Committee praises Channel NewsAsia

FOR its extensive coverage of the American presidential elections, and for keeping viewers well abreast of the political situations in Malaysia and Thailand, MediaCorp's Channel NewsAsia was yesterday praised by the Programme Advisory Committee for English Programmes (Pace).

Also given the thumbs up: The channel's "wide variety" of info-educational programmes and documentaries on wide-ranging topics, from travel to technology - plus interviews and discussions with experts.

In its 12th biennial report, Pace noted that CNA has tried "to be opinion leaders instead of merely reporters of facts". For instance, its current affairs programme, ! Say, sought to offer analysis by the presenter afterwards.

To improve the news channel further, Pace called for more programmes

The report noted that despite CNA's efforts, overall, "the broadcaster was still adopting a conservative and careful approach in its reports and programmes".

age of current affairs and info-educational programmes was sufficient, others felt the programmes lacked the "X-Factor" to attract loval view-

on the merging of Singapore Tonight and Singapore Business Tonight, Media Corp said this was "to create a more focused Singapore half hour" as well as respond to viewers who wanted more coverage of global and regional financial news". Overall, reports on Singapore have not been reduced, the broadcaster assured.

CNA also discusses regional and world issues on Insight and 360, while Singapore issues are discussed

on Talking Point every Sunday. Programmes such as BlogTV.Sg and Get Real target young people, said MediaCorp.

Programmes for Singaporeans, it explained, must be "balance(d) with the fact that the channel is a regional news and information channel competing with global news players".

It added, MediaCorp will work with the Media Development Authority on more "hardnosed" interview programmes, while pointing to programmes such as In Conversation With, which have "received good reviews".

CNA's assistant vice-president Rohana Mohammed said CNA is "constantly evolving" to serve local and international viewers. For instance, there is now an online component within BlogTV.sg. "We will also continue to improve and come up with more incisive and probing

but noted cartoons promoting violence

remained "common features" and there

more fun and educational programmes.

MediaCorp said okto has "been mindful"

not to show violent trailers when young

viewers are watching TV. It toned down

was replaced with info-educational pro-

dia and info-educational programmes.

PROGRAMMES FOR SENIORS

join, or on the songs of yesteryear.

PROGRAMMES ON CULTURE

grammes. okto also shows dramas, come-

Pace reiterated the need for programmes

teaching seniors the importance of health

and fitness, featuring activities they can

Pace wanted entertainment programmes

depicting cultures other than the Chinese

MediaCorp said it has developed a local

series, Stranger than You, which features

various cultures here and in the region.

and Peranakan, without stereotyping them.

www.mda.gov.sg/pace

See the full report here

trailers for REM.2, and Freaky Friday

were more shows on the occult. It wanted

Sports@SG got for its coverage

Thumbs up for local sports coverage

LOCAL sports programming — on free-toair and cable channels — earned a glowing report card from Pace.

MediaCorp Channel 5's The Schools Nationals, it said, motivated young athletes and instilled a sense of school pride, and the committee hoped to see more programmes targeting youth.

It gave its thumbs up to the channel's Sports@SG programme, which showcased local sporting personalities and the latest in the sporting world, and suggested broadcasters also feature local sporting heroes, as well as instructional sports videos.

It would have liked to see more "live" free-to-air coverage of football games involving the national teams, though Pace acknowledged poor viewership could be a hurdle.

Also praised: MediaCorp's and StarHub's coverage of last year's Olympics and the recent Asian Youth Games. The cable operator had dedicated extra channels to each event at no extra cost, while the local broadcaster was applauded for airing Olympic-related documentaries ahead of the Beijing Games.

But Pace was concerned about the "bidding war" between pay TV operators StarHub and SingTel over the exclusive broadcast rights to the Uefa Champions League. This had led to fans having to pay more to subscribe to both operators' channels.

It "strongly encouraged" the operators

MediaCorp Channel 5's The Schools Nationals, Pace said, motivated young athletes and instilled a sense of school pride, and the committee hoped to see more programmes targeting youth.

to in future cooperate on an arrangement that would be better for viewers.

