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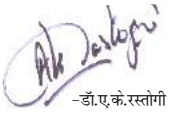
# चेतना यात्रा



वत उपलब्धियों की करें तो आपार उपलब्धियां हांसिल हुई हैं चेतना यात्रा से अद्भुत अनुभव बहुत ही नजदीकी से अपने देश को देखने जानने का अवसर मिला है। सिर्फ समस्याओं को नहीं बल्कि समाधानों को भी जानने का अवसर मिला है। देश ही क्यों देशवासियों को भी उनके बहुत निकट जाकर उन्हें समझने का मौका मिला। प्रकृति का अद्भुत श्रृंगार पर्वत-पहाड़ बर्फ से ढकी वादियों के तले साल-चोड़, देवदार की मनमोहक खुशबू उच्चल कल झरनों की कलकल उफानी वेग में बहती नदियों-नालों में आए उफान रोकते ट्रैफिक को जैसे नईदिशा चेतावनी दे रहे है ज्ञान मानव को कि सीमाओं का सदैव करो सम्मान नहीं तो फिर होगा भारी नुक्सान। इसी धारा पर भरुस्थल (जैसलमेर) ऐसा कि डजर्ट सफारी में दुबई भुला दे सूखा बीहड़ नजर कम नहीं, हरियाली भरपूर्ण, बाग-बगीचे, फल-अनाज, दाल - मसालों, तिलहन , मूंगफली, कपास, औषधियां धरती माता दे रही जबकि खनिज-खदानों के भण्डार भरे हैं, ऐसा देश है मेरा। तीन और समुन्दर का पहरा, रेलवे लाइन का लम्बा जाल रोजाना लाखों सवारी माल ढुलाई का बड़ा सहारा, जबकि पूरब से पश्चिम और उत्तर से दक्षिण चहुँ और सड़कों-हाईवे-द्रुत हाईवे का फैला जाल रफ्तार बढ़ाए जा रहा है, सबको सभी से जोड़े जा रहा है। मठ -गुरूद्वारे- गिरजाघरों की बहुतायत लेकिन चारों धाम-बद्रीनाथ, केदारनाथ, गंगोत्री और यमुनोत्री, ज्योतिर्लिंग सोमनाथ, मल्लिकार्जुन, महाकालेश्वर, ओंकारेश्वर, केदारेश्वर, भीमाशंकर, विश्वनाथ, त्र्यंबकेश्वर, वैद्यनाथ, नागेश्वर, रामेश्वर और घुष्मेश्वर, अयोधया जी- महाकाल, काशी विश्वनाथ, मथुरा-वृंदावन, मिनाक्षी टेम्पल मदुराई, तिरुपति बाला जी सहित तमाम धार्मिक स्थानों के दर्शन, गिर वन का शेर, कॉर्बेट, रणथंभौर, पेंच, बन्दीपुर जैसे भिन्न नैशनल टाइगर रिजर्व पार्कों में वाइल्डलाइफ सहित प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य यात्राओं में ही देखने का सौभाग्य मिला।

देश को भीतर से देख पाना सरल नहीं है कांकेर-बस्तर-दंतेवाड़ा-मलकानगिरी जाकर पता चलता है कि वहां भी भारत ही बस्ता है बस्तर दंतेवाड़ा के दशहरा का आकर्षण कुल्लू-मैसूर से कम नहीं है झाबुआ के कड़कनाथ (मुर्गे) डिंडोरी आदि तमाम आदिवासियों की हाट जीवन के सच का आइना दिखलाते है। अद्भुत -विशाल खजानो को संजोय भारत आज भी सोने की चिड़िया है यहां की मिटटी कर्नाटका में लोहा तो अन्दर बोकारो-धनबाद कोयले का भण्डार बहार है, किस तरह साइकिल पर सैकड़ों किलो लाद कर रोजाना ढोया जाता है देख दांतो तले ऊंगली दबा लेना चरितार्थ हो जाता है। असंख्य स्मृतियां जीवन का हिस्सा बन गई हैं बस शुरू कहीं से भी हों जाती हैं लेकिन इनसे बाहर निकल पाना कठिन हो जाता है जबकि वहां के केबल टीवी ऑपरेटरों के साथ बिताए पल सदैव साथ बने रहते है। दुनिया का कोई भी खजाना इनके सम्मुख बोना हो जाता है। अभी यह सफर पूर्ण नहीं हुआ है। यात्रा का बस एक पड़ाव है 19वीं यात्रा भी।

