage over the press. It has been reported that state-level and national officials regularly use advertising boycotts to put economic

pressure on publications that do not heed unofficial directives on coverage. However, as the 2007 report of the World Association of Newspapers indicates, private sector companies are becoming Pakistan's top newspaper advertisers thus slowly eroding the government's grip on the media.

Broadcast Media

While only 46 percent of all households owned a television set in 2006 (United Nations data), television is as dominant a medium in Pakistan as it is in other countries. This medium of information and communication is even more important, as literacy rates remain low. Since restrictions on the ownership of broadcast media were eased in late 2002, Pakistan has seen an explosion in the number of privately owned television channels. Increasing competition for state-run Pakistan Television Corporation has contributed to an improvement in quality and pluralism of news and information. International satellite television channels are also accessible. The first English language television station called *Dawn TV* was launched in late 2007.

The government owns and operates the bulk of radio stations through the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation. Radio reaches almost 100 percent of the population. Nationwide local internet access was established in 1996 and by early 2008 was available to 17.5 million internet users, representing 7.3 percent of the total population (Internet World Stats). All leading newspapers, including *Daily Jang*, the *Dawn*, and *The Nation* have online editions while the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and Pakistan Television Corporation both have web sites accessible to the public.

Press Laws

Chapter I, Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees the freedom of expression and freedom of the press. However, since the country's founding in 1947, Pakistan has undergone three periods of martial law and two military dictatorships. The constitution has therefore frequently been suspended – the last time in 1999 – and was restored in December 2007. Furthermore, the constitutional right to freedom of speech is subject to “reasonable restrictions” that may be imposed by law. As any student of Pakistani political affairs will appreciate, the legal framework governing the media alters with different governments and reflects changing political circumstances. In particular, during periods of military rule, various legal and other measures have

in the past greatly oppressed freedom of speech and freedom of the press. This included the issuance of permits by the Ministry of Information for the import of newsprint, as a way to silence undesirable publications.

Under the rule of General Musharraf, a new legislation was drafted for the formation of a Press Council which many observers interpreted as an attempt to institutionalise government control over the media. Similarly, a proposal to create a Press and Publication Regulatory Authority (PAPRA) was criticised as jeopardising the independence of the media from government interference.

Currently, various agencies connected with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting monitor the media. The Office of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) is in charge of the release of military news. Laws currently in place include the Anti Terrorist Act, which prohibits the possession or distribution of material designed to provoke sectarian hatred or material obtained from banned organisations. Chapter XV of the Pakistan Penal Code mandates life imprisonment for desecrating the Quran and up to 10 years in prison for insulting another's religious beliefs with the intent to outrage religious feelings. The Official Secrets Act authorises the government to curb freedom of speech on subjects, including the constitution, the armed forces, the judiciary and religion. The Defamation Act of 2004 expanded the definition of defamation and increased the punishment for offenders.

To date, the registration of publications or journalists remains merely an administrative act. Nonetheless, as has been noted above, various attempts have been made in the past to pass legislation that would increase the government's influence on this process. Foreign correspondents require accreditation by the Press and Information Departments under the Ministry of Information, which reportedly can be difficult to obtain for Indian journalists. Pakistan's proximity to Afghanistan has led to an increase of foreign journalists seeking to use the country as their base in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

In spring 2008, the International Federation of Journalists reported that Pakistan's new government was planning to withdraw restrictions on the media that were put in place when emergency rule was imposed in November 2007. This includes the proposal to cease punishment for journalists who "defame" the president, the government or the army.

In view of the complex and fragile legal context, members of Pakistan's

media work under difficult conditions. While news consumers enjoy a wide range of often critical views on Pakistani politics, violence against and intimidation of journalists remains a serious nationwide problem.



The Nation is an English language newspaper published from Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. Arif Nizami, editor of *The Nation*, signed the

agreement with ANN's editors in Bangkok in mid-June 2008 and said, "I am pleased to be joining ANN. We hope to make a great contribution with *The Nation* being part of Pakistan's press dynamism." The paper is published by the Nawa-i-Waqt group and had a circulation of 25,000 copies in 2006.

Republic of the Philippines

Named after 16th century Spanish King, Philip II, the Philippines is an archipelagic country of 7,107 islands with a total land area spanning 300,000 square kilometres. It is surrounded by many of Southeast Asia's main water bodies – the Philippine Sea, South China Sea, Sulu Sea, Celebes Sea and the Luzon Strait. According to the 2000 census, its population of 88 million consists of diverse ethnic groups, namely Tagalog (28.1 percent), Cebuano (13.1 percent), Ilocano (9 percent), Bisaya/Binisaya (7.6 percent), Hiligaynon Ilonggo (7.5 percent), Bikol (6 percent) and Waray (3.5 percent). The two official languages are Filipino and English, although eight major dialects are also spoken – Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon/ilonggo, Bikol, Waray, Pampango and Pnagasinan. The majority of Filipinos are Roman Catholic (80.9 percent) and minority religious groups include Muslims (5 percent) and other variants of Christianity.

The Philippines was first colonized by the Spanish during the 16th century and was later ceded to the United States in 1898 following the Spanish-American War. In preparation for independence to be granted after a 10 year transition, it became a self-governing commonwealth in 1935 with Manuel Quezon elected as president. However, 1942 saw the beginning of the Japanese occupation during the Second World War.

The Republic of the Philippines gained independence on 4 July 1946, with Manuel Roxas as President. The first president to hold more than one term in office was Ferdinand Marcos, who was elected in 1965. Marcos implemented martial law in 1972, in the midst of rising lawlessness and the threat of a communist insurgency. Although political opposition and civil liberties were curtailed, martial law was initially well-received as it brought about social stability. However, rampant corruption and nepotism led to a decline in economic growth and development, culminating in a peaceful People Power Revolution in 1986 that ended his 20 year despotic rule.

Despite attempts by successive administrations to restore democratic institutions, political stability and economic reform have been hampered by corruption, political scandals, natural disasters, and violence in the Southern Philippines where Muslim rebels have been fighting for a separate Islamic state. Although negotiations between the Gloria Arroyo government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) led to a cease-fire in 2003, the prospects of a final settlement remain unclear in view of outstanding territorial issues and the

activities of a violent splinter group of the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf Group.

The Philippine economy is primarily built upon services, light industry and agriculture. Despite being ranked as the second most progressive Asian economy after Japan during the 1950s and 1960s, rampant corruption under the Marcos era resulted in a dramatic economic decline from which the Philippines has not recovered. Although Fidel Ramos' presidency saw a period of impressive economic growth, the Asian financial crisis of 1997 resulted in a sharp downturn. The country still faces challenges such as a large national debt, high unemployment, an inefficient tax system, inadequate infrastructure, and tens of millions of people living in poverty.

Nevertheless, the Philippine economy has been doing well in recent years with record growth of 7.3 percent in the first half of 2007. This has been attributed to higher government spending, a resilient service sector, improved exports and agricultural output, and large remittances from overseas Filipinos - an increasingly important economic driver.

Media Landscape

In the early twentieth century, the Philippine press followed the United States model, which guaranteed press freedom and also freedom of press access to official documents. However, when Marcos implemented martial law in 1972, press freedom was curtailed and newspaper assets confiscated by the state. Under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, enacted under Corazon Aquino, press freedom was restored although instances of state censorship have persisted. Apart from government pressure, the media is also susceptible to the commercial and political interests of its proprietors. Nevertheless, with about 539 radio stations, 63 national television networks and a large number of privately owned print and electronic media, the Philippine media climate is among the liveliest in Southeast Asia.

Print Media

According to the World Association of Newspapers, most print and electronic media is privately owned. Twenty seven daily newspapers were published in 2005 and 2006, of which 22 were published nationally and five at the regional and local levels. There were two free daily papers in 2006, up from one in 2005. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a privately owned English daily paper, is the most widely read paid-for broadsheet newspaper with a daily circulation of 260,000

copies, which constituted a 52 percent share of total broadsheet circulation in 2006. It is followed by the *Manila Bulletin* and *Philippine Star*, both English broadsheets, with a circulation of 220,000 and 200,000 respectively.

However, the English language broadsheets are less popular than the tabloids, ranking sixth, seventh and eighth respectively among the top paid-for daily papers, after Filipino language tabloids – *Remate* with a circulation of 620,000, *Bulgar* with 601,000 copies, *Pilipino Star Ngayon* and *Abante* with 418,000 each, and *Abante Tonite* with 278,000.

Newspaper readership is limited to about two million people and the only news agency is the government-run Philippines News Agency.

Broadcast Media

Statistics from the World Press Review in 2001, recorded 539 radio stations throughout the Philippines, of which 273 were on the AM band. In view of the high poverty rate, newspapers are considered expensive to buy and are also limited in their circulation across the country, making radio one of the most popular communication mediums, especially in outlying areas. The government-run Philippine Broadcasting Service operates 31 stations nationwide with an emphasis on news and public affairs. Other main radio stations, that are not state-owned and operate stations nationally, include ABS-CBN, GMA Network, Manila Broadcasting Company and Radio Mindanao Network.

In the urban areas, television is more popular than print media, with films, comedies and entertainment programmes attracting the largest audiences. There are 63 television stations, 50 relay and 24 UHF channels nationwide (World Press Review).

According to the BBC, the free-to-air networks, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp and GMA Network Inc., are the most popular among audiences. Other major television stations include Radio Philippine Network, Allied Broadcasting Corporation, Interisland Broadcasting Corporation and People's Television Network Inc. The World Bank reported that 63 percent of households had televisions in 2005, up from 53 percent in 2000.

The electronic media is also increasing its presence in Philippine journalism, due to print publications offering online versions. Despite a high literacy rate of 92.6 percent (United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008), the number of internet users in the Philippines was low at 54 for every 1,000 persons in 2005, although this was more than double from 20 per 1,000 person in 2000

(World Bank). The low internet penetration corroborates with the Internet World Stats in 2007, which found that only 15.4 percent of the population had internet access, and access was limited to wealthier citizens and companies. Nevertheless, there is potential for the internet sector to grow with a deregulated market, strong government support for IT development, and an increasingly 'internet savvy' population.

Press Laws

Although press freedom was curtailed during martial rule under Marcos, this was reversed under the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Section 4 of Article 3 states, "no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances." According to Section 7 of Article 3, the people's right "to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitation as may be provided by law."

However, constitutional guarantee of press freedom has occasionally been undermined in practice. For instance, the Philippines' libel laws have been used to silence journalists. According to the 'Reporters Without Borders' 2007 annual report, José Miguel Arroyo, President Gloria Arroyo's husband, brought 43 suits against journalists critical of him. However, the suits were dropped after the journalists filed a counterclaim for violating press freedom guaranteed in the Constitution. Arroyo also declared a state of emergency in 2006 in the face of a rebellion within the army, during which the crackdown on generals was extended to include a police search of the Daily Tribune, an opposition press.

The World Association of Newspapers' 2004/2005 Report, labelled the Philippines as "the deadliest country for journalists in the world", citing over 50 journalists killed between 1986 and 2005, with nine slaughtered between November 2004 and May 2005. 'Reporters Without Borders' alleged that at least six journalists were murdered "while doing their job" in 2006, implicating politicians, the military and law enforcers, seeking to silence reporters. While government efforts are being made to address this endemic problem, through the establishment of an investigative taskforce, success is very limited, partly because of collusion inside the justice system.



The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* was founded on 9 December 1985, during the last days of the regime of the Philippine dictator,

Ferdinand Marcos, and became one of the first private newspapers to be established under the authoritarian Marcos regime. The political spirit prior to the People Power Revolution of 1986 is reflected in the mission statement of the paper's founding fathers, namely, to create a paper that is truly independent and free from the influence of interest groups. Headquartered in Makati City, Manila, the paper has four regional news bureaus employing over 130 provincial correspondents. It has four printing presses in Cebu, Davao, Laguna and Manila. With a daily circulation of 30,000, more than 20 years after its beginning, the paper has become the dominant Philippine media organisation for Filipinos in their own country and abroad.

Today, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* has a weekday circulation of 200,000 while 250,000 copies are published on Sundays. With over 2.7 million nationwide readers daily, it enjoys a market share of over 50 percent and tops national readership surveys. The paper has also succeeded in establishing itself as one of the country's most trusted sources of news. Having received over 200 national awards and citations, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* is the Philippines' most awarded broadsheet. It is ranked number one amongst the country's English language publications for readership and circulation, and the paper describes itself as "a world-class processor of news and information".

Since joining ANN in 2000, the paper has dedicated increased space for the publication of informative articles and thought provoking commentaries about Asia, which it receives through the news exchange mechanism.

Republic of Singapore

With a population of almost 4.6 million people and a land area of only 707 square kilometres, the Republic of Singapore is one of the world's most densely populated countries and the smallest in Southeast Asia. Its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population is composed of 75 percent Chinese, 13 percent Malay and 8 percent Indian. Located off the coast of Malaysia on the Strait of Malacca, the small city-state is connected with the mainland by a causeway and a bridge.

Initially an outpost of the Sumatran Srivijaya Empire and named *Temasek*, Singapore's modern history began in 1819 with the arrival of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, an agent of the British East India Company. Following increased immigration and the expansion of trade, Singapore became a British Crown Colony in 1867, an arrangement that continued until 1946. After gaining independence in 1959, Singapore joined the newly independent Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak, to form Malaysia in 1963, but separated from Malaysia two years later to become an independent republic. Since then it has evolved into one of the world's most prosperous countries with strong international trading links and a GDP equalling that of leading Western European economies. Singapore is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral parliamentary government. The bulk of the executive power rests with the cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister.

Singapore has a highly developed market-based economy, which historically revolves around trade. In 2007, the overall volume of trade reached 847 billion Singapore dollars with Malaysia, China and the United States of America as the country's main trading partners. Singapore is the busiest port in the world in terms of tonnage shipped. It is also the world's fourth largest foreign exchange trading centre. Following a worldwide recession in 2001 and the SARS outbreak in 2003, fiscal stimulus, low interest rates, a surge in exports, and internal flexibility, have led to vigorous expansion with real GDP growth averaging seven percent annually. The government hopes to establish a new growth path that will be less vulnerable to the global demand cycle, by transforming the country into the region's financial and high-tech hub.

Media Landscape

Singapore's press is modern and efficient in its setup, operations and layout. Nonetheless, it continues to be guided by restrictive government policies and

legal restraints that have served to constrain national development and communal harmony.

Given its high rates of affluence (per capita GDP in 2007 of US\$ 35,163) and literacy (92.5 percent), Singapore enjoys equally high rates of newspaper readership. In 2006, total newspaper circulation stood at 1,631,948. The press in Singapore publishes in all four of its official languages. However, the English newspapers capture over half (55 percent) of the total circulation followed by Chinese (40 percent), Malay (3.75 percent) and Tamil (0.7 percent). (Singapore Government 2007).

