

How ASEAN Media Portrays India

Insights into the Construction of Media Text



Om Prakash Das



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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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rajan@pentagonpress.in
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INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia has historically been significantly dynamic in global politics, where India has considerable strategic interests. The cultural influence and deep-rooted historical connections that India maintains with the people of this region, dating back to pre-modern times, contribute to the uniqueness and multi-dimensionality of its relationship with Southeast Asia. Presently, India reassessing its role in global politics, while also aiming to bolster its active engagement in Southeast Asia, given the prevailing economic dynamics and China's expansionist policies.

Media narratives, which have permeated our lives, consciously or unconsciously shape our perspectives and attitudes. In this context, it is imperative to comprehend and analyse India's outreach to the people of Southeast Asia, capitalizing on media narratives and trends. This Occasional Paper does not assert a direct influence of media narratives on the general populace and policymaking in Southeast Asia. Rather, it delves into the question whether media content originating from India, effectively reaches the people and how it addresses India's relations with the region and its global presence. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge that media operates within specific political, social, and economic contexts.¹ Media narratives are shaped by societal and political dynamics, and wield significant influence in the era of economic globalization, capital presence and associated politics.² Media, owing to its power to shape perceptions, constitutes an

¹ Chris Rudd. "Political economy of the media," In Geoff Kemp, Babak Bahador, Kate McMillan and Chris Rudd (Eds.), *Politics and the Media*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, (2nd ed.), 2016, pp. 38-54.

² Des Freedman, *The Contradictions of Media Power*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2014, p. 137.

important dimension of the economic-political system, operating within broader societal frameworks.³

The central premise of this Occasional Paper lies in understanding the origin and transformation of information into news and the role of the information structure in shaping cross-border media representations. Through empirical study, this Occasional Paper aims to offer insights into these pressing questions. Essentially, it underscores the pivotal role of media in moulding perceptions and navigating the intricate interplay between political economy, the media landscape, and India's representation in Southeast Asia. It represents an endeavour to unravel the complexities of media representation and its ramifications for regional dynamics and relations.

Furthermore, this study also delves into how Southeast Asian countries may perceive India's economic, geopolitical, and diplomatic roles through media representation and narrative, while also investigating the trend of relying on external news sources for coverage on India in Southeast Asian media. It underscores the potential risks associated with this dependence, including limited information diversity, propagated narratives, and slanted representations. Additionally, the Occasional Paper explores the influence of international news content and its dissemination, particularly within the constraints of the Southeast Asian media, on attitude formation among regional subscribers. It aims to navigate the challenges of structured representation, especially in developing nations.

In the context of given prepositions, it remains largely unclear whether media content originating from India effectively reaches the people of Southeast Asia (particularly in the ASEAN region), how media narratives portray India's relations with the region and its global presence. Another aspect concerns media consumption and its impact, yet it remains largely unexplored how Southeast Asian media relies on external news sources or their sources for coverage of India and what potential risks arise from this dependence. Understanding how international news dissemination within the constraints of ASEAN media influences attitudes towards India

³ Eric Louw, *The Media and Cultural Production*, Sage, London, (1st ed.), 2001, p. 8.

is crucial. Regarding representation and its impact, a significant question before us is how media representation is taking place, and what has been the major embedded sentiment of news related to India's portrayal, in the context of shaping public perceptions of India. This study aims to provide insights into these critical issues and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of India's image and the process of its representation in Southeast Asia.

This Occasional Paper is structured with the help of a thorough examination of primary data provided by reputable media monitoring organizations. These datasets provide insights into the evolving landscape of media freedom, access, and circulation patterns across ASEAN member states. Although ASEAN consists of ten members, for this study, the research is limited to the five largest economies within ASEAN in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Another point of contention revolves around the fluctuating economic statuses of these member states, which are currently in a state of flux. As of today, Vietnam ranks among the five largest economies. To mitigate the effects of this dynamic situation, a span of four years is considered, focusing on the period just prior to the conceptualization of this study, by scrutinizing yearly assessments and studies conducted by these organizations. Primary data for this study was collected from reputable media monitoring organizations from five ASEAN member states. The research design aims to analyse the headlines, sources of media coverage, and sentiment analysis of news text about India in ASEAN newspapers.

Prioritisation of topics, source analysis and sentiment analysis data of this study, established a pattern about the representation of India and Indian affairs but the larger structure to watch is the influence of the news narrative on policy making and outlook for the outside world. There is no doubt that media and politics are intertwined, with the media serving as the primary source of information for the public regarding political events and policies. Simultaneously, policymakers rely on the media to gauge public opinion and understand key issues within the public agenda.⁴ This symbiotic

⁴ Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Toward the Integrated Study of Political Communications, Public Opinion, and the Policy-making Process", *Political Science & Politics*, 29(1), 1996, pp. 10-13. doi:10.2307/420182

relationship underscores the interconnectedness of media and politics, as highlighted by the statement, “foreign policymakers respond to the public and the public responds to the media.”⁵ Some earlier studies have suggested that media influence may not always be overt; research suggests its significant impact on the salience of foreign policy issues for the public.⁶ Media content has the power to shape public perception, influence the agenda, and heighten public interest in specific policy matters. As Cohen aptly notes, the media may not dictate what people should think, but it is remarkably successful in determining what issues they think about.⁷ Moreover, it is important because a positive national image can enhance a country’s political and economic influence in the international system. It can influence exports, foreign direct investment, the stability of international relations, the prosperity of national tourism, the attractiveness of domestic labour markets and education systems.⁸

NORMATIVE STRUCTURE AND MEDIA

The Southeast Asian region is shaped by various regional and global vagaries, including colonization, the Cold War, and post-colonial nation-building efforts, that have left indelible marks on the political and economic structures of countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Apart from establishing trade routes and exerting influence over the education system, “colonial powers also introduced transformative technologies in communication and transportation that reshaped the region’s economy and communication systems.” These interventions had a profound impact on the political landscape, characterized by a centralized governance model often associated with

⁵ Jarno S Lang, *Foreign Policy and the Media: The US in the Eyes of the Indonesian Press*, Springer, Basingstoke, 2016, p. 10.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Alexander Buhmann, “Measuring Country Image: A New Model,” USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 7 November 2016 at <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/measuring-country-image-new-model> (Accessed 12 February 2024).

authoritarian and repressive tendencies. During the Cold War (1945-1991), nine out of eleven Southeast Asian countries achieved independence, including Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma/Myanmar, with Thailand being the notable exception as the sole Southeast Asian nation never subjected to colonization.

The political processes in Southeast Asia over the past seven decades or more, suggest a state of variability influenced by different factors. However, specific examples, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, highlight instances where institutions played a crucial role in managing popular urges. Furthermore, in cases where a democratic political regime was established, it paved the way for the emergence of new political elite, negotiating for a more open electoral landscape in some countries. Today, Southeast Asia is situated at the crossroads of geopolitics and there are various and obvious reasons for this. This region is known for its young and growing population, amid major global trade routes, diverse political and ethnic cultures, rich histories, and rapid economic growth. These characteristics make this region a “complex tapestry of political and economic landscapes.”

In Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia, media conglomerates have advanced to consolidate economic power, evolving into a formidable political force capable of influencing communication regulations. This phenomenon extends its domain over the regulatory framework, engaging with the political sphere and prompting amendments to the government regulations.⁹ According to data from the Press Council of Indonesia, various types of mass media outlets are currently operational and active within the country. The data from 2022 reveals a diverse media landscape, encompassing approximately, “436 print publications, 368 television channels, 15 radio stations, and around 865 online media platforms.”¹⁰

⁹ Luciana Retno Prastiwi, “Political Economy of Media in Indonesia with the Study of Law No. 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting”, Proceedings of the Second Jogjakarta Communication Conference (JCC 2020), Surabaya, Indonesia, 2020.

¹⁰ “Indonesian Media Landscape 2022 #1,” Imogen Public Relations Indonesia, 13 March 2022 at <https://imogenpr.com/new-report-indonesian-media-landscape-2022/> (Accessed 3 January 2024).

The aggregate figures from various sources significantly exceed the provided statistics. According to data from 2017, as reported by the Press Council, there were a total of “2,000 printed media outlets, 1,166 radio stations, 674 television channels, and 43,300 online media platforms.”¹¹ The internet has a 76 per cent coverage rate in the country, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (now referred to as ‘X’) are significantly popular among users.¹² The Press Council itself has acknowledged a major deficiency in professional ethics and practices within media companies. For instance, a mere “16% of print media and 0.5% of online media” are deemed to meet the standards of professionalism.¹³ A few reports suggest that there are 12 major conglomerates active and they “own 60 [television channels], 317 print media, 66 radios, and 9 online media outlets (2017). For example, ‘The Jawa Pos Group’ has 20 television channels, 171 print media and 1 online media. While ‘Kelompok Kompas Gramedia’ has 10 television channels, 12 radio, 88 print media and 2 online media.”¹⁴

Malaysia boasts of a diverse array of print publications, encompassing a variety of newspapers and magazines. The present condition of the print media industry appears to be on a downward trajectory, particularly following the advent of digital media, which has precipitated a shift in media consumption habits.¹⁵ According to a survey, approximately 19

¹¹ “Indonesia,” Media Landscapes, at <https://medialandscapes.org/country/indonesia> (Accessed 3 January 2024).

¹² “*Indonesia Profile - Media*,” Indonesia media guide, BBC News, 24 February 2023, sec. Asia-Pacific at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15105923> (Accessed 3 December 2023).

¹³ “Indonesia,” Media Landscapes, at <https://medialandscapes.org/country/indonesia>. (Accessed 3 January 2024)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Whither the Print Media in Malaysia?” National Press Club Malaysia, 23 October 2019 at <https://nationalpressclub.org.my/whither-the-print-media-in-malaysia/> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

per cent of individuals derive their news from print media sources.¹⁶ This specific sector, comprising print newspapers and magazines, accounts for approximately 8 per cent of the total revenue within the broader media market.¹⁷ When examining media ownership in Malaysia, it becomes evident that it is concentrated with a limited number of conglomerates. For several years, 'Media Prima' has held the position as the predominant conglomerate, overseeing the largest terrestrial broadcasting network in the country.¹⁸ This conglomerate wields substantial influence over the media landscape of the country. Anti-monopoly laws regulating media ownership concentration are absent, and conglomerates such as Media Prima are free to procure controlling stakes in diverse media outlets.¹⁹

In Thailand, despite the stringent regulations governing the media landscape, numerous news outlets operate within the country.²⁰ These encompass traditional print publications such as newspapers and conventional electronic television and radio news channels. Digital media is prominent and omnipresent. Thailand boasts approximately 20 daily publications in Thai and English.²¹ The historical roots of newspapers in Thailand trace back

¹⁶ "Malaysia: Top Sources for News 2023," Statista, 14 June 2023 at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/982719/malaysia-top-news-sources/> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

¹⁷ "Print Newspapers & Magazines - Malaysia | Market Forecast," Statista at <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/media/newspapers-magazines/print-newspapers-magazines/malaysia> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

¹⁸ "Malaysia Media Guide," BBC News, 19 May 2023 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15384221> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

¹⁹ Saodah Wok and Shafizan Mohamed, "Internet and Social Media in Malaysia: Development, Challenges and Potentials," In Beatriz Peña Acuña (ed.), *The Evolution of Media Communication*, Open Science Open Minds, 31 May 2017 at <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/55225> (Accessed 13 January 2024).

²⁰ "The News Landscape in Thailand," Statista, 28 February 2022 at <https://www.statista.com/topics/9075/the-news-environment-in-thailand/#topicOverview> (Accessed 8 January 2024).

²¹ "Thai Newspapers: List of All Thailand Newspapers," Newspapers Land, 12 October 2023 at <https://www.newspapersland.com/thailand/> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

to the 19th century, with the initiation of print media dating back to 1844.²² Despite the evolution of media, newspapers continue to play a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and disseminating information among the populace. Data on readership patterns indicate that roughly 17 per cent of the population opts for print newspapers and magazines as their primary source of information.²³ Notably, 75 per cent of individuals, aged 76 years and above, prefer gaining information through printed newspapers. In stark contrast, only 16.7 per cent of the younger generation, aged 23 years and below engage with printed newspapers in Thailand.²⁴ Digital platforms are evidently supplanting traditional counterparts. A recent survey reveals a substantial shift, indicating “36.6% of individuals in Bangkok and its surrounding areas who traditionally read print newspapers now engage with online newspaper content.”²⁵ This trend aligns with broader developments, exemplified by the fact that, at the beginning of 2023, Thailand boasts 61.21 million internet users, constituting an impressive 85.3 per cent penetration rate.²⁶ This landscape is dynamic and subject to change with the emergence of new technologies and platforms. The 1997 Constitution facilitated the transformation of Thai media from a government entity to a market-oriented private enterprise. This transition

²² Wanpen Pajai, “The Profound Legacy of Thailand’s First Newspaper, The Bangkok Recorder,” *Southeast Asia Globe*, 27 May 2021 at <https://southeastasiaglobe.com/thailands-first-newspaper/> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

²³ “Print Newspapers & Magazines - Thailand | Market Forecast,” Statista at <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/media/newspapers-magazines/print-newspapers-magazines/thailand> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

²⁴ “Thailand: Share of Printed Newspaper Consumer by Generation 2019,” Statista, 22 November 2019 at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1181153/thailand-share-of-printed-newspaper-consumers-by-generation/> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

²⁵ “Thailand: Share of Newspaper Consumer BKK by Type 2019,” Statista, 22 November 2019 at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1181168/thailand-share-of-newspaper-consumers-bangkok-by-type> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

²⁶ Simon Kemp, “Digital 2023: Thailand,” Data Reportal – Global Digital Insights, 13 February 2023 at <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-thailand> (Accessed 10 January 2024).

was realized through shifts in media ownership patterns and the dynamic interplay between media owners and political leaders. Central to this framework is the influence of the Monarch-military hegemony, which has championed nationalism.²⁷ Consequently, the media has evolved into a promoter of official nationalism, serving as a novel avenue for endorsing political agendas and shaping public perception.

