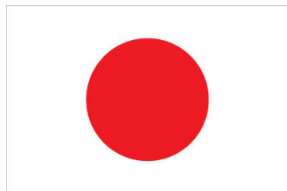




Japan



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall): Ranked 67 (29.36)

Head of State / Head of Government: Emperor NARUHITO (since 1 May 2019)
& Prime Minister Shinzo ABE (since 26 December 2012)

Capital city: Tokyo

Population: 126,168,156 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): Japanese

Ethnic Groups: Japanese 98.1%, Chinese 0.5%, Korean 0.4%, other 1% (includes Filipino, Vietnamese, and Brazilian) (2016 est.)

Currency: Japanese yen

Gross domestic product (PPP): 4.872 trillion USD (2017)

Internet penetration: 92% (July 2016 est.)

Most trusted medium of information: N/A

Legal System: civil law system based on German model; system also reflects Anglo-American influence and Japanese traditions; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court

Political system: parliamentary constitutional monarchy

Journalists Killed/Jailed 2019: 0

Media Environment: a mixture of public and commercial broadcast TV and radio stations; 6 national terrestrial TV networks including 1 public broadcaster; the large number of radio and TV stations available provide a wide range of choices; satellite and cable services provide access to international channels as of

2019. The media landscape in Japan has long been characterized by strong newspapers with large circulations, along with five country-wide networks of television including the license fee-funded public broadcaster NHK. However, with traditional readership falling, publishers are exploring ways of embracing digital platforms.

Media Issues: The world's third biggest economic power, Japan is a parliamentary monarchy that, in general, respects the principles of media diversity. But journalists find it hard put to fully play their role as democracy's regulator because of the influence of tradition and business interests. Journalists have been complaining of a climate of mistrust toward them ever since Shinzo Abe became prime minister again in 2012. The system of "kisha clubs" (reporters' clubs) continues to discriminate against freelancers and foreign reporters. On social networks, nationalist groups harass journalists who are critical of the government or cover "antipatriotic" subjects such as the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster or the US military presence in Okinawa. The government continues to refuse any debate about a law protecting "Specially Designated Secrets," under which informers, journalists and bloggers face up to ten years in prison if convicted of publishing information obtained "illegally." During a press conference on February 26, 2019, Yoshihide Suga, the Chief Cabinet Secretary to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has publicly refused to answer questions from a Tokyo Shimbun reporter, Isoko Mochizuki, on the grounds that he was "not required to". This incident triggered a wave of protests from journalists' unions, the media and opposition parties, and prompted the launch of a petition that gathered more than 17,000 signatures. This incident is the latest in a series of similar clashes between the Abe administration and the Tokyo journalists. Mochizuki, who has been working for the regional newspaper since 2000 and is known for her straightforward questions, has particularly become the scapegoat of the government's press services, and almost always sees her questions ignored or rejected. In a statement issued last December that implicitly targeted this journalist, the Prime Minister's Office didn't hesitate to ask the Japanese media to ensure that their questions are "fact-based" and "accurate", a request that nearly equals to an insult given the fact that these are two inner characteristics of journalistic work.

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Print: Led by the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, which sells 8.1m, and Asahi Shimbun, 5.6m, daily newspapers are still enormously influential in Japanese society. However, as in the rest of the world, circulations are decreasing fast. Total newspaper circulation in October 2018 was 39.9m or 0.7 copies per household, down 5.29%, or 2.23m copies, from the previous year – a record fall.

Television: Television news remains the most important source of news in Japan, while print has declined significantly over the last six years. Japanese engage with online news primarily through aggregators like Yahoo! News, tend to use social networks less, and have taken longer to fully embrace smartphones.

Social Networks: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Line, are the leading used media platforms in the Japanese industry. Line is an app used for instant communication on electronic devices. Statistics show that Facebook use in Japan is at 47.75%, Twitter use is at 19.33%, YouTube use is at 13.9%, Pinterest use is at 10.69%, Instagram use is at 4.93%, and Tumblr use is at 2.29%. In Japan during 2017 nearly 100% of residents are online, smartphone use is reaching 80%, and some form of social media is being used by over half of the population.