Panel member Raymond Lye, citing recent speculation on a possible joint bid for the English Premier League, said: "I hope that comes true ... if it results in lower costs for consumers, Pace would be very

Also in for flak was the use of female celebrities as presenters and interviewers. For instance, ESPN Star Sports has seen Jamie Yeo, Paula Malai Ali and Georgina Chang reporting on football, F1 and tennis respectively.

Pace said it was important presenters be prepared and "well-versed" in the sport. Sports fan and magazine writer Lawrence Tan could not agree more: "Some of them are unbearable to watch."

Radio: Moulding a strong identity

RADIO stations have "continued to strength en and develop their individual identities", said Pace — highlighting, for example, how MediaCorp's Lush 99.5 FM had reinvented itself by coming up with new programming and picking music that was "reflective" of social changes.

It was also glad to note that content breaches by radio stations from 2007 to 2009 have dropped, and that deejays were making attempts to ensure their language and content were acceptable to general listeners.

Singled out for commendation for their efforts to maintain a "good standard of English" were MediaCorp 90.5 FM's Tim O, Denise Tan, Hamish Brown and Maggie Lim.

But, as it had in its previous reports, the committee signalled its concern about the use of "excessive Singlish" on air. In particular, Pace felt Safra Radio's Power 98 deejays' overuse of Singlish to "appeal" to National Servicemen "was not only an embarrassment to the station, but it also sent the wrong message to young listeners that speaking Singlish was acceptable and cool".

Pace also felt Power 98 and MediaCorp's 98.7FM "lacked consistency" in presenters' news-reading. It was "often embarrassing" to hear, especially Power 98 presenters who "came across as being amateurish".

In response, MediaCorp noted that the news is read by broadcast journalists or presenters who are trained at least once a month in presentation skills, pronunciation and news delivery. Safra Radio said it would try to "maintain a good standard of English" and ensure consistent news delivery.



Some local dramas provided good entertainment

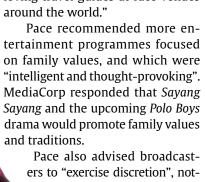
IT PRAISED local dramas such as Sayang Sayang — a series about a Peranakan family that offered a "unique perspective of Singapore" rarely seen on mainstream TV — and Fighting Spiders, about three boys coming of age in 1960s that took older viewers down memory lane.

Pace also cited programmes shown on MediaCorp Channel 5 that "provided good entertainment to viewers and some were also of educational value". These included Singapore Idol and Prove It! and acquired series such as CSI and The Amazing Race.

Said chairman Leo Tan: "You can see the Singapore public appreciates such programmes (like Fighting Spiders). It endeared my generation and the younger generation could see what life was like."

But Pace took issue with certain programmes, such as Fist of Zen on MTV S.E.A Channel, which were "deemed to be lacking in taste". It

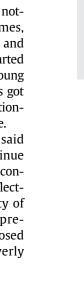
also found S Factor and SingTel Grid Girls shown on Channel 5 to be "degrading to



ing that certain programmes, such as Hannah Montana and High School Musical, "imparted the wrong values to its young riewers" as the characters got involved in love relationships at a young age.

MediaCorp said it would "continue to ensure such content, while reflecting the reality of issues that preteens are exposed to, are not overly emphasised".

> Local programmes such as Sayang liked for their portrayals of ique elements o



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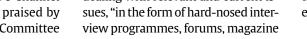












dealing with relevant and current isprogrammes, talk shows and documentaries". Pace also wanted more "thought-provoking" discussions.

The trouble with this, said Pace, was the public perceiving CNA as the "voice of the Government", rendering it less effective in difficult times.

ers, noted the report In response to Pace's comments

programmes.'

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS In response, MediaCorp said that PROGRAMMES FOR KIDS S Factor was "meant to be an enter-Pace was "pleased" the new okto channel offered more choices for young viewers,

taining, light-hearted and tongue-incheek reality TV series". The broadcaster said S Factor targeted a "more discerning and mature audience who would be able to appreciate the 'raw' unscripted content" of the show.

SingTel, title sponsor for this year's Formula 1 race, said: "Grid Girls on Tour is a travel and lifestyle programme produced by MediaCorp, and the ladies act as sporty and funloving travel guides at race venues around the world.