Recent trends in Singapore suggest a shift in the political landscape, exerting control over opposition activities and media outlets. This development has led opposition politicians to exercise caution in their expressions. Another noteworthy concern pertains to the mainstream media, which appears to lean favourably towards the ruling powers. This inclination raises queries regarding regulatory measures directed at alternative media, “limiting their independence and financial viability, with the government justifying restrictions.”²⁸

Singapore boasts a rich and illustrious history of the Press, exemplified by the enduring legacy of the prominent newspaper, *The Straits Times*, established around 1824. As of today, approximately 842,000 copies of newspapers²⁹ are circulated daily in Singapore through more than 16 active newspaper publications,³⁰ English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil.

²⁷ Chakrit Tiebtienrat, “Film Media and Nationalism in Thailand : Comparative Studies of Film Media Propaganda in Thailand and Its Influence on Thai Nationalism, Political Ideology, and Class Structure Since the Enactment of the Thai Constitution of 1997,” UC Research Repository at <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/items/e1e6788f-655a-4af1-912c-561337033bc2> (Accessed 29 December 2023).

²⁸ “BTI 2022 Country Report, Singapore Country Report 2022, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2022”, at <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SGP> (Accessed 28 December 2023).

²⁹ “Singapore: Daily Newspaper Circulation 2021,” Statista, 28 June 2023 at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/950259/singapore-daily-newspaper-circulation/> (Accessed 6 January 2024).

³⁰ “Singapore Newspapers,” FamilySearch Wiki, 4 December 2019 at https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Singapore_Newspapers#:~:text=Today%20there%20are%20a%20total,distributed%20with%20The%20Straits%20Times (Accessed 6 January 2024).

The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore, as stipulated in Article 14(1), affirms the entitlement of Singaporean citizens to “the rights to freedom of speech and expression, peaceful assembly without arms, and association.”³¹ However, a point of contention is the constraints imposed, rendering this ‘right to freedom’ considerably curtailed and subject to the discretion of the government or ruling class. A subsection of Article 14 describes the restriction of these rights, as “necessary or expedient in the interest” of the nation. The given rationale behind these restriction are the security of nation, maintenance of public order, morality (freedom of speech and freedom of association), and friendly relations with other countries (freedom of speech only). In this context, two prominent entities emerge as major players. The first is the ‘Singapore Press Holdings,’ intricately associated with the ruling party and exercising a near-monopoly over the Press.^{32,33} The second is MediaCorp, a media group under the ownership of a State-controlled investment agency. These influential media conglomerates exert a pervasive influence over all forms of mass media, extending to online platforms.³⁴

Singapore maintains a comprehensive regulatory framework that extends to both offline and online news platforms. This regulation is facilitated through The Newspaper and Printing Presses Act, which employs a licensing system for newspaper companies.³⁵ Even the ownership pattern

³¹ “University of Minnesota Human Rights Library,” Human Rights Library-University of Minnesota, 16 September 1963 at <https://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/singapore/singapore-constitution.html> (Accessed 7 January 2024).

³² National Library Board Singapore, “Formation of Singapore Press Holdings,” National Library Board, 9 October 2023 at <https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=34789177-5f5e-468d-9a77-db3680ce4161> (Accessed 7 January 2024).

³³ “Singapore Media Guide,” BBC News, 23 May 2023 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15966553> (Accessed 7 January 2024).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Singapore,” Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 9 January 2024 at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/singapore> (Accessed 8 January 2024).

of mass media is linked with government companies.³⁶ Digital media platforms gained their space during last few years, but the litigations and closure/blockage of a few prominent private media outlets gave rise of apprehensions. The ownership structure of mass media is predominantly associated with government entities. Although digital media platforms have gained prominence in recent years, legal disputes and the closure or blocking of certain prominent private media outlets, such as ‘States Times Review’³⁷ and ‘The Online Citizen,’³⁸ have fuelled concerns.

During the first half of 2020 amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine President made concerted efforts to stifle the media through threats, insults, and legal action targeting journalists and media organizations.³⁹ The waning influence of the traditional print media was evident when juxtaposed with the prominence of electronic and digital platforms, wherein television was the predominant source of information on a global scale.⁴⁰ Particularly in rural areas, the regional Press and radio persisted as the favoured means of communication, maintaining their pre-eminence despite the pervasive impact of the digital revolution.⁴¹ According

³⁶ Drew & Napier LLC, “In Brief: Media Law and Regulation in Singapore,” *Lexology*, 5 August 2020 at <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=bad6a3ed-7528-435a-93cf-0c2bdaa9cca9> (Accessed 8 January 2024).

³⁷ Joshua Lee and Belmont Lay, “States Times Review to Close Down After Getting Blocked in S’pore by Authorities,” *Mothership*, 9 November 2018, at <https://mothership.sg/2018/11/states-times-review-closed-down/>. (Accessed 8 January 2024)

³⁸ “Singapore Suspends Independent Website, Threatens It with Closure,” *RSF*, 15 October 2023, at <https://rsf.org/en/singapore-suspends-independent-website-threatens-it-closure>. (Accessed 8 January 2024)

³⁹ Pauline Estella and Martin Löffelholz, “Philippines,” at <https://medialandscapes.org/country/philippines> (Accessed 11 January 2024).

⁴⁰ Media Ownership Monitor, at <https://philippines.mom-rsf.org/> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

⁴¹ Pauline Gidget Resterio Estella, “Digital populism, digital newswork and the concept of journalistic competence: the Philippine condition,” *Media International Australia*, April 2021 at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350610336_Digital_populism_digital_newswork_and_the_concept_of_journalistic_competence_the_Philippine_condition (Accessed 12 January 2024).

to available data, approximately 22 per cent of Filipinos rely on newspapers as their primary source of news, while the majority (55 per cent) prefer online platforms.⁴² “The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* remains the pre-eminent newspaper, now propelled by its digital iteration. In contrast, formerly dominant regional newspapers like the *Sunstar Baguio* and the *Visayan Daily Star* find themselves grappling for survival in the absence of a robust online presence.”⁴³ The pervasive influence of commercialization and political motivations casts a shadow on the pristine principles of journalistic ethics and public service.⁴⁴ Despite these challenges, a noteworthy growth is visible within community journalism, marked by the emergence of new publications and the expansion of existing ones.

INDIA’S REPRESENTATION IN ASEAN MEDIA

The Southeast Asian region encapsulates a plethora of nations, each characterized by unique cultural, political, and economic dynamics. The representation of one country in another foreign nation’s media ecosystem is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by diverse factors and parameters. Diplomatic representation encompasses various tangible and structural initiatives such as the establishment of embassies, Consulates, and other official channels aimed at facilitating communication and cooperation between nations. In contemporary times, economic interdependencies contribute significantly to the dynamics of representation, along with cultural exchanges that foster mutual understanding.⁴⁵ Additionally, geopolitical

⁴² Media Ownership Monitor, at <https://philippines.mom-rsf.org/> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

⁴³ “Philippines,” RSF, in <https://rsf.org/en/country/philippines> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

⁴⁴ Yvonne T. Chua, “Philippines,” Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 14 June 2023 at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023/philippines> (Accessed 11 January 2024).

⁴⁵ Jelena Subotić, “Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 12 (4), 2016, pp. 610–27 at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26168124> (Accessed 18 April 2024).

alignments serve as effective and proven tools of representation.⁴⁶ Despite the existence of formal and structural frameworks, the media narrative plays a crucial role due to its extensive reach and ability to disseminate information across all segments of society.⁴⁷ Routine news coverage significantly shapes citizens' perceptions of foreign countries, their policies, and their representation.

Qualitative methods used to analyse media representation delve into the nuances of political, economic, and cultural contexts, as well as critical experiences.⁴⁸ Moreover, the continuous flow of information plays a pivotal role in shaping narratives.⁴⁹ Frequent news coverage reinforces specific themes, whether positive (e.g., cooperation, achievements) or negative (e.g., conflicts, tensions, governance issues, climate disasters, terrorism).⁵⁰ Nonetheless, this study adopts a mixed-method approach, acknowledging that the frequency of information (frequency effect)⁵¹ also substantially contributes to the construction of narratives.

⁴⁶ Colin Flint, "Introduction to Geopolitics," Researchgate, July 2021 at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353134656_Introduction_to_Geopolitics (Accessed 18 April 2024).

⁴⁷ Iakov Frizis, "The Impact of Media on Foreign Policy," *International Relations*, 10 May 2013 at <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/05/10/the-impact-of-media-on-foreign-policy/> (Accessed 18 April 2024).

⁴⁸ "2.3 Methods of Researching Media Effects," Libraries, University of Minnesota at <https://open.lib.umn.edu/mediaandculture/chapter/2-3-methods-of-researching-media-effects/#:~:text=Experiments.%20Media%20research%20studies%20also%20sometimes%20use> (Accessed 18 April 2024).

⁴⁹ Vencislav Popov and Lynne M. Reder, "Frequency Effects on Memory: A Resource-Limited Theory," *Psychological Review*, 127 (1), 2020, pp. 1–46 at <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000161> (Accessed 18 April 2024).

⁵⁰ Ahmad S. Haider, "Frequency Analysis as a Way of Uncovering News Foci: Evidence from *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*," Researchgate, January 2017 at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312663769_Frequency_Analysis_as_a_Way_of_Uncovering_News_Foci_Evidence_from_the_Guardian_and_the_New_York_Times (Accessed 18 April 2024).

⁵¹ Vencislav Popov and Lynne M. Reder, "Frequency Effects on Memory: A Resource-Limited Theory," *Psychological Review*, 127 (1), 2020, pp. 1–46, at <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000161> (Accessed 18 April 2024)

The research duration spanned six months from 1 May 2023, to 31 October 2023. The selection of this period had followed a random method, devoid of intentional bias. This study examines the digital versions of well-known English newspapers from five ASEAN member states: Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. These countries were chosen because they are the top five economies in the ASEAN bloc based on their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rankings. Given the volatility of GDP figures across ASEAN nations owing to the rapidly evolving economic landscape, this study adopts a comprehensive approach by considering data spanning from 2018 to 2022,⁵² thus affording a nuanced understanding of economic trends. The newspapers selected for sampling encompass a diverse array of publications from Southeast Asia.⁵³ These include *The Jakarta Post* from Indonesia, *The Star* from Malaysia, *Bangkok Post* from Thailand, *The Straits Times* from Singapore, and *Philstar* from the Philippines. One limitation of the sample collection methodology is the exclusion of sports-related news articles; instead, news items where the headline prominently featured the keyword 'India', were specifically selected. For this study, the terms 'print media of ASEAN's major economies' and 'print media of ASEAN' are considered interchangeable. This equivalence is predicated on the assumption that the major economies within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) serve as representative examples of the broader regional media landscape. While this generalization may not capture the nuances of smaller ASEAN member states, it provides a useful framework for analyzing predominant trends in the region's print media sector.

This study scrutinized headlines of news articles pertaining to India, with a specific focus on the framing, emphasis, and tone of coverage. Coding

⁵² "ASEAN countries GDP 2027", Statista, 19 April 2022 at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/796245/gdp-of-the-asean-countries/imf>. (Accessed 17 April 2024).

⁵³ Indonesia (\$1,289 Billion), Thailand (\$ 522 Billion), Malaysia (\$ 439 Billion), Singapore (\$ 424 Billion), and the Philippines (\$ 412 Billion) in 2022. (According to an International Monetary Fund study at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/796245/gdp-of-the-asean-countries/imf> (Accessed 15 January 2024).

categories, encompassing positive, apprehensive, negative, and neutral (factual) representations were established. In the ‘sentiment analysis’ of news articles employing a Lexicon-based approach, all news items were categorized into four distinct classifications: Positive, Apprehensive, Negative, and Neutral. Positive news denotes information that enhances our perspective and fosters a more optimistic worldview.⁵⁴ Positive news encapsulates facts, circumstances, or encounters that are uplifting and beneficial in nature. At the same time, Apprehensive news “refers to information that evokes feelings of anxiety or alarm when considering the future.”⁵⁵ The news content makes us feel uncertainty, uneasy or fearful about what lies ahead. It often highlights potential risks, dangers, or uncertainties. Adverse media, commonly referred to as negative news, encompasses unfavourable information sourced from a diverse array of media outlets.⁵⁶ This spectrum encompasses newspapers, online publications, and broadcast media, as well as blogs, web posts, and social media feeds. The neutral category of news pertains to journalism that maintains impartiality and objectivity when reporting on diverse issues.⁵⁷ In terms of news writing and coverage, it is focused on presenting the facts without bias or subjective interpretation. In other words, “Neutral news strives to present information objectively, without taking a stance or promoting a specific agenda.”⁵⁸ Regarding the source analysis, each news

⁵⁴ “Positive News and the Psychology Behind,” *Positive News*, 27 July 2022 at <https://www.happiness.com/positive-news/> (Accessed 5 February 2024).

⁵⁵ “Definition of Apprehensive,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 27 January 2024 at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apprehensive> (Accessed 5 February 2024).

⁵⁶ “Why is Negative News Screening (NNS) Important?” *RIPJAR*, 17 May 2022 at <https://ripjar.com/blog/why-is-negative-news-screening-nns-important/> (Accessed 5 February 2024).

⁵⁷ Tom Law, “Neutral Journalism: What Does It Mean when Democracy or Humanity Are at Stake?” *Ethical Journalism Network*, 26 July 2022 at <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/neutral-journalism> (Accessed 6 February 2024).

⁵⁸ Gavin Phillips, “Top 4 Unbiased Independent World News Sources,” *Make Use Of*, 11 June 2023. <https://www.makeuseof.com/top-unbiased-news-sources/> (Accessed 5 February 2024).

article underwent coding to ascertain whether the coverage originated internally (e.g., staff reporters, news desk, etc.) or externally (e.g., news agencies, wire services, other news publication/media organizations). In sentiment analysis, techniques were employed to categorize the overall tone and emotional context of news articles concerning India in ASEAN newspapers.

