AMARC Asia Pacific Newsletter

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Content

1. AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference Special: Interview of Mavic-Cabrera Balleza, Chair of Conference Steering Committee p.2
2. Register for the AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Assembly p.3

News from the region:

3. South Korea: The Opening of the First Community Radio in Korea, Sungseo Community FM – p.4
4. India: Government Invites Tender to expand FM radio broadcasting - p.4
5. India: India: All India Petition on Community Radio - p.5

7. Thailand Community Radio Update by Dr. Uajit Virojtrairatt – p.6
9. Thailand: Petition to Support Media Reform Activist - p.8

10. Nepal page in AMARC website p.8
11. Women’s International Network: Call to Join the 24 Hours of Feminist Mobilisation - p.9
13. Philippines: Media Watchdog Demonstrates Power of Blogging - p.10

15. Arab and World Media Conference– p.12
17. Eco-friendly Radio Station Started in Wales - p.12
18. Asia Media Forum- p.13
19. The Asia Summit- p.13

20. Feature: The launch of Korean Network for Media Activism! - p.14
21. Feature: Building Community on the Airwaves- p.15

22. Useful Links- p.17
23. Join AMARC - p.17
AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference Special:

AMARC Asia-Pacific Conference Will Help Scaling-Up of Community Radio in the Region

Following is an interview with Mavic Cabrera-Balleza regarding the first regional assembly of AMARC Asia Pacific in Bali, Indonesia from November 24-27, 2005. Mavic chairs the Conference Steering Committee:

Question: Please tell us how much work has been done in terms of setting the program agenda of the first regional assembly of AMARC Asia Pacific? Please provide a preview of the agenda.

Mavic: The conference agenda and programme had already been developed through a consultative process among members of the AMARC Asia Pacific Conference Steering Committee, which is composed of community radio practitioners and advocates in the Asia Pacific region.

The first Asia-Pacific Conference of AMARC is envisioned as a venue that will allow the community radio sector to develop an enabling environment for the scaling-up of community radio in the region. We hope to develop a strategic plan for the development of the community radio sector and this includes lobbying and advocacy strategies around regulatory frameworks on community media as well as strategies to improve community partnership and sustainability.

The conference also serves as the founding Assembly of AMARC Asia-Pacific and the election of the first AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Board that will translate the strategies and recommendations into action.

Question: Is there a possibility of accommodating requests for presentations by members and non members and if there is a deadline for that?

Mavic: Yes, members who have concrete experiences and analysis to share in relation to the issues of communication rights, use of community radio in conflict and post conflict situations, use of community radio in promoting women’s empowerment and gender equality, broadcast regulatory environment and spectrum allocation, role of community radio in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are invited to make presentations. Non-members are also welcome but of course priority will be given to members -- in terms of presentation slots. The deadline for the submission of proposal presentations is September 30, 2005.

Question: What side events are you planning during the Assembly? Are there going to be training opportunities available?

Mavic: One important side event that we are planning is the launch of the Asia-Pacific broadcast campaign on the 16 days of activism against violence against women. The 16 days campaign begins on 25 November which coincides with the dates of the AMARC AP conference. The campaign will end on December 10, the international human rights day. We hope to make the AMARC AP conference a major platform to reach out to as many people as possible and get them to participate and support the 16 days campaign.
A training on audio streaming has been proposed but so far there is no clear indication yet on whether this is the kind of training that community radio practitioners in the region need.

**Question:** How many have registered so far to participate in the Assembly? And how are you soliciting participation from community broadcasters as well as other stakeholders? Are you in a position to subsidise participants that need financial assistance?

**Mavic:** So far about 70 have registered. We are inviting other community media advocates and supporters as well as representatives of broadcast regulatory bodies so we can have a dialogue with them. Yes, I’m delighted to say that we have received some funds from donor organizations who are supportive of community radio and that allows us to subsidize some participants that do not have access to funds to come to the conference. However, we would greatly appreciate it if those who have access to funds could raise the money needed to participate to the conference so that we could bring more community radio practitioners -- especially from the underrepresented countries and sub-regions.

**Question:** Can non-members participate? What will their role be?

**Mavic:** Yes, non-members can participate but we need to know their specific interest in the conference. We always want to build networks and forge solidarity with all those who subscribe to the principles of community media that includes promoting media plurality and diversity.