चेतना यात्राओं ने देश के कोने-कोने तक एक विशाल नेटवर्क बनाया है, आपसी रिलेशनशिप का नायाब खजाना जमा किया है, अब इसे आपस में बांटने का समय आ गया है क्योंकि केबल टीवी व्यवसाय अपने अंतिम चरण में पहुंच चुका है, टेक्नोलॉजी इससे बहुत आगे बढ़ गई है, फिर भी देश के करोड़ो लोगों तक 24सौ घण्टों पहुंच के साथ 30-32 वर्षों का भरोसा जो कमाया है, उससे आगे के अनेक रास्ते निकलते हैं। साधन और क्षमता परिपूर्ण है उपभोक्ताओं की संख्या इतनी की कई देशों की जनसंख्या समा जाए। अभी दिया हि क्या है उपभोक्ताओं को बस थोड़े से चैनल, जबकि उन्हें क्या नही चाहिए सब कुछ तो उन्हें उपलब्ध करवा सकते हैं कोई भी सेवाएं हो या फिर प्रोडक्ट सब कुछ जो भी उन्हें चाहिए। केबल टीवी ऑपरेटरों की पहुंच से परे नहीं हैं उपभोक्ता ऑपरेटरों को अलग से इसके लिए कोई आफिस खोलने अथवा अतिरिक्त इन्वेस्टमेंट की आवश्यकता नहीं है वह सब तो है उनके पास, मैनपॉवर ऐसी जो हर-घर उपभोक्ता से जुड़ी हुई पूर्ण भरोसे के साथ भरोसा भी 30-32 साल का और सबसे बड़ी बात कि मीडिया के भी प्रमुख माध्यम है केबल टीवी ऑपरेटर। चेतना यात्राओं ने देश के कोने-कोने में विधमान केबल टीवी ऑपरेटरों के साथ जोड़ा है उनके साथ व्यावसायिक सम्भावनाओ के अद्भुत अवसर है जिन्हे जमीन पर उतारने का अब सही समय आ गया है। केबल टीवी से छूटते उपभोक्ताओं को आगे भी जोड़े रखने के लिए अविलम्ब उन्हें नई सेवाओं के साथ जोड़ना नया व्यावसायिक मार्ग बनाएगा। इस प्रकार केबल टीवी ऑपरेटर अपने उपभोक्ताओं को भिन्न सेवाओं सहित देश का एक विशाल व शक्तिशाली नेटवर्क बन सकेंगे उपभोक्ताओं से लबालब भारत समूचे विश्व की नजर है , उन तक पहुंचने के लिए उन्हे आकर्षित करने अथवा प्रभावित किए जाने के लिए अनेक तरीकों से करोड़ों खर्च होते हैं जबकि केबल टीवी ऑपरेटरों के लिए यही कार्य सशक्त रूप में बिलकुल सरल और सटीक है,अब सीधे-सीधे उनकी अपार क्षमताओं को व्यावसयिक योजनाओं पर काम किया जाएगा। तमाम सेवाओं के साथ सीधे देश के उपभोक्ताओं को जब केबल टीवी ऑपरेटर नए व्यवसाय का मार्ग बनाएंगे तब वास्तव में की गई चेतना यात्राओं के परिणाम सामने आएंगे। हम जानते है अच्छी तरह से कि भविष्य के गर्भ में तमाम सम्भावनों के अंबार लगे है जो उनकी प्रतीक्षा कर रहे है।



-डॉ.ए.के.रस्तोगी

# Can Telecoms Bill '23 be enacted into law before general elections?




Even as a large section of the industry went rah-rah over the Telecoms Bill 2023, introduced in parliament on December 18, terming it progressive, some concerns remained.

The big question is: can the Bill be passed by the government in the remaining period of the present session or will it do so during the short session when the interim Budget would be okayed sometime in February, considering the general elections would have to be held in the first half of 2024?

As the Telecoms Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha as a Money Bill, it does not need to go to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) and the government, having a majority in the lower house, can easily see the safe passage of the Bill into a formal legislation, industry experts opined.

According to a PTI report, when Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw initiated the process of introducing the Bill, BSP member Ritesh Pandey opposed its introduction as it was being brought in as a Money Bill and would not require approval of the Rajya Sabha. Pandey also sought that the Bill be sent to a parliamentary committee since there are concerns relating to privacy.

Industry Reactions: The government's proposal in the Telecommunications Bill 2023 to allocate spectrum to satellite companies without auction, keep internet-based calling and messaging apps out of telecom rules, and measures to protect infrastructure is progressive and will boost digital connectivity, industry bodies said on Monday, according to a PTI report.

The Bill proposes allocation of spectrum to satellite communications companies through an administrative method without the need for bidding in auction. The issue of allocation methodology had divided the industry into those preferring auctioning of spectrums and those for administrative allocation.

Indian Space Association Director General AK Bhatt said satellite-based communication networks have a huge potential that can transform India into a truly digital and developed economy.

"By allocating the spectrum by administrative method for satcom, India could align itself with international standards, promote global cooperation and also help drive innovation, create opportunities for startups, and strengthen the country's position in the global satellite market," Bhatt said.

This would also spur growth in all downstream sectors of space providing impetus to the space economy in India, he said.

SIA-India, whose members include companies such as Viasat, Inmarsat, SES, Hughes Communications, etc, said the Bill aligns with international best practices for satellite spectrum assignments, placing a strong emphasis on fair and transparent administrative processes that conform to global standards.

"SIA-India, in its submission, emphasised on the importance of adopting methodologies that ensure maximum usability, and adhere to established international norms. The association extends its appreciation to the Indian government for its progressive stance on spectrum management in the satellite communication sector," SIA-India Director General Anil Prakash said.

While the Bill defines transmission of messages through wire or wireless technologies as telecommunication, official sources said the definition is as per the old Act.

The internet-based messaging and calling apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Meet will be covered under IT Rules and not under telecom laws as per government rules of business allocation.

Internet-based companies' representative body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), whose members include Google, WhatsApp, etc, hailed the Bill as email, internet-based communication services, broadcasting services, machine-to-machine communication services and over-the-top (OTT) communication services have been excluded from it.

"The time-tested distinction between telecom spectrum controlling entities (which are regulated) and spectrum-using companies should be maintained as it has been the basis that has allowed innovation and deeper penetration of internet in India," IAMAI said.

The definition of messages as included under telecom rules has been interpreted differently by experts and the US-based industry body ITI, which represents global technology majors.

Telecom specialist and independent consultant Parag Kar said the Bill is historic as it decisively clarifies longstanding ambiguities surrounding the allocation of spectrum for crucial services such as satellite and backhaul.

He, however, said in the revised version of the Telecom Bill, there is a noticeable shift in the approach to licensing OTT services compared to the earlier 2022 draft.

Previously, OTT was explicitly categorised under "telecommunication services" and the revised Bill in contrast opts for a more inclusive approach, encapsulating OTT within a broader definition of telecommunication.

”In essence, the proposed draft of the Telecom Bill grants the Government of India (GOI) discretionary power to classify OTT services as ‘telecommunication services’ if it chooses to do so. This is because, by their inherent nature, OTT services align with the broad scope of the term ‘telecommunication’ as defined in the bill,” Kar said.

ITI Country Director for India Kumar Deep said the industry body welcomes the revised version of the 2023 Telecommunications Bill as it refines the scope of the 2022 draft.

”While we are still reviewing the full text, the current definition of telecommunication services appears to be quite broad. We expect the government to conduct a consultation on the current version of the bill and welcome the opportunity to provide additional feedback,” he said.