Table 1

Country	Newspaper Duration: 1 May to 31 October 2023
Indonesia	The Jakarta Post
Malaysia	The Star
Thailand	Bangkok Post
Singapore	The Straits Times
Philippines	philstar

The Jakarta Post, Indonesia

To study Indonesian media, the daily newspaper *The Jakarta Post* was chosen. *The Jakarta Post* is a daily English-language newspaper in Indonesia. It is owned by PT Bina Media Tenggara and is based in the nation's capital, Jakarta.⁵⁹ It also has an online edition that includes news from the paper and other news. A few sources suggest that the daily circulation of *The Jakarta Post* is about “40,000 copies”⁶⁰ and the online traffic has been around “890.2 thousand from November 2023 to January 2024.”⁶¹ Through meticulous data collection and categorization, the frequency and

⁵⁹ “*Jakarta Post*,” The Library of Congress, 8 February 2024 at <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0003049/> (Accessed 7 February 2024).

⁶⁰ “*The Jakarta Post*,” The Mediavantage, 20 July 2019 at <https://themediavantage.com/media-partners/the-jakarta-post/> (Accessed 7 February 2024).

⁶¹ “thejakartapost.com Traffic & Engagement Analysis,” Similarweb, January 2024 at <https://www.similarweb.com/website/thejakartapost.com/#ranking> (Accessed 7 February 2024).

thematic distribution of news articles concerning India during this period was examined.

The analysis reveals a consistent focus on political relations between India and other countries, including Indonesia. Diplomatic visits, bilateral agreements, and geopolitical developments featured prominently in the coverage, reflecting the enduring importance of diplomatic ties in regional and global contexts. Economic news related to India, including trade agreements, investment opportunities, and economic policies, constituted a significant portion of the coverage. The articles highlighted India's role as a key economic player in Asia and its potential for fostering economic cooperation with Indonesia. Discussions on security and defence issues, including military cooperation, counter-terrorism efforts, and regional security dynamics, received notable attention in the media coverage. Socio-political developments within India, including domestic politics, social issues, and governance reforms, garnered significant media attention. The empirical data of news articles provided insights into India's evolving socio-political landscape and its implications for regional stability and governance. The study systematically categorizes news items into ten distinct thematic areas: 'Domestic Politics,' 'Terrorism/Law & Order,' 'Global Economy/Investment in India,' 'India's Economy,' 'Bilateral Relations,' 'Geo-Politics/External Affairs/Defence,' 'Climate Disaster,' 'Governance/Accidents,' 'Science/Technology,' and 'Cultural/Society.' Each category represents a specific aspect of the news landscape, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of contemporary issues across diverse domains.

Table 1.1

Total Number of News Items Month-wise	Total Number of News Item 54
May	12
June	09
July	05
August	13
September	14
October	01

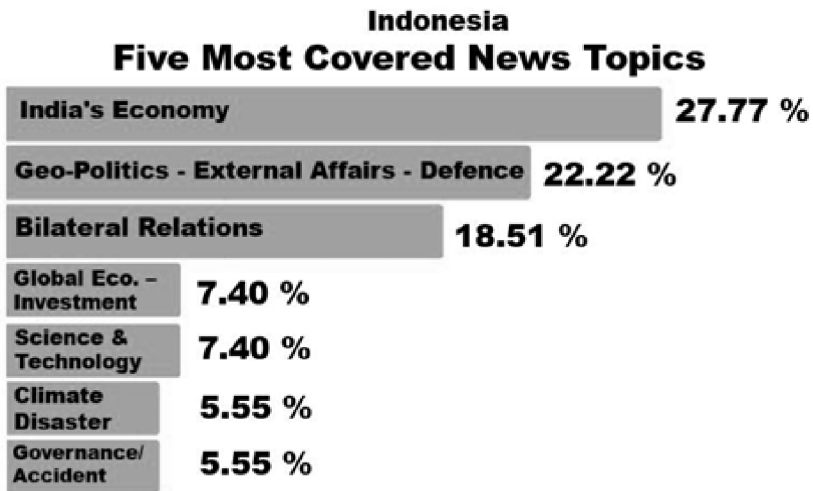
Table 1.2

Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Domestic Politics	02	03.70%
Terrorism/Law & Order	01	01.85%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	04	07.40%
India's Economic	15	27.77%
Bilateral Relations	10	18.51%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	12	22.22%
Climate Disaster	03	05.55%
Governance/Accident	03	05.55%
Science & Technology	04	07.40%
Cultural/Society	00	00.00%
Total	54	100%

Table 1.3

Five Most Covered News Topics (Indonesia)		
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
India's Economic	15	27.77%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	12	22.22%
Bilateral Relations	10	18.51%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	04	07.40%
Science & Technology	04	07.40%
Climate Disaster	03	05.55%
Governance/Accident	03	05.55%

Figure 1



The empirical data above reflects a diverse range of topics, with a significant emphasis on India's economy and economic affairs. This category has the highest coverage, with 15 news items, accounting for 27.77 per cent of the total news items. This indicates a strong interest in India's economic activities and policies. 'Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defence related to India' has been the second most covered topic, with 12 news items, representing 22.22 per cent of the total. This suggests a keen focus on India's international relations and defence policies. News related to bilateral relations between India and Indonesia has a share of 18.51 per cent, making it the third highest covered news topic. This underscores the importance of India's diplomatic ties with Indonesia. 'Global Economy-Investment-Investment' and 'Science & Technology,' jointly hold the fourth place, each with a share of 7.40 per cent. India's Internal Governance Issues and Climate Disaster had a share of more than 5 per cent (5.55 per cent).

Here are few examples of newspaper coverage.

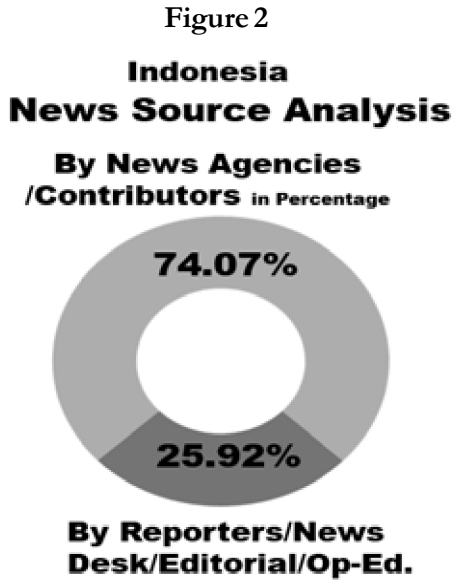


Source Analysis

Table 1.4

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors (%)
	54	14	25.92%	40	74.07%

The above set of empirical data reveals that Indonesia’s leading newspaper relies heavily on international news agencies for its coverage of India. The study looked at 54 news articles and found that only about a quarter of them (25.62 per cent), were created by the newspaper’s own reporters or contributors.



In contrast, the vast majority (74.07 per cent) of the articles were sourced from international or Western news agencies. Additionally, the text highlights that national news agencies have a very limited role in providing news about India in the newspaper’s coverage.

Sentiment Analysis

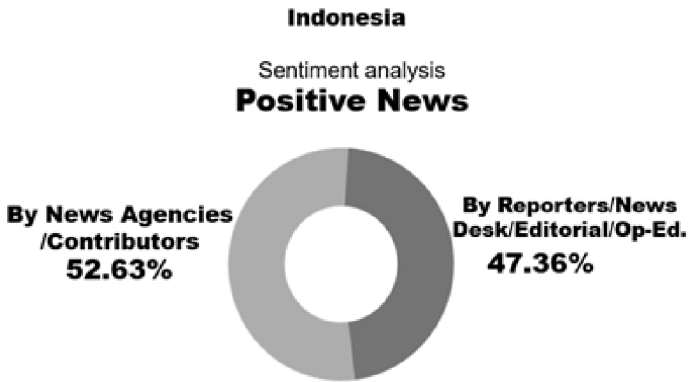
Sentiment analysis of collected data decodes the inherent slant of the news coverage. According to given data, among the 54 news items analysed, 19 were identified as having a positive sentiment, accounting for 35.18 per cent of the total number of news items.

Table 1.5

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	19	35.18%	9	47.36%	10	52.63%

Further analysis revealed that 47.36 per cent of the positive stories were generated by reporters, news desks, or opinion articles within the newspaper ecosystem.

Figure 3



Conversely, 52.63 per cent of the positive stories originated from international agencies, national agencies, freelancers, or contributors.

Table 1.6

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	11	20.37%

Table 1.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	15	27.77%	3	20%

Table 1.8

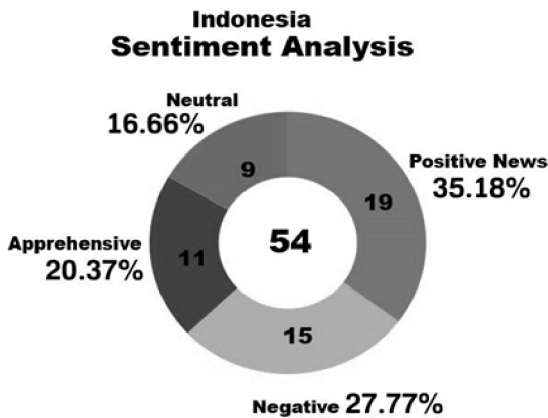
Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Neutral	9	16.66%

One aspect investigated in this study is the presence of apprehensive connotations within news categories. A detailed analysis revealed that 11 items, comprising 20.37 per cent of the total news coverage, exhibited elements of apprehension. Although these news items did not overtly manifest negative connotations, they conveyed undertones of uncertainty or implied negative probabilities.

Out of total selected 54 news items, 15 news items among these empirical data, exhibit a discernible negative slant or convey negative connotations, representing 27.77 per cent of the total sample size. This observation underscores the prevalence of pessimistic tones within media discourse and is reflective of broader editorial inclinations. Furthermore, 20% of the negative news items stem from stories authored by reporters, emanating from news desks, or manifesting as opinion articles.

The above data (Table 1.8) indicates that out of 54 collected sample news articles over six months, 9 articles were neutral. This accounts for 16.66 per cent of the total sample.

Figure 4



The Star, Malaysia

To study Malaysian media, the daily newspaper *The Star* was chosen. *The Star* is a leading English-language newspaper in Malaysia, established in

1971 as a regional newspaper in Penang.⁶² It is the largest paid English newspaper in terms of circulation in Malaysia.⁶³ As of January 2017, it had a daily circulation of about 2, 48,559.⁶⁴ *The Star's* online edition reaches an average of 4.64 million weekly readers, making it the most visited online newspaper brand in Malaysia.⁶⁵ *The Star* is linked to the Malaysian Chinese Association, a member of the Barisan National alliance. Since 1977, it has been under the effective control of this political party.⁶⁶

Table 2.1

Country: Malaysia Name of Newspaper: The Star	
Total Period: 1 May to 31 October 2023	Total Number of News Item 417
May	27
June	85
July	55
August	72
September	102
October	76

The empirical investigation conducted between 1 May and 31 October 2023, offers a comprehensive examination of the representation of India and Indian affairs within the online version of *The Star*. The dataset,

⁶² Amelia Abdul Aziz and Sankaran Ramanathan, "Selection and Flow of Foreign News in Malaysia," Mara Institute of Technology Shah Alam, Malaysia, 1992 at https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10356/92647/1/AMIC_1992_07_19.pdf (Accessed 7 February 2024).

⁶³ Meredith Weiss, (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Malaysia*, Routledge, Oxon and New York, 2015, pp. 343.

⁶⁴ "*The Star*," at [https://adqrte.com/newspaper/details?id=32&type=1#:~:text=Circulation:%20248%2C559%20%2C%20B7%20Readership:%201%2C185%2C000%20%2C%20B7%20Cost%20\(FPBW\):%20RM%2023%2C088](https://adqrte.com/newspaper/details?id=32&type=1#:~:text=Circulation:%20248%2C559%20%2C%20B7%20Readership:%201%2C185%2C000%20%2C%20B7%20Cost%20(FPBW):%20RM%2023%2C088) (Accessed 7 February 2024).

⁶⁵ "Our Story So Far," Star50 at <https://50.thestar.com.my/ourstory.aspx> (Accessed 8 February 2024).

⁶⁶ "*The Star* (Malaysia)," Detailed Pedia at https://www.detailedpedia.com/wiki-The_Star_%28Malaysia%29 (Accessed 8 February 2024).

comprising 417 news items or articles, serves as a valuable corpus for understanding the temporal dynamics and thematic patterns surrounding India's coverage in the media outlet.

