

Government advertising, state-owned media are control weapons, says IAPA

LIMA, PERU: Use of official advertising to reward or punish news media and government takeovers of media in several parts of the Americas continue to be powerful weapons used to hinder the free flow of information, the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) concluded on winding up its 67th General Assembly held recently in Lima, Peru.

In Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Venezuela and some countries in the Caribbean, such as Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, the authorities seek to manipulate information and opinions disseminated by the press by using placement of official advertising to reward or punish, said the report adopted by the IAPA on Tuesday.

The IAPA further said that governments have constructed a parallel network of state-owned and government-supporting media that mount campaigns to discredit the independent press.

In Ecuador the government has become the owner of a large number of news media outlets. The same is occurring in Argentina, Venezuela and Nicaragua, where the numbers of government-run news media are expanding without limit. In the latter country, in addition to several radio stations, Web sites and five television channels, there are plans to set up a second UHF television channel, TV 47.

The government of Venezuela has purchased or set up news media, while keeping more than 30 radio stations and privately owned television channels shut down.

Source: Inter American Press Association