According to Singapore Press Holdings, the country's major newspapers and their daily 2008⁷ circulation figures were ranked as follows. According to Singapore Press Holdings, the country's major newspapers and their daily 2008 circulation figures were ranked as follows. *The Sunday Times* had a circulation of 382,200 followed by the weekday edition of this English language newspaper with a daily circulation of 389,000. The Chinese language papers, *Lianhe Zaobao* with a circulation of 176,000 and its afternoon counterpart *Lianhe Wanboa* with a circulation of 107,200 ranked next. Launched in 2006, *My Paper* is a free, bilingual paper with a daily circulation of 280,000. With 109,300 daily copies, *The New Paper*, Singapore's only afternoon tabloid, was the second most read English newspaper in Singapore. Singapore's only financial daily, *The Business Times*, had a daily circulation of 35,700. The two Malay language papers, *Berita Harian* and its Sunday edition *Berita Minggu*, had a daily circulation of 62,000 and 62,000 respectively. *Tamil Murasu*, Singapore's only Tamil language newspaper, had a weekday circulation of 14,400.

Two players dominate the media scene. Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), which has close links to the ruling party, has a virtual monopoly of the newspaper industry. It publishes 15 newspapers, including the English daily papers *The Straits Times* and *Business Times*. MediaCorp (MCS), owned by a state investment agency, operates TV and radio stations. The government holds special voting shares that allow it to influence staff appointments. The two companies merged their free newspaper and TV operations at the start of 2005. Private satellite dishes are prohibited, with exceptions made for banks and other enterprises requiring international news for their operations.

7 Figures show the daily average circulation for August 2008.

Press Laws

Section 14 (1a) of the Singapore Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression, subject to restrictions Parliament considers necessary “in the interest of the security of Singapore”, “public order or morality”, “or to provide against contempt of court, defamation or incitement to any offence” as stated in Section 14 (2a). In line with the core idea of the Asian values debate which originated in Singapore in the early 1990s, the Singaporean press is expected to take on a supporting role in the government’s economic growth and political progress.

The Media Development Authority (MDA) supervises all forms of media operating in Singapore, including newspapers. In addition to helping develop local media content and encouraging investment, the MDA seeks to ensure that communication outlets pay attention to the two national goals of maintaining social harmony and furthering economic growth. The agency is also tasked with enhancing competition between, and maintaining the quality of, the two major media groups, the SPH and the MCS.

The principal piece of legislation that affects print publications is the ‘Newspaper and Printing Presses Act’ (NPPA). Section 21 (1) requires all local and foreign publications, printers and the primary personnel associated with those publications, to be registered with, and licensed by, the government and to have those permits renewed every year. According to Section 21 (3b), before granting the permit [the Minister] “may require the applicant to execute a bond with or without sureties to secure the payment of any penalties which may be imposed upon the newspaper company, proprietor or editor of the newspaper under this Act or under any other written law”. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act is punishable with a “fine not exceeding \$50,000” or “imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or both” (Section 33 (1)). The government also has the power to seize and detain illegal newspapers (Section 34) and to search for and seize illegal printing presses (Section 40).

The NPPA also regulates ownership of newspaper companies stating that any given individual or group can only own three percent or less of the total stock of a newspaper company. Section 10 (1b) of the NPPA allows two types of shareholders. Only persons approved by the government are allowed to buy ‘management shares’ (Section 10 (1c)) while others may buy ‘ordinary shares’. The difference between the two is with their voting powers, specifically on editorial policy and personnel decisions. Each management share vote is worth 200 times the vote of an ordinary share (Section 10 (11)). The power to approve the

acquisition of management shares allows the Singapore Government to influence the editorial governance of all local newspapers and magazines.

A 1986 amendment to the NPPA allowed the government's Ministry of Communication to reduce the number of copies of any foreign publication circulated in Singapore that is seen to engage in domestic politics. The Singapore Government continuously stresses that foreign newspapers may circulate in Singapore as foreign observers, while refraining from interfering in the country's domestic politics. Furthermore, it insists on the right of reply and refuses to allow editing of its statements.

Since 1990, offshore newspapers, unless exempted, must have a permit to circulate in Singapore. This permit can be issued subject to conditions under Section 23 (3) of the NPPA. Under Section 24 of the NPPA, the Minister may allow declared foreign newspapers (defined as those engaging in the domestic politics of Singapore) to continue circulation in Singapore and this approval may also be granted subject to conditions. Section 23 obliges foreign media to recruit a legal representative in the country and to pay a deposit of 200,000 Singapore dollars. In the past, several international and regional weekly newspapers, including *Time*, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Far Eastern Economic Review* and the defunct *Asiaweek*, have been affected by these provisions. Government officials also have a record for winning defamation suits against foreign publications.

In addition to specific laws that deal with libel, defamation and copyright infringement, there are a few other important laws that affect press operations. The 'Undesirable Publications Act' prohibits the sale, importation or dissemination of foreign publications defined as contrary to the public interest (Section 5 (1)). Under Section 8 of the 'Internal Security Act', the government has the power to detain suspects, including journalists, without judicial review in the interests of national security - a loosely defined term.

Singapore became the second country (after Malaysia) in Asia to introduce internet, in mid-1994. In 2005, 66 percent of all Singaporean households had internet access. According to a 2007 report by 'Reporters Without Borders', the government has increased its control over the internet, in particular during election times. In 2006, several legal cases were launched for posting news, podcasts or videos on the web. According to guidelines by Singapore's Media Development Authority (MDA), in view of the country's "multiracial, multi-religious nature", political websites are required to register with the authorities

for a licence.

Local newspapers have adapted to their specified functions of providing education and information within the existing setup in Singapore. Furthermore, Singaporeans appear generally happy with the content and coverage of their country by the local press, and do not necessarily want aggressive, combative or crusading journalism. The government alone has the right to set the national agenda and priorities, by virtue of having won elections and repeatedly receiving a mandate for its policies from the people.

THE STRAITS TIMES

Established in 1945 during British colonial rule, *The Straits Times* is Singapore's oldest

newspaper. After Singapore left the Federation of Malaya in 1965 and became an independent state, the paper became more locally focused and is today the main printed news source for the country's English language residents. With a daily circulation of 480,000 copies, almost 1.4 million people read the paper each day, making it the number one national newspaper. With nine news bureaus across Asia as well as Europe and the United States of America, and a worldwide network of other contributors, the paper "strives to be an authoritative provider of news and views, with special focus on Singapore and the Asian region". The paper possibly has the most extensive network of foreign correspondents of any Asian English-language newspaper. *The Straits Times'* regional focus is reflected heavily in its in-depth coverage of Asian affairs, which has increased to more than fifteen pages a day since, as one of its founding members, the paper helped set up the ANN in 1999. With four of its journalists involved in providing news and video content produced by Straits Times' journalists and professional expertise, to their Asian colleagues, the paper's dependence on foreign news wires has noticeably decreased. "The ANN", says Deputy Editor, Mr Felix Soh, "has integrated the different countries not only in terms of content but also in the important task of building personal and working relationships among Asian editors, which did not exist on such a scale before." He adds, "ANN has fulfilled its mission of reporting on Asia by Asians and for Asians."

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's population of 21 million people is composed of two main ethnic groups: Sinhalese, who form the overwhelming majority of approximately 69 percent, and Tamils, the largest minority group at around 18 percent. Throughout its history various external actors have left their mark on Sri Lankan culture and politics, often with consequences the nation still grapples with today. In the 14th century, a south Indian dynasty established a Tamil kingdom in north Sri Lanka. Two centuries later, the coastal areas of the island fell under Portuguese control before becoming a Dutch colony from 1658 until 1795.

In view of its strategic importance for the growing British Empire, Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, became a British colony in 1815. The British relinquished control over the island nation in 1948, one year after they left the Indian subcontinent. As Ceylon, the country became independent in 1948 and changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972. In the same year, the constitution introduced a unicameral parliamentary system with the prime minister, who belonged to the majority party in the parliament, as the head of government. Under the new Constitution of 1978, the polity changed to a presidential system with the president directly elected for a term of six years with full executive authority.

Since independence, domestic politics have been dominated by the violent struggle for cultural affirmation, political representation, economic advancement and linguistic parity between the nation's two main ethnic groups. Increasing discontent amongst the Tamils over their political disenfranchisement following independence gave rise to extremism manifested in the violent separatist movement of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In the past 20 years, the brutal civil war, which began in 1983, has claimed nearly 65,000 lives on both sides and continued to hamper the economic and political development of the country. Although the government and LTTE formalized a ceasefire in February 2002, violence between the two sides intensified again in 2006, and in January 2008 the government officially withdrew from the ceasefire. The demand for an independent Tamil state continues to be the overriding political issue in Sri Lanka.

In the mid-1970s, Sri Lanka began to turn away from its initial socialist orientation towards more market oriented policies, export oriented trade and encouragement of foreign investment. At the same time, the country's export

industry shifted from plantation crops to textiles and processed foods, insurance and banking. In 2006, plantation crops were about 15 percent of exports, while textiles and garments accounted for more than 60 percent.

While over 20 years of civil war drastically hampered the economic development of the country, Sri Lanka saw robust GDP growth rates of an average 4.5 percent throughout most of the last decade despite the devastation incurred by the Asian tsunami in late 2004. Remittances of over \$1 billion a year sent by the approximately 800,000 Sri Lankans who work abroad, contribute substantially to the domestic economy.

Media Landscape

Sri Lanka's media outlets are generally divided along linguistic and ethnic lines, with state and private media operators providing services in the main languages - Sinhala, Tamil and English. Of the approximately 200 newspapers in circulation, the most are published in Sinhalese, which is spoken by over 70 percent of the population. According to Damodar R. SarDesai⁸, in 2002, of 23 important newspapers, 10 were daily (four in Sinhala, and three each in Tamil and English); 11 were Sunday editions (five in Sinhala, two in Tamil and four in English); one publication appeared only on Wednesdays and another only on Saturdays.

Although circulation figures are generally not made public by the newspaper groups because of acute competition in advertising, the author estimates that in 2002 there were 587,500 copies of daily newspapers and 1,415,000 copies of Sunday newspapers with total readership of about 3.5 times those numbers.

The newspapers with the widest circulation in all three languages are owned by the state. The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited (ANCL), also known as 'Lake House', produces 20 publications in the three main languages. Nationalised in 1973, ANCL has the broadest outreach for distribution networks. It also benefits extensively from state advertising. The remaining papers are privately owned, many of them linked to political parties. In general, a partisan media culture is deeply entrenched in almost all Sri Lankan mainstream media.

8 Damodar R. SarDesai (2003) "Sri Lanka" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Gale: Farmington Hills, p. 875 - 884.

The state controls the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (radio), the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (television) and the ITN radio and television network. According to the “Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Act No 37” of 1966, all private broadcasting stations require government licensing. Similarly, the “Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation Act No 6” of 1982, grants licences for private television broadcasting.

There are several large private establishments that print daily newspapers and several weekend newspapers, in all three languages. Although radio and television were a government monopoly up to 1984, several privately owned television and radio stations have been established since the onset of liberalisation. All radio stations operate under the direction of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting whose mandate is to secure inter-ethnic harmony. Nonetheless, as the transmission capacity and reach of the private stations still remain limited, state owned electronic media enjoys the widest reach. According to a 2005 report published by the Sri Lanka based Centre for Policy Alternatives and its Danish partner, International Media Support, television is the principle source of news for 57 percent of Sri Lankans, followed by newspapers for 18 percent, radio for 18 percent and other sources for less than 10 percent. The authors state that 72 percent of all households in the country own or have access to a television, while 80 percent own or have access to a radio.

While internet access has been available via a local server based in the capital Colombo since 1995, computers are still beyond the purchasing power of the majority and internet access is restricted, particularly in rural areas.

Press Laws

Although the constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression, the government restricts these rights in practice, often using national security as the rationale, in particular during periods of intense civil war between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In the past, this has included censorship of newspapers and the electronic media, physical harassment of journalists, and government legal action against members of the press. According to a 2006 Report of the International Press Institute, on the media situation in Sri Lanka, there was a serious deterioration in security with threats, abductions and attacks committed by all parties in the conflict, particularly paramilitary and militia groups. Eight media workers have been killed since August 2005 and there have been numerous death threats and incidents of harassment, including

violent attempts to stop the distribution of newspapers. Even when evidence of the identity of alleged killers exists, little or no action has been taken by the relevant authorities. The International Federation of Journalists states in its sixth 'Annual IFJ Press Freedom Report for South Asia' that a range of emergency regulations has been introduced that restrict access to conflict affected areas, for civil society actors and the media. The regulations enable arbitrary arrest and detention, and control dissemination of information considered to be contrary to the interests of national security. Access to areas of the country's north and east, where military conflict is ongoing, is extremely restricted, and the state-created Media Centre for National Security (MCNS) has a monopoly on official information regarding the conflict.

Strict controls on the media were imposed through the emergency regulations introduced in December 2007, which broadly encompassed all activities that could be construed to have an impact on national security, and extended the scope of criminal liability to executive officers of corporate bodies. The report also found that censorship existed, although it was applied largely through indirect means. The government approved the reintroduction of state controlled regulation of the media through the Sri Lanka Press Council while the military also put pressure on the media. Furthermore, the willingness of politicians and others to denounce the media has reinforced self-censorship and made the free expression of opinion a life threatening activity. The decision by authorities to close satellite television services has hindered public access to foreign news programmes.

According to the Sri Lankan based Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lankan law contains many restrictions on the content of what may be published or broadcast, that go beyond acceptable limits on freedom of expression. Areas of law which are particularly problematic are civil defamation law, the law regarding contempt of court, secrecy and national security rules, emergency regulations, anti-terrorism regulations and the law on parliamentary privilege. The Official Secrets Act (OSA) makes it an offence to disclose "official secrets," which are loosely defined. Critics fear that the act causes journalists to self-censor their reporting on sensitive issues. In addition, the Press Council Law (PCL), 1973, prohibits publication of material that falls under the broad categories of obscenity and profanity, government decision making, fiscal policy, official secrets and defamation. Section 16(1), prohibits publication of proceedings of cabinet meetings without prior approval of the Secretary to the Cabinet. The act also prohibits the publication, of any matter under consideration by a minister

or the government, any official secret, or any matter relating to military, naval, air force or police establishments, equipment or installation, which is likely to be prejudicial to the defence and security of the country. Emergency regulations have been one of the most powerful means of censorship – particularly with regard to conflict reporting. The Public Security Ordinance No 25, 1947, empowers the President to issue regulations that appear to him or her to be necessary or expedient in the interests of public security, preservation of public order and the suppression of mutiny, riot or civil commotion, or for the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community. Emergency regulations take precedence over all other laws except the constitution, and once emergency has been declared the existence of a state of emergency cannot be questioned in court. Emergency rule lapsed in July 2001 but was invoked once more in late 2007.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), No 48, 1979, is usually discussed alongside emergency regulations. Enacted first as a temporary law to deal with the armed struggle by the Tamil separatist movement in 1979, the law became permanent in 1982 with the escalation of the conflict. While the PTA deals mainly with providing wide powers of search, arrest and detention to the police to deal with suspected terrorism, it also curtails reporting on certain issues. Criminal defamation has been used extensively in the past to silence critical reporting and to persecute editors and journalists. In 2002, Parliament unanimously passed a law abolishing criminal defamation. The government has yet to enact a Freedom of Information Act, despite having approved a draft version of the law at a cabinet meeting in 2003. Legislation on broadcasting in the country fails to provide independence, including editorial independence, and any future public service media must reflect public service values. Although urged to set aside its interests in all media organisations, and despite several committee reports reflecting this view, the government retains control of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (ANCL).