The Bill proposes protective measures for telecom infrastructure and reinforces provision for a smooth rollout of networks, especially optical fibre cables.

The Centre has proposed exemption of telecom networks installed on any property from any claims, encumbrances, liquidation or the like, relating to such property, the PTI report said.

”The Telecom Bill 2023, tabled in Parliament today paves the way for robust telecom networks through a well-defined Right of Way (RoW) framework,” telecom industry body COAI said.

The Bill has proposed measures that will protect abrupt removal or any changes in the mobile tower or network elements from a property Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) Director General T R Dua said the provisions in the Bill will bring uniformity across states in terms of Right of Way (RoW) rules and regulations, along with rates.

He said the bill aims to ensure the continuity of authorisation and provides for the continuation of rules, guidelines, and administrative orders issued under the existing regime.

”Additionally, the Bill safeguards digital infrastructure, stating that no public entity can take coercive actions against the telecommunication network without permission from a central government-authorised officer, except in cases of natural disasters or public emergencies.

”In conclusion, it will certainly ease the process of doing business and reduce compliance burdens, aiming to create a conducive business environment,” Dua said.

The Bill proposes to stop transmission and intercept messages in case of public emergency, in the interest of the public, to prevent incitement for committing offence etc.

”On the occurrence of any public emergency, including disaster management, or in the interest of public safety, the central government or a state government or any officer specially authorised in this behalf by the central government or a state government, if satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do, by notification—take temporary possession of any telecommunication service or telecommunication network from an authorised entity,” the Bill said, the PTI report stated quoting from the Bill.

According to the Bill, the press messages meant for publication in India of correspondents accredited to the Centre or state governments shall not be intercepted or detained unless their transmission has been prohibited under rules applicable for public emergency, public order etc.

Spectrum Allocation: ”The central government shall assign spectrum for telecommunication through auction except for entries listed in the First Schedule for which assignment shall be done by administrative process,” the Bill said.

The first schedule has 19 cases for which spectrum will be assigned through administrative process including global mobile personal communication by satellites, national long distance and international long distance services, mobile satellite services, VSAT, In-Flight and maritime connectivity, BSNL and MTNL.

The Bill defines cases when spectrum will be assigned through an administrative method.

”Auction will be the preferred mode of spectrum allocation. However, in cases where auction of spectrum is not the preferred mode of assignment due to technical or economic reasons or to serve public interest or to perform government function, the spectrum will be assigned administratively,” an official citing the Bill said, the PTI report further added.

According to sources, the price for administrative allocation of spectrum for satellite service will be decided based on reference sought from Trai while BSNL and MTNL will need to match the auction determined price.



# Charu Asopa ventures into OTT in 'Johri' on MX Player




Embracing a new chapter in her career, Charu Asopa, known for her decade-long stint in television, has marked her foray into the world of OTT with the recently unveiled series, 'Johri,' streaming on MX Player and Atrangii TV.

In 'Johri,' Asopa embodies the enigmatic persona of Tani, a character pivotal in shaping Niraj's journey in the diamond business. Tani's influence serves as a driving force behind Niraj's transformation from an ordinary man to a diamond mogul. She becomes the social face, captivating the attention of the elites of society, while Niraj operates as the strategic mind, UNI reported from Mumbai.

The series unfolds the narrative of a common man's evolution into a prominent figure in the diamond industry under the guidance of his uncle. However, the storyline takes an intense turn as it ventures into the realm of bank scams and deceit, chronicling the rise and fall of a businessman.

Set against the backdrop of the '90s, "Johri" commences with Niraj's humble origins, spiraling into a gripping thriller that encapsulates the era's essence. Actor Nishant Malkani portrays the role of Niraj, complementing Asopa's portrayal of Tani.

Asopa's debut on the OTT platform in "Johri" signifies her venture into a new landscape, promising audiences a compelling narrative blended with suspense and drama, promising a fresh and engaging viewing experience.

Expressing her excitement about this significant shift, Asopa remarked, "This show was a comeback for me, and I wanted to play a different role that I hadn't played in the past." She highlighted the distinctiveness of Tani's character, considering it an ideal choice for her debut in the OTT realm.

# Disney+Hotstar unveils Raveena starrer 'Karmma Calling'




Disney+ Hotstar yesterday unveiled its new series 'Karmma Calling', starring actor Raveena Tandon in the lead. The show, which will debut on the streamer's platform on January 26 next, is based on the popular American series 'Revenge', which aired from 2011-2015 and was produced by ABC Signature, a part of Disney Television Studios.

It is adapted and directed by Ruchi Narain of 'Guilty' fame. According to a PTI report, the show is set in the world of glitz and glamour, filled with deceit and betrayal and will feature Tandon as Indrani Kothari, the reigning queen of the Alibaug society.

Tandon, who made her series debut with the 2021 show 'Aranyak', said she has not played a character like Indrani Kothari in a long time.

" 'Karmma Calling is definitely more than what meets the eye and explores different facets of the world of the rich. Collaborating with Disney+ Hotstar was a great experience and playing Indrani helped me explore more for myself as an actor. It is a never-seen-before and never done before role and I am looking forward to audience reactions," the 51-year-old actor said.

Narain said the show is set against the backdrop of the ultra-rich and affluent Kothari family and all that conspires around them in their world.

"The series has massive grandeur, scale and a glamorous outlook with a story that weaves in revenge, deceit, betrayals and also navigates experiences of the Kothari family. The series is definitely going to be your 'guilty pleasure' watch and leave you craving for more. Collaborating with Raveena Tandon and Disney+ Hotstar has been an incredible experience," she added.

# Netflix reveals viewership data for 18,000 titles

Netflix has lifted the curtain on viewership statistics for over 18,000 titles spanning six months. The inaugural 'What We Watched' report, encapsulating viewing figures from January to June 2023, sheds light on both original and licensed content, encompassing a staggering 99 percent of all streaming activity on the platform.