*Mavic is also the International President of the Women’s International Network and can be reached at mavic@iwtc.org*

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**Register for the AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference**

Have you registered for the upcoming AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Bali, Indonesia from November 24-27, 2005?

If not, you can register online by logging on to: [http://conference.asiapacific.amarc.org](http://conference.asiapacific.amarc.org). Register before October 25 and receive a discount.

In case you need assistance regarding registration or if you have any query, please email Suman Basnet in the AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Office in Kathmandu at suman@wlink.com.np.

Please visit the conference site for the latest information regarding the Regional Conference.
Opening of the First Community Radio in Korea -- Sungseo Community FM

By Ji-Hyun Kim

September 20, 2005. At last, the signal of the first legal community radio broadcasting in Korea hit the air on August 22, 2005, which is to be followed by others shortly. This will be marked as a historically important moment of community media in Korean broadcasting history. It took the SungSeo Community FM almost 9 months to begin broadcasting since it was first selected for the pilot project by KBC (Korean Broadcasting Committee) called "Low Frequency Radio Project" in last November along with other seven applicants.

The selected parties had to face their opening cancelled 3-4 times as Ministry of Information and Communication refused to allocate the frequency. Located in one of the biggest industrial complex in Korea, SungSeo Community FM aims to broadcast for the interest of 300,000 residents in SungSeo region with its 50,000 complex workers and 5,000 immigrant workers from many South Asian countries. To be faithful to the mandates of the community media, the station’s programs focus on eliciting participation from the people where anyone can come and talk about their stories. And for the first time in Korea, immigrant workers will take turns to broadcast in their own languages such as Sri Lankan, Chinese, Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Nepalese on different days of the week.

As an opening that came after three times of cancellations before, many problems lurk in the path of their future. One of the biggest problems is the unreasonably small coverage of their frequency. KBC and MIC (Ministry of Information and Communication) allowed only 1 watt for their broadcasting which covers only 1.5 km wide. This will be a serious problem in their effort of constructing a genuine community through the broadcasting. In order to overcome this problem, SungSeo FM decided to upload their program in their website too, and keep working on policy advocacy. Another challenge is to raise funds as KBC supports only for the equipment. A more systematic approach to community radio supporting system is needed in the future.

Source: MEDIACT newsletter - [inter-ACT!] #3

For further information, please contact: Jo, Dongwon, Director of Policy Research Department, MEDIACT. Email: jonairship@yahoo.co.kr. To subscribe MediAct newsletter, please visit: http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/inter-act

India: Government Invites Tender to expand FM radio broadcasting

September 21, 2005.

New Delhi, India. The Government of India, on September 21, 2005 has issued a public invitation of tender to bid for expansion of FM radio broadcasting services through private agencies. The notice mentions that “a total of 338 channels in 91 cities across the country are being made available for bidding by Indian private companies at this stage.” The bid is called under the Radio Broadcasting Services through Private Agencies (Phase – II) Policy.

For details of the notice inviting tender, please log on to: www.mib.nic.in OR http://www.communityradionetwork.org/news_item.2005-09-22.0933713862
India: All India Petition on Community Radio

The current "Community Radio Policy" of India is discriminatory towards communities as it bars community members, community based-organisations, non-government organisations and other civil society groups from applying for licenses to operate low power community radio stations. The policy holds that only "well established educational institutions & organisations" can apply for a community radio license. So, what we have in the name of Community Radio is in reality Campus Radio.

Several organisations, academicians and individuals have been actively campaigning for communities' right to access the airwaves for the last seven years. They have made innumerable representations to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and to the Broadcast Regulator (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India - TRAI). They have also written and submitted several drafts to reform the existing Community Radio Policy so as to include community rights in it. In spite of these efforts the government continues to be non-committal and discriminatory.

We urge you to join hands with us to mount adequate pressure on the government to end this discrimination against the largely rural and poor communities. Please express your solidarity by signing the 'Urging the Inclus ion of the Right of the Communities within the Community Radio Policy' petition at:  http://www.petitionOnline.com/comradio/petition.html

Thailand: Government Shuts Down Radio Station

August 11, 2005. Local community radio station FM92.25, known for its strong criticism of the government, was shut down in an outrageous raid on the station by authorities on 9 August 2005.