The media in Sri Lanka has historically been divided along ethnic lines, identifying with political movements and agendas that have promoted their ethnic and religious identities; a trend which dates back to colonial times. There is also little commitment on the part of both state and private electronic media to actively assist in creating understanding and easing ethnic tensions. However, this is partly due to the lack of a coherent national broadcasting policy framework that includes a commitment to diversity in programming and adequately portrays

the political, social and cultural dimensions of different communities, while ensuring editorial/programming freedom - particularly in relation to news and documentary broadcasts.



An ANN member since 2002, The Island is published by the Upali Newspapers group with its maiden edition dating back

to 4 February 1982. After a modest beginning the group now prints over 40,000 copies of its English language newspaper.

Chinese Taipei

Taipei's almost 23 million people are primarily ethnic Taiwanese, with Mandarin Chinese as the island's official language. Originally populated by Austronesian people, the island was colonized by the Dutch in the 17th century. Large numbers of Han Chinese from mainland China arrived in the wake of the defeat of the Ming dynasty in 1644. Ming Dynasty loyalists later defeated the Dutch and established a base of operations on the island. In 1895, military defeat forced China to cede Taiwan to Japan, which ruled over the island until the end of World War II. Following the Communist victory on the mainland in 1949, two million Chinese nationals fled to Taiwan and established a government using the 1946 Constitution drawn up for all of China.

Until 1987, Taiwan was ruled under martial law proclaimed by the ruling Kuomintang (KMT), which held a monopoly over political and military power. However, economic prosperity and widespread education led to increasing demands for political liberalisation. Between 1987 and 1992, restrictions were gradually lifted, and in 1996 and 2000, free and direct elections were held at all levels, including for president. The process of political liberalisation has positively manifested itself in the nation's press, its media and in widespread use of the internet.

Over the past 50 years, Taiwan has become one of Asia's big traders. It has achieved an economic miracle, becoming one of the world's top producers of computer technology. Despite restrictions on cross-strait links, China has overtaken the United States to become Taiwan's largest export market and its second-largest source of imports after Japan. China is also the island's number one destination for foreign direct investment. In 2007, Taiwan's GDP per capita stood at US\$29,800.

Media Landscape

Taiwan's economic prosperity allows for a thriving and highly competitive media market. Numerous media outlets, primarily in the broadcasting field, reflect a wide range of views.

Print Media

The liberalisation of publishing in 1987 initially caused a massive increase in the number of newspapers. However, readership has since dwindled and

many newspapers have been forced to shut down. Since the mid-1990s, many newspapers have gone online and some have merged with other industries. In 2006, a record number of five newspapers were forced to shut down, some having been in operation for decades. Intense competition from the internet and electronic media has been the major cause for these developments. The World Association of Newspapers states that in 2005, Taiwan's media consumers spent 188 minutes each day watching TV and 73 minutes using the internet, yet only 22 minutes reading newspapers. As a result, the market share of newspapers has fallen from 65 percent in the 1980s to 35 percent today. While the Government Information Office listed 602 newspapers in 2003, four years later the World Association of Newspapers reports only 27 surviving daily papers.

Four general interest morning newspapers contend for leadership in the Chinese language market. In 2006, they were: *Liberty Times* with a readership of 2.6 million, *United Daily News* with a readership of 1.9 million, and the *China Times* and *Apple Daily*, with readerships of 1.7 million each. The English language *Taiwan News*, *Taipei Times* and *China Post*, have managed to keep a firm hold on the market. *The Asian Wall Street Journal* and *The International Herald Tribune* also issue Taiwanese editions. Taiwan's four major newspaper conglomerates are, The China Times Group (CTG), publisher of the *China Times*; The United Daily News Group (UDNG), publisher of the *United Daily News*; The Union Group, publisher of the *Liberty Times*; and Next Media Limited, publisher of the *Apple Daily*. With the shrinking print media market, competition between these four newspaper conglomerates is increasing. In 2006, Taiwan's newspapers also faced competition from within the industry with the appearance of complimentary newspapers.

While there has been a phenomenal growth of non-political magazines in Taiwan, political magazines are suffering from competition from the internet and cable television. In particular, subscriptions for weekly and bi-weekly papers have declined. The successful new magazines are in the areas of finance and management, computer science and technology, women's issues and health.

Taiwan's newspapers must compete with broadcasting and new online media for advertising revenue. Between 2001 and 2002 alone, Taiwan's newspapers experienced a loss of 25.7 percent in advertising revenue, reports the World Association of Newspapers.

Internet

By early 2008, Taiwan had 15.4 million internet users, a 146 percent increase over the figure for 2000. Its online penetration rate in early 2008 was 67.2 percent. In 2008, Taiwan ranked eighth in Asia for its number of internet users.

Television

Public television has undergone major reorganisation since July 1, 1998, with the establishment of the Public Television Service (PTS) under provisions of the Public Television Law of May 1997. The PTS is an independent, non-profit station. Under the 1997 legislation, the PTS received a government subsidy of NT\$1.2 billion (US\$37.2 million), which will be reduced by 10 percent every year until it falls to half of the first year subsidy. Since its inception, the PTS has raised funds through programme sponsorship from businesses and industry, donations from individuals and corporations, sale of videotaped programs, and the leasing of its studios.

The growth of commercial television has paralleled that of public television, since 1962. In the 1990s, television in Taiwan took giant strides with increased satellite broadcasting and digital television. Since the 1990s, cable TV has challenged terrestrial broadcast television by cutting into its viewing numbers and advertising revenue. The take-up of multichannel cable TV stands at 85 percent of the population.

Radio

Radio broadcasting has grown since 1993 and the staggered release of frequencies has enabled an increase in radio broadcasting companies, to 170 radio stations. National broadcasting is governed by the Central Broadcasting System Establishment Statute 1998, which established the present Central Broadcasting System (CBS). It operates a variety network and news network in Mandarin Chinese, and a dialect network that transmits in seven dialects, including Southern Fujianese, Cantonese, Hakka, Mongolian and Tibetan. Radio Taipei International broadcasts in 11 foreign languages, and its Voice of Asia broadcasts in English, Mandarin, Thai and Bahasa Indonesia.

Media Laws

Since the end of martial law and the 1987 Emergency Decree, the newspaper industry and electronic media have grown dramatically and an independent

and lively press has emerged. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press enjoy constitutional protection. Chapter II, Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of China states, “The people shall have freedom of speech, teaching, writing and publication.” The press has taken on an important role as a conduit for public discourse on the democratic development of Taiwan, with little or no government interference. In view of the strained relationship with mainland China, allegations of leakage of state secrets and the corruption of national security have in the past led to isolated newspaper raids by the Public Prosecutor’s Office.



When the China Post joined the ANN in the autumn of 2008, it was the twentieth and for the time being, last member of the news network. The China Post is one of Taiwan’s three English

language newspapers. Founded in 1952, its circulation currently reaches 400,000 readers each day. Mr David Tzou, Information Director at the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Thailand, welcomes ANN membership as a vehicle for increasing knowledge about Taiwan in other parts of the world. “People in Taiwan want their story to be told as much as possible”, he said. “Through joining ANN, I think the success story of Taiwan can be made known not only in this part of the world but also in Europe and America.”

Kingdom of Thailand

Thailand, with a land area of 513,115 square kilometres, is located at the heart of Southeast Asia flanked by Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia. Its population of 64 million is predominantly Thai (75 percent), followed by Chinese (14 percent) and other ethnic groups such as Malays and various hill tribes (11 percent). The majority of the people are Buddhist (94.6 percent), and Muslims (4.6 percent) who form the largest minority religious group are concentrated in the southern tip of Thailand. The national language is Thai, although many other regional and ethnic dialects are also spoken. English is used but primarily by the educated elite.

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian nation that has never been colonized by a European power. The 13th century kingdom of Sukothai is regarded by Thais as the beginning of the Thai nation. It was later known as Siam under the Kingdom of Ayudhya until it was renamed Thailand in 1939.

While Southeast Asian nations were systematically conquered by European powers in the 19th century, the establishment of warm relations with the West and the implementation of Western-oriented reforms from King Mongkut's rule onwards, served to keep European colonization at bay. The weak rule of the monarchy between 1910 and 1932 culminated in a bloodless coup and replacement of the monarchy's absolute power with a constitutional monarchy.

During the Second World War, the Thai government allied itself with Japan. Later, the floundering post-war government was replaced with an autocratic military government between 1948 and 1973. A "Students' Revolution" paved the way for the restoration of democracy.

A bloodless military coup to unseat Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2006, was followed by the adoption of a new constitution by referendum in August 2007 and the holding of national elections in December 2007. A democratically elected government led by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej was sworn in on February 2008. Thailand is currently grappling with violence in its southern provinces brought about by separatist demands from its minority Muslim population.

Prior to World War II, the Thai economy depended heavily on rice exports. Since then, Thailand's economy has broadened to include the production of agricultural products and the development of a manufacturing sector. In recent times, Thailand has also become a key regional financial centre. However, wealth

has not been evenly distributed, with poverty particularly pronounced in the north, northeast and far south.

The 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis revealed structural weaknesses such as an unsustainably large current account deficit, chronic public infrastructure problems and high private sector borrowing for speculation in the property market. Nevertheless, Thailand seems to have recovered from the crisis and was ranked among the best performing East Asian economies between 2002 and 2004. With a strong export sector, Thailand's GDP growth in 2007 was 4.7 percent. By this year, the tourism sector had also largely recovered from the 2004 tsunami. Challenges to Thailand's economy include external issues, such as the uncertain global markets and economies that may impact on its exports.

Media Landscape

Thailand's media sector is well-developed and relatively free compared with neighbouring countries, despite certain state regulations. Moreover, citizens' rights, including their right to freedom of expression, are explicitly detailed in the 1997 Constitution, although the law also permits the government to restrict press freedom in exceptional cases. The degree of press freedom is often dependent on the individuals in power.

The print media is mostly privately run and independent of the Thai government, which is not allowed to finance newspapers. Although the economic hardships brought about by the 1997 Asian financial crisis led to the closing down of several newspapers, the number of publications has steadily increased in recent years. According to the World Association of Newspapers, the total number of paid-for daily papers increased from 35 in 2002, to 45 in 2006. The majority of these papers are in Thai although there are also Chinese and English publications.

The two key English language daily newspapers are the *Bangkok Post*, which represents conservative and business perspectives, and *The Nation*, which is inclined towards critical and liberal views. The six Chinese language daily papers are *Sing Sian Yit Pao*, *Tong Hwa Yit Pao*, *Universal Daily*, *Asia Daily*, *Sinn Chung Yuan Pao* and *Jing Hwa Yit Pao*. The Chinese papers have limited circulation as most of the Chinese people living in Thailand have been assimilated into mainstream culture. The top ten paid-for daily papers in 2006 were all in the Thai language with the *Thai Rath* leading with a circulation of 1,200,000 copies, followed by the *Daily News* with 900,000 copies and *Kom Chat Leuk* with

800,000 copies. Both the *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* tend to be conservative and favour the status quo.

The Thai News Agency is the only news agency in Thailand and is run by the Mass Communication Organisation of Thailand (MCOT), a government agency. Even though the Thai literacy rate is very high at 92.6 percent, newspapers only reached 28 percent of adults in 2006 (World Association of Newspapers).

The internet is subject to censorship by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) cyber inspection team. The World Association of Newspapers reported that prior to the September 2006 coup, most of the banned websites touted pornography or illegal drugs, but after the coup many websites, chat rooms and blogs critical of the coup, were blocked. 'Reporters Without Borders' also observed that political discussion forums and websites close to separatist movements in the south of Thailand, were shut down in 2007. Although internet penetration was low in 2007 with only 13 percent of the population having access (Internet World Stats), internet users increased from 37 per 1,000 people in 2000, to 110 per 1,000 people in 2005. Access to personal computers more than doubled from 28 per 1,000 people in 2000, to 58 per 1,000 people in 2005 (World Bank). Thirty seven percent of schools were connected to the internet in 2005 (World Bank).

Compared to print, broadcasting media is subject to greater state regulation, as the government and military control virtually all radio and television stations. According to the World Association of Newspapers, in 2006 the government owned and controlled all 524 officially registered AM and FM stations, while the military and police owned 230 radio stations - justified on grounds of national security. Radio stations are required to renew their licenses every year and radio signals are broadcast via government transmitters. The law also dictates that stations must broadcast 30 minutes of government produced newscast, twice daily. Radio is the most popular means through which the government disseminates news and information.

Television is popular among Thais. According to the World Bank, the proportion of households with televisions in recent years has been consistently high at 91 percent in 2000 and 92 percent in 2005. The two key players of the television industry are MCOT and the Thai Royal Army. Of Thailand's six terrestrial TV stations, two are owned by MCOT (Channel 3 and *Modernine*), two by the Royal Thai Army (Channel 5 and BBTv) and one by the government's Public Relations Department (the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand).

The sixth and most watched channel, iTV, was bought by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, in 2000. However, after the 2006 coup, the channel was handed over to MCOT but since 2008 has been transformed into TPBS, a UHF-band TV station. Cable and satellite TV are also available.

Press Laws

The rights and liberties of Thai citizens are enshrined in Article 3 of the 1997 Constitution. While Section 37 states that “[a] person shall enjoy the liberty of communication by lawful means,” this provision adds a qualification that “[t]he censorship, detention or disclosure of communication between persons including any other act disclosing a statement in the communication between persons shall not be made except by virtue of the provisions of the law specifically enacted for security of the State or maintaining public order or good morals.” Similar qualifications are made in Section 39 which pertains to the “liberty to express his or her opinion, make speeches, write, print, publicise, and make expression by other means,” and Section 58 relating to the “right to get access to public information in possession of a Courts, agency, Courts enterprise or local government.” The impartiality of the media is reinforced in Section 41 of Article 3, which states that “Officials or employees in the private sector undertaking newspaper or radio or television broadcasting businesses shall enjoy the liberty to present news and express their opinions under the constitutional restrictions without the mandate of any State agency, State enterprise or the owner of such businesses; provided that it is not contrary to their professional ethics.”