Table 2.2

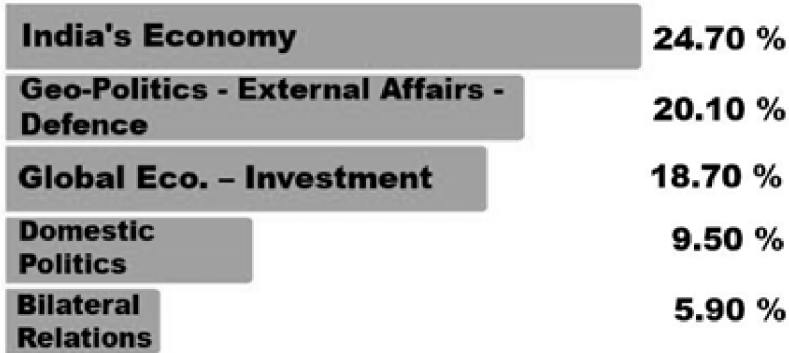
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Domestic Politics	40	09.5%
Terrorism/Law & Order	23	05.5%
Global Economy and India	78	18.7%
India's Economy	103	24.7%
Bilateral Relations	25	05.9%
Geo-Politics and India	84	20.1%
Climate Disaster	15	03.5%
Governance/Accident	20	04.7%
Science & Technology	22	05.2%
Cultural/Society	7	01.6%
Total	417	100%

Table 2.3

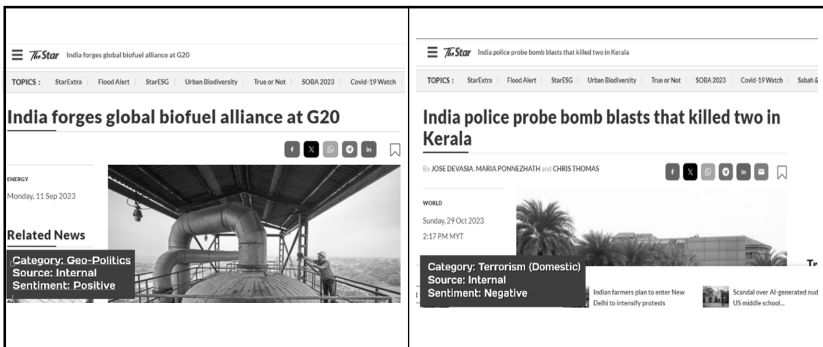
Five Most Covered News Topics (Malaysia)		
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
India's Economy	103	24.7%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	84	20.1%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	78	18.7%
Domestic Politics	40	09.5%
Bilateral Relations	25	05.9%

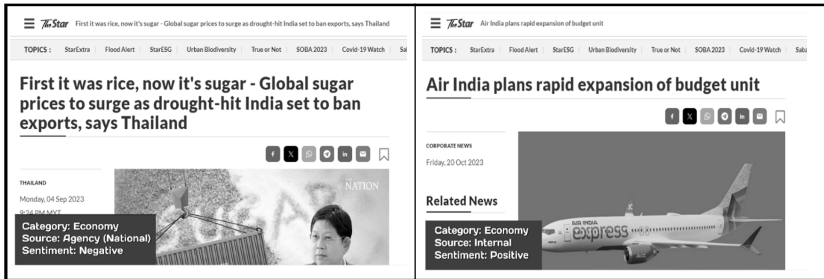
Figure 5

**Malaysia
Five Most Covered News Topics**



The analysis of media coverage patterns in Malaysia reveals a notable emphasis on India’s economy as the primary focus of news reporting. With 103 articles dedicated to this topic, constituting 24.7 per cent of the total sample size of 417 articles, it underscores the significant attention given to India’s economic landscape in the leading news publication of Malaysia. This heightened coverage reflects the interconnectedness between the world and India in economic spheres, likely influenced by trade policies, investment policies, and economic policies.





Source Analysis

The reliance of Malaysia’s leading newspaper on international news agencies for its coverage of India reflects a broader trend of globalization and interconnectivity within the media landscape. The study’s analysis of 417 news articles underscores a significant dependence on external sources, with only a fraction—approximately one-third (32.85 per cent)—of the content originating from the newspaper’s own reporters or contributors.

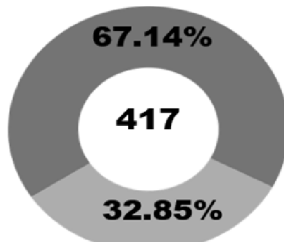
Table 2.4

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors (%)
	417	137	32.85%	280	67.14%

Figure 6

Malaysia News Source Analysis

By News Agencies /Contributors in Percentage



By Reporters/News Desk/Editorial/Op-Ed.

This statistic illuminates not only the scale of reliance but also the asymmetry in content creation and dissemination, whereby international or Western news agencies contribute to the majority, approximately 67.14 per cent, of the articles on India.

Sentiment analysis

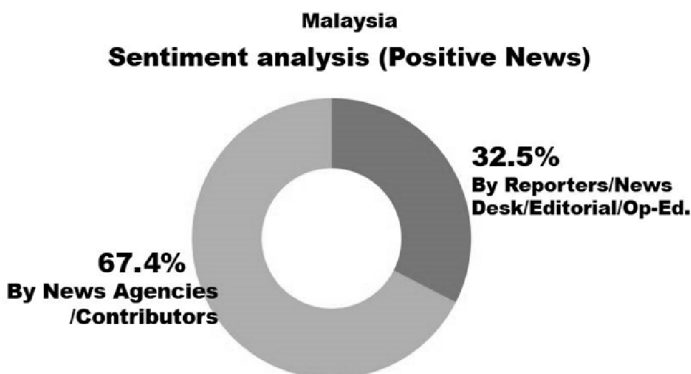
The examination of 417 news items underscores the prevalence of subjective inclinations, with 169 instances identified as harbouring a positive sentiment. This finding, constituting 40.52 per cent of the total corpus, highlights a significant inclination towards optimistic portrayals within the media landscape under scrutiny.

Table 2.5

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	169	40.52%	55	32.55%	114	67.45%

Data analysis reveals that 32.55 per cent of positive narratives and a substantial majority of positive narratives, accounting for 67.45 per cent (114 news articles), were sourced from external entities including international agencies, national agencies, freelancers, or contributors.

Figure 7



The findings of the study shed light on a notable aspect of news discourse and the researchers discerned that a considerable portion of the news coverage – encompassing 14.38 per cent– encapsulated elements indicative of apprehension.

Table 2.6

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	60	14.38%

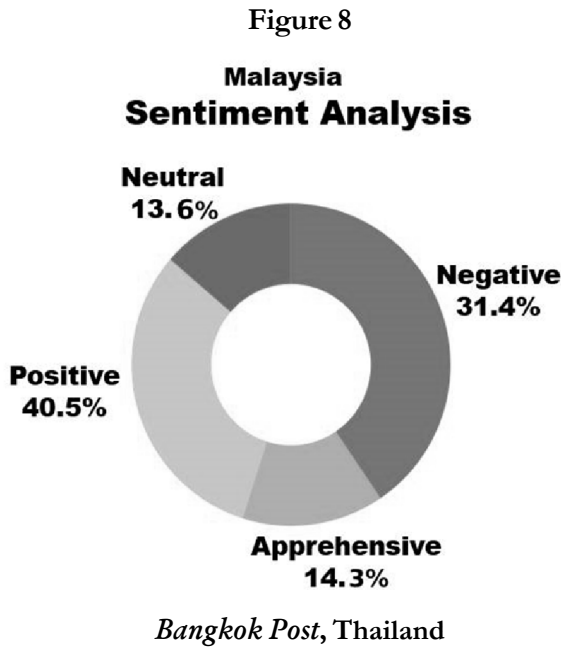
Table 2.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	131	34.41%	35	26.71%

Table 2.8

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Neutral	57	13.66%

Among the selected news items, 131 – constituting 31.41 per cent of the total sample – exhibit discernible negative tones. However, despite this 73.29 per cent of negative news items are sourced from external agencies, including international news agencies. Among samples, 57 articles were classified as neutral. This accounts for precisely 13.66 per cent of the total sample.



To investigate India's portrayal of India within Thailand's media environment of, the *Bangkok Post* was selected. Established in Bangkok on 1 August 1946, the *Bangkok Post* is an English-language daily newspaper.⁶⁷ According to the most recent data available, the daily circulation of the *Bangkok Post* boasts a readership totalling 450,000 individuals, both locally and internationally, of which 80 per cent are concentrated in Bangkok while the remaining readership extends nationwide.⁶⁸ In 2019, the *Bangkok Post's* online platform experienced significant growth, evidenced by a surge in page views to 84.7 million, marking an 11.9 per cent increase from the preceding year. Moreover, approximately 16.7 million visitors accessed the website during the same period.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ "The Birth", *Bangkok Post* at <https://72years.bangkokpost.com> <https://72years.bangkokpost.com/thebirth.php>. (Accessed 9 February 2024).

⁶⁸ *Bangkok Post*, AFP, 21 March 2016 at <https://www.afp.com/en/products/partners/bangkok-post> (Accessed 9 February 2024).

⁶⁹ *Bangkok Post*, Bangkok Post Public Company Limited at <https://www.bangkokpost.co.th/business/newspaper/bangkokpost> (Accessed 9 February 2024).

Table 3.2

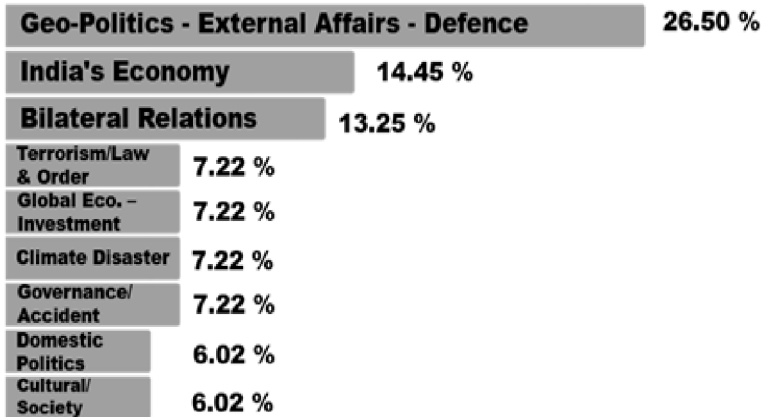
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Domestic Politics	05	06.02%
Terrorism/Law & Order	06	07.22%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	06	07.22%
India's Economy	12	14.45%
Bilateral Relations	11	13.25%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	22	26.50%
Climate Disaster	06	07.22%
Governance/Accident	06	07.22%
Science & Technology	04	04.81%
Cultural/Society	05	06.02%
Total	83	100%

The dataset comprises 83 news items or articles and serves as a valuable corpus for understanding temporal dynamics and thematic patterns of India's coverage in the media.

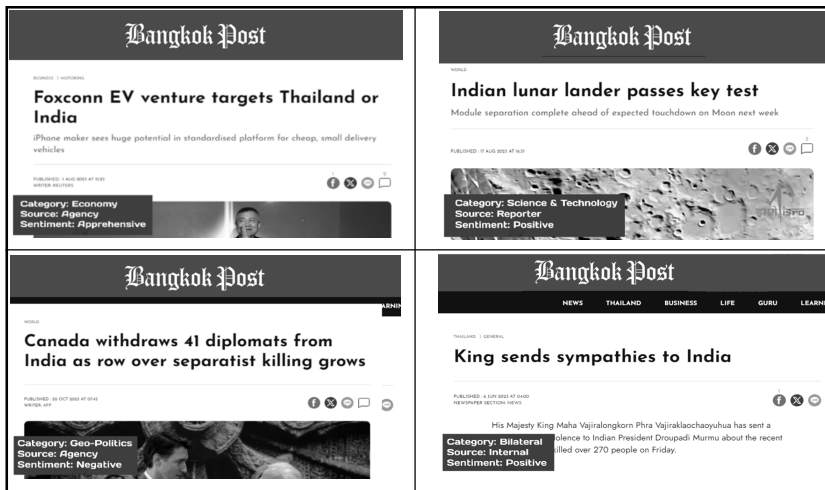
Table 3.3

Five Most Covered News Topics (Thailand)		
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	22	26.50%
India's Economy	12	14.45%
Bilateral Relations	11	13.25%
Terrorism/Law & Order	06	07.22%
Global Economy, Investment, and India	06	07.22%
Climate Disaster	06	07.22%
Governance/Accident	06	07.22%
Domestic Politics	05	06.02%
Cultural/Society	05	06.02%

Figure 9
Thailand
Five Most Covered News Topics



Among the top five topics related to India, issues pertaining to Geo-politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defence stand out, commanding a share of 26.50 per cent in news coverage.



Source Analysis

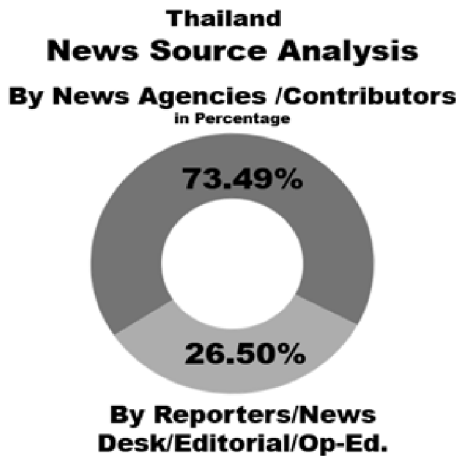
Media outlets depend on a variety of sources to gather news and information, including international organizations and their own staff

reporters and news desks. Table 3.4 presents a breakdown of the sources of news related to India’s representation in the Thai media. Among the 83 news items/articles collected for analysis, a significant portion, constituting 26.50 per cent of total news coverage, emanates from internal sources within the reviewed media outlets. These internal sources typically include staff reporters, news desks, or opinion makers, reflecting a direct influence from editors in the news-making process. This underscores the importance of understanding the internal dynamics and editorial perspectives shaping the portrayal of Indian affairs in Thai media. The reliance on internal sources suggests a level of editorial control and agenda setting within the media, where editorial decisions play a pivotal role in shaping the narrative surrounding India’s representation.

Table 3.4

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
	83	22	26.50%	61	73.49%

Figure 10



Conversely, the data reveals that a substantial majority of news coverage, accounting for 73.49 per cent of the total, originates from external sources such as international agencies, national agencies, freelancers, and various contributors.

Sentiment Analysis

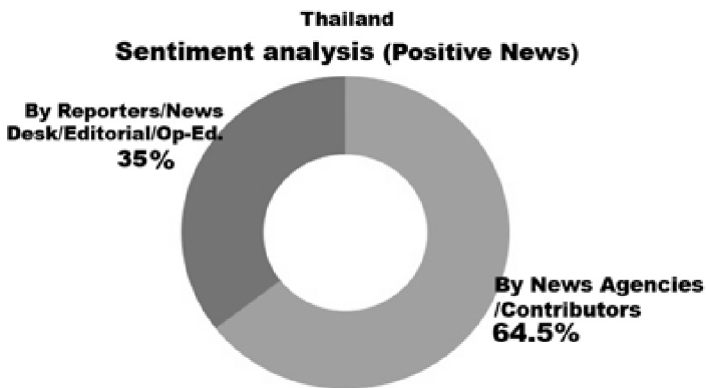
Sentiment analysis is demonstrated in the prevalence of subjective inclinations within the media discourse, through a discernible tilt towards positive sentiments.

Table 3.5

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	31	37.34%	11	35%	20	64.51%

The identification of 31 news items (Table 3.5), comprising approximately 37.34 per cent of the sampled news items, as harbouring positive sentiments, serves as a testament to the nuanced nature of media portrayal. Notably, a significant portion of the positive news emanates from the newspaper's own reporters, news desk professionals, and other editorial staff or columnists, constituting 35 per cent of the total positive news coverage.