The top spot in this comprehensive ranking was claimed by 'The Night Agent,' a gripping spy series, amassing a substantial 812.1 million hours of views, establishing its dominance atop the top-20 chart, PTI reported from Mumbai.

Notably, no Indian show or movie secured a position within the top 20 list. Following 'The Night Agent,' the second and third positions were secured by the second season of 'Ginny & Georgia' with 665.1 million hours and the Korean drama 'The Glory' with 622.8 million hours, respectively.

Other prominent titles in the top 10 included 'Series Wednesday,' released in November 2022, ranking fourth with 507.7 million hours, alongside 'Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story,' 'You'0 season four, 'La Seina del Sur' season three, 'Outer Banks' season three, 'Ginny & Georgia' season one, and 'FUBAR' season one.

Netflix also disclosed that approximately 55 percent of the streaming activity was attributed to original content, while the remaining 45 percent comprised licensed shows and films.

Among the licensed content, 'Suits' emerged as a standout, accumulating a combined 599 million hours of global viewership across all nine seasons available on Netflix.

This transparent release of viewership data marks a significant step for the streaming giant, offering unprecedented insight into audience preferences and the performance of various titles across their expansive library.

# Castrol POWER1, Viacom18 team up for MTV moto show




Castrol POWER1, in collaboration with Viacom18 and Rajni Academy for Competitive Racing (RACR), has embarked on a thrilling quest to unearth India's finest motorcycling talent through 'Castrol POWER1 presents India's ULTIMATE Motostar on MTV'.

This pioneering initiative, backed by Castrol India Limited, aims to spotlight the country's burgeoning racing talent, igniting a fervor for moto-racing across India, Financial Express has reported.

Aspiring racers will undergo rigorous auditions, testing their mettle on the racetrack, and receive professional training from RACR, winners of the Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship (INMRC) 2023.

The ultimate winners will earn an exclusive opportunity for training at the prestigious LCR Honda Castrol MotoGP Team's racing facility in Europe.

# Telecom PLI draws Rs 2,725 cr by Oct: Devusinh Chauhan

The government has received Rs 2,725 crore investments till end-October 2023 out of the total Rs 4,014 crore committed by 42 applicant companies under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for telecom gear manufacturing, Devusinh Chauhan, minister of state for communications, told Parliament Friday.



He added that products worth Rs 8,804 crore had been exported till date under the PLI scheme for telecom gear and over 15,500 new jobs had been created till end-October, Economic Times reported.

"The PLI scheme for telecom and networking products was launched in June, 2021…within a short span, it has catalysed production of telecom equipment in India," Chauhan told Rajya Sabha.

Elaborating on the progress levels of the telecom gear PLI scheme, he said that of the Rs 2,37,807 crore incremental sales committed by applicants, as much as Rs 38,999 crore had already been realised till end-October 2023. The scheme has also generated as many as 15,561 fresh jobs out of the targeted 44,494, he added.

# Spotify tests AI-Powered playlist creation feature




Spotify, the renowned music streaming platform, is currently experimenting with a novel AI-driven playlist creation feature. This feature aims to empower users in curating personalized playlists through AI technology and prompts.

The emergence of the 'AI playlists' feature on Spotify was detected by a group of users, subsequently acknowledged by the platform to TechCrunch, albeit without delving into intricate details about the AI technology at play.

While confirming the test, a Spotify spokesperson highlighted the platform's routine engagement in various tests, some leading to broader user experiences, and others contributing solely to learning endeavors.

"We routinely conduct a number of tests. Some of those tests end up paving the path for our broader experience and others serve only as an important learning," the Spotify spokesperson remarked, declining further details at present.

The feature itself, described as "Turn your ideas into playlists using AI," is presently accessible only in English. Users exploring this feature encounter a screen where they can input their prompts into an AI chatbot-style box or explore suggested prompts from a provided list.

Upon selection, the AI chatbot initiates playlist creation with a response of "Processing your request..." and subsequently presents a sample playlist based on the user's prompt.

Concurrently, Spotify recently disclosed intentions to reduce its workforce by approximately 17%. This reduction marks the company's third round of layoffs in 2023. The move is part of Spotify's strategic pursuit of increased productivity and efficiency.

Earlier this year, Spotify had laid off 200 employees (2 percent of its workforce) from its podcast division in June and slashed 6 percent of its workforce (around 600 staff) in January. Alongside these changes, the company's chief financial officer (CFO), Paul Vogel, will depart following the latest round of layoffs.

As Spotify undergoes organizational shifts, its commitment to innovating user experiences through AI experimentation underscores its ongoing efforts to cater to evolving user preferences and demands in the music streaming landscape.

# 'Aavesham' to release on April 11

In a recent social media revelation, acclaimed actor Fahadh Faasil has ignited excitement among movie enthusiasts by confirming the nationwide theatrical release of his highly anticipated Malayalam film, 'Aavesham,' on April 11, 2024.

Known for his compelling performances in hits like 'Take Off,' 'Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum,' 'Malik,' and 'Joji,' Faasil shared this thrilling news with his followers via Facebook.

The film, set against the backdrop of Bangalore, is helmed by director Jithu Madhavan, acclaimed for his work on 'Romancham.', PTI reported from Mumbai.




'Faasil will portray the character of a local gangster, promising an engaging and immersive narrative within the vibrant urban landscape.

Aavesham' is reported to share the same cinematic universe as 'Romancham,' adding an intriguing layer for fans familiar with Madhavan's previous work.

Produced under Anwar Rasheed Entertainments, the movie is co-produced by Faasil's wife, Nazriya Nazim, through their company Fahadh Faasil and Friends.

In addition to "Aavesham," Fahadh Faasil is set to grace the big screen in "Pushpa: The Rule," the much-anticipated sequel to the 2021 blockbuster "Pushpa: The Rise," starring Allu Arjun. Faasil has also joined the stellar cast of megastar Rajinikanth's upcoming film "Vettaiyan," sharing screen space with icons like Amitabh Bachchan, Rana Daggubati, and Manju Warrier.