In sum, restrictions to freedom of speech and press are permitted by law, to maintain national security and public order, preserve the rights of others, protect public morals, and to curtail criticisms of the royal family and insults to Buddhism. The police are empowered by law to close newspapers or printing presses, with a court order, in times of war or national emergency, and to restrict or confiscate publications deemed to disturb the peace, interfere with public safety or offend public morals. The state exercised its prerogative to curb media freedom in a crisis in July 2005, when an Emergency Decree was imposed. However, even though the decree authorized censorship of newspapers and the banning of publications, these measures were not enforced (World Association of Newspapers). An example of censorship, in response to criticisms of the royal family, was the blocking of the popular video-sharing website, ‘YouTube’, by the government in April 2007 for carrying content critical of King Bhumibol

Adulyadej. The website was only unblocked when the videos in question were removed. This incident led to the adoption of the Computer Crime Act in July 2007 that allowed police to seize computer equipment from anyone suspected of sending messages with insulting or pornographic content. The new law also stipulates that internet service providers must keep personal details of internet users for 90 days and authorities have the power to check this information without any legal requirements.

There is also a provision in Section 40 of Article 3 of the 1997 Constitution, which calls for the creation of “an independent regulatory body having the duty to distribute the frequencies [...] and supervise radio or television broadcasting and telecommunication businesses as provided by the law.” However, this has yet to materialize.

The 2006 Interim Constitution did not repeal junta bans restricting freedom of speech, assembly and political activity. Nevertheless, reforms are underway to check the influence of the military on the media and to increase private sector opportunities.



Initially called *The Voice of the Nation* when the paper was founded in 1971, Thailand’s premier English

language broadsheet is known today by the shorter name, *The Nation*. Owned by the Nation Multimedia Group, the paper publishes 68,000 copies daily from its main news bureau in the Thai capital, Bangkok. Having grown out of the student movement of the 1970s, the progressive paper has established itself as the country’s number one English language publication and lists professionals and the business community amongst the 240,000 people who read the paper every day.

As a founding member of the ANN, *The Nation* plays a core role in the network and houses the ANN office in the same corridor as its own bustling news room. Given the close proximity of the two news bureaus, staff at *The Nation* can often be found lending a helping hand in the everyday running of the network. Alongside the news stories and photos which *The Nation* makes available for publication in ANN member newspapers, it also promotes industry

related activities such as conferences or workshops, with the aim of deepening cooperation amongst network members and creating a framework for the development of new ideas.

The Nation's pan-Asian mission is evident in the comprehensive coverage of Asian affairs, which has grown to five pages daily since collaboration in the news network began in 1999. The paper dedicates one page daily to ANN news stories in its print edition while also dedicating a section on its website to ANN news.

“ANN membership”, says the paper’s president and current Executive Director of ANN, Mr. Pana Janviroy, “has injected dynamism into Asian journalistic activities and has cemented this unique form of regional cooperation.” He adds that, “ANN is one of the most successful models of pan-Asian cooperation in the private sector, through which individual nations and national papers have been able to gain a regional dimension.”

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is bound by the South China Sea to the east, Laos and Cambodia to the west and China to the north. Its land area of over 331,000 square kilometres makes it the fourth largest country in Southeast Asia. According to United Nations data, Vietnam had a population of 86 million people in 2007.

Vietnam's early history was characterized by a continuous struggle for autonomy, beginning with a thousand years of Chinese domination, which lasted until the 19th century. External control was imposed once again in the 19th century, when Vietnam was occupied by the French, following Japanese invasion during World War II. Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence in 1945 but failed to receive recognition from the international community, resulting in military conflict between France and Vietnam which lasted until France admitted defeat in 1954.

The Geneva Accord left Vietnam divided into two military zones but endorsed reunification through a general election in 1956. However, motivated by Cold War Communist fears the United States began to support a separate southern state. Mounting tension between north and south culminated in full scale war in 1964. When the southern capital of Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese in 1975, the country was reunited under Communist rule.

Decades of military war and a rigid centralised economy have in the past severely restricted Vietnam's development. In view of the economic crisis that followed reunification, the Sixth Party Congress approved a broad economic reform package in 1986. The policy of renewal introduced market reforms and allowed for substantial progress in significantly reducing poverty. The 1997 Asian financial crisis highlighted the problems in the Vietnamese economy and temporarily allowed opponents of reform to slow progress towards a market-oriented economy. However, since 2001, Vietnamese authorities have reaffirmed their commitment to economic liberalisation and international integration, by implementing the structural reforms needed to modernize the economy and produce more competitive, export-driven industries. Vietnam became a member of the ASEAN Free Trade Area in 2001 and joined the World Trade Organisation in 2007, following over a decade of negotiation.

Media landscape

Since the beginning of the renewal period, Vietnam's print media sector has expanded rapidly. In 2005, some 700 newspapers and periodicals were published. According to the World Association of Newspapers, the number of paid-for daily newspapers and their average daily circulation remained consistent at 28 and 2,600 respectively between 2002 and 2006. These include two English language daily papers - *Việt Nam News* and the business newspaper, *Saigon Times Daily*, and the country's only national French language daily, *Le Courrier du Vietnam*. *Nhân Dân* (People's Daily) is the primary national newspaper of the Vietnamese Communist Party and features transcripts of party speeches and articles written by party leaders. The paper is obligatory reading material for all government and party workers and has a circulation of almost half a million. *Tap Chi Cong San* (Communist Review) is a monthly government journal designed for both domestic and international readership circulating to several hundred thousand readers.

Other nationally distributed newspapers include *Nguoi Viet Daily News*, *Tap Chi Cong Doan* (Trade Union Review), *Phu Nu Vietnam* (Vietnamese Women), and *Quan Doi Nhân Dân* (People's Army). In addition to national papers, many local newspapers are circulated, with some published in the languages of ethnic minorities. Vietnam also publishes a number of periodicals directed at an international audience and are published in several languages including English and French.

The Vietnam News Agency (VNA) is the official government wire service that releases and receives news to and from Vietnamese and international sources. The daily Vietnam News Agency is an English language press release that contains items the government considers most significant for distribution.

Despite the high number of publications and Vietnam's high literacy rate of 90.3 percent (United Nations data 2007/8) television has established itself as the main medium of communication. According to the World Bank, 83 percent of all households owned a television in 2005. Vietnam's Central Television network (Vietnam Television) was established in 1970 and broadcasts from Hanoi. In addition, each major city and most of the 59 provinces have their own television stations. Like all media in the country, television programming is directly controlled by the government. The law

limits access to satellite television to top officials, foreigners, luxury hotels and the press.

The state-run radio station, *Èai Tieng nói Việt Nam* (The Voice of Vietnam), has broadcast internationally from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City since 1986, in twelve languages as well as minority dialects. Vietnam has also recorded an annual 20 percent internet growth since 2001, with more than eighteen million users in 2007, as reported by Internet World Stats.

Press Laws

In line with Communist doctrine, the role of Vietnam's media is to communicate party policies to the masses. The Communist Party of Vietnam and the government control all print, broadcast and electronic media. Control is exercised through the Ministry of Culture and Information.

Vietnam's print media is subject to the Press Law, which was passed by the National Assembly in 1989 and subsequently amended in 1999. While it broadly protects press freedom and other freedom of expression, the provisions of the press law are subject to broadly defined criminal and national security laws. The government controls editorial appointments and approves stories for publication. In July 2006, Decree 56/2006/ND-CP, known as the Administrative Sanctions on Cultural Information Activities, came into effect. It imposes fines for crimes such as, denying revolutionary achievements; defaming the nation, great persons and national heroes; slandering and wounding the prestige of agencies and organisations.

Print journalists are required to follow the Code of Ethics of the Vietnam Journalist's Association. Foreign journalists must be approved by the Foreign Ministry's press centre and they must be based in Hanoi. Local staff working for foreign media must be registered with the ministry.

Internet access is available through a limited number of domestic, state-owned internet service providers that are required to store information transmitted on the internet, for at least 15 days. Vietnam's cyber-cafes are obliged to register the personal information of their customers, to store records of internet sites visited by customers for 30 days, and to cooperate with public security officials in monitoring internet activities. The government uses firewalls to block Web sites that it deems politically or culturally inappropriate.



Headquartered in Vietnam's capital Hanoi and with a daily circulation of 30,000 copies, *Việt Nam News* is the country's

leading English language paper. Established on 17 June 1991, the government owned paper caters mainly to the business community, the diplomatic corps, government officials, academics and students. It has a daily readership of over 65,000 people.

Having joined ANN in 1999, *Việt Nam News* is among those network members who have benefited most from membership. Whereas the paper would previously dedicate three pages on average to regional matters, it now allocates between four and five pages to reporting on Asian affairs. Six members of staff are involved in ANN work, providing news and photos for their colleagues abroad while selecting material from the joint news pool for publication in their own paper.

Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Nguyen Tien Le, is certain of the benefits of ANN membership for the paper and its readers, in particular the greater emphasis on Asian business, social and cultural matters. "While wire services remain essential to the paper", he explains, "*Việt Nam News* now has the opportunity to give greater depth to news stories on Asian affairs by complementing material received through the wires, with local perspectives provided by ANN colleagues." From a professional standpoint, the sharing of knowledge and experience is of particular importance to the paper while from the perspective of the Asian community, news exchange in the format of the ANN takes the political process of regional integration and cooperation to the 'grassroots'.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) was founded in 1956. Originally called the Society for Christian Democratic Education Work, it was set up at Eichholz Manor near Wesseling. On October 13 1964, the

organisation supporting the Eichholz Political Academy changed its name to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for Political Education and Student Promotion, after the former German Chancellor. Since then, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has expanded significantly. It operates two education centres and 16 education institutes in Germany. The organisation has also grown worldwide, with 200 projects in over 120 countries.

NORMS AND VALUES

At a **national and international level**, the foundation supports political education to promote peace, freedom and justice. Its key concerns include consolidating democracy, promoting the unification of Europe, intensifying transatlantic relations and development policy cooperation.

As a **think-tank and consulting agency**, KAS develops scientific background information and current analyses, breaking the ground for political action. The foundation's academy in Berlin provides a forum for discourse about issues of future relevance in politics, the economy, the church, society and science.

At **meetings and congresses**, KAS brings together people who 'have something to say'. Each year, the foundation organises more than 2,500 events attended by 145,000 people in Germany alone.

KAS provides moral and material support to **gifted young people** not only from Germany but also from Central and Eastern Europe and from the developing countries. It keeps close contacts with its alumni, who now number more than 8,800.

Exhibitions, readings and awards complement the foundation's portfolio. It supports young artists, and the renowned literature prize of the KAS is awarded once a year. It has dedicated projects to promote young journalists and since

1980, the organisation has been awarding a prize for local journalism The Social Market Economy Prize of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been awarded since 2002 to persons of outstanding merit, for preserving and developing social market economies.

HISTORY OF THE SINGAPORE OFFICE

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation Regional Office in Asia was set up in Singapore in May 2002, after having been located in Manila, the Philippines, for a decade. The decision for relocation lay in the belief that Singapore was better placed as a regional centre. At the outset, there were three members of staff in charge of the entire office, which comprised Politics, Legal and Media Departments. Politics became a self-directed department in 2002 with the Legal and Media Departments following soon after.

THE REGIONAL MEDIA PROGRAMME

The KAS Media Programme Asia was established by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in 1996, to promote a free, responsible and ethical press in Southeast Asia, with particular focus on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Dialogue among leading journalists in the region is facilitated by way of regional conferences and meetings. The programme has since expanded to include East Asia (i.e. South Korea and Japan) and South Asia (i.e. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh). The Media Programme Asia is currently based in the Singapore regional office.

Sources

- Attorney General's Chamber Brunei Darussalam (2002), *Brunei Newspapers Act*, revised edition 2002, <http://www.agc.gov.bn/>
- Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Country Briefs*, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geol/>
- British Broadcasting Corporation News, *Country Profiles*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
- Centre for Policy Alternatives and International Media Support (IMS) (2005) *A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (excluding the North and East)*, http://www.cpalanka.org/research_papers/Study_Media_Sripercent20Lanka.pdf
- Chongkittavorn, K (2004) "Thailand" in: vom Busch, W (ed.) *The Asia Media Directory*, Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, pp.197-206.
- CIA: The World Factbook, *Country Profiles*, <https://www.cia.gov>.
- Damodar R. SarDesai (2003) "Sri Lanka" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Gale: Farmington Hills, p. 875 - 884.
- Desai, Damodar Sar (2003) "Bangladesh" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 76 – 82.
- Davies, J B (2003) "Laos" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., p. 549.
- Epstein, B W (2003) "Pakistan" in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 2, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc.
- Federal Bureau of Statistics Pakistan, *Media and Recreation Statistics*, http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/statistics/social_statistics/social_statistics.
- Federation of Nepalese Journalists, *Legal Provisions*, http://www.fnjnepal.org/legal_provision.php
- Freedom House (2007) *Freedom of the Press 2007 – Pakistan*, www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/pakistan_FTP_07.pdf
- Gobel, R & Eschborn, N (2005) "Indonesia" in: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (ed.) *KAS Democracy Report. Media and Democracy*, Bonn: Bouvier

- Publishing Company, pp. 159-176.
- Government of Bangladesh, Chief Adviser's office, *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, <http://www.pmo.gov.bd/constitution/index.htm>
- Government of Japan, *Constitution of Japan*, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html
- Government of Malaysia (2006), The Commission of Law Revision Malaysia, *Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 (incorporating all amendments up to 1 January 2006)*, <http://www.agc.gov.my/agc/oth/Akta/Vol.%207/Act%20301.pdf>
- Government of Malaysia, *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*, http://www.malaysia-today.net/malaysia_constitution.pdf
- Government of Malaysia, Laws of Malaysia, Act 15, *Sedition Act 1948 (incorporating all amendments up to 1 January 2006)*, <http://www.agc.gov.my/agc/oth/Akta/Vol.%201/Act%2015.pdf>
- Government of Malaysia, Laws of Malaysia, Act 588, *Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (incorporating all amendment up to 1 January 2006)*, http://www.msc.com.my/cyberlaws/act_communications.asp
- Government of Singapore (2006), Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, *Infocomm usage by household and individuals 2000 – 2005*, <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/papers/people/ssnmar06-pg17-19.pdf>
- Government of Singapore (2007), The Singapore Department of Statistics, *Singapore Yearbook of Statistics 2007 – Culture and Recreation*, <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/reference/yos/statsT-culture.pdf>
- Government of Singapore (2008), Ministry of Trade and Industry, *Singapore in Brief 2008*, <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/reference/sib2008.pdf>
- Government of Singapore (2008), Singapore Department of Statistics, *Per Capita GDP at Current Market Prices*, <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/themes/economy/hist/gdp.html>
- Government of Singapore, *Constitution of the Republic of Singapore*, <http://agcvldb4.agc.gov.sg/>
- Government of Singapore, *Singapore Newspaper and Printing Presses Act*, <http://agcvldb4.agc.gov.sg/>
- Government of Singapore, *Undesirable Publications Act*, <http://agcvldb4.agc.gov.sg/>