Figure 11



Among the 31 news items characterized as positive, a striking revelation pertains to the sourcing dynamics, wherein approximately 64.51 per cent of the positive news items are generated or supplied by external entities.

Table 3.6

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	9	10.84%

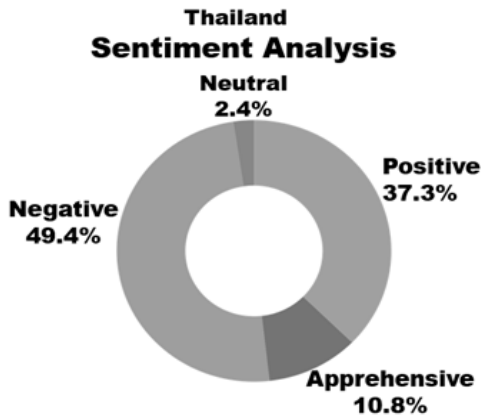
Table 3.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	41	49.39%	9	21.95%

Table 3.8

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Neutral	2	2.4%

Figure 12



The analysis of 83 news articles regarding India's portrayal in *the Bangkok Post* paints a concerning picture. A staggering 60.23 per cent of these articles, representing 50 items, harbour negative sentiments or evoke apprehension about potential negative outcomes.

The Straits Times, Singapore

The Straits Times, an English daily, is owned by the SPH Media Trust. Its inception dates back to 15 July 1845 when it was initially established as a

single-sheet weekly publication, catering particularly to Singapore’s port community.⁷⁰ The circulation data has been a subject of debate and overstated allegations over a period, but latest figures claimed by the newspaper have been about 85,000 to 95,000 daily copies on an average between September 2020 and March 2022.⁷¹ In terms of online presence and users engagements, “*The Straits Times (ST)* has a weekly online reach of 42% in Singapore”⁷² with more than “1.2 million readers consuming its content across all its print, online, mobile, and other platforms.”⁷³

Table 4.1

Country: Singapore	
Name of Newspaper: The Straits Times	
Total Period: 1 May to 31 October 2023	Total Number of News Item 379
May	49
June	64
July	42
August	60
September	107
October	57

An extensive empirical investigation conducted from 1 May to 31 October 2023, provides thorough analysis of the portrayal of India and Indian affairs in the online edition of *The Straits Times*.

⁷⁰ “Our History,” SPH Media, 11 February 2024 at <https://www.sph.com.sg/our-history/> (Accessed 10 February 2024).

⁷¹ Tham Yuen-C, “SPH Media Circulation Issue, Public Housing Affordability to Be Aired in Parliament Next Week,” *The Straits Times*, 3 February 2023 at <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/sph-media-circulation-issue-public-housing-affordability-to-be-aired-in-parliament-next-week> (Accessed 10 February 2024).

⁷² Edson C. Tandoc Jr and Matthew Chew, “Singapore,” Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 14 June 2023 at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023/singapore> (Accessed 10 February 2024).

⁷³ Clement Yong, “The Straits Times Remains Most-read Title, with Reach Across Platforms, Media Study Finds,” *The Straits Times*, 14 November 2019 at <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/the-straits-times-remains-most-read-title-with-reach-across-platforms-media-study-finds> (Accessed 10 February 2024).

Table 4.2

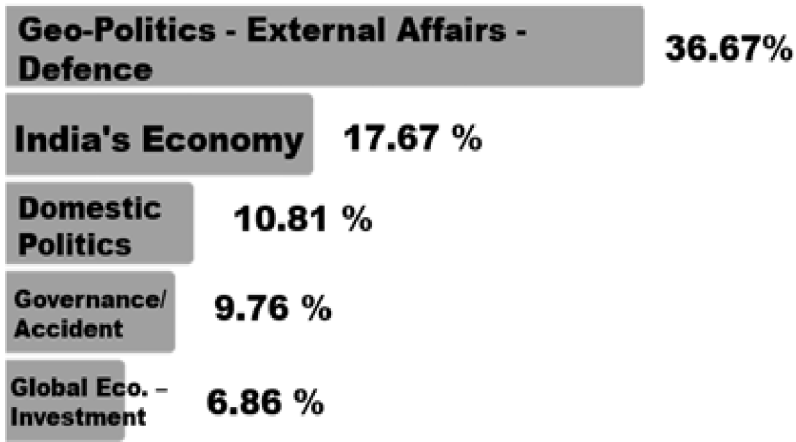
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Domestic Politics	41	10.81%
Terrorism/Law & Order	24	06.33%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	26	06.86%
India's Economic	67	17.67%
Bilateral Relations	8	02.11%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	139	36.67%
Climate Disaster	11	02.90%
Governance/Accident	37	09.76%
Science & Technology	15	03.95%
Cultural/Society	11	02.90%
Total	83	100%

Table 4.3

Five Most Covered News Topics (Singapore)		
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	139	36.67%
India's Economic	67	17.67%
Domestic Politics	41	10.81%
Governance/Accident	37	09.76%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	26	06.86%

Figure 13

Singapore Five Most Covered News Topics



Among the most frequently covered topics pertaining to India, it is especially notable that matters related to “Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defence” receive considerable attention commanding a share of 36.67 per cent in the news coverage. This emphasis underscores India’s global geopolitical significance. The data highlights that approximately a quarter of the news articles related to India, represent its economic and day-to-day progression. This demonstrates the keen interest of the Singaporean audience in understanding India’s economic dynamics, indicating a recognition of India as a key player in the global economy.





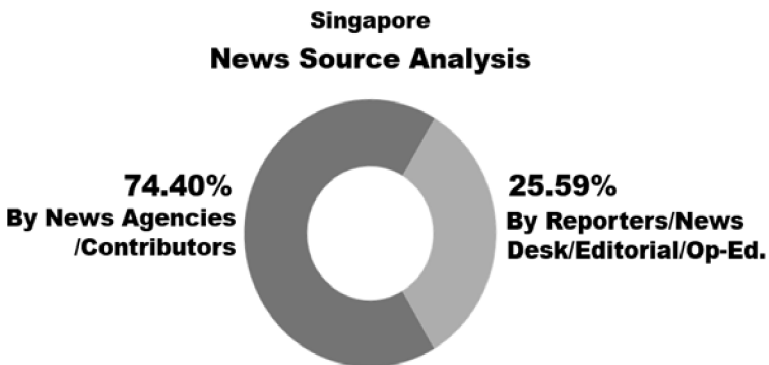
Source Analysis

The breakdown of 379 news items and articles reveals a notable divide in the sources contributing to the coverage, with 25.59 per cent originating from reporters, news desks, editorials, and opinion columns, while international agencies, national agencies, freelancers, and external contributors provide 74.40 per cent.

Table 4.4

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
	379	97	25.59%	282	74.40%

Figure 14



The dominance of sources external to media frameworks suggests a complex interplay of global influences and perspectives in shaping narratives surrounding the coverage on India. The prevalence of contributions from international and national agencies highlights the

interconnectivity between media landscapes and syndicated content to fulfil the demands of global news.

Sentiment Analysis

This meticulously conducted sentiment analysis of 379 news items sheds light on the prevalence of positive sentiment (nearly 40 per cent) and uncovers a compelling dynamic between internal and external sources in shaping this positivity. The identification of 146 positive news items raises questions about journalistic practices and inherent biases. Only 26.76 per cent of this positivity originates from the newspaper’s own internal human resources and 70.94 per cent of positive content stems from external sources.

Table 4.5

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	146	38.52%	42	26.76%	104	70.94%

Figure 15

Singapore

Sentiment analysis (Positive News)

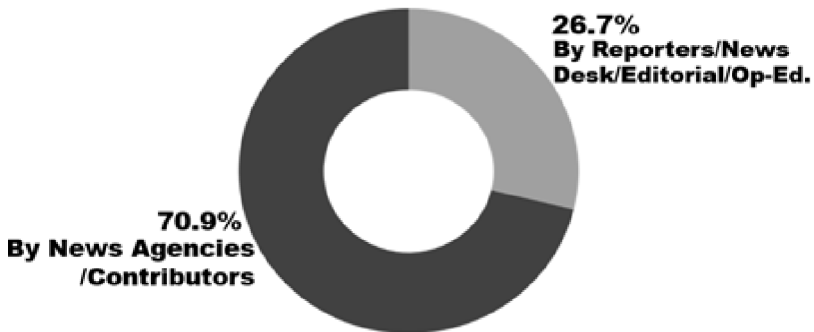


Table 4.6

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	50	13.19%

Table 4.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	157	41.42%	36	22.92%

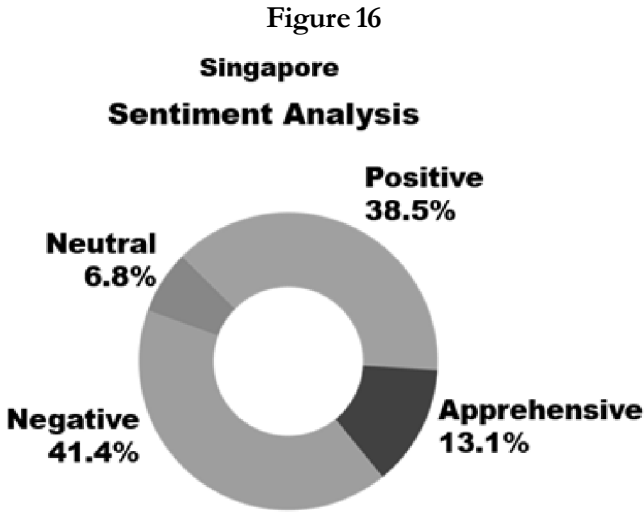
Table 4.8

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Neutral	26	6.86%

The analysis presented reveals that 41.42 per cent of the total sample resonates with discernibly negative tones. This statistical revelation underscores the impact of pessimism and adverse narratives. However, the analysis transcends mere quantification, delving deeper, to unravel the negativity pervading media content. It is significant to note that 22.92 per cent of negative news emanates from internal sources such as reporters and the news desk; 77.08 per cent originates from external agencies, notably international news sources.

With 379 articles meticulously collected and subjected to rigorous analysis, the revelation that merely 26 articles (6.86 per cent) were classified as neutral, is striking, to say the least.

The analysis of 379 news articles pertaining to India's portrayal in Singapore's leading newspaper unveils a disconcerting trend. With over half of the articles – precisely 54.61 percent – reflecting negative sentiments or instigating apprehensions about potential adverse outcomes, the portrayal of India in Singaporean media merits serious re-examination.



This statistical insight not only sheds light on the prevailing narrative but also underscores the nuanced dynamics between two significant geopolitical entities.

Philstar, Philippines

To investigate India's portrayal in Philippines's leading newspaper, the prominent newspaper, *Philstar* was selected. *The Philippine Star*, also known as *Philstar*, is an English-language newspaper in the Philippines and the flagship brand of the Philstar Media Group.⁷⁴ "*The Philippine Star* is among the Philippines' most widely circulated newspapers, with an average circulation of 2,66,000 copies daily."⁷⁵ The website garnered 9.7 million hits globally in December 2023, securing a global ranking of 8,618.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ "*The Philippine Star*," Academic Accelerator, at https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/the-philippine-star#google_vignette (Accessed 11 February 2024).

⁷⁵ "*The Philippine Star*," World Crunch, 2014 at <https://worldcrunch.com/partners/the-philippine-star/>. (Accessed 11 February 2024).

⁷⁶ "Philstar.com," similarweb, January 2024 at <https://www.similarweb.com/website/philstar.com/#overview>. (Accessed 11 February 2024).

Table 5.1

Country: Philippines Name of Newspaper: 'Philstar'	
Total Period: 1 May to 31 October 2023	Total Number of News Item 16

The empirical analysis of the *Philstar* conducted between 1 May and 31 October 2023, indicates that the number of news items is significantly lower compared to those of the four other ASEAN countries under review. The dataset comprises 16 news items or articles and serves as a small corpus for India's coverage.

Table 5.2

Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Domestic Politics	0	0
Terrorism/Law & Order	0	0
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	2	12.50%
India's Economic	0	0
Bilateral Relations	7	43.75%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	5	31.25%
Climate Disaster	2	12.50%
Governance/Accident	0	0
Science & Technology	0	0
Cultural/Society	0	0
Total	16	100%

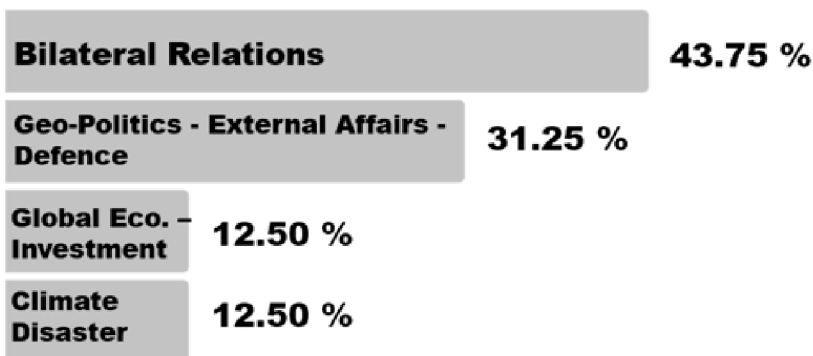
Table 5.3

Five Most Covered News Topics (Philippines)		
Category of News Topic Wise	Total Number of News Items	Total Number of News Items (%)
Bilateral Relations	7	43.75%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	5	31.25%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	2	12.50%
Climate Disaster	2	12.50%

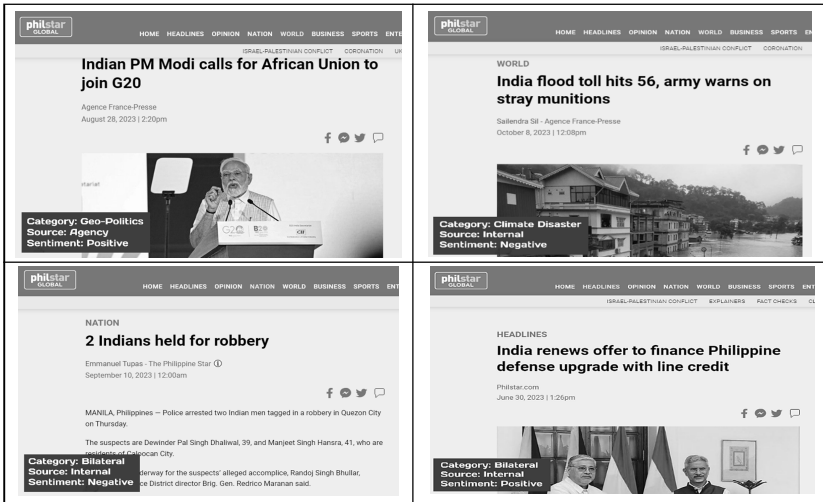
In accordance with the methodology employed for this study, sample news items are classified into ten distinct categories. However, six of these categories yielded no entries based on the prescribed methodology.