With the actor's versatile performances and captivating storytelling, "Aavesham" stands as a promising addition to Fahadh Faasil's repertoire, poised to captivate audiences nationwide upon its theatrical release in April 2024. Stay tuned for more updates on this eagerly awaited cinematic venture.

# Disney, Comcast up adspend on Insta after X pause




Big US companies including Walt Disney and Comcast increased advertising spending on Instagram after pausing commercials on X last month, according to Sensor Tower, as marketers flee the Elon Musk-owned social media platform over antisemitic content.

Disney and Comcastlifted their US spending on the app owned by Meta by 40 percent and about 6 p[ercent, respectively in the two weeks from November 20, Sensor Tower data showed, a Reuters report said, adding, Paramount, meanwhile, tripled its spending on Snapchat.

The figures underscore the challenge facing Musk, who in late November unleashed a profanity-laced tirade against advertisers who had dropped X, formerly known as Twitter.The billionaire has seen several advertisers flee the platform after he endorsed an antisemitic post that falsely claimed members of the Jewish community were stoking hatred against white people. He has apologized for sharing the post.

“Brands are intelligent about these choices, and any brand safety concerns will be met with a re-allocation of budgets away from troubled platforms,” said Felipe Thomaz, associate professor of marketing at University of Oxford.

Disney, Comcast, Paramount and X did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

“While platforms like X are likely to maintain a core niche of users, the overall trends show consumers are swapping out text-based social networking apps for photo and video-first platforms,” mobile analytics firm data.ai said in a report earlier this month.

“Along with a series of mismanagement and public image fumbles for X, there is a general shift of where news content is being absorbed,” it added.

# BCCI initiates bidding for IPL 2024-28 title sponsorship

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced the release of an invitation to tender for Title Sponsor Rights for the Indian Premier League (IPL) Seasons 2024-2028.

The Governing Council of the Indian Premier League (IPL) invited bids from reputed entities for acquiring the title sponsor rights for the Indian Premier League Seasons 2024-2028.

The detailed terms and conditions governing the tender process, including eligibility requirements, the process for submissions of bids, rights and obligations, etc., are contained in the ‘Invitation to Tender’ document. This document will be made available on receipt of payment of a non-refundable fee of INR 5,00,000, plus applicable taxes.

The ITT will be available for purchase until January 8, 2024.

Interested parties are requested to email the details of payment made for the purchase of the ITT to ipltitlesponsor2023.itt@bcci.tv. Any party interested in submitting a bid must purchase the ITT.

The interested parties have been further informed that the highest bid submitted by the parties shall be subject to Tata Sons Private Limited exercising its ‘Right to Match’ such bid.

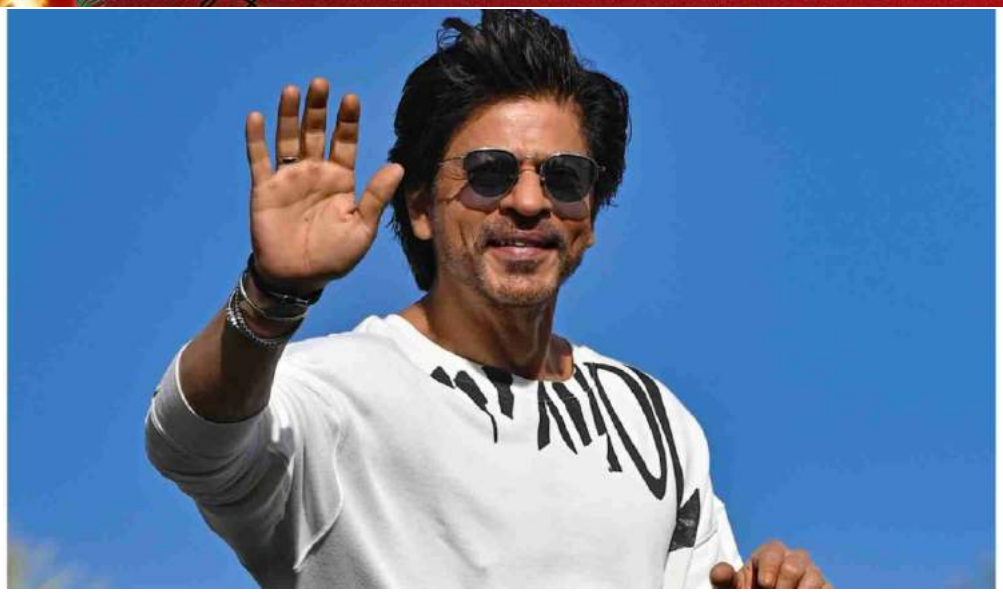
# Prasar Bharati invites tenders for OTT marketing, PR agency

India’s public broadcaster has invited offers from professional agencies for undertaking marketing and PR activities ahead of the launch of its OTT platform.

The scope of work will include conceptualising, designing non-traditional and attractive merchandise for different audiences as per requirement and advising Prasar Bharati on appropriate media options and formats for marketing campaigns. (Representative Image: Glenn Carstens-Peters via Unsplash)

After releasing a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) document, outlining goals, features of the platform, vendor bidding processes, and additional specifications in September, the pubcaster has now invited e-tenders from marketing and public relation agencies to pitch for a multi media agency contract.

As per tender specifications, the services of the agency will be used pre, during and post launch of the OTT platform. The launch of the platform is scheduled for the FC first half of January 2024. Duration of the services will be 12 months, extendable based on performance review.



# SRK bags top spot in UK's 2023 South Asian celeb list

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, referred to as the King Khan of the Indian film industry, has topped a UK list of the 'Top 50 Asian Celebrities in the World' previewed in London on Wednesday.

The 58-year-old actor, who had double box-office success this year with action thrillers 'Pathaan' and 'Jawaan', is currently preparing for the Christmas release of the comedy-drama 'Dunki'. Khan beat off tough competition to make it to the annual list published by UK weekly 'Eastern Eye', PTI reported from London.

"By the time 2023 ends, King Khan will become the first leading man from the modern era to have three huge Bollywood blockbuster hits in a calendar year," said 'Eastern Eye' Entertainment Editor Asjad Nazir, who compiled the list.