- Government of the Republic of Korea, *Constitution of the Republic of Korea*, <http://english.ccourt.go.kr/home/english/welcome/republic.jsp>
- Hasan, J (2004) “Media, Democracy and Human Rights in Bangladesh” in: *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 113 – 118.
- Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2063* (2007), http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nepal_Interim_Constitution2007.pdf
- International Federation of Journalists (2008) *Sixth Annual IFJ Press Freedom Report for South Asia (2007-2008)*, pp. 27–29, <http://asiapacific.ifj.org/assets/docs/112/252/0121470-3bbb1fc.pdf>
- International Federation of Journalists (2008), *IFJ Welcomes “New Era” as Pakistan Sweeps Away Media Restrictions*, <http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-welcomes-new-era-as-pakistan-sweeps-away-media-restrictions->
- International Press Institute (2006) *World Press Freedom Review – Taiwan*, http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom_detail.html?country=/KW0001/KW0005/KW0133/
- Internet World Stats, *Internet Usage in Asia*, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm#asia>
- Jae-won Lee (2003) “South Korea” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 2, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 840 – 855.
- Johnson, L (2003) “Malaysia” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 589 – 600.
- Cambodian Defenders Project, *Kingdom of Cambodia Press Law*, http://www.cdpcambodia.org/press_law.asp
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., *About Us – Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/4/>
- Korea Press Foundation (2005) *Media Facts*, http://eng.kpf.or.kr/eng/html/media/facts_2005_02.php
- Library of Congress, *Country Data: India*, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-6126.html>
- Lyman, R B (2003) “Japan” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills:

- Gale Group, Inc., pp. 500 – 512.
- Unnithan N. Prabha (2003) “Singapore” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 2, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 819 – 826.
- Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, <http://pfuj.info/site/>
- Pakistan Penal Code, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/1860/actXLVof1860.html>
- Pakistan Press Foundation (2007), *Pakistan Media Comes of Age Despite Rising Violence*, www.pakistanpressfoundation.org
- People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Regulations Concerning Foreign Journalists and Permanent Offices of Foreign Media organizations*, <http://ipc.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wgjzzhznx/xgfg/t286114.htm>
- Puy Kea (2005) “Cambodia” in: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (ed.) *KAS Democracy Report. Media and Democracy*, Bonn: Bouvier Publishing Company, pp. 89 – 106.
- Quinn, S (2008) *Asia’s Media Innovators*, Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Reporters Sans Frontières (2007) *Singapore – Annual Report*, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20796
- Reporters Sans Frontières (2008) *Thailand – Annual Report 2008*, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=25691
- Reporters Sans Frontières (2008) *Laos Annual Report 2008*, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=25655
- Reporters Sans Frontières (2008) *Nepal Annual Report 2008*, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=25674
- Reporters Sans Frontières (2007) *Pakistan Annual Report 2007*, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20794
- Schafer, E D (2003) “Cambodia” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., p. 147.
- Schafer, E D (2003) “Nepal” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 2, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 641 – 644.
- Schafer, E D (2003) “Vietnam” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A*

- Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 2, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 1080 – 1081.
- Singapore Press Holdings, <http://www.sph.com.sg/>
- Sison, MN (2001) “Philippines: Elusive Access to Information”, *World Press Review*, Vol. 48, No. 12, <http://www.worldpress.org/specials/press/phil.htm>.
- Smith, AL (2001) “Indonesia: Transforming the Leviathan” in: Funston, J *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 74 – 119.
- The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, As amended by the First Amendment of 1999, the Second Amendment of 2000, the Third Amendment of 2001 and the Fourth Amendment of 2002, <http://www.us-asean.org/Indonesia/constitution.htm>
- The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, <http://www.chanrobles.com/philsupremelaw1.htm>.
- The 1997 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/th00000_.html.
- The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>
- The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, <http://www.usconstitution.net/china.html#Article35>.
- The Jakarta Post (18.6.2008) *Pakistan’s ‘The Nation’ joins Asia News Network*, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/06/18/pakistan039s-039the-nation039-joins-asia-news-network.html>
- UNdata, *Illiteracy rates*, <http://data.un.org>
- United Nations Development Programme (2007), *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 269 – 272 & 279.
- World Association of Newspapers (2004) *World Press Trends: Brunei Darussalam*, Paris: Zenith Media, p. 81
- World Association of Newspapers (2004) *World Press Trends: Laos*, Paris: Zenith Media, p. 218.
- World Association of Newspapers (2004) *World Press Trends: Nepal*, Paris: Zenith Media, p. 263.
- World Association of Newspapers (2004) *World Press Trends: South Korea*, Paris:

- Zenith Media, pp. 217-219.
- World Association of Newspapers (2005) *World Press Trends*, <http://www.wanpress.org/article2825.html>
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Bangladesh*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 182-183.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: India*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 372-378.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Indonesia*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 379-382.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Japan*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 410-417.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Malaysia*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 475-479.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Thailand*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 692-695.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007) *World Press Trends: Vietnam*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 754-757.
- World Association of Newspapers (2007), *World Press Trends: China*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 242-248.
- World Association of Newspapers, *World Press Trends 2007 – Pakistan*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 553-554.
- World Association of Newspapers, *World Press Trends 2007 – Taiwan*, Paris: Zenith Media, pp. 681-685.
- World Bank (2008), World Development Indicators database, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GNIPC.pdf>
- World Bank, *ICT at a glance tables*, <http://www.worldbank.org/>
- Xing, Zhigang (2004) “China” in vom Busch, W (ed.) *The Asia Media Directory*, Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Foundation Singapore, pp. 39-54.
- Yoder, L (2003) “Indonesia” in: Quick, A C (ed.) *World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Farmington Hills: Gale Group, Inc., pp. 447 – 459.

Interviews & Personal Correspondence

Anam, Mahfuz; Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh)

Bayuni, Endy M; Chief Editor, *The Jakarta Post* (Indonesia)

Choi, Nam-hyun; Editor-in-Chief, *The Korea Herald* (South Korea)

Haji Bujang Bin Haji Masu'ut, Group Editor-In-Chief, *The Brunei Times* (Brunei)

Janviroj, Pana; President, *The Nation* (Thailand)

Kumar, Ravindra; Editor and Managing Director, *The Statesman* (India)

Ng Poh Tip; Group Editor / Education Adviser, *The Star* (Malaysia)

Nguon, Serath; Editor of Political Section, *Rasmei Kampuchea* (Cambodia)

Nguyen, Tien Le; Deputy Editor-in-Chief, *Việt Nam News* (Vietnam)

Pook Ah Lek; Editor-in-Chief, *Sin Chew Daily* (Malaysia)

Pradhan, Prateek; Editor, *The Kathmandu Post* (Nepal)

Razmounry, Savankhone; Director General and Editor-in-Chief, *Vientiane Times* (Laos)

Saeyoon, Suthichai; Group Editor-in-Chief, *The Nation* (Thailand)

Sato, Hidenori; Assistant Editor, *The Daily Yomiuri* (Japan)

Soh, Felix; Deputy Editor, *The Straits Times* (Singapore)

Yambot, Isagani; Publisher, *Philippine Daily Enquirer* (The Philippines)

Zhou, Li; Deputy Managing Director, *China Daily* (China)



The ANN on its 10th Anniversary – Achievements and Aspirations

Although the ANN is merely one decade old it already boasts a remarkable number of achievements and initiatives. The core feature of this unique model of pan-Asian cooperation remains the daily exchange of news and photographs, which feed into the ANN website and the weekly *AsiaNews* magazine. In addition, the alliance has expanded cooperation into several new areas including, regional conferences; an annual photo contest for Asian photographers; the organisation of dialogue forums for Asian and European leaders and editors, on issues of mutual concern; the creation of professional training opportunities for journalists from ANN newspapers; and the provision of pan-Asian advertising for Asia-focused companies.

Building a Brand Name

The swift expansion of the network's scope of activities is, first and foremost, testimony to the 'can do' spirit of all its members as well as their firm belief in the added value of pan-Asian cooperation for the future of the entire region. Secondly, it is a reflection of the growing regional and international recognition of the ANN as a professional news alliance. "The presence of the ANN is increasingly acknowledged by decision makers both in the political and business arena," explained Zhu Ling of *China Daily*. "We have gone beyond mere exchange of content to jointly work on a number of projects including the *AsiaNews* weekly magazine and the organisation of the annual ANN photo competition."

Most important for the successful branding of the ANN has been the extensive and in-depth coverage of Asian affairs. “When the tsunami happened, when World Cup soccer happened, when there was this big train crash in India, when there was a coup in Bangkok; who else could report about all this better than an Asian?” said Suthichai of Thailand’s Nation Multimedia Group.

A further indicator of the success of the ANN is the noticeable strengthening of the Asian perspective of regional developments, shown by the increased use of ANN stories in publications across the region. Ravindra Kumar, Editor and Managing Director of India’s *The Statesman*, pointed to the example of India “where there is a multiplicity of media, especially English language newspapers, there are hundreds of them.” “However”, he explained, “we [ANN member *The Statesman*] are pretty much recognized as the one newspaper which has a real trans-national presence. Prateek Pradhan, Editor of Nepal’s *The Kathmandu Post*, added that it is his paper’s membership in ANN that gives his readers a competitive edge. “Our readers gain a new perspective, the Asian perspective of the news. If anything happens [...] the wire service has one perspective, basically from foreign correspondents, European and American correspondents, and it is their view. You don’t get the local flavour. [...] From the network, I believe my readers will get a local flavour of the news.”

Finally, the remarkable expansion of ANN’s combined readership, which encompasses 50 million in 2008, has not gone unnoticed. Today, the network is taking its first tentative step towards becoming the advertising platform of choice for companies seeking access to the Asian consumer market. Both its rich and insightful content, as well as its geographical reach, are making the ANN a core player in the regional media scene and increasingly attractive to international advertisers.

Towards a Professional, Responsible and Ethical Press in Asia

As has already been mentioned, the ANN is not simply a joint business enterprise. All ANN members stand united in the belief that mutual help and support will allow Asian media to take its rightful place on the international stage, next to its Western counterparts. In this respect, the excellent job the network does in providing training opportunities for Asian journalists cannot be emphasised enough. Indeed, the ANN is central to regional efforts for increasing professional standards in journalism. The annual programme of seminars and educational tours, which is part of the ANN staff exchange programme, is also important.

Increasing Intra-Asian Dialogue

Besides improving professional standards, cooperation within the ANN also supports a wider process of regional integration as intra-Asian dialogue helps to build mutual trust between Asian countries. Everyday there is an exchange of around 100 articles amongst twenty Asian newspapers that shows very clearly the intensity of this intra-Asian dialogue. Pointing towards the heterogeneity of the Asian continent, Prateek Pradhan underlined the important facilitating role the network plays in tackling remaining ignorance on Asian matters within Asia itself. “Asia is such a diverse and big continent and people don’t know enough about each other. [...] There is so much to learn from each other, but we are not doing anything about it. Even our decision makers are not doing anything about it.” “Through the ANN”, he explained, “we get to understand each other, and that is beneficial to Asian people.” The members of the network are rightfully proud of their achievements in fostering closer relations between countries whose relationships in the political sphere are not always running smoothly. “If you look at it politically, all the countries in Asia have issues with each other. China has issues with Japan, Japan has issues with South Korea, Malaysia has issues with Singapore, Thailand has issues with Singapore; everybody has issues with everybody. But as journalists in ANN, we can get along.” explained Felix Soh.

The cooperation between the different papers appears to even transcend political divides that seem insurmountable in international relations, such as the strained relations between China and Taipei. In 2008, ANN included a paper from Taipei in its ranks with the full support of its Chinese colleagues. For Singaporean Felix Soh the reason is clear. The initiative for deepening cooperation has always been taken collectively by the ANN members and forward moves have only been taken when everybody felt the time was right. “We don’t want to rush things”, he said. “We should not be so impatient and say ‘I want this today’ but build up our cooperation slowly.” The result is an organically-grown mechanism that “helps to improve understanding among Asian countries”. “Of course”, he added, “there are plenty of artificial forums and conferences and all that, but here is one forum that we developed ourselves over the years.” Indeed, it is the natural development of the network, firmly based on personal friendships and mutual respect, which makes the ANN so successful. Felix Soh recalled various past attempts at creating similar networks – even an attempt by ASEAN itself – all of which failed. It is because of the personal character of the ANN and its collective approach to making decisions “that the network has been able to blossom. “[W]e

have been friends long before we formed this network, we accept each other and we don't try to impose our thinking on each other," said Suthichai.

The Road Ahead - Challenges ...

The network's members share a great sense of optimism and enthusiasm about its future, with a wide range of ideas in circulation on how to exploit the full potential of their cooperation. Yet, as Pana Janviroj cautioned, pan-Asian cooperation is not easy. The physical distance between the various members alone makes cooperation time-consuming and, at times, hampers the implementation of joint decisions and visions, noted the President of Thailand's *The Nation*.

"My number one concern is the sharing of news," said Philip Golingai, ANN's Bangkok based Editor, referring in particular to the occasional delay his team has to deal with when trying to access time-sensitive information. He is currently campaigning for a system that speeds up the process of news sharing and which would allow ANN members "to immediately grab any news, like going through a wire service". He is convinced that a speedy news exchange is the future of the ANN. Ravindra Kumar, too, is eager to stress the need to expand the original idea of the network. "If you're looking at growth and brand building, I think we've done well. But our news exchange, the original idea, seems to have plateaued and we need to look at ways to expand it." Ensuring that each member contributes to the joint news pool in a timely manner becomes even more trying as the number of members keeps growing.

The combination of personal ties and a shared vision is central to the ANN's remarkable success. However, both aspects also pose key challenges to its future progress. Undoubtedly, achieving such a historic effort in adverse conditions and the dedication to turn the joint enterprise into a success story, has united the first generation of ANN leaders. Moulding and shaping the network gave plenty of opportunity for intellectual exchange and many occasions to celebrate joint success. Ten years into the project, greater efforts have to be made to ensure that the network's future potential does not succumb to daily routine. Indeed, a lot of time and effort is necessary to keep inter-personal relations between all members in top condition, and to smooth out the occasional slip-up. For example, when ANN coordinators at a member newspaper are unexpectedly unreachable due to illness or urgent work commitments, the work in the network's offices in Bangkok is immediately affected. In response to these challenges, the regional representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Media Programme Asia spends

a large amount of his time visiting the different members in their respective countries to ensure the lines of communication between them are working at all times. Even more importantly, when the ANN's current set of main players retire, "they have to pass the baton to other people who must be equally enthusiastic," concluded Philip Golingai.

Including the new generations of ANN leaders in the definition of future goals is one way to ensure the continued success of the network. Further institutionalising of the ANN's working mechanisms may be another. Pana Janviroj is among the group of people who wonder whether the appointment of a marketing officer or even a General Manager might be a possible solution to ensuring the smooth running of the network.