The raid on the station took place at about 2:00 p.m. (local time), during regular broadcast programming. On 10 August, local dailies reported that some 30 officials, representing police, the Public Relations Department (PRD) and National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) stormed the station and stripped employees of their work papers. According to the news reports, they also ordered staff to stop the broadcast immediately or face arrest.

The station was charged with "disseminating false information" tending to "incite the public against government". The charge came in addition to two other charges that the station had violated transmission rules which, as a result, had disturbed the reception of television signals in nearby homes and interfered with aeronautical radio communications.

The authorities said the raid followed a court order and several warnings to the station to correct its technical operation.

But the raid prompted a protest from the Thai Broadcast Journalists Association (TBJA), a local broadcasters' association. In a statement issued on 10 August, the TBJA questioned the charge of disseminating false information against the government. "Citing such motives for the raid could violate Articles 39 and 41 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of the media and media independence," said the statement.
The TBJA noted that the station's right to inform the public and criticise the government were guaranteed by the Constitution. The organisation recalled that the government had previously raided the station several times without court warrants and charges.

In June, the government closed down the FM92.25's website and harassed the station's executive director and program host, Anchalee Paireerak, on the same grounds. Anchalee later resigned for fear of her life following a warning that she should stay away from her house.

The radio station and its website, which later resumed operations, remained defiant against the government's warning of closure.

Since May, the PRD has been spearheading the revamp of community radio stations following complaints that many stations violated community radio rules. The move, however, has been widely viewed by advocacy groups as a means of imposing state control on the fledging sector, which offers alternative information to the state-controlled radio stations.

Source: Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), http://www.seapabkk.org

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Thailand Community Radio Update by Dr. Uajit Virojtrairatt

The situation regarding community radio in Thailand is becoming increasingly complicated. After the Thai Government allowed Community radios to broadcast advertisements the number of community radio stations rose to more than 3,000. Instead of discouraging commercial radio stations in the guise of community radio, the government accorded validity to them by claiming income tax from the stations.

On one hand, Thailand does not have a National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and on the other hand the government is all set to destroy community radio stations by promoting blatant commercialization. It is ironical that genuine community based radio stations are being called illegal and tormented by government machineries. Among the reasons the government gives for closing down community radio stations are interference of signal, technical reasons, national security reasons, etc.

The National Broadcasting Commission, when established is expected to be a national and independent organization that will manage frequency allocation and will monitor broadcasters on the basis of the broadcasting law and constitution.

Thailand has had a draft broadcasting law since last six years. However, the country still does not have the NBC. The latest development is that 14 nominees were proposed to senate for forming the NBC. The senator is supposed to select seven members from among the proposed nominees for making a final recommendation to the King. All the 14 nominees are people that have little credibility when it comes to rights to communication. Most of them represent the media business community and are not actual freedom of expression champions. The National Broadcasting Act makes provision for a very powerful NBC and it will be disastrous to have an NBC that is not serious about freedom of expression and communication rights of the people.

For more information, please contact: uajitv@yahoo.com
September 7, 2005. An international media watchdog has told the Criminal Court that press freedom in Thailand has declined since Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra took office.

Testifying yesterday in support of media reform campaigner Supinya Klangnarong, Shawn Crispin, an Asia-based consultant to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), said more pressure had been exerted on the media by the Thaksin government, including several civil defamation cases filed against media organisations by the government or companies with close links to the government. Mr Crispin said many international media organisations, including the CPJ and the International Federation of Journalists, had expressed concern over the lawsuits which were deemed inappropriate because freedom of the press was guaranteed by the Thai constitution.

Mr Crispin claimed that Shin Corp, a telecom giant owned by Mr Thaksin's family, had set an example for other companies to file defamation lawsuits seeking massive damages from the media. These included Picnic Corp's 10-billion-baht complaints against Matichon and Prachachart Turakit daily newspapers, and Krisdanakorn Plc's 4.8-million-baht lawsuit against Khao Hoon newspaper. Shin Corp has filed a defamation lawsuit against Ms Supinya and Thai Post, demanding 400 million baht in damages for comments made by Ms Supinya in an article run by the newspaper in July 2003.

Ms Supinya was quoted as saying in the article that Shin Corp's profits soared after Mr Thaksin rose to power.