"By drawing big audiences back into cinema halls with global juggernauts, the actor gave a movie industry in decline a much-needed boost and had a transformative effect. The history making superstar eclipsed everyone else with his brilliance and reminded global audiences what escapist Bollywood cinema is capable of," he said.



The Top 50 list celebrating South Asian stars who shone the brightest in 2023 is based on their impactful work, breaking boundaries, and being generally inspiring over the year. It is compiled as a result of public inputs, with readers and social media users nominating their favorites.



Popular actress Alia Bhatt came in second for her impact in Bollywood and Hollywood and also for being a strong role model for working mothers.

Third placed Priyanka Chopra Jonas, the most famous Indian on the planet, has been recognised for her ground-breaking work on the international stage, including with big-budget series 'Citadel', Hollywood film 'Love Again', humanitarian work and lighting up the red carpet globally.

Fourth placed Diljit Dosanjh confirmed his place as the biggest Punjabi star, with stunning work as an actor and singer, which included cinema, major crossover international music collaborations and a path-breaking performance at the prestigious Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California.



Fifth placed Charli XCX from the UK was the biggest singing star internationally of a South Asian heritage and accomplished a lot this year, from super single releases to blockbuster live performances globally. She is followed by Ranbir Kapoor (sixth) for delivering the year's most impactful movie performance with blockbuster hit 'Animal'.

Singer Shreya Ghoshal comes in at number seven with another award-winning year, which included magnificent songs in multiple languages, global arena shows and her turn as an Indian Idol judge. Eighth placed Vijay is the biggest South Indian cinema star of 2023 with two hits and for being an inspiration to countless fans with his humility.

The highest placed Pakistani on the list is actor Wahaj Ali (ninth), who delivered strong performances all year round, including in the record-breaking serial 'Tere Bin'. Canadian actress Iman Vellani is at number 10 for headlining Hollywood blockbuster 'The Marvels' with a path-breaking role.

The oldest star in the list is 81-year-old Amitabh Bachchan (35th) and the youngest is 20-year-old television star Sumbul Touqeer (44th), who said: "Being included in the annual list with so many distinguished international names feels great.

"I am also proud to be the youngest in this list again and hope to inspire others starting out on their journey that anything is possible. I am grateful to be able to do what I love and so thankful for all the support."

# Agenda Aaj Tak gathers elite leaders for New Delhi event

Aaj Tak, India's leading news channel, is all set to host the 11th edition of Agenda Aaj Tak, their flagship event, on December 13-14 in New Delhi.

This highly anticipated two-day event will bring together an impressive roster of thought leaders, industry magnates, political figures, and entertainment icons for captivating discussions across diverse realms, the channel said in a statement.

Among the distinguished attendees are luminaries such as Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP National President Jagat Prakash Nadda, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur.

Additionally, the presence of other influential personalities including Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav, Chief Ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, alongside entertainment stalwarts Konkona Sen Sharma, Manoj Bajpayee, Ananya Panday, and Janhvi Kapoor, promises engaging discussions.

Notably, Indian cricketer Mohammed Shami will contribute to this conclave, enriching conversations across a myriad of topics.

Adding depth to the event, experts Kalpana Kalahasti from Chandrayaan-3 and Nigar Shaji from the Aditya L1 Mission will lend their expertise to the engaging discussions.

Agenda Aaj Tak aims to steer thought-provoking conversations that shape the national agenda while offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the nation.

With over 23 years of credibility, Aaj Tak continues to establish itself at the forefront of Indian news, and Agenda Aaj Tak stands as a platform where the nation's brightest minds converge to share insights, influencing the trajectory of the country into the future.

# For movies, TV shows, users redirected to revamped Apple TV app

Things have changed at Apple's iTunes as it would not be the place to search for TV shows and movies — for viewing or for rent.

Not only the tech giant has unveiled a new-look app for Apple TV, but it has said that the iTunes Store app on iPhone and iPad, and the iTunes Movies and iTunes TV Shows apps on Apple TV 4K and Apple TV HD will redirect users to the Apple TV app, where they can find their existing purchases and watch all of their favourite TV shows and movies in one place.




"The redesigned Apple TV app makes it easier than ever for users to watch the shows, movies, and sports they love through an intuitive interface that brings content to the forefront," said Eddy Cue, Apple's senior vice president of Services, in a statement.

"With so much available to watch, our aim is to ensure users always have their favorites at their fingertips," Cue added.

The redesigned Apple TV app, unveiled earlier this week, makes it even easier for users to watch Apple's award-winning original series and films, as well as live sports, movies, and television shows across their Apple devices, smart TVs, streaming sticks and gaming consoles.

An official media statement from Apple said the simplified interface's new sidebar allows users to quickly navigate the app, providing easy access to Apple TV+, home of Apple Original series and films; MLS Season Pass, home of Major League Soccer; Store, where users can buy and rent popular movies; and shortcuts to channels and apps viewers already have, such as Disney+, Paramount+, and Max.

The new sidebar navigation also introduces Home, a unified guide for all the shows, movies and sports viewers like. Within Home, the Channels and Apps section allows users to browse each of their subscribed channels or connected apps in depth. And collections — including New Shows & Movies, Top Charts, Trending and For You — bring forward the best recommendations for viewers to enjoy across what's new, popular, and tailored just for them.

The redesigned navigation introduces Home, a unified guide for all the shows, movies, and sports users love. On living room devices, the sidebar will also feature profiles, allowing households to quickly switch between users for better personalization in Up Next and content recommendations across the app.

The updated Store tab in the Apple TV app unifies movies and TV shows into one offering, so users can more easily access everything available to buy or rent, and a new Add Channels & Apps shelf where users can explore popular streaming services.

# Tata Play launches addressable ads for Linear TV



Tata Play on Monday rolled out addressable ads for linear television, a 'breakthrough' in the Indian industry for unconnected boxes and a move that should propel revenues of the dish TV provider who never had access to advertising revenue.