... and Aspirations

Undoubtedly, all ANN members are dedicated to tackling these challenges head on. Furthermore, they harbour ambitious dreams for the network's future development. On top of everyone's agenda is the shared aspiration of creating authentic Asian news for their mostly Asian readers. "We have news that you cannot get from other places," Philip Golingai noted in reference to the closure of *Asiaweek* and legal restrictions in Asia on the distribution of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. "The ANN Magazine gives a distinctive Asian voice and is written by Asians. It gives people the opportunity to know what's happening in the region. That's the advantage of ANN."

After ten years of jointly building a platform for Asian journalism, ANN's members have firmly set their eyes on becoming, as Tran Mai Huong, Editor-in-Chief of *Viet Nam News* put it, "the most reliable source to provide news consumers with news reflected by Asian people." The belief in the strength of the network is so profound that he predicts "ANN, in the next five years, will become the most prestigious media organisation in Asia." Indeed, members of the network are full of ideas on ANN's future direction, to ensure its full potential is being met. The array of suggestions that frequently shoot back and forth during the group's annual board meetings show that, as the network has evolved, so have the visions of its members.

Only ten years after its creation, ANN has its eyes firmly set on cementing its role as a truly pan-Asian news organisation dedicated to joint reporting on issues that are of concern to Asia as a whole. A first decisive step towards this goal has been taken with the launch of the trans-Asian issues of *AsiaNews* which

appear every four weeks and provide a truly pan-Asian reflection on issues of regional concern. This aspect of the ANN's work is indeed a unique selling point which its members hope to expand further.

As an additional measure, the network has been busy recruiting first-class newspapers from the region to ensure ANN's standing as a truly Asian newspaper organisation. In 2008 alone, four new members joined the alliance, including partners from Pakistan and Taipei. While the next membership round may not happen in the near future, the network is already contemplating the next step in its quest to become a pan-Asian organisation, by inviting more vernacular papers to join ANN in the future. Felix Soh explained that language barriers and related translation costs have prevented this form of expansion so far. Recently though, he said that ANN has agreed in principle to accept vernacular papers "if they have an English language website which we can tap into." Expanding the network this way, "would really extend the reach of ANN."

Most of his colleagues share this vision of expanding the reach of ANN through adding additional members as and when the network is ready. A second avenue that is currently being explored concerns the availability of the network's magazine which, for the time being, can only be purchased at newsstands in Bangkok. Interest in the ANN magazine has been increasing both within Asia and outside the region. Owing to the long-standing partnership between the ANN and Star Alliance, free copies are available to travellers in the business class section on all Star Alliance flights and the magazine is beginning to gain a loyal following. "Star Alliance carriers are taking the magazine from Bangkok where it is printed, to a number of places," explained Felix Soh. "But", he smiled "it would be too much for us to ask Star Alliance to carry it for us and also sell it in those places".

The network is weighing up the logistical implications of extending the magazine's circulation, including the possibility of direct distribution. The rationale for this next step is simple. "Whenever I read something interesting", said Christian Klick, "I want to read it again but I'm not flying to Asia every week." The Vice-President of the Corporate Office of Star Alliance added, "so, why not send it to my home instead?"

To be able to deliver the magazine to their readers' doorsteps, the network needs to work hard at increasing its advertising revenue. Felix Soh added with a laugh, "Star Alliance has been so good to us, one day we would like to actually pay for the freight costs!" Expanding the reach of the ANN magazine, both in

terms of geographic coverage and the current number of publications, requires additional funds. Currently, the network depends on financial contributions from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the main sponsor, Star Alliance. However, Felix Soh is convinced that the ANN will become self-financing. “I can see it coming, but I don’t know when,” he declared confidently. The key to financial independence is closely tied to the expansion of the exchange of news between members of the network. “It’s invaluable because it allows access to nineteen newspapers free of charge. I can pick up any story I want [...] I can have a very rich Asian content simply by picking up stories from [the ANN member newspapers]. Which organisation in the world allows you to do that?”

The expansion of ANN’s membership and reach, together with its matured self-understanding as a pan-Asian news organisation that provides authentic Asian news for an international readership, culminates in the ultimate goal of further reducing dependency on Western news wires – if not even to eliminate their role altogether. The Editor-in-Chief of *Viet Nam News* is convinced that ANN “[...] will mitigate the influence of Western media in the region”. Philip Golingai is more modest in his expectations. “You cannot be independent from the wire services”, he said, “because they are just all over the place, but you can be distinctive. For example, if you can use the picture from an ANN paper which only they have then you’ll beat your competition because everybody else is getting pictures from the same wire services.”

A Giant Step – Asian Journalism Goes International

When ANN started out ten years ago, a group of like-minded colleagues searched for ways to get across their side of the Asian story. To lessen the financial burden of having to buy news from Western wires they began to exchange news amongst each other instead. The success of the past decade has allowed for bigger dreams. Isagani Yambot of the *Philippine Daily Enquirer* is not alone in his hope for ANN becoming “a fully fledged wire service, like the three major Western wire services, the Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Presse, with a staff of fully fledged, permanent editors and reporters, and with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities [...]” His colleague Zhu Ling, Editor-in-Chief of *China Daily*, supports this ambitious vision. “In the long term, we hope ANN becomes an influential media brand across the world and as instantly recognisable as CNN around the world.”

Zhu Ling feels that ANN has “contributed to better understanding of other

countries in the region through regular exchanges, workshops and seminars. We have fostered 'Asian values' if you like. By that I mean that we do not need to be confrontational to be critical. We are interested in the development of our countries, our continent and are willing to work with government and non-government organisations to better the lives of our peoples. Asian coverage used to be tinted with Western perspectives. Now there is a much better understanding even among the Western media about Asian conditions and that is reflected in their coverage."

What seemed unattainable almost ten years ago became a reality in July 2008; the Asia News Network spread its wings and went global. "As we have grown in numbers," Ravindra Kumar recalled, "we have become a credible voice that accumulates the news of Asia and makes it available to members. Today's occasion takes us one giant step further in that we are meeting here to try and see whether this package of Asian news stories that we put together could be of relevance to an audience outside Asia". Witnessed by members of the ANN Board and the diplomatic corps, ANN President Pana Janviroj and the Director of the German-based international news wire, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), Michael Segbers signed a cooperation agreement. Remarkably, the agreement was finalised within only four months. Undoubtedly, ANN's growing reputation as a leading player in the regional news market will have helped negotiations along. However, as KAS Media Director, Werner vom Busch explained, the "swift and courageous proceedings" were also testimony to the "great show of unity within the ANN" and the shared desire to firmly establish Asian journalism on the international stage. As per the agreement, around forty news and business articles, opinion and op-ed pieces, feature stories and photos will reach DPA every evening from the ANN bureau in Bangkok. Subsequently, these news items are available to DPA's clients in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas, allowing ANN members to dramatically widen their reach.

The decision to collaborate closely with Asia's leading newspaper network appears to naturally complement DPA's ambitions in the region. In acknowledgement of the rising role of Asia and the growing interest of news consumers in obtaining professional information on developments in the region from journalists with inside knowledge, DPA is enlarging its office in Bangkok to become the third hub for its English world service, alongside its offices in Berlin and Washington. "The extended editorial desk will be able to serve the growing demands of our clients in Asia even better," explained Michael Segbers.

“I am convinced that the media all over the world will require the Asian view of international events even more in the future. This can only be done by high quality journalism. Who could cover these needs better than your network?” he commented in a short speech during the ceremony.

The agreement with DPA is a remarkable development in the ANN’s history. Firstly, it is tangible proof that the ANN has become an internationally recognised brand name that stands for professional and insightful reporting on Asian affairs. Benefiting from its unique organisation, the ANN is able to offer a service that is attractive to international news wires and secures its financial sustainability. Secondly, through the agreement with DPA, ANN members are able to present an Asian view of Asian affairs to a much wider international audience. Undoubtedly, the international standing of Asian media can only benefit from this development. Thirdly, while this form of inter-regional cooperation allows Asian media to reach into international news markets, international standards of journalistic practice are also able to penetrate deeper into Asia and help professionalism in Asia.

Finally, joining forces with an international news agency that is based outside Asia also marked the birth of what Suthichai aptly called “the first Asia-European link for information”. In the words of Ravindra Kumar, “apart from just being a business relationship, this agreement will actually bring news organisations closer together. We are not always competitors. We can complement each other. And I think the fact that all of us are here today proves that this is a possibility that we need to work on.”

Interview with Werner vom Busch, Director of the Regional Media Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2003 – 2009)

Werner vom Busch has been a journalist since 1969. He started out as a film critic and a reporter for the Bavarian Broadcasting Cooperation (*Bayrischer Rundfunk*) but switched to print media early in his career. He became Editor for Foreign Affairs at *Die Welt*, one of Germany's major national papers, and has held the position of Editor-in-Chief twice during his professional career. His honorary roles include that of President of the Academy of the Media in Bavaria, his home state in Germany. He credits, in particular, his professional experience as Editor-in-Chief for the smooth and successful cooperation with the ANN Board members.

Mr vom Busch, when did you take over the ANN?

I started out here in Singapore in November 2003. The first time I heard about it was on the first of April when somebody gave me a call and asked did I want to apply for the job. At first I thought I would be the April's Fool but luckily that wasn't the case! I had previously been working with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation from 1980 to 1981 in Papua New Guinea where I assisted in founding a weekly newspaper which was successfully launched and – under a different name – is still being published. Later I worked for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation as the regional representative for the South Pacific in Fiji where I worked, amongst other things, as a lecturer for the BA programme in journalism at the University of the South Pacific and also for the Fiji Print Association as a trainer for printing journalists. So they knew me and I knew them. I also knew that this was a really interesting posting. I knew this was a regional project and at this time you could already see that Asia was going off like a rocket so I really did not hesitate very long. So I applied for the job and I got it. And I have not regretted it ever since!

Mr vom Busch, you came to Singapore to take over the leadership of the Regional Media Programme of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and to continue to guide the ANN project. What did you know about your new role and which ideas did you have for both projects?

I already knew about the ANN project because in September prior to my arrival I had attended a conference in England where all the ANN Board members were

present too. That is where I got to know the crew and they got to know me. I had the opportunity to get a real idea of the project. Because if you only look at a project proposal on paper and try to turn it into a three dimensional reality, that is tough. Of course, I knew what the Konrad Adenauer Foundation stands for, which is the support of good governance and democratic structures. If you look at the media as the fourth estate, of course, the state of the media is a very important precondition to how a state may function or may not function.

How were you trying to bring in your experience to develop the ANN further?

I think if you join a project with too many preconceived ideas you may be in danger of not seeing the forest for all the trees! I find that these kind of long-term projects are always work in progress. Nevertheless, after I had started I quickly saw that the exchange of news is the core idea of the ANN and I really put a lot of emphasis on trying to make the exchange process as smooth as possible. I also tried to get the ANN Board members to send their writers and younger editors to the news hub in Bangkok. On top of that, I saw a few white patches on the Asia geographical map which we needed to fill. But in general, within the ANN the plans develop as we go along.

When you leave Singapore early next year, it will have been five years and four months that you have been in charge of the ANN project as the Director of the Regional Media Programme. If you review the development of the ANN during that time, what are you most proud of?

On a personal level, I am really happy that I can count many of the editors in chief of the ANN members my personal friends. This also reflects on the working conditions within the ANN which are based on friendship and trust. In an organisation like the ANN, without trust it would not work. If you ask me what I am most proud of, I must say that is the fact that we do no longer have any white patches on the Asian landscape because now we are twenty members compared to the twelve members that were part of ANN when I joined. The second thing is that we have signed the ANN – DPA contract. This means for ANN that an international player – and DPA is the fourth biggest news agency in the world – has recognised the ANN and the professionalism that governs ANN. So, on the one hand the expansion of ANN and the extension into the international space through DPA, and on the other hand our

funding and financing of the ANN magazine 'AsiaNews'. I think from its humble beginnings this has turned into a really, really interesting magazine which does one thing that has never happened before which is trans-Asian issues. For example, the problem of immigration labour in Asia or the different view points on ASEAN. I think those are the major achievements I am really happy about.

How would you describe the role of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in helping the ANN project develop?

Of course, the ANN is always teamwork! What I tried to do was to be a facilitator giving certain impulses but you need the support of the whole team to get to where we are today. Talking about the Foundation's facilitator role, the ANN needs an adviser to the Board because sometimes he can accommodate certain things better than any of the colleagues. Sometimes, when there is a 'hot potato' I put on my gloves. But you have to be able to tell what is simply a 'hot potato' and what is an issue that, as a European, you shouldn't touch. And don't try to interfere all the time because they are all excellent journalists who are running papers that are often much bigger than many European papers.

You have worked in Europe and other parts of the world. Do you think that the ANN mechanism can be applied to other parts of the world?

In Europe, I think, the emphasis is on the individual and here it is on the community. Clearly, this has advantages and disadvantages. But in this particular case I think it works very much in favour of ANN. Working in Asia follows very different rules than in Europe. I cannot imagine twenty European newspapers from such different countries as India and China – or in the European context, Russia and Britain – working together in such an amicable atmosphere of friendship and trust. Why is that? I think in Asia the emphasis is placed on what unites the different partners rather than what divides them. During negotiations they are very goal-oriented and controversial issues are left aside until the whole package has been agreed on. And then the controversial points seem to fall into place. Because once a whole package has been tied up nobody really wants to be the one who unties it again and it falls apart. In ANN, if someone raises a concern, we note it and try to find a general solution before we deal with the concern. Once it is all done, the one or two issues that are of concern can be solved. I have seen that

happening. Sometimes it looks a bit like magic but it works. ANN is a group of good friends and good acquaintances and they try to achieve something together. If I look at the ANN and what they have done in 10 years and compare this with other structures, I think that our principle is not so bad! It was always a great joy to cooperate in this context.

The ANN project is part of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Regional Media programme Asia. How does the project fit into the wider goals of the Foundation regarding its work in Asia?

I was once asked about the hidden agenda of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Of course, there really is none! But there are two aims which we try to achieve besides strengthening democratic structures and these are intra-Asian dialogue and European-Asian dialogue. The fact that everyday there is an exchange of around 100 articles amongst twenty Asian newspapers shows that we have achieved intra-Asian dialogue. The magazine is the icing on the cake because every four weeks they come up with a trans-Asian issue. They pick up issues that are probably not known by many others somewhere else in Asia. We also have the Asia-European editors' forum where about 60 percent of Asian participants come from ANN. I know that lasting connections have resulted from this forum. We also send visitor groups from Asia to Germany and many of the journalists on these visits are connected to ANN one way or the other. Really, KAF helps journalists who work in ANN. In October we have a conference on media and law where journalists are being trained to get acquainted with the legal way of tackling problems. In Indonesia, for example, the lower courts always apply criminal law even though there is a media law and this puts journalists in jail. So they should not put up with it, they should know that there is a media law and put pressure. Let's face it; the ANN can also act as a pressure group. It has happened that one of our colleagues went behind bars for laughable reasons and suddenly all over Asia appeared an article that a journalist was put in prison for no legal reason. Like a flash of lightning he was out again because no government likes that. And of course, our goal is to have a free and responsible press. This is, of course, what we try to achieve but it would be megalomaniac if we would say we can achieve this. We achieve it together with ANN and other organisations. We are not the only ones who are fighting for freedom of the press. It is a team effort that might lead to this goal.