Mr Crispin was the first foreign witness to testify in the case following the defence legal team's failed attempt two weeks ago to present two foreign expert witnesses. The plaintiff's legal team objected to that, reasoning that it did not trust the defence's interpreter.

Mr Crispin was a journalist formerly with the Far Eastern Economic Review weekly magazine, which changed its format last November. He was based in Thailand from 1999-2004 and told the court the Review had published a similar comment that the Thaksin government's policy was beneficial to Shin Corp, but no lawsuit was filed against the magazine.

He gave the court a number of examples he perceived as conflicts of interest in the government policies which, he said, were beneficial to Shin Corp. These included the iTV concession modification which saved Shin Corp, the television station's major shareholder, a great deal of money to be paid to the government, as well as the Board of Investment's eight-year tax holiday for Shin Satellite Plc's iPSTAR revenues earned abroad, he said.
Mr Crispin said Ms Supinya as well as other journalists enjoyed freedom of expression, as guaranteed in the Thai constitution and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and therefore had the right to write articles on conflicts of interest in government policies, and on Shin Corp as the firm was listed on the Thai stock market and since Mr Thaksin was a public figure.

Shin Corp's lawyer Somporn Pongsuwan argued that the constitution allowed freedom of expression only to the extent that it did not violate other people's rights. The constitution did not state that public figures and public firms were exceptions that could be violated against in the name of freedom of expression, the lawyer said.

Source: [http://www.wacc.org.uk/supinya](http://www.wacc.org.uk/supinya)

For detail information on the case Supinya versus Shin Corp. in Thailand, please visit: [http://www.wacc.org.uk/supinya](http://www.wacc.org.uk/supinya)

**Thailand: Petition to Support Media Reform Activist**

Join Noam Chomsky, Ariel Dorfman and others in supporting the case of Supinya Klangnarong, a campaigner on media reform in Thailand who faces a two-year jail sentence and US$10 million fine for daring to question Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's business and political relationships.

An online petition calling on Shin Corp. to drop its lawsuits against Supinya has been launched. So far, more than 1,200 individuals have signed on.

In July 2003, Supinya said in an interview published in the "Thai Post" that Shin Corp. profits had soared since Thaksin came to power in 2001. Shin Corp. was founded by the prime minister and is now owned by his family. Founded in 1983, the company owns Thailand's biggest mobile phone company and Internet provider, controls iTV television station and holds a monopoly on the country's satellite communications business.

The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) says the outcome of the Supinya trial will set an important precedent for free expression in Thailand. "This case will either free people to speak out for a better Thailand, or it will teach them to never question people in power," says SEAPA Executive Director Roby Alampay. A court ruling is expected in December.


**Nepal page in AMARC website**

As part of its support to the community radio movement in Nepal AMARC has started a page in its website dedicated entirely to Nepal. For the latest information from Nepal, please visit: [http://nepal.asiapacific.amarc.org/site.php](http://nepal.asiapacific.amarc.org/site.php).

Latest addition to the site is an interview with Raghu Mainali, Coordinator of Save Independent Radio Movement of Nepal (SIRM) and President of Association of Community Radio Broadcasters of Nepal.
WIN Calls to all Women’s Groups to Join the 24 Hours of Feminist Mobilization

On October 17, women in all time zones will successively take to the streets at noon to stage actions for one hour. This is how they will show their support for the blueprint for society depicted in the Women's Global Charter for Humanity. In the Pacific Islands (New Caledonia, Samoa, etc.), the women of Asia will kick off the relay, followed by the women of Africa, then Europe and so on.

This call to action goes out to all women’s groups who belong to the World March of Women and to those who wish to join us. Let’s all act together on October 17 by organizing public events. The watchword is to be simple, positive, in touch with one another, to show that, with our differences and similarities, women are united.

Groups in various regions of the world have begun to organize their activities. Some will rings bells and alarms in cities and villages to alert the population that women are mobilizing throughout the world to vigorously defend the values in the Charter. Others will organize vigils or actions during which women will form human chains of solidarity.

October 17 is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. On this day the women of the World March of Women (WMW) will complete the Women's Global Charter for Humanity World Relay. Many women will gather in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the last stop of the Relay, to remind the planet that women are demanding the elimination of poverty and violence against women and that they want to build a world based on equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace.