Addressable Ads will allow brands to target segmented audiences with the same TV ad spots, the company said. In simple terms, broadcasters can now choose which ads to play for which audience of varied regions and income groups, the Economic Times reported.

Invidi is the ad-tech and campaign management partner for Tata Play, which has also partnered with TAM for audience measurement and monitoring.

"This breakthrough marks a first for unconnected boxes, empowering advertisers to reach their targeted audience with complete measurability," the company said in a statement. "The segmentation will be based on audience profiles and various geographical cuts, making television advertising more engaging and effective."

Addressable TV advertising technology helps advertisers segment TV audiences selectively, delivering distinct ads to various households, regardless of their shared content consumption. Advertising effectively allows businesses to reach out to their potential customers and remind them of their interest in the brand, the company said.

This comes at a time when India is seeing increasing penetration of OTTs with rapid adoption of the Internet that enables targeted ads on digital platforms. India's burgeoning online population presents a colossal market for businesses leveraging re-targeting advertising.

However, Tata is now bringing the tech to non-connected TVs as well, which should be adding to the revenues as well.

"Platforms have never had access to advertising revenue. This makes us a stakeholder in that stream of revenue too," Harit Nagpal, MD & CEO, of Tata Play, told ET Online.

"The service will encourage advertisers to advertise more because of the efficiencies achieved due to the reduction in spillover. Niche brands that did not hitherto advertise will also find the ROI's compelling," he added.

Addressable TV ads represent a groundbreaking shift in TV advertising by combining traditional linear TV with digital capabilities, the company said. TV ads play a crucial role in initial brand exposure. Through Tata Play's Addressable Ads solution, advertisers can enhance their return on investment by utilizing features such as targeted advertising and impression purchasing, it added.

The targeted ads strategic approach optimizes budgets by directing ads to individuals who have displayed prior interest, ensuring higher conversion rates compared to broader campaigns. Targeting advertising in India capitalizes on user engagement, proving to be a cost-effective and efficient method for businesses aiming to engage a receptive audience and drive sales.

"While television delivers the highest advertising reach for brands, it doesn't offer sharper targeting. With our targeted ad delivery, we can now split a TV spot into multiple beams with each beam carrying messages to distinctive audience cohorts, as required by the advertisers," said Nagpal.

# BBC India forms new entity to meet FDI regulations




Four BBC staff members on Tuesday announced plans to leave the organization and form a new entity in India named Collective Newsroom, which will provide services "as commissioned by the BBC" and in compliance with the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) rules.

According to PTI, a statement from the UK-based public service broadcaster, Collective Newsroom has been established as an Indian company that is wholly owned by Indian citizens. It replaces BBC World Service India to continue to provide language-based content.

The move follows the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) premises in India facing "surveys" by tax authorities and an ensuing investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over alleged FDI violations earlier this year.

"The establishment of Collective Newsroom Private Limited ensures the BBC and Collective Newsroom can meet their shared commitment to Indian audiences and cover stories on India that matter to global audiences. It complies with the Indian Foreign Direct Investment law," reads the BBC statement.

"Collective Newsroom has been established as an Indian company, wholly owned by Indian citizens, with four existing staff members leaving the BBC to lead Collective Newsroom. These senior leaders have a wealth of editorial and program-making experience," it said.

"The BBC will commission Collective Newsroom to produce its six Indian language services as well as Indian digital output and Indian YouTube channel in English for audiences globally," it added.

# NxtDigital HR chief Thakur honoured with leadership award




Vaishali Thakur, Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at NXTDIGITAL, has been honoured with the esteemed Great Indian HR Empowerment Leader Award.

The accolade, curated by Transformance, stands as a testament to Thakur's unwavering dedication, innovation, and remarkable contributions to the HR domain, NxtDigital said in a Linkedin post yesterday.

The award serves as a well-deserved recognition of Thakur's relentless commitment to fostering excellence within the realm of human resources. Her visionary leadership and ground-breaking strategies have not only reshaped HR practices within the organization, but have also set new benchmarks within the industry.

Under Thakur's stewardship, NXTDigital has witnessed a paradigm shift in HR methodologies, embracing cutting-edge technologies, fostering a culture of inclusivity, and pioneering initiatives that prioritize employee well-being and professional growth, the company stressed.

The Great Indian HR Empowerment Leader Award by Transformance serves as a beacon, spotlighting exemplary individuals shaping the future of human resources across the nation.

# Apple reveals best apps, games of 2023 on App Store

Apple has unveiled the most popular downloaded apps and games of 2023, with year-end charts localised for users in more than 35 countries and regions.



The 2023 charts, now available on the App Store's Today tab, include the top free and paid apps and games, as well as the top Apple Arcade games, the company said in a statement.

Among the 'Top Free iPhone Apps' category, WhatsApp Messenger, Instagram, YouTube and JioCinema were the top four platforms.

In the 'Top Paid iPhone Apps' slot, DSLR Camera, pdf scanner – Wordscanner pro and Slow Shutter Cam were the top three apps.

In the 'Top Free iPhone Games' category, BATTLEGROUNDS MOBILE INDIA (BGMI), Ludo King and Subway Surfers ruled the turf in 2023.

Among the 'Top Paid iPhone Games' category, Hitman Sniper, Minecraft and RFS – Real Flight Simulator were the top three games.

JioCinema, YouTube and Google Chrome were the top three in the 'Top Free iPad Apps' category while Procreate, LumaFusion and Nomad Sculpt were the top three in 'Top Paid iPad Apps' category.

The App Store is the world's safest and most vibrant app marketplace, recommending the best apps and games to its more than 650 million weekly visitors, according to Apple.

# DoT overhauls spectrum charge methodology

To promote ease of doing business, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has revised the methodology to levy spectrum charges on captive users, rationalising fees paid by such players. As per officials, the DoT will now be charging for spectrum based on area as against the number of devices earlier.



"We have simplified the whole process and introduced the new concept of area-based pan-India captive category. The rates have also been rationalised for most captive users," the Economic Times reported.