Figure 17

Philippines Most Covered News Topics



Among given categories, news items falling under ‘Bilateral Relations’ represented the highest proportion, accounting for 43.75 per cent of the total. Following closely in second place, topics pertaining to ‘Geopolitics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defence’ constituted 31.25 per cent of the corpus. Furthermore, news articles related to ‘Global Economy, Investment, and India’ as well as those addressing ‘Climate Disaster’ each comprised 12.50 per cent of the sampled content.



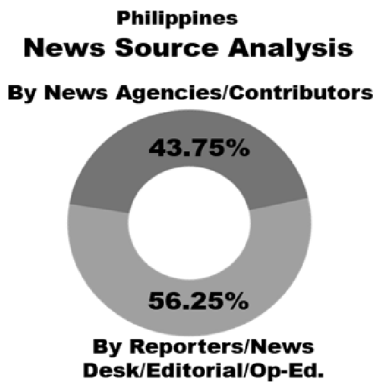
Source Analysis

Table 5.4

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News/Desk/Editorial/Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/National Agencies/Freelancers/Contributors (%)
	16	9	56.25%	7	43.75%

Out of the 16 news items scrutinized, a majority, comprising 56.25 per cent, stem from the newspaper’s internal sources.

Figure 18



In contrast, the remaining 43.75 per cent of news articles are derived from external sources, primarily international news agencies.

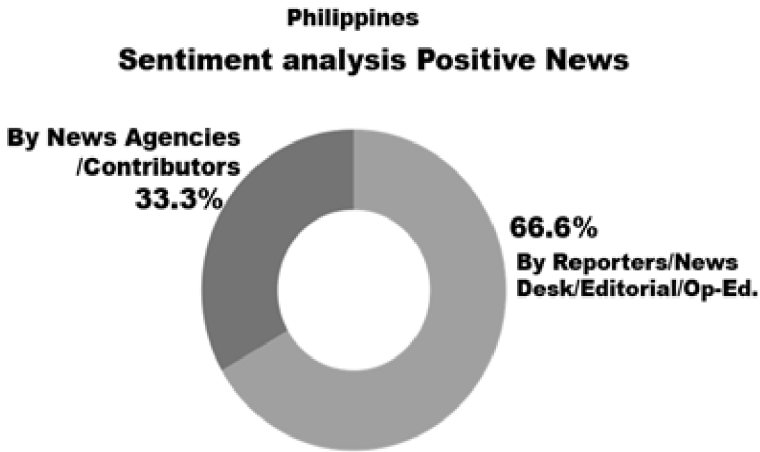
Sentiment Analysis

Table 5.5

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	6	37.50%	4	66.66%	2	33.33%

On scrutiny of 16 news items, 6 news articles, accounting for approximately 37.50 per cent, exude positive sentiments. The dominance of positivity stemming from the newspaper’s in-house human resources, including reporters, news desk personnel, and editorial columnists, comprising 66.66 per cent of the optimistic news coverage, is noteworthy.

Figure 19



Moreover, approximately 33.33 per cent of the positive news items originate from external sources, including international agencies, national agencies, freelancers, and other external contributors.

Table 5.6

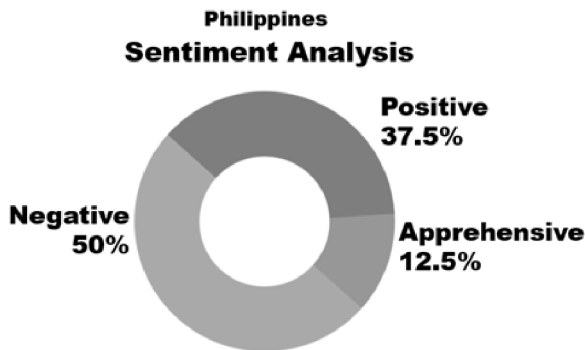
Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	2	12.50%

Table 5.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	8	50%	5	62.50%

The identification of apprehensive elements (Table 5.6) in 12.50 per cent of the total news samples sheds light on the complexity inherent in media narratives concerning India and Indian affairs. The analysis presented reveals that majority—62.50 per cent—of negative news emanates from internal sources such as reporters, news desks, and editorial team, a comparatively smaller portion—37.50 per cent—originates from external agencies, particularly international news sources.

Figure 20



Out of reviewed news articles, a substantial 62.50 per cent, are found to harbour negative sentiments or evoked apprehension about potential negative outcomes. This pervasive negativity raises concerns about its potential impact on various entities within Filipino society, including the political class and the public.

EMPIRICAL DATA AND DISCUSSION

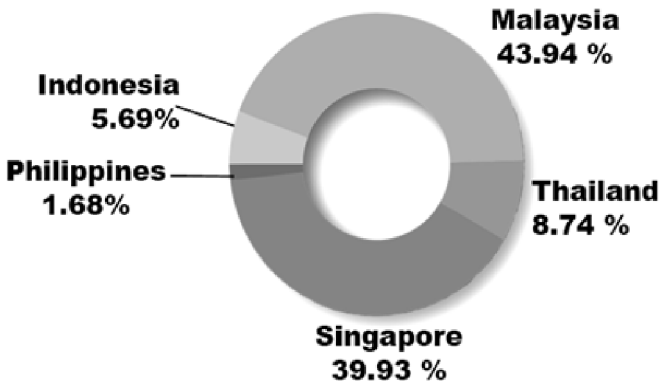
The period of data collection for this study spanned from 1 May to 31 October 2023, comprising a six-month duration, during which a total of 949 news items were gathered. During the review period, *The Jakarta Post* from Indonesia featured 54 news items, constituting 5.69 per cent of the total sample collected for this study. Similarly, *The Star* from Malaysia presented a total of 417 news items during the review period, amounting to 43.94 per cent of the total collected sample news items.

Table 6.1

Country	Number of News Items	Percentage
Indonesia	054	05.69 %
Malaysia	417	43.94 %
Thailand	083	08.74 %
Singapore	379	39.93 %
Philippines	016	01.68 %
Total	949	100 %

Figure 21

News Items Country wise



The *Bangkok Post* from Thailand covered 83 news items during the review period, representing 8.74 per cent of the total collected sample news items for this study. *The Straits Times* from Singapore included 379 news items

during the review period, accounting for 39.93 per cent of the total collected sample news items. Lastly, *Philstar* from the Philippines contributed 16 news items during the review period, making up 1.68 per cent of the total collected sample news items for this study.

Table 6.2

Category of News Topic Wise: (Overall)	Number	Percentage
Domestic Politics	88	09.27%
Terrorism/Law & Order	54	05.69%
Global Economy, Investment, Investment and India	116	12.22%
India's Economy	197	20.75%
Bilateral Relations	61	06.42%
Geo-Politics, External Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence	262	27.60%
Climate Disaster	37	03.89%
Governance/Accident	66	06.95%
Science & Technology	45	04.74%
Cultural/Society	23	02.42%
Total	949	100%

Table 6.2 a

Indonesia Category of News Topic Wise	Total 54	Percentage
Domestic Politics	02	03.70%
Terrorism/Law & Order	01	01.85%
Global Economy and India	04	07.40%
India's Economy	15	27.77%
Bilateral Relations	10	18.51%
Geo-Politics and India	12	22.22%
Climate Disaster	03	05.55%
Governance/Accident	03	05.55%
Science & Technology	04	07.40%
Cultural/Miscellaneous	00	00.00%

Table 6.2 b

Malaysia Category of News Topic Wise	Total 417	Percentage
Domestic Politics	40	09.5%
Terrorism/Law & Order	23	05.5%
Global Economy and India	78	18.7%
India's Economy	103	24.7%
Bilateral Relations	25	05.9%
Geo-Politics and India	84	20.1%
Climate Disaster	15	03.5%
Governance/Accident	20	04.7%
Science & Technology	22	05.2%
Cultural/Miscellaneous	1	01.6%

Table 6.2 c

Thailand Category of News Topic Wise	Total 83	Percentage
Domestic Politics	5	06.02%
Terrorism/Law & Order	6	07.22%
Global Economy and India	6	07.22%
India's Economy	12	14.45%
Bilateral Relations	11	13.25%
Geo-Politics and India	22	26.50%
Climate Disaster	6	07.22%
Governance/Accident	6	07.22%
Science & Technology	4	04.81%
Cultural/Miscellaneous	5	06.02%

Table 6.2 d

Singapore Category of News Topic Wise	Total 379	Percentage
Domestic Politics	41	10.81%
Terrorism/Law & Order	24	06.33%
Global Economy and India	26	06.86%
India's Economy	67	17.67%
Bilateral Relations	8	02.11%
Geo-Politics and India	139	36.67%
Climate Disaster	11	02.90%
Governance/Accident	37	09.76%
Science & Technology	15	03.95%
Cultural/Miscellaneous	11	02.90%

Table 6.2 e

Philippines Category of News Topic Wise	Total 16	Percentage
Domestic Politics	0	0
Terrorism/Law & Order	0	0
Global Economy and India	2	12.50%
India's Economy	0	0
Bilateral Relations	7	43.75%
Geo-Politics and India	5	31.25%
Climate Disaster	2	12.50%
Governance/Accident	0	0
Science & Technology	0	0
Cultural/Miscellaneous	0	0

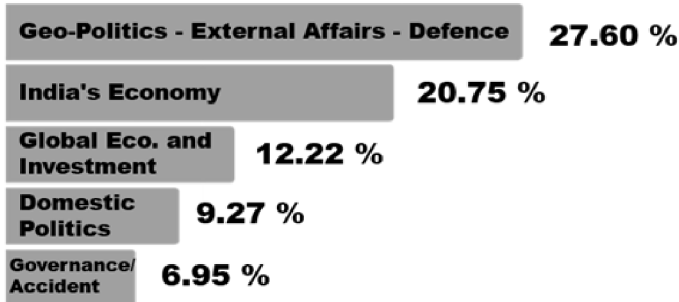
Based on empirical data, news coverage pertaining to geopolitics, external affairs, foreign affairs, and defence commands the highest share among all news categories, comprising 27.60 per cent of the total news sample. News concerning India's economy, encompassing government policies or corporate developments within India, accounts for 20.75 per cent. Following closely in third place, are news articles discussing the global economy from India's standpoint, India's economic ties with other nations,

and trade and investments, constituting 12.22 per cent of the sample. The fourth highest volume of news items pertains to India's domestic politics and current events, representing 9.27 per cent, while news coverage regarding India's governance or unfortunate accidents ranks fifth, comprising 6.95 per cent.

PROMINENCE OF NEWS TOPICS

At the forefront of the analysis is the prominence of news coverage related to 'Geo-Politics, External Affairs, and Defence', this revelation underscores the enduring significance of geopolitical dynamics and interest in India's policy agendas. Geo-Politics, external affairs, and Defence signify a keen interest among ASEAN's powerful economies as well as opinion makers (journalist/editors) in understanding and engaging with India's external relations, regional dynamics, and defence strategies. The aforementioned phenomenon underscores the intricate interconnections between India's domestic affairs and the broader realm of global geopolitics, while simultaneously highlighting the imperative for nation-states to adeptly navigate the multifaceted and dynamic landscape of international relations in an era characterized by heightened global interdependence. This interconnectedness necessitates a nuanced understanding of the reciprocal influences between national policies and transnational political currents, as well as the development of sophisticated diplomatic strategies to effectively engage with diverse state and non-state actors across multiple spheres of interaction. The aforementioned phenomenon underscores the intricate interconnections between India's domestic affairs and the broader realm of global geopolitics, while simultaneously highlighting the imperative for nation-states to adeptly navigate the multifaceted and dynamic landscape of international relations in an era characterized by heightened global interdependence. This interconnectedness necessitates a nuanced understanding of the reciprocal influences between national policies and transnational political currents, as well as the development of sophisticated diplomatic strategies to effectively engage with diverse state and non-state actors across multiple spheres of interaction.

Figure 22

Five Most Covered News Topics

The coverage of India's economy, constitutes 20.75 per cent of the sample. This underscores the pivotal role of economic affairs in shaping the national narrative and driving policy deliberations. It reflects a heightened awareness of economic trends, government policies, and performance of industry, highlighting the intricate interplay between economic indicators, and policymaking processes. The emphasis on India's economic trajectory also underscores the nation's aspirations for growth, prosperity, and global competitiveness. Furthermore, the news coverage delves into India's integration with global economics, foreign direct investment, foreign institutional investment, and economic ties, which is at third position among the news samples. This dimension underscores India's integration into the global economy and its evolving role as a key player in international trade, investment, and economic cooperation. It signifies the interconnected nature of economic forces and the imperative of understanding global trends and developments in shaping India's economic policies and strategic engagements with other nations.

In addition to geopolitics and economics, the empirical data sheds light on the significance accorded to India's domestic politics and governance issues, representing 9.27 per cent and 6.95 per cent respectively, of the total news sample. This revelation underscores the vibrancy of India's democratic polity and the robust public discourse surrounding domestic politics, governance challenges, and institutional reforms. It reflects a keen interest among Southeast Asian audiences and media stakeholders in monitoring political developments within India. This may be due to a significant presence of the Indian diaspora, in Southeast Asia. Moreover,

the coverage of ‘unfortunate accidents’ within the news coverage regarding India’s governance, hints at the media’s role in highlighting instances of governance failures and the issue of accountability of the ruling class. The empirical data regarding news coverage transcends its quantitative analysis to reveal deeper insights into India’s socio-political, economic, and global engagements, encapsulating the complexities, aspirations, and imperatives that shape the nation’s narrative and trajectory in an increasingly interconnected world. Through its thematic exploration and nuanced portrayal of news coverage patterns, the text invites reflection on the evolving contours of media discourse and priorities of opinion makers of ASEAN nations.