Please send information about the actions you are planning for October 17 to: 24hrs2005@gmail.com

Documents and press releases will be posted regularly on this site by AMARC and other correspondents about this activity. Visit the AMARC-WIN site regularly for updates. check out regularly: http://www.win.amarc.org

The Women's International Network is a large assembly of women's communicators working to ensure women's Right to communicate through and within the community radio movement.

Australia: Lock Up Your Boss – A Different Way to Raise Funds

15th August 2005

Community broadcasters participate in a lot of different and interesting ways to raise funds for local charities.

Ange Barry the General Manager at Plenty Valley FM 88.6 swapped normal work clothes for a prisoner shirt and handcuffs on Friday 12/08/2005 as the staff locked Ange up for an hour to raise money to support Kids Help Line as part of Lock Up Your Boss Day 2005.

Ange Barry said "We registered through the Lock Up Your Boss website a while ago and have been looking forward to it ever since. It brings together the need to have a lot of fun as a team as well as supporting a worthwhile charity that I really believe in. As a community radio
station, we are all about you - and our aim is to work with the local community to support the local community!"

The arresting Sheriff, Jowen Louis-Smith at 6 months is the youngest member of Plenty Valley FM working with Karenza and Holly, presenters of the Friday Morning Magazine. Ange Barry's arrest was broadcast live!

Holly said that since the Summons was delivered, Ange has been, "feverishly calling, emailing and visiting friends, clients and colleagues in an effort to raise the minimum bail of $500 to secure release."

Jowen said (through the support of his mum Karenza),"we're not too worried how long it takes Ange to raise the minimum bail. It gives us a chance to show who's really Boss - and he set to work running the station for over 1 hour, giving himself a nice food allowance!"

Below is the email plea from Ange Barry, following her lock-up:

"I need your help. I've just received a Summons and I'm locked up until I can make bail. I wouldn't normally ask but I'm in shock and I need people who I can still trust to help me out."

"I still can't believe it. It only happened a few minutes ago. Jowen Louis-Smith along with the rest of the people here at Plenty Valley FM have dobbed me in to the authorities and I have been charged with the crime of "Too many bad hair days", she cried.

Lock Up Your Boss Day is the annual fundraiser for Kids Help Line and this year they hope to embrace over 4,000 Bosses who'll agree to get locked up for just an hour to help sustain Australia's only free, 24 hour, confidential and anonymous telephone and online counselling service for Australian kids aged 5 to 18 years of age.

Kids Help Line is staffed by paid, professionally trained and supervised counsellors and currently responds to up to 10,000 contacts for help in any one week. An average day for a counsellor includes handling calls from children who are bullied at school, are feeling depressed or suicidal, are being abused, have a drug problem, are homeless or are having problems dealing with their family or friends.

Source: [http://www.cbaa.org.au](http://www.cbaa.org.au)

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**Philippines: Media Watchdog Demonstrates Power of Blogging**

The Philippines has one of the most vibrant media landscapes in Southeast Asia, with at least 20 daily newspapers, more than a dozen tabloids, six national television networks, an all-news cable station and dozens of radio stations. Yet far from leading the news agenda, traditional media are following online blogs for breaking news, reports the Centre for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR).

One blog, in particular, has become an indispensable source on the country's recent political crisis - Inside PCIJ ([www pciij org/blog](http://www.pciij.org/blog)). Run by the Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), the blog was the first to reveal tapes and transcripts of an alleged phone conversation between President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and an election official during the
vote count for the 2004 presidential election. Arroyo has since admitted having such a
conversation and has come under intense pressure to resign.

Created initially to complement mainstream media, Inside PCIJ has instead become the
source for news tips and analyses, especially on the presidential scandal. The Centre's staff of
seven ventures out to cover stories, take pictures, transcribe tapes and fact-check tips from
sources. At the peak of the scandal in June 2005, PCIJ's blog registered almost 500,000 hits
that month.

"A blog has meant space for us to further enhance our reporting and at the same time expand
the frontiers of information access," says PCIJ staffer Alecks Pabico. "With a blog, not only
are we able to provide our readers with the mere text of our stories, but also downloadable
copies of primary documents gathered in the research phase, images, links to relevant
websites from which we got secondary materials, statistics, studies and human sources to
give background and context to what we've written."

