

HuffPost launches in India, eyes China edition

December 8 2014, by Penelope Macrae



Arianna Huffington founded the Huffington Post in 2005, which launched an Indian version of its news website

The Huffington Post launched an Indian version of its news website Monday, seeking to tap the country's exploding number of Internet users, and announced its next big goal was a Chinese edition.

The AOL-owned website featuring, news, entertainment, health and

blogs, has allied with The Times of India Group to launch HuffPost India, its 13th-edition worldwide.

It hopes to gain new readers in the world's second-most-populous nation of 1.25 billion, where smartphones and other Internet-enabled devices are proliferating.

"This is a wonderful chance for us," said editor-in-chief Arianna Huffington, who founded the website in 2005, adding she wanted HuffPost India to "tell the stories that matter most" to the country.

"More and more people will be able to access news on their mobile devices," Huffington added, on a day when the government announced India has become the world's second-largest mobile-phone user with over 900-million users.

But The Huffington Post faces fierce competition in India's crowded online media scene as it jostles for readers with a host of local newspaper sites and international offerings such as BuzzFeed and Quartz.

The Greek-born editor said India held "special significance" for her as she studied there in her late teens.

The Indian edition led with a story headlined "Uber and Out"—about the US-based cab service being banned in New Delhi over the alleged rape of a female customer by a driver booked through the company.



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The Huffington Post, which began international editions three years ago, has been using a format abroad in which it teams up with a local media firm.

Chinese version

Its other editions appear in countries including Britain, Canada, South Korea, Japan and Brazil and it is planning launches in coming months of Australian and Arabic-language editions.

Its next big project, though, is a Chinese version of The Huffington Post.

"We'd like to put China on the roadmap, we hope we can do business

there," said The Huffington Post media group chief executive Jimmy Maymann.

"China is really pushing the boundaries in (online) innovation. We know the (media) restrictions" but "we're really bullish on China," he said,

Maymann said The Huffington Post, bought by AOL three years ago for \$315 million, expected to reach a deal with a Chinese partner by early 2016.

The Huffington Post relies on advertising revenues, which makes it well-suited to subscription-resistant Indian consumers who are reluctant to pay for online content.

Internet penetration remains relatively limited in India but analysts say growth possibilities are huge.

India will have the second-largest Internet user base after China by the year's end, with 302 million people online, the Internet and Mobile Association of India forecasts.

Even with that many users, India will have Internet penetration of just 25 percent, significantly below China's 45 percent.

"India is a critical destination for any global media company," said Maymann.

Financial details of the tie-up were not announced.

"We're both investing and will be sharing costs and revenues", Satyan Gajwani, [chief executive officer](#) of Times Internet, the digital arm of The Times of India, told AFP.

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