Source Analysis

The empirical data on news coverage in ‘the print media of major ASEAN economies provides substantial insights into the dynamics of news production and dissemination, with a particular focus on content related to India. This analysis sheds light on the sources contributing to news articles and their implications for India’s representation in Southeast Asian media.

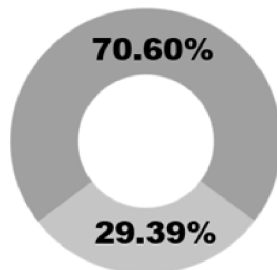
Table 6.3

Source Analysis	Total News Items	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds	News coverage by Reporters/News /Desk/Editorial /Op-Eds (%)	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	News coverage by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
	949	279	29.39%	670	70.60%

Figure 23

News Source Analysis

By News Agencies/Contributors



By Reporters/News Desk/Editorial/Op-Ed.

According to the data, which encompasses 949 news items in ASEAN print media, staff reporters, desk personnel utilizing multiple news sources, or independent contributors offering opinion pieces, produce 279 news articles, constituting approximately 29.39 per cent. This finding underscores the diverse sources and contributors involved in generating content for print media platforms across Southeast Asia. The presence of such variety suggests a nuanced approach to news reporting, incorporating perspectives from various stakeholders.

However, a significant majority, accounting for more than 70.60 per cent (Table 6.3) of news items featuring India or topics associated with India, are sourced from international/multinational news agencies, national news agencies, or other publications in ASEAN countries. This finding raises questions regarding the nature of information flow and editorial decisions within Southeast Asian print media organizations, particularly concerning their reliance on external sources for coverage related to India. One plausible explanation for this trend could be the perceived expertise or credibility associated with established international or national news outlets in reporting on Indian affairs. ASEAN media organizations may rely on these sources to provide comprehensive and authoritative coverage, especially in contexts where local resources or expertise on Indian issues may be limited.

However, while the utilization of external sources contributes to the depth of news coverage, it also raises concerns regarding the potential for biased or incomplete representations of Indian affairs.⁷⁷ Dependence on external sources may inadvertently prioritize certain perspectives or narratives while marginalizing others, thereby shaping audience perceptions and influencing public discourse.

Sentiment analysis

This study also examines quantitative analysis of various categories of news items. With 949 news items scrutinized, the study uncovers that 371 of these items carry positive connotations, representing 39.09 per cent of

⁷⁷ Anil Trigunayat, "Unveiling the Western Media's Biases in Reporting on India and the Global South," Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies, 1 January 2024 at <https://www.impriindia.com/insights/unveiling-the-western-medias-biases/> (Accessed 7 February 2024).

the overall news coverage. Delving deeper into the granularity of the data, among the positive news items, 121 are attributed to staff reporters, desk personnel collaborating with multiple news sources, or independent contributors expressing their opinions.

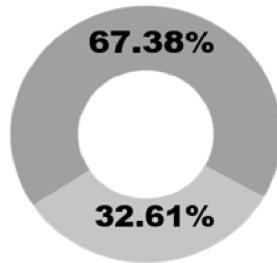
Table 6.4

Sentiment Analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Items (%)	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/ Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds.	Positive Story by Reporters/ News/Desk/ Editorial/ Op-Eds. (%)	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors	Positive Story by International Agencies/ National Agencies/ Freelancers/ Contributors (%)
Positive	371	39.09%	121	32.61%	250	67.38%

Figure 24

Sentiment analysis (Positive News)

By News Agencies/Contributors



By Reporters/News Desk/Editorial/Op-Ed.

This statistic accounts for 32.61 per cent of the total positive news coverage and signifies content directly produced under the supervision and approval of news professionals within the organization. Conversely, approximately 67.38 per cent of positive news coverage, emanates from external sources, comprising international/multinational news agencies, national news agencies, or other publications beyond the immediate purview of the primary news organization. This observation underscores the diverse array of sources contributing to positive news dissemination, suggesting a multifaceted landscape in which information is acquired and disseminated.

The findings of this study underscore the intricate dynamics at play within news production and distribution. While a considerable portion of positive

news items originates from internal channels, indicating a level of editorial oversight and professional scrutiny, a substantial proportion is sourced externally. This juxtaposition highlights the symbiotic relationship between news organizations and external publications, where information flows interchangeably across diverse platforms. Moreover, the disparity in the distribution of positive news items between internal and external sources prompts reflection on the factors influencing editorial decisions and sourcing practices within the media landscape. It raises questions about the criteria governing the selection and prioritization of news stories, as well as the extent to which editorial autonomy and journalistic ethics shape the narrative of positive events.

Furthermore, the prevalence of positive news coverage, irrespective of its origin, underscores the inherent role of media in shaping public perceptions and influencing discourse. Positive news narratives not only inform but also contribute to the construction of societal norms, values, and collective consciousness.

Table 6.5 A

Sentiment Analysis of Media Organisation's generated/produced content	
Country	Positive News (%)
Philippines	66.66
Indonesia	47.36
Thailand	35
Malaysia	32.55
Singapore	26.76

Table 6.5 B

Sentiment Analysis of Media Organisation's generated/produced content	
Country	Negative News (%)
Philippines	62.50
Malaysia	26.71
Singapore	22.92
Thailand	21.95
Indonesia	20

Figure 25

Positive News by Internal Source Country-Wise

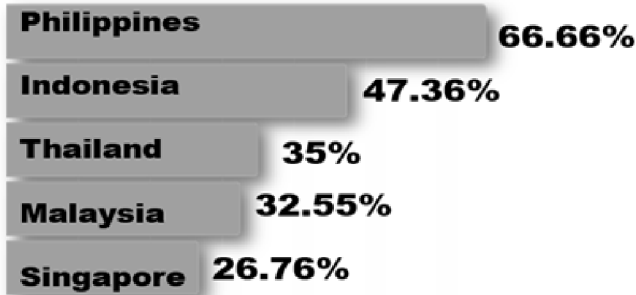
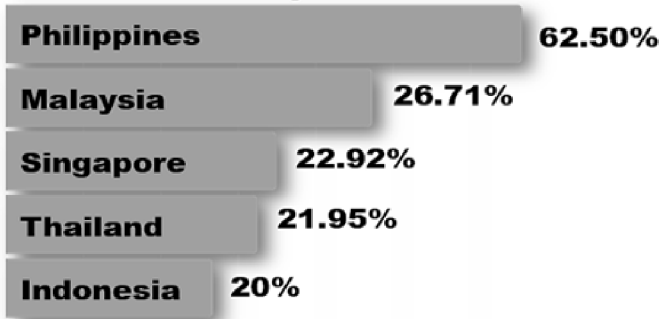


Figure 26

Negative News by Internal Source Country-Wise



The data presented in Table 6.5 A and 6.5 B provides a comprehensive overview of the examined ASEAN countries, specifically focusing on which country's media professionals are generating the highest number of news articles with positive and negative connotations concerning India and Indian affairs. The Philippines emerges as the top producer in both Tables, although its sample size is small. Indonesia ranks second in terms of producing the most positive news items, followed by Thailand, with Singapore occupying the lowest position in this regard. Conversely, when examining news articles with negative connotations, the Philippines again leads the Table, with Malaysia in second place, followed by Singapore. Notably, Indonesia ranks lowest in the production of news items with negative connotations.

Table 6.6

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Apprehensive	132	13.90%

Table 6.7

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion	Negative Story by Reporters/ News Desk/ Opinion %
Negative	352	37.09%	83	23.57%

Table 6.8

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Neutral	94	9.90%

One of the news categories of this study specifically focuses on apprehensive connotations. It was found that 132 of these items, constituting 13.90 per cent of total news coverage, conveyed elements of apprehension.

Here are a few examples of apprehensive news from the reviewed news items.

THE STRAITS TIMES
Putin, Xi to attend virtual Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit hosted by India's Modi

Bangkok Post
Foxconn EV venture targets Thailand or India

The Jakarta Post
Indian cough syrup: Mystery middleman may be new clue

TheJakartaPost

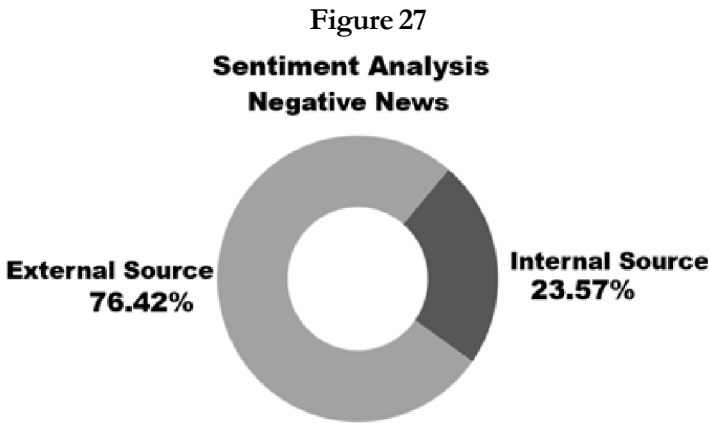
**Maldives election may be key for
China, India rivalry**

TheStar

India's massive US\$775bil stock boom at risk

These news articles reveal the complexity of the apprehensive news discourse. We have seen that the news items carry a positive overtone in the presentation, however, the nature of news reporting is not always binary; it encompasses varied tones and implications. While some news articles may overtly convey positivity or negativity, others are ambiguous, hinting at apprehension without being fully negative. Understanding this nuanced discourse is crucial for comprehending the complexities of media representation and its impact on societal perceptions. The apprehensive nature of these articles often hints at an uncertain future or the potential for unfavourable outcomes, without explicitly framing the content in negative terms. Moreover, the prevalence of apprehensive connotations raises questions about the impact of subtle messaging in news reporting.

In contrast to the prevalence of positive news, this research has shed light on the dimensions of negativity within media coverage in the ASEAN region. In the examination of 949 news items, 352 items were found to carry negative connotations. This accounts for approximately 37.09 per cent of the total news coverage under scrutiny, indicating a significant presence of negative narratives. The subset of negative news, directly stemming from the efforts of professionals within media organizations, constitutes approximately 23.57 per cent of total negative news coverage.



Furthermore, the identification of such negative news produced under the supervision and with the consent of news professionals prompts critical reflections on the factors driving the generation and dissemination of negative narratives. It raises questions about the editorial processes, institutional norms, and external influences that may shape the selection, framing, and presentation of news content. One potential avenue for further inquiry is to explore the underlying motivations and incentives driving the production of negative news.

The neutral news pieces among the plethora of articles examined, constituted approximately 9.90 per cent of the entire collected sample. The presence of such neutral news articles underscores the diversity of the media landscape, reflecting a commitment to unbiased dissemination of information. Within this segment, the primary aim seems to be the provision of factual updates rather than the imposition of any subjective evaluation or interpretation.

Furthermore, the prevalence of these neutral news items accentuates a broader narrative regarding the sentiment distribution within the analysed sample. Remarkably, nearly 90 per cent of the total collected sample exhibited some degree of sentiment slant, whether positive, apprehensive, or negative. The analysis reveals a tendency towards binary representations. The prism through which India is depicted in ASEAN media often reflects a dichotomous viewpoint, wherein issues are portrayed in starkly contrasting terms. This binary framing implies a simplification of complex narratives and an inclination towards polarization in the media discourse. By reducing

nuanced issues to binary oppositions, the depth and complexity of the subject matter may be obscured, potentially limiting the audience's understanding and inhibiting constructive dialogue.

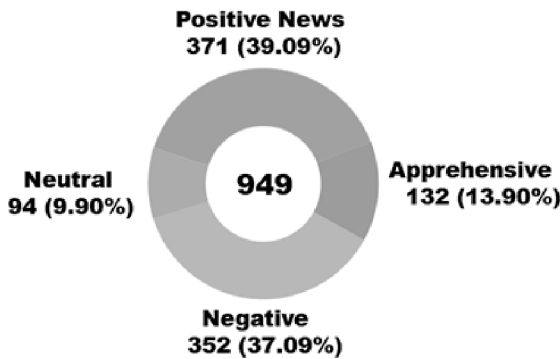
Table 6.9

Sentiment analysis	Number of News Items	Number of News Item (%)
Negative	352	37.09%
Apprehensive	132	13.90%
Total	484	50.99%

A critical examination of the sentiment distribution within news headlines pertaining to India reveals a striking dichotomy, wherein the majority of articles exhibit either negative or apprehensive characteristics. Specifically, negative headlines account for 37.09 per cent of the total, while those characterized by apprehension comprise 13.90 per cent, collectively constituting 50.99 per cent of the sampled headlines.

Figure 28

News: Sentiment Analysis



The prevalence of negative and apprehensive representations of India within ASEAN media underscores the complex interplay of various factors that contribute to the construction of news narratives. The data reveals a significant slant in news items, with 50.99 per cent of them carrying a negative or apprehensive slant. This percentage is not trivial and indicates a substantial amount of news that could potentially shape public opinion in a negative way.

RELATION BETWEEN SENTIMENT AND SOURCE OF THE NEWS

The source analysis provides the pattern behind the negative news coverage. The newspaper's own reporters, the news desk, or editorial/opinion contributors generate 23.57 per cent (Table 6.7) of the total negative news. This suggests that the majority of the news items are not original content but sourced from elsewhere. The empirical data also uncovers that 76.42 per cent (Figure 27) of negative news comes from various international news agencies such as Reuters (UK), Agence France-Presse (AFP, France), and Associated Press (AP, USA). This high percentage indicates a heavy reliance on these agencies for news content. The data derived from source analysis in this study also indicates that 70.60 per cent (Table 6.3) of news items discussing India or topics related to India originate from international/multinational news agencies, national news agencies, or other publications within the leading ASEAN countries. This reliance on external sources raises several questions about the objectivity and balance of the news presented. It suggests a potential influence of these international agencies on the portrayal of events and narratives. The fact that these agencies are based in different countries could also introduce cultural, political, or ideological biases into the news.