To read more about how blogging is redefining journalism and access to information in the
Philippines, see:

- Beyond the Call of Duty: http://www.cmfr-phil.org/pjr-aug2.htm
- Inside PCIJ: http://www.pcij.org/blog/
- PCIJ: http://www.pcij.org/

Source: commrights-asia mailing list. To subscribe please visit:
http://mail.fma.ph/mailman/listinfo/commrights-asia

Philippines: Radio Journalist Bear Brunt of Murders

Radio commentators in rural Philippines are being gunned down in record numbers, a
symptom of corruption and a weak judicial system, concludes a new report by the Committee
to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

"On the Radio, Under the Gun" examines the reasons behind the rising death toll among
broadcast journalists in the country, following a CPJ fact-finding mission in June 2005.

Of 22 journalists murdered in connection with their work in the Philippines since 2000, 17
were radio commentators from rural provinces who were shot and killed for what they said
on the air, according to CPJ. Government officials are suspected of involvement in half of the
murder cases, and witnesses to murders are often too fearful to testify. Not a single person
has been convicted for any of the murders, says CPJ.

Read full report here: http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2005/phil_05/phil_05.html
**Arab and World Media Conference**

Leading journalists and media leaders from around the world will join their Arab colleagues at the Arab and World Media Conference on 5-6 December 2005 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates to discuss issues facing the media, with an emphasis on Arab countries.

Organised by the Arab Thought Foundation, a non-governmental, non-religious think tank in Beirut that debates critical issues facing Arabs, the conference offers participants the opportunity to engage in interactive discussions led by skilled moderators. Topics will include censorship, propaganda, journalists in the line of fire, and national differences in how key issues are covered, including the war on terror and emerging perspectives in India and China.

Interviews of political and business leaders are scheduled, including The Hon. Sa’ad Hariri, Member of the Lebanese Parliament; HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal; The Hon. Ghazi al-Yawer, Vice President, Iraq; General Mansour al-Turki of Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Interior; and others.

The event is by invitation only. Readers of the "IFEX Communique" can nominate themselves for an invitation, as well as learn more about the conference at: [http://www.arabandworldmedia.org](http://www.arabandworldmedia.org)

*Source: IFEX COMMUNIQUÉ, [http://www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)*

**Article 19 Offers Model Public Broadcasting Law**

ARTICLE 19 has published a Model Public Service Broadcasting Law to guide lawmakers in ensuring that public broadcasters are editorially independent, publicly accountable and adequately funded.

The Model Law is based on international standards on freedom of expression, under which public broadcasters must be protected against political or commercial interference, and be obligated to serve the public interest by providing balanced and impartial coverage.

The publication is the latest in ARTICLE 19's series of standard-setting legal texts on freedom of expression. Previous publications include a Model Freedom of Information Law, Principles on Defamation and Freedom of Expression, and Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.

To download the publications, visit: [http://www.article19.org/pdfs/standards](http://www.article19.org/pdfs/standards)

*Source: IFEX COMMUNIQUÉ, [http://www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)*

**Eco-friendly Radio Station Started in Wales**

Wales' first eco-friendly radio station is to start broadcasting via a hilltop transmitter powered by wind and solar energy.

It has mains electricity to back up its wind and sun power.
Mr George - a Baptist minister in the village of Llandysilio - said the station would use the mast on the Preseli Hills to broadcast 24 hours a day to north Pembrokeshire and west Carmarthenshire.

Funding for the 28-day project has come via the European Union's Objective One scheme and from the Welsh Assembly Government.

"We can only broadcast up to 5km from the studio, but using the transmitter near Maenclochog, we should be able to reach as far away as Weston-super-Mare, Cornwall, and even southern Ireland," he said.

The daily running order of the station has yet to be decided, but its character is already well defined. In one episode of the programme, actor Dawn French, who played the vicar, fronted a community radio station with a difference.

"We're not having the traditional weather forecasts. Instead, we've got a local farmer - Twm Tywy' - coming in.

"Instead of talking about fahrenheit and centigrade, he'll be telling us more important things, like: 'It's nice enough to go to Tenby today', or 'It's ok to mow the grass'."

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk

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**Asia Media Forum**

Asiamediaforum.org is a space for media professionals to share insights on issues related to the media and their profession, and to exchange stories, information and opinions on democracy, development and human rights in Asia.

