

# A very modest Murdoch: Raghav Bahl & Indian Media

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Raghav Bahl

It's not often that you get a media magnate who wants his editors to tone down their headlines. But Raghav Bahl the Indian entrepreneur and media magnate has a reason which is to do with the thesis of [his new book](#) that India's 'tortoise' might one day overtake China's economic 'hare'.

In his lecture at LSE and in conversation afterwards Bahl argued that India has the civic strengths that mean it might compete in the long-term with the state-driven powerhouse of China. But what about the role of the media in this?

Bahl is rightly proud of how India's mass media has boomed in the year's of economic liberalisation, inspired in part by Rupert Murdoch's example of how to build innovative commercial media companies.

Bahl says that sometimes India's exuberant newsrooms go over the top and are now a threat to India's international image. The Commonwealth Games were not perfectly organised he admits, but he cites one story run by his own titles about two roof tiles that had fallen off a stadium before the Games even began. The headline ran: "Roof Falls In On Games".

I suspect this is the sign of a healthy press. A little bit of exaggeration and even some febrile panic may be the price you pay for a news media that is competitive and confident of its right to be critical.



Network 18

Personally, if I was Indian I would be more worried about the lack of resource for serious analysis and the accusations of systematic 'paid-for news' where editors or journalists sell editorial space. I would also be concerned about the health of the 'vernacular' or language press that serves India's less affluent majority. But generally, India's news media in the metropolitan areas appears to be in rude health, and that's largely down to the professionalism and enterprise of visionary people like Raghav Bahl.

As to Mr Bahl's thought-provoking book, I think the [Financial Times' reviewer has got it right](#).

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