The dominance of international news agencies in the propagation of negative news raises several critical implications for media dynamics and societal discourse. Firstly, it underscores the need for heightened scrutiny and critical analysis of news content, particularly concerning its origin and underlying motives.⁷⁸ The concentration of negative narratives within the purview of international news agencies necessitates a nuanced understanding of the geopolitical, economic, and institutional factors that drive news production and dissemination.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Rod Tiffen, "A New Information Order? International Agencies and the Flow of News," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 4 (2), 1976, pp. 65–76.

⁷⁹ Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Rethinking News Agencies, National Development and Information Imperialism," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 46 (13), 2011, pp. 85–94.

The role of ASEAN media organizations in this context is a crucial aspect to consider. These organizations serve as the conduit through which narratives, including those from international news agencies, reach the local audience. Dominance of international agencies could be due to the convenience and efficiency of subscribing to these agencies, which provide a steady supply of news content. However, this practice also means that the perspectives and biases inherent in these international narratives are propagated to the local audience without significant alteration or contextualization. “The influx of international news plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and guiding foreign policy decisions. Additionally, it can significantly impact the level of interest in foreign affairs and international relations.”⁸⁰ It is imperative to recognize the variance in news dissemination and portrayal of global events across different nations.

The flow of information poses significant challenges within decision-making contexts, given its indispensable role in the decision-making process, particularly in the realm of global news dissemination.⁸¹ This aspect becomes pertinent in the context of indigenous media outlets in various countries, which often lack direct access to global news sources. The establishment of news agencies can be attributed to the inability of individual newspapers to sustain their own foreign correspondents. News agencies, supported by collective funding, were able to maintain correspondents in diverse locations. These agencies prioritized speed and conciseness in their reporting. Despite the expanding market, particularly in provincial regions, the substantial costs associated with news-gathering and transmission compelled these agencies to adopt a cooperative approach rather than a competitive one.⁸² Consequently, external forces, including powerful global

⁸⁰ Stig Thorén, “The Flow of Foreign Wire Service News into Sweden,” *Cooperation and Conflict*, 3 (3), 1968, pp. 198–209 at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45082900> (Accessed 12 February 2024).

⁸¹ Einar Östgaard, “Factors Influencing the Flow of News,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1), 1965, pp. 39–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200103> (Accessed 13 February 2024)

⁸² Rod Tiffen, “A New Information Order? International Agencies and the Flow of News,” *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 4 (2), 1976, Special Issue: “Communication and Social Development in Asia”, 1976, pp. 65–76. (Accessed 13 February 2024)

entities, heavily invest in media channels worldwide to propagate desired narratives or distorted accounts of events. “The western media’s coverage of India and the Global South has increasingly been criticised for its biased and often misleading portrayal. The good news is no news is often the refrain.”⁸³

The imbalance of international news flow is evident in the volume and focus of attention given to different regions, with a clear bias towards Western countries over Third World nations. A study from 1969 says that, “the Associated Press in the US in June 1969 contained in its foreign news file about 70% from developed and 30% from developing countries.” The distribution of news resources by agencies also contributes to this skewed coverage, although some journalists working in Southeast Asia prioritize catering to regional audiences. Despite the growing importance of Third World markets for revenue, current practices still fail to reflect their priorities. This study also reflects the domination of international news agencies, when it comes to coverage of foreign news for each reviewed ASEAN nation. In 1980, the MacBride Commission Report on international communication and flow of information suggested that for Third World countries, the Report revealed the one-directional flow of information and communication from First World countries into Third World countries and highlighted the starkly inferior communication infrastructure in these poorer countries.⁸⁴

MEDIA TEXT, INFLUENCE AND POLICYMAKING

This Occasional Paper presents a framework for examining the media representation of any nation with a particular focus on Southeast Asia.⁸⁵ In the realm of constructing foreign policy, the focus has predominantly been on elite images, security threats, and military capabilities. However, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the pivotal role economic dimensions play in shaping foreign policy decisions. Factors such as patterns

⁸³ Anil Trigunayat, no. 77.

⁸⁴ “The MacBride Report Legacy and Media Democracy Today,” WACC, 11 August 2019, <https://waccglobal.org/the-macbride-report-legacy-and-media-democracy-today/> (Accessed 12 February 2024).

of State formation, levels of development, and the evolving international division of labour, profoundly influence the foreign policies of nations, particularly those situated in the ‘many Third Worlds’ of the South.⁸⁶ A nation’s international status can prompt a restructuring of its foreign policies.

The construction of a comprehensive framework for the propagation of a country’s representation is inherently subjective, yet numerous processes are envisaged at a theoretical level. This includes the perceived competitiveness of a country, which encompasses beliefs regarding its economy, businesses, products, services, labour markets, governance system, political competencies, and technological advancements.⁸⁷ Another significant dimension pertains to the normative structure, which encapsulates judgements concerning a country’s social and ecological responsibility, reflecting its integrity. Additionally, the perceived attractiveness of a country’s culture, traditions, and landscapes plays a pivotal role in shaping its image. These processes eventually coalesce into an “emotional dimension” that embodies effective responses towards a country, including feelings of liking and fascination.⁸⁸ Such responses are outcomes of the cognitive beliefs held about the country. This multi-dimensional approach offers a nuanced understanding of a country’s image, integrating various aspects of its characteristics and the perceptions they evoke.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, “A Foreign Policy Framework for Southeast Asian States”, in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton (Eds.), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*, Springer, (4th ed.). 2016, p. 2.

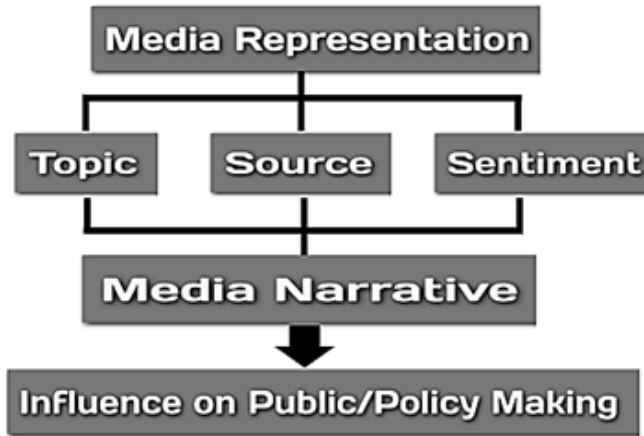
⁸⁶ Timothy M. Shaw, “Foreign Policy and the New International Division of Labor in the Late-1980s: The African Dimension”, in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton (Eds.), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*, Springer, (4th edn.), 2016, p. 32.

⁸⁷ Alexander Buhmann, “Measuring Country Image: A New Model,” USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 7 November 2016, at <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/measuring-country-image-new-model> (Accessed 12 February 2024).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Figure 29



The above flow chart (Figure 29) suggests that media representation is a complex process involving several tools and methodologies that shape narratives. The research design used highlights the significance selection of news topics, sources of information/news and the sentiments expressed within news items. These elements collectively contribute to the creation of a biased narrative, which in turn can influence policy-making decisions and public perceptions regarding the subject under scrutiny. Specifically, this study focuses on India, utilizing empirical and quantitative methods to analyse how these media dynamics report/portray India. By investigating these aspects, the research sheds light on the nuances of media influence and their implications on broader societal understanding and governance. The empirical and quantitative approach underscores the rigour and systematic investigation employed to unravel the complexities of media representation and its consequential effects on shaping public discourse and policy considerations related to India. The process of media content production involves multiple layers of decision-making, wherein editors, journalists, and media owners navigate a complex web of political, economic, and social considerations. The selection of topics, sources of information, and the framing of news stories is influenced by ideological predispositions.

CONCLUSION

The historical legacies of colonization, Cold War dynamics, and post-colonial nation-building efforts have profoundly shaped the region's political and economic structures. Today, Southeast Asia stands at the crossroads geopolitically, marked by rapid economic growth and diverse cultural landscapes. However, this growth encompasses tensions between economic liberalization and intervention by the State. Media across ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines, reflects complex interactions among political structures, economic interests, and regulatory frameworks. Despite periodic shifts in political power and constitutional guarantees, the future of media freedom and independence in Southeast Asia remains uncertain. This study uncovered how Southeast Asian newspapers portray India, intricately interwoven with each nation's specific strategic and economic priorities. All nations acknowledge India's burgeoning economic prowess, with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore devoting significant coverage to it. This underscores India's potential as a major economic player and its evolving position in the global economy. Indonesia primarily perceives India through an economic lens, while Malaysia underscores economic dynamics intertwined with regional and global contexts, accentuating its strategic considerations. Thailand recognizes India's geopolitical influence, concentrating on regional security and global diplomacy, reflecting its concerns about regional stability. Singapore acknowledges India's strategic importance on the global stage, covering geopolitics and strategic affairs from a broader perspective. The Philippines emphasizes India's bilateral relations and role as a key regional player, reflecting its focus on regional alliances and partnerships. While economic considerations predominate, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines also recognize India's diplomatic engagements and its role in global affairs. This indicates India's multifaceted image beyond just its economic prowess. Thailand and the Philippines take note of India's engagement with other countries and its response to global challenges such as climate disasters, suggesting a deeper interest in India's broader role in the international arena.

External Narratives and Indian Affairs in Southeast Asian Media

This study exposed a concerning trend of excessive dependence on external news sources for coverage of Indian affairs in Southeast Asian media, underscoring potential ramifications for diversity of information, audience comprehension, and bilateral relations. Across all analysed countries, indigenous reporting capabilities are lacking, which result in superficial and biased coverage stemming from reliance on external viewpoints. This limited grasp of India's complexities can adversely affect bilateral relations and public discourse. Resource constraints, dearth of expertise, and editorial priorities contribute to the reliance on external sources, raising apprehensions about narrative control and representation of diverse viewpoints. Such over-reliance fosters a shallow understanding of India among Southeast Asian audiences, impeding deeper engagement and informed dialogues. Relying on external narratives may distort India's socio-political and economic realities, thereby influencing bilateral relations and public discourse. Furthermore, dependence on external sources may prioritize global agendas at the expense of local perspectives, thereby stifling diversity and critical analysis.

Media Coverage on India and Narratives

This study examined the portrayal of India in news articles across major ASEAN economies, revealing that about forty per cent of these articles present positive narratives. The research emphasized concerns over the heavy reliance on external sources, particularly international news agencies, which may introduce biases and external agendas, potentially influenced by Western media giants. The Philippines's publication stands out for its active engagement in news production, leading in both positive and negative portrayals. Indonesia follows closely with positive coverage and minimal negative articles, relying more on internal resources to shape narratives. Thailand's publication ranks third in positive coverage but exhibits higher reliance on external sources, raising concerns. Conversely, Singapore fares poorly in positive portrayals, necessitating further investigation. Overall, the study highlighted a significant imbalance in sentiment distribution, with a majority of news headlines reflecting negative or apprehensive tones about India. The dominance of international agencies in news dissemination underscores concerns about objectivity and the propagation of international

biases within ASEAN media. This study underscored the influential role of ASEAN media in shaping international narratives and calls for critical analysis of news content amid increasing reliance on external sources.

Global News Dissemination and Representation

The influx of international news significantly influences public opinion, foreign policy decisions, and the level of interest in global affairs. However, the variance in news dissemination across nations highlights challenges in decision-making, particularly in terms of access to global news sources. Indigenous media outlets often lack direct access, relying instead on news agencies that prioritize speed and brevity, potentially leading to biased or misleading portrayals of events. Western media coverage faces criticism for its bias towards developed countries over Third World nations, reflected in imbalanced news flow and resource distribution. The MacBride Commission Report has underscored the one-directional flow of information from the First World to Third World countries, revealing disparities in communications infrastructure. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort to diversify news sources and prioritize the perspectives of marginalized regions in global news dissemination.

Furthermore, the sentiment of news products is crafted to resonate with target audiences, aligning with prevailing ideological narratives and influencing public perceptions on bilateral relations and geopolitical developments. The analysis has underscored the importance of integrating the political economy into the examination of media representation, offering insights into the mechanisms through which narratives about foreign countries are constructed, disseminated, and internalized within power structures. Finally, this study emphasized the need for a nuanced understanding of media representation within the broader context of political economy and foreign policy dynamics. By unravelling the complex interplay between economic interests, political ideologies, and media production processes, critical insights are gained into the shaping of public perceptions and the broader discourse on international relations. Further research in this area promises to deepen the understanding of the complexities surrounding media representation, and its implications for diplomatic relations and regional dynamics.

This research paper analyses the media landscapes of ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines, and explores the interplay between political structures, economic interests, and regulatory frameworks. Despite political changes in the region, media freedom in Southeast Asia remains precarious. The study reveals that Southeast Asian newspapers heavily depend on external sources for their portrayal of India, often resulting in superficial narratives. A significant portion of negative coverage originates from international news agencies, raising concerns about objectivity and balance. This reliance on external sources has led to a skewed representation, with a majority of headlines presenting India in a negative or apprehensive light, reflecting a broader imbalance in global information flow that favours Western perspectives. The research calls for more in-depth local reporting and a critical examination of media representation within the contexts of political economy and foreign policy. The findings underscore the need for diverse news sources to foster accurate public perceptions and more informed international relations.

Dr. Om Prakash Das is a Research Fellow at the Southeast Asia & Oceania Centre of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. His research focuses on strategic communication, Myanmar-India relations, and Southeast Asian geopolitics. He earned his Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Dr. Das has nearly 18 years of broadcast journalism experience, specializing in defense, international relations, and national security. He has authored research papers in national & international journals, and writes columns on media trends, geopolitics, and defense strategies. He also contributes to national publications, writing columns, opinion editorials, and blogs on various subjects, including media trends, advancements in media technology, geopolitical dynamics, and defense strategies.



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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010

Tel.: (91-11) 2671-7983 Fax: (91-11) 2615 4191

Website: <http://www.idsa.in>