IFEX members and journalists can join AMF and be kept informed about the latest media developments in the region. Membership is free.

The website is hosted by Inter Press Service (IPS) Asia-Pacific and financially supported by ActionAid International.


For more information, contact: Surasak Glahan, AMF Fellow; Tel: (66-2) 246-7877-8 (IPS Asia-Pacific Bangkok office); (66-4) 101-4773 (mobile); Fax: (66-2) 246-7876 (IPS office); E-mail: surasak@asiamediaforum.org

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**The Asia Summit**

Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) in collaboration with its partners and international organizations organizes the Asia Media Summit (AMS). The Asia Media Summit provides a unique opportunity for broadcasters around the globe to share their thoughts on Information and Broadcasting.

The **AMS 2006 Online** pages give you the information about the Asia Media Summit 2006.
Feature:
The launch of Korean Network for Media Activism!

By Jo, Dongwon, Korea

In October 2001, more than 20 activists from 10 regions in Korea gathered to form the Network to support each other's efforts in establishing a local media centres in the regions, and since then they held 7 nationwide workshops. In 2003, it developed into a more systematic organization called Korean Coalition for Establishing Local Media Centre, broadening its concern to cover various issues such as media education, public access, the production and distribution of independent films, progressive internet press, and community radio. In the 7th workshop in June 25th, 2005, about 90 organizations in 16 regions agreed to launch the "Korean Network for Media Activism."

Korean Network for Media Activism will encourage the networks of media activism within and between the regions and promote the issues of media education, public access, the distribution of independent films, community radio, progressive internet press, and local media centre. In this context, it pursues not a monolithic organizational frame but an autonomous and horizontal networking of media activism and social movements.

The communication and media environment of Korea is controlled by political powers and monopolistic capitalism. Despite such an atmosphere and due to the legacy of the several media movements in Korea such as the audience movement, media industry trade union's movement and the independent film/video movement, many democratic movements are taking place in the media sector such as the legalization of public access, the growth of independent films, the public funding for media education and the establishment of local media centres. Our collective effort is to construct a public sphere that enables democratic communication of public opinions and discourses. We will develop an autonomous space and methods to reform the dominant media structure and nurture independent and alternative media activities.

The media movement for democratic communication, diversity and autonomy needs not only to involve itself in the current changes of media-communication environment, but also to prepare itself for a democratic media-communication environment in the future. The network for media activism needs to communicate with various sectors of the society, create numerous public spheres, bring forward the voices of the socially marginalised, reform dominant media structure and at the same time encourage community and independent media.

Based on the participations of the media and social activists to realize communication rights and strengthen the public-ness of the media, the Korean Network for Media Activism will be a new move towards the establishment of media democracy in Korea where every member of our society participates and communicates.

Source: MEDIACT newsletter - [inter-ACT!] #3

For further information, please contact: Jo, Dongwon, MEDIACT, Director of Policy Research Department, email: jonairship@yahoo.co.k
Feature:
Building Community on the Airwaves

By Jaya Menon, Chennai, India

September 14, 2005.

Touted as the country’s first community radio and cleared rather hurriedly in February 2004, barely three months before the Lok Sabha election, Anna Radio was to be the Bharatiya Janata Party’s\(^1\) (BJP) centrepiece in its high decibel India Shining campaign in Tamil Nadu. However, with just two hours of content and no blueprint to conquer the airwaves, it was hardly the dramatic poll trigger the BJP had envisaged. However, what was seen as a political decision then turned out to be a milestone in the area of community outreach. “It’s been a challenging 18 months (since Anna FM’s launch). But I think we have passed the test,” says Dr R Sreedher, Director of Anna University’s Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC) and the man behind the rather low profile achievement. Relaxing in his office in the sprawling Anna University campus in Chennai, the 55-year-old academician has enough reason to feel pleased.

Anna Radio at 90.4 Mhz (Megahertz) has now stockpiled 1800 hours of content. According to Sreedher it reflects the voice of the community, recorded as it was by “innocent (with no commercial motive)” producers. The programmes are indigenously produced. There’s no news, no advertisements, no film-based programmes and no programmes violating Intellectual Property Rights or broadcast guidelines.