The move is likely to benefit captive users like Railways, ONGC, BHEL, mining industry etc. The DoT will also give three months grace time for setting up networks by such players and no spectrum charges will be levied for the period.

As per an order issued on December 11, the DoT said, "A construction period of three months is permitted for the purpose of import of the equipment, site preparedness, deployment, etc. and spectrum charges be levied, after three months period from the 1st day of the month of date of issue of letter of intent (LoI)."

The revised charges will come into effect from April 1 next year. Spectrum charges comprises royalty and licence fee and shall be calculated for terrestrial broadcasting service, land mobile service (up to 375 kHz), maritime mobile service, aeronautical service, radar under radionavigation service and radiolocation service, fixed and mobile service (multi-channels multiplexed) and satellite-based services.



# COAI wants US-type Bill on making big apps pay for infra in India

Telecom operators want the government to adopt a Bill, similar to a proposal in the US Congress, that would make large internet apps contribute to infrastructure costs to help lower broadband costs for consumers, a senior industry official said.

A Bill sponsored by US Senators Markwayne Mullin, Mark Kelly and Mike Crapo in the US Congress last month — aimed at lowering broadband costs for consumers — proposed a direction to telecom regulator Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to mandate social media platforms, streaming services apps, cloud computing service providers like WhatsApp, YouTube, Netflix, Google, etc. to contribute to a universal fund that is used for building networks.

The proposed Bill named, Lowering Broadband Costs for Consumers Act of 2023, has classified social media platforms, streaming services, over-the-top messaging services, video gaming services, videoconferencing services, e-commerce platforms, and search engines under edge services providers.

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said that the proposed Bill in the US vindicates the stand taken by service providers in India.

"We are very happy that whatever is given as a provision proposed in this bill, vindicates our stance. It is not only the telecom service providers who are there, it is edge computing, who are providing content services. Edge computing entities and telecom service providers, or as they call it, broadband providers, both have been clearly defined. This needs to be done in the Indian ecosystem as well," COAI, Director General, SP Kochhar told PTI.

The Bill proposes to levy charges only on those entities that generate more than 3 per cent of the estimated quantity of broadband data transmitted in the United States and more than USD 5 billion in annual revenue.

Kochhar said telecom operators in India want only large traffic generators, which are a handful of foreign companies, to contribute to the infrastructure cost and similar provisions have been proposed in the US Congress. "In the US they are suggesting three per cent of network traffic load and we've gone to the extent of saying maybe eight per cent. We are very clear in our mind that we are targeting only the large traffic generators (LTGs), who are riding on our networks. We are not targeting the MSMEs, start-ups or any small players," Kochhar said. When asked if charging LTGs will increase the cost of service for consumers, Kocchar said that apps are already operating various business models which include advertisement-based free service or lower priced service for customers or fully paid subscription.




# 15th Indian Film Festival Melbourne set for August 2024

The 15th edition of the Indian Film Festival Melbourne will open on August 15, 2024, and will feature the Indian Independence Day Celebrations (flag hoisting), IFFM Awards Night, IFFM Dance Competition, and IFFM Closing Night.

The upcoming edition of the film festival was announced by Victoria governor, Margaret Gardner AC, at an IFFM industry event held in Mumbai, IANS reported from New Delhi.

In attendance was Mitu Bhowmick Lange AM, IFFM Festival Director, along with various leading film makers, studio heads, stars, and stakeholders of the Indian film industry.

The festival also announced a new festival initiative called IFFM Baari, which means 'House' in Bengali.

IFFM Baari will be an inclusive space for founders and leaders from diverse creative industries to engage with emerging creative voices, especially from South Asian communities.

Veteran actress Shabana Azmi was also honored with the IFFM Excellence Award.

The award was confirmed for the 2023 festival, but the actress was unable to accept the award at the time. Shabana said: "I am so grateful I was here among this small yet important gathering of my peers from the industry. I always believe it's the actors who get all the honors and attention, but I truly believe that actors and films are a result of all the teams behind the camera. I am thankful to every technician, spot boy, light guy, and everyone who deserves to be celebrated. I'm grateful to the governor, the government of Victoria, and IFFM for honoring me with the Excellence in Cinema Award."

This year will also premiere 'My Melbourne' — a new format mentored by four filmmakers, Rima Das, Kabir Khan, Imtiaz, and Onir with four relevant and timely stories celebrating diversity with new films celebrating the LGBTQAI+ community, disability, race, and gender.

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# Rediscovering Glimpses



























# Prime Video launches Anime Times




Prime Video, a beloved entertainment hub in India, has announced the launch of its first dedicated anime channel, Anime Times, on Prime Video Channels.

This premiere streaming service, originally available in Japan, now makes its debut in India, offering a vast collection of anime movies, TV shows, and beloved classics exclusively on Prime Video Channels. Prime members can access Anime Times through an annual subscription priced at INR 899, the company said in a press statement.

The channel offers a rich lineup of popular titles such as 'SPY×FAMILY,' 'HUNTER x HUNTER,' 'Fairy Tale Movie Houou No Miko,''Tokyo Revengers,' 'Zom 100: Bucket List of the Dead,' 'Mob Psycho 100,' 'That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime,' 'Goblin Slayer,' 'Zombieland Saga,' and more.

Vivek Srivastava, Head of Prime Video Channels, India, highlighted their commitment to providing diverse and engaging content for customers, acknowledging the significant rise in anime fandom in India. The addition of Anime Times to Prime Video Channels aims to cater to this growing audience, establishing the platform as the comprehensive entertainment destination for anime enthusiasts across the country.

Hideo Katsumata, CEO of Anime Times Company, expressed excitement about introducing Anime Times to the Indian audience. Recognizing the global appeal of Japanese anime culture, the collaboration with Prime Video seeks to offer a vast array of anime content, serving fans and enthusiasts nationwide.




# Vidyut Jammwal's 'Crakk' to hit theatres in Feb

Actor Vidyut Jammwal's sports action film 'Crakk' will be released in theatres on February 23, 2024, the makers have announced.

The movie is directed by Aditya Datt of Aashiq