The ANN is a network of 20 newspapers from 17 Asian countries, and journalists work under very different political and legal conditions. How is ANN helping to professionalise journalism across Asia?

There are different angles to this. For example, the young writers in the ANN exchange programme spend time in the ANN office in Bangkok. Suddenly they are exposed to different working styles which they take back to their home countries when they return. In fact, we even had cases where people came to ANN and then went on to do jobs they probably would have never gotten if they had not worked at the ANN office. Every year, about ten people take part in this exchange programme. We also do workshops on important issues with a specific angle for journalists and many of those that participate are from ANN. I have a two-pronged approach. When I came here I decided not to do another training seminar on editing. This has been done too many times before. You have to do it in a special framework. Journalists are very target oriented and they like to go away with special knowledge. What I always do is to combine a current issue with journalistic training. That means we talk about reporting conflict, for example, and journalists will learn about the issue itself but also how to report on it. A very skilled journalist will have taught them which traps to look out for when reporting on an issue. We even taught them what they should do if they hear somebody shooting! Don't get behind a tree because trees don't stop bullets anymore. You have very practice-oriented teaching. We do about three to four conferences each year and they always give the journalists new information on the issue and teach them how to write about it in an article. Of course, we also have the ANN Board meetings where someone from country z might meet someone from country x. They talk to each other and they may see that they have things in common but they might also see that the working conditions for journalists are different in other countries. I always say that freedom is a bug and very few people have developed resistance to it. I think if you expose people to this international friendship no-one can be so thick-skinned not to take something away from this exchange and not to sometimes think 'That sounded like a good idea, let us do it this way'. As you know, the media sector is also undergoing a huge transformation and some of the ANN papers are much more advanced than others. So others may think, 'I do not have as much time as I thought. They are doing it already and this development will be coming to my country too'. There you have the famous crystal ball which is held by those papers which are already more experienced and have adopted a multimedia strategy.

This brings me to another important question. As we know, the ANN was founded in response to various challenges which emerged in the 1990s including the rise of new media and the perceived dominance of Western reporting on developments in Asia. How successful has the ANN been in tackling these challenges?

If we go back to the roots, shortly after the Asian financial crisis seven editors-in-chief sat together in Bangkok to discuss how to broaden their coverage without paying their heads off. The situation then was that the person sitting in Indonesia would read about what is happening in Bangkok via Reuters. How could they do it that Asian perspectives were more at the fore? That was the beginning. Today it has achieved much more than they set out to do. Now we have the exchange of news on a regular basis. What also works well is that you can get help from your colleagues if you happen to be away from your own country and a news story breaks. Your colleagues will give you a desk; they will give you any help you need to cover that story. I don't think the founding fathers of ANN thought that we would venture into fields such as printing our own magazine and getting into business with one of the international news agencies. On the whole, ANN has very successfully tackled the problems plus and it has reached the goals it has set out to achieve.

If you look at ANN when it started in 1999 and the shape it has taken on today, how much more potential does the ANN have? Where would you like to see the ANN in five or ten years' time?

When I come back in ten years time, first of all, I would like to find all my good friends in good health. Probably retired but certainly going strong! And I would like to see that ANN has become a trademark in Asia and the world. As for the extension of activities, as far as I can see it from here, of course we will have to venture more into IT and the web. Also at the moment ANN very much depends on the goodwill of everybody and we have no real administrative structure. I hope for professionalisation. That does not mean that we don't do a good job but it means that we can do more and quicker and maybe more efficiently. With a few more funds that may come in, I think we will be able to employ somebody who can look after these things like marketing, for example. To me, the potential of ANN

is nearly endless. In one of the most dynamic regions of the world you have twenty organisations cooperating in certain fields. Let's face it, each of them is their own boss and they all have their own interests which they pursue but if they throw at least parts of their lot together they can have endless possibilities. We do not have a crystal ball and we do not know which way it will be going, but if the goodwill is there, which I do not doubt – then who is going to stop us!

The Who's Who of ANN

BANGLADESH

Member Newspaper: *The Daily Star*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 2000

Board Member: Mahfuz Anam

Biographical Data:

Mahfuz Anam, M.A, has been the Editor–Publisher of *The Daily Star* for 15 years (1993–2008) and looks back at a journalistic career spanning 36 years. He has previously worked at the *Bangladesh Observer* and *Bangladesh Times*. From 1977 to 1990 he worked with UNESCO in Paris, New York, and Bangkok in media related projects. Mahfuz Anam is also author of a widely respected political column and a popular TV commentator.



BRUNEI

Member Newspaper: *The Brunei Times*

Type of Membership: Associate Member

Year of Accession: 2008

Board Member: Haji Bujang Bin Haji Masu'ut



Biographical Data:

Haji Bujang Bin Haji Masu'ut is Group Editor-in-Chief of *The Brunei Times*. He has previously held the posts of Senior Education Official at the Ministry of Education and Director of Information at the Department of Information in the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam.

CAMBODIA

Member Newspaper: *Rasmei Kampuchea*

Type of Membership: Associate Member

Year of Accession: 2008

Board Member: Pen Samitthy



Biographical Data:

Born in 1960 Kompong Cham Province, Cambodia Pen Samitthy (Alias: Pen Pheng) holds diplomas in Khmer culture, political science and journalism from institutions of higher education in Cambodia, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. Since 1993 he has been the Editor-in-chief of *Rasmei Kampuchea* a Cambodian daily published in Khmer. He is also Editor of the online Khmer paper *Cambodia Express News*. In 2008 he became Lecturer at Lecturer at the

Department of Media and Communication at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. His previous posts included reporter, Chief Copy Editor and later Editor-in-chief of *Phnom Penh Weekly* and officer at the Phnom Penh Municipality Propaganda Department. Pen Samitthy has been President of the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ) since 2002. From 1996 to 1998 he held the post of Vice President of the league of Cambodian Journalists.

CHINA

Member Newspaper: *China Daily*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: ZHU Ling

Biographical Data:

Born in Nanjing, Jiangsu province in 1957 Mr. Zhu Ling holds a BA in English Literature from Beijing Foreign Studies University. He was a fellow at the Department of Journalism at the University of Hawaii, Visiting Scholar at *The Financial Times* and *The Guardian* in the UK (1984) and Visiting Scholar at Seattle Post-Intelligencer in the US (1986). Zhu became the Editor-in-Chief of *China Daily* in October 2004. Between 1995 and 2004, he was the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of China Daily and the Editor-in-Chief of China Daily Hong Kong Edition from 2000-2004. From 1993-1995, he was a member of the Editorial Board. He was, in consecutive order, the Deputy Director, Acting Director,



and Director of Economic and Business News Department between 1986 and 1995. He serves as a member of the National Committee of the 11th CPPCC.

INDIA

Member Newspaper: *The Statesman*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Ravindra Kumar

Ravindra Kumar, born 24 July 1960 and a graduate of the University of Delhi, is Editor and Managing Director of *The Statesman*, one of Asia's oldest English-language newspapers. He is also Chairman of the Press Freedom Committee of the Indian Newspaper Society and a member of its board. He serves on the Board of Governors of Media Research Users' Council, India; on the Council of the All India Management Association and on the boards of Nachiketa Publications Ltd. and Chowringhee Prakashan (P) Ltd. He is also a Trustee of the C R Irani Foundation. Mr. Kumar has twice been Chairman of United News of India, a member of Central Board of Film Certification, and has served on boards of various journalism institutes.



INDONESIA

Member Newspaper: *The Jakarta Post*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Endy M Bayuni

Endy M. Bayuni became chief editor of *The Jakarta Post*, Indonesia's independent and leading English language newspaper, in August 2004 shortly after he returned from a one-year Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University. He has been with the newspaper since 1991, working his way up from Production Manager (Night Editor), to National Editor, Managing Editor, and Deputy Chief Editor. He previously worked as the Indonesian correspondent for Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP) between 1984 and 1991, and began his journalistic career with *The Jakarta Post* in 1983. He holds a Bachelors degree in economics from Kingston University in the UK.



JAPAN

Member Newspaper: *The Yomiuri Shimbun*
/ The Daily Yomiuri

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 2001

Board Member: Shigefumi TAKASUKA

Born in Tokyo in 1957 Shigefumi Takasuka holds a BA in sociology from Keio University, Tokyo in Japan and an MA in journalism from Michigan State University in the US. He joined *The Yomiuri Shimbun* in 1984 as a staff writer in the paper's International News Department where he covered the Gulf Crisis of the early 1990s. After working as the paper's correspondent in Bangkok he was assigned to *The Daily Yomiuri* in Tokyo in 1999 and became the paper's Assistant Editor in 2003.



SOUTH KOREA

Member Newspaper: *The Korea Herald*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Choi Nam-hyun

Biographical Data:

Choi Nam-hyun has been Editor-in-Chief of *The Korea Herald* since 2004. He joined the English daily in 1980 as a reporter. Prior to his appointment to the post of managing editor in 1999, he covered foreign policy, domestic politics, finance and business and served as editor of business and politics. In 2001, he was named an editorial writer. Choi Nam-hyun holds degrees from Chonnam National University and the University of Missouri at Columbia, Missouri.



LAOS

Member Newspaper: *Vientiane Times*

Type of Membership: Associate Member

Year of Accession: 2006

Board Member: Savankhone Razmouny

Biographical Data:

Savankhone Razmouny is Director and Editor-in-Chief of *Vientiane Times* and one of the founders of the paper. He graduated from Canberra University, Australia in 1986. He has previously worked in foreign affairs and has served with the national news agency of Laos for six years.



MALAYSIA

Member Newspaper: *The Star*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Wong Chun Wai

Biographical Data:

Wong Chun Wai is Group Chief Editor of *The Star*. He has been with the newspaper since 1984. He holds a degree in political science from the National University of Malaysia. Wong Chun Wai writes a weekly column entitled “*On The Beat*” and blogs on current affairs. He was awarded with the prestigious ‘Journalist of The Year Award’ of the Malaysian National Press Institute.



MALAYSIA

Member Newspaper: *Sin Chew Daily*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Pook Ah Lek

Pook Ah Lek, aged 52 joined *Sin Chew Daily* in 1978 as a Cadet Reporter and was promoted to the posts of Assistant Chief Reporter, Deputy Chief Reporter, News Editor, Area Manager (East Coast), Executive Editor, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor-in-Chief. He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper. During the last 30 years with *Sin Chew Daily*, he was assigned to cover the visits of the former Prime Ministers Hussein Onn and Mahathir Mohammad as well as



the present Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi to several countries including China, United States, Russia, Japan, Australia, Britain, and Singapore. Mr. Pook is also the President of the Editors' Association (Chinese Medium) Malaysia.

NEPAL

Member Newspaper: *The Kathmandu Post*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 2006

Board Member: Prateek Pradhan

Biographical Data:

Prateek Pradhan is the Editor of *The Kathmandu Post*. He has been in journalism for the last 16 years. He holds a Master's degree in Journalism from New York University, USA, and a Master's degree in Economics from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. (Mr Pradhan has since left this position)



PAKISTAN

Member Newspaper: *The Nation*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 2008

Board Member: Arif Nizami

Mr. Arif Nizami is President of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) and Editor of the daily *The Nation* published from Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. He started his career as a reporter and later became Executive Editor of the daily



Nawa-i-Waqt. Mr. Arif Nizami launched *The Nation* as the first Independent English daily from Lahore in October 1986 with himself as its Editor.

PHILIPPINES

Member Newspaper: *The Nation*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Isagani Yambot

Isagani Yambot is the publisher of *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. He is also Vice president of the Philippine Press Institute. Isagani Yambot studied English and law at the University of the Philippines. He was Fall Fellow at the Washington Journalism Center in 1971 and lecturer at the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication. In 1994 he won the Catholic Mass Media Awards in the category Best In-Depth Article. He was cited as Outstanding News Editor by the College Editors Guild Alumni Association. In 1995 he was awarded for Outstanding Achievement in Journalism by the Tondo Rotary Club, Manila.



SINGAPORE

Member Newspaper: *The Straits Times*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Felix Soh



Biographical Data:

Felix Soh is the Digital Media Editor of the English & Malay Newspapers Division of Singapore Press Holdings, which runs five news websites, including the AsiaOne portal, and the social networking website, Stomp. He is also the Deputy Editor of *The Straits Times*, the largest-circulation English-language newspaper in Asia. He has been News Editor and Foreign Editor of the paper and has written a book on the security history of Singapore, titled “*Phoenix: The Story of the Home Team*”.

CHINESE TAIPEI

Member Newspaper: *China Post*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 2008

Board Member: Daniel Huang



Biographical Data:

Presently Mr. Daniel Huang is Deputy Director of The China Post, published from Taipei since 1952. He started his career as Business Development Manager for The China Post and later joined Citibank Taiwan as Risk Manager for credit cards. Mr. Daniel Huang holds an MBA degree from the University of California in Los Angeles.

THAILAND

Member Newspaper: *The Nation*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Pana Janviroj

Biographical Data:

Pana Janviroj is President of *The Nation*, Thailand's leading English-language newspaper. He is also the Executive Director of the Asia News Network. He was editor of *The Nation* during 1996-2005. He holds a BA from Essex University and an MA from Tufts University in the US. His journalism career began in 1984 as a business reporter with *The Nation*, four years after which he became the business editor and executive editor in 1994. Mr Janviroj became editor of *The Nation* in 1996.



VIETNAM

Member Newspaper: *Viet Nam News*

Type of Membership: Full Member

Year of Accession: 1999

Board Member: Tran Mai Huong

Biographical Data:

Tran Mai Huong is Editor-in-Chief of *Viet Nam News*. He started his career as a journalist for the Vietnam News Agency in 1969. Back from South Viet Nam as a war reporter, he continued working for VNA. He co-founded *Viet Nam News* in 1991 and became Editor-in-Chief in 1999 and vice director-general in 2005.