“It is the smallest radio station (8 ft by 5 ft) and the most cheaply maintained one at that, at just US $1,000 (about Rs 45,000) a month,” he says. A 50 watt transmitter (with a 30-metre-long antennae), another one on standby, a computer, control panel, earphones and microphones complete the small array of equipment in the tiny station, which holds about three people at a time.

The reach of the 50-watt transmitter is in the radius of eight to 10 km and 10 hours of programmes are broadcast every day from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. The focus areas are education, health, environment, women’s issues and community development. Every Saturday evening there are live phone-ins from two slum colonies (Kannigapuram and Kotturpuram), about 2 km from the University, to discuss day-to-day civic or social problems including drinking water shortage, bad roads and transport. The phone-ins are a great source of excitement for the women in Kannigapuram who wait eagerly for Saturday evenings.

The ‘samuthaya nerkanal (social interview)’ programmes where slum dwellers are taught to engage their time creating art from scrap and made to talk about that ‘empowering’ experience has been particularly popular. So too the ‘Sakthi Arivayadi (Women, Know Your Power)’ programme aimed at improving quality of life.

Faculty and students from the Anna University’s Media Science department chip in as interrogators, anchors, editors and producers. In fact, it is a bustling radio station, mobilising communities in a big way.

When the government first threw open the airwaves to private players in 2002, there were few takers. There were no community radios in the country and no models to fall back on. One frequency was preserved for education in 40 cities and the Indira Gandhi National Open

\(^1\) BJP is a national level political party of India
University (IGNOU) was given the task of coordinating the licensing process. Sreedher was the first, along with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, to apply for a radio license on behalf of Anna University. As advertisements were not allowed, educational institutions were not exactly thrilled. IGNOU’s 2003 experiment with ‘Gyan Vani Radio,’ on a ‘cooperative model’ with a 10-watt transmitter, had proved an utter failure.

It was a 15-month struggle to get Anna Radio on air. Despite representing a government-run institution, his application was tossed from one ministry to another. ‘Fortunately, we crossed all the barriers without any major hitches by December 2003.’

But when it came to actually equipping the station, Dr Sreedher realised nobody manufactured a 50-watt transmitter. Bharat Electricals was given the job of making the transmitter. ‘‘It cost us just about Rs 10 lakh to set up the station.’’ Soon the station was in operation and the content rolling out.

Within six months, Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO granted recognition to Anna Radio as a training centre for station managers. Soon after, the station trained 60 participants from 11 countries.

Several universities have since followed EMRC’s footsteps—VVIT’s Vasundhara Vahini at Baramati in Maharashtra, Delhi-based campus station, Radio Jamia, Open Knowledge Network of M S Swaminathan Foundation and a host of other campuses across the country. With the Centre considering Sreedher’s request to increase the power of transmitters and allowing five minutes of advertisements (a definite source of revenue), institutions are likely to play a greater role.

Anna FM may be way below in the popularity chart. Nevertheless, it hopes to make a mark following the principle that the true spirit of a community radio is to make programmes with the cheapest resources available and getting a community to decide on the content. ‘‘We don’t want TRPs (Television Rating Points) and RRPs (Radio Rating Points). If we can transform the life of 600 women, then we have achieved a lot. If six leaders come out of the community, then it is bound to have a cascading effect,’’ said Sreedher, who will shortly leave EMRC to join IIT Rourkee, where too he hopes to start a community radio.

**Tuning in to the future**

- Anna FM Radio at 90.4 Mhz has 1800 hours of content
- Community radio focuses on education, health, environment, women’s issues and development
- Vasundhara Vahini, Baramati, Radio Jamia, Delhi and Open Knowledge Network, Chennai all follow suit.

*Source: [http://www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)*
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**The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA)** is a non-governmental organisation campaigning for genuine press freedom in Southeast Asia [http://www.seapabkk.org](http://www.seapabkk.org)


**Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)**, a non-government organization based in the Philippines, seeking to enhance the popularization and social marketing of development-oriented issues and campaigns through media-related interventions, social communication projects, and cultural work [http://www.fma.ph](http://www.fma.ph)

**Burma Guide to Rights and Democracy**: It offers easy access to news on Burma, and resources and tools aimed at supporting Burma's democracy movement by opening channels of communication into one of the world’s most repressive states. Information is available in English and six Burmese languages (Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Mon, and Shan). Visit: [http://www.burmaguide.net](http://www.burmaguide.net)

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