**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Regional Media Programme Asia
Werner vom Busch**

Born in Germany in 1946 Werner vom Busch holds a Masters degree in Political Science, History and German Literature from the Friedrich-Alexander-University in Erlangen, Germany. He began his journalistic career in 1969 as a Film and TV Reviewer before joining the Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation in 1972. He was Editor-in-Chief of *InterNationes* (1984-85), Editor-in-Chief at “Ring Nordbayerischer Tageszeitungen” (1985-1991 & 1997-2003), and Editor for Foreign Affairs with the German Newspaper *Die Welt* (1996-97). Werner vom Busch joined the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAF) as its Country Director for Papua New-Guinea in 1979. He became the Regional Director KAF for the South-Pacific in 1992 and Director of the Media Program Asia in 2003. From 2004 to 2009 he was concurrently member of the Advisory Board at the Department of Media and Communications, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Member of the Executive Board at the Asian Center for Journalism at Ateneo University in Manila, Philippines. He has recently been appointed Visiting Professor at the Ateneo University in Manila, Philippines.



Honorary Members

Nation Multimedia Group, Thailand

Suthichai Yoon

Suthichai Yoon is currently Editor-in-Chief of The Nation Multimedia Group, which publishes The Nation; Krungthep Turakit Daily and Kom Chad Luek. He also serves as a television anchorman on Nation Channel, a local cable TV and several well-known local and international news programmes.



Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Regional Media Programme Asia

Thomas Bernd Stehling

Thomas Bernd Stehling is a lawyer by profession. He worked as a media executive between 1983 and 1995 and was the Chairman of the International Committee of German Radio and TV.

In 1996 he became the first Director of the Asian Media Project of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung initiating the foundation of the Konrad-Adenauer-Center for Journalism at the Ateneo de Manila University and of the Asia News Network. Since 2001, he has been the Director of the London Office of KAS, in charge of the UK, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.





10 years of ANN in pictures



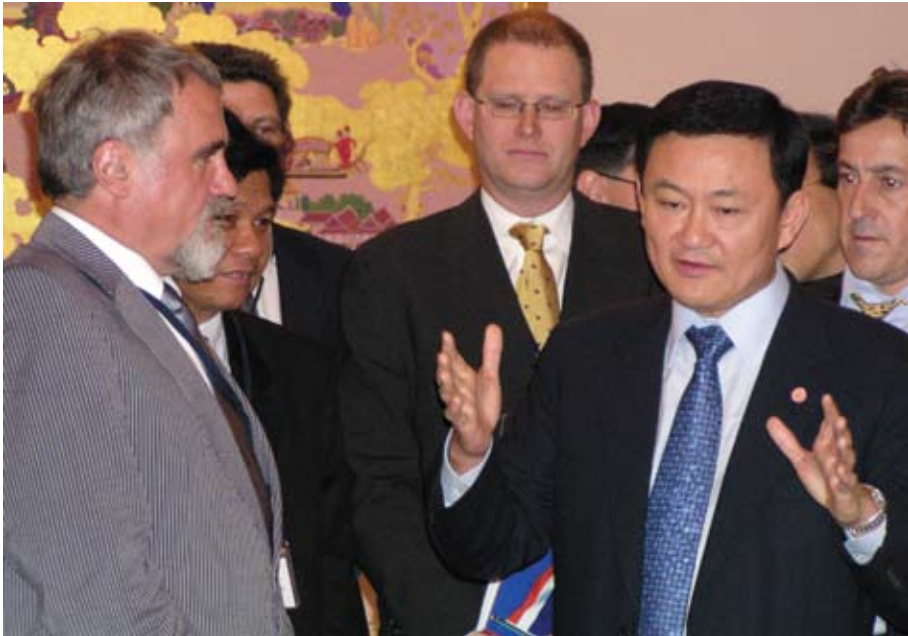
The Asian European Editors Forum brings together editors, journalists and political decision-makers from both regions and allows for fruitful inter-regional dialoge and exchange. Here the group poses in the Government House of Bangkok

5th Asian European Editors Forum
Bangkok (Thailand) May 2004



The ANN takes pride in providing fora for intellectual dialogue and exchange between journalists, academics and policy-makers from Europe and Asia. In this picture, security Expert Prof Kumar Ramakrishna (left) from the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore and Mr Werner vom Busch at the 5th Asian European Editors Forum.

5th Asian European Editors Forum
Bangkok (Thailand) May 2004



The activities of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Regional Media Programme draw participation from the highest political ranks. The picture shows Mr vom Busch receiving the keynote speaker, the former Prime Minister of Thailand Mr Thaksin Shinawatra

5th Asian European Editors Forum
Bangkok (Thailand) May 2004



Specialists from academia and policy-making share their expertise with the participants

ANN Workshop “Reporting Conflict: Analyzing, Writing, Surviving”
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) November 2005



Providing training opportunities to Asian journalists is integral part of the ANN's mission. The network together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Regional Media Programme collaborate closely in the organisation of conferences, workshops and dialogue fora on current affairs

ANN Workshop "Reporting Conflict: Analyzing, Writing, Surviving"
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) November 2005



Besides conveying specific content and improving professional skills, ANN-organised training initiatives seek to harmonise journalistic standards in Asia. The picture shows the participants of a workshop on ‘Terrorism, International Law and the Media’

ANN Workshop “Terrorism, International Law and the Media”
Bali (Indonesia) December 2006



Through its training programme, the ANN and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Regional Media Programme aim to promote excellence and professionalism in Asian journalism.

ANN Conference "Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia"
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) July 2006



Specialist seminars, workshops and conferences address questions of best journalistic practice regarding the reporting on the multitude of issues facing Asia

ANN Conference “Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia”
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) July 2006



While ANN has greatly strengthened the Asian perspective of Asian news the network is home to an array of divergent views

ANN Conference “Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia”
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) July 2006



Prof. Dr. von Rosen, Managing Director of the “Deutsche Aktieninstitut” (2nd from left) and Mr Ravindra Kumar of India’s *The Statesman* (far right)

ANN Roundtable “Corporate Governance - Perils and Possibilities
Singapore, January 2006



Unity in Diversity - Diversity in Unity. The ANN family welcomes “*The Kathmandu Post*” in its midst

Official Signing Ceremony on the sidelines of the ANN Board Meeting,
Seoul (Korea) 2007



The Konrad Adenauer Foundation and its partners celebrated a milestone success in their cooperation in 2000 when the Konrad Adenauer Asian Center for Journalism (KAACFJ) at the distinguished Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines opened its doors. The first batch of Journalism Masters students graduated in 2007

From left to right:

Jofelle Tesorio, Dibyajyoti Chatterjee, Ma. Lourdes Cabaero, Chay Hofileña (MA Journalism program coordinator, 2003-2006), Arlene Burgos, Lih Huey Yap, Shita Laksmi and Diosa Labiste.

Manila (Philippines), 2007

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years



With each Annual Board Meeting the network's membership increases

ANN Board Meeting in Seoul (Korea) 2007



Each ANN member takes great pride in hosting the network's Annual Board Meetings

ANN Board Meeting in Seoul (Korea) 2007



The network's members share ideas on expanding and deepening cooperation amongst them during the ANN Board Meetings

ANN Board Meeting in Dhaka (Bangladesh) 2008



Intensifying cooperation with member country Bangladesh

From left to right (back):

Dato' NG Poh Tip, Mr Mahfuz ANAM, Mr NGUYEN Tien Le, Mr CHOI Nam-hyun, Mr Werner vom BUSCH, Mr Ravindra KUMAR, Ms Katrin GÜNTHER, Mr Pana JANVIROJ, Mr Serath NGUON, Mr Savankhone RAZ-MOUNTRY, Mr SAEYOON Suthichai, Mr Isagani YAMBOT

From left to right (front):

Ms Yasmin ARPON, Mr POOK Ah Lek, Mr Hidenori SATO, Mr Endy M. BAYUNI, Ms Britt GEHDER, Mr Felix SOH, Mr ZHOU Li (Ray)

ANN Board Meeting in Dhaka (Bangladesh) 2008



What makes the network truly unique is that it is more than just a joint business venture. True friendship is what drives it. Here, ANN Board Members Mr Suthichai Yoon (left) of Thailand and his Indian colleague Mr Ravindra Kumar share a joke.

9th Asian European Editors Forum
Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008



The network's activities draw participation from eminent personalities in Asia and Europe.

Dr. Ammar Siamwalla, Acting President of the Thailand Development Research Institute addresses the audience

9th Asian European Editors Forum
Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008



The ANN Goes Global - the official signing ceremony of the landmark agreement between the Asia News Network (ANN) and Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA)

Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008

From left to right:

ANN President Mr Pana Janviroj (Thailand), Mr Werner vom Busch (KAS), and Managing Director of DPA, Mr Michael Segbers



The ANN and its supporters celebrate the signing of the landmark agreement with DPA

Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008

From left to right:

Mr Werner vom Busch (KAS), Her Excellency Ms Vijaya Latha Reddy (Indian Ambassador to Thailand), and Mr Suthichai Yoon (Thailand)



Inter-regional cooperation reaches new heights

Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008

ANN President Mr Pana Janviroj (Thailand) and Managing Director of DPA, Mr Michael Segbers



The ANN Board witnesses the conclusion of the ANN-DPA agreement

Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008

AsiaNewsNetwork - 10 Years



The ANN family and friends celebrate the new milestone in the network's history

Bangkok (Thailand) June 2008

Bibliography

Anderson, B (1991) *Imagined Communities: reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso

Barr, M D (2000) “Lee Kuan Yew and the “Asian Values” Debate” in: *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 309 – 334.

Berthelsen, J (2003) “Internet hacks: Web news cashes in”, in: *Asia Times Online* http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/ED12Dj01.html (accessed on 17/10/2007)

Bologaita, E (2002) “How Globalization Alters the Depictions of East and West” in: Goonasekera, Anura & Chua Chong Jin (Eds) *Under Asian Eyes. What the West Says, What the East Thinks*, Singapore: Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University (SCI-NTU), pp. 169 – 172.

Bowring, P (2005, November 23). “Nonaligned Nonstarter”. *International Herald Tribune, The IHT Online*. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/11/23/opinion/edbowring.php> (accessed 6/3/2008)

Chachavalpongpun, P (2006) “In search of an Asian nation”, *The Nation*, Bangkok

Chong, A (2004) “Singapore’s foreign policy and the Asian values debate, 1992 – 2000: reflections on an experiment in soft power” in: *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 95 – 133.

Committee of Concerned Journalists (2006) *A statement of shared purpose*, <http://www.concernedjournalists.org/node/380> (accessed 26/9/2007)

Dahlan, M Alwi (2002) “The Dynamics of Information Sharing” in: Goonasekera, Anura & Chua Chong Jin (Eds) *Under Asian Eyes. What the West Says, What the East Thinks*, Singapore: Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Asian Media

Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University (SCI-NTU), pp. 177 – 182.

Datta-Ray, S K (2006) “Asia must evolve its own journalistic idiom” in: Hao Xiaoming & Sunanda K Datta-Ray (Eds) *Issues and Challenges in Asian Journalism*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, pp. 44 – 64.

Evans, K (2007) “Scolding someone is like scolding oneself”: Asian values in Cambodian journalism” in: *New Voices in Media Research*, 1/07, <http://www/arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/media/newvoices/Kate%20Evans.pdf> (accessed 8/3/2008)

George, C (2006) “Asian Journalism: Neglected Alternatives” in: Hao Xiaoming & Sunanda K Datta-Ray (Eds) *Issues and Challenges in Asian Journalism*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, pp. 79 – 92.

Gunaratne, S A (2006) “Democracy, Journalism and Systems: Perspectives from East and West” in: Hao Xiaoming & Sunanda K Datta-Ray (Eds) *Issues and Challenges in Asian Journalism*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, pp. 1 – 24.

Han Sung-Joo (1999) “Asian Values: An Asset or a Liability” in: Han Sung-Joo (ed.) *Changing Values in Asia: The Impact on Governance and Development*, Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 3 – 9.

Hao Xiaoming (2002) “Cultural Vs Professional Bias: Western Media Coverage and Asian Reality” in: Goonasekera, Anura & Chua Chong Jin (Eds) *Under Asian Eyes. What the West Says, What the East Thinks*, Singapore: Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University (SCI-NTU), pp. 157 – 161.

Huntington, S P (1993) “The clash of civilizations’ in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 22 – 49.

Interactive Advertising Bureau (2007) “IAB Internet Advertising Revenue Report: An Industry Survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers and sponsored by the Interactive Advertising Bureau. 2006 Full Year Results”

International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (1980) *Many Voices, One World. Toward a new, more just and more efficient world information and communication order*, Kogan Page London/Unipub, New York/Unesco, Paris, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000400/040066eb.pdf> (accessed 13/3/2008)

Internet World Stats (2007) *Internet Usage in Asia*, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed 10/1/2008)

Joan Shorenstein Center (2007) *Creative Destruction: An Exploratory Look at News on the Internet*, A Report from the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy”, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Knight, A (2000) “Fact or Friction? The collision of Journalism values in Asia” in: Damien Kongsbury, Eric Loo, Patricia Payne (Eds) *Foreign devils and other journalists*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute.

Latif, A (ed) (1998) *Walking the Tightrope. Press Freedom and Professional Standards in Asia*, Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC).

Luan Shanglin (2007, 22 April) “‘The world is not flat’ – Asian media challenge dominating Western rivals”, *China View*, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-04/22/content_6012649.htm (accessed 6/3/2008)

Mahbubani, K (1998) *Can Asians Think?*, Singapore: Times Editions Pte Ltd.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1993) *Report of the Regional Meeting for Asia of the World Conference on Human Rights*, Bangkok, 29 March 1993 – 2 April 1993, Geneva, Switzerland <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu5/wcbangk.htm#III> (accessed 7/3/2008)

Pew Internet and American Life Project (2007) “Online Activities – Daily”, http://www.pewinternet.org/trends/Daily_Internet_Activities_2.15.08.htm (accessed 10/1/2008)

Raya M (2007, October 20) “Asia’s papers keep print flag flying”, *Asia Times Online*, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IJ20Df02.html (accessed 13/3/2008)

Sheridan, G (1999) *Asian Values, Western Dreams: Understanding the new Asia*, St Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Subramanian, S (2000) “The Asian values Debate: Implications for the Spread of Liberal Democracy”, *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 19 – 35.

The Straits Times (1999, January 16), “Asian Media for Asians”, p.60.

Thompson, M R. 2004. “Pacific Asia after ‘Asian values’: authoritarianism, democracy, and ‘good governance’” in: *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, no. 6, pp. 1079 – 1095.

World Association of Newspapers (2004) “Newspapers: A brief history”, http://www.wan-press.org/article.php3?id_article=2821 (accessed 23/9/2007)

World Association of Newspapers (2007) “World Press Trends 2006”, <http://www.wan-press.org/article14362.html> (accessed 27/2/2008)

Xin Xin (2006) “A developing market in news: Xinhua News Agency and Chinese newspapers” in: *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 28, No. 5. <http://mcs.sagepublications.com/cgi/content/abstract/28/1/45> (accessed 26/2/2008)

Xu Xiaoge (2005) *Demystifying Asian Values in Journalism*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish.

Interviews

Dr Hao Xiaoming

Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University Singapore

12 March 2008

Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and former editor of the Indian newspaper, *The Statesman*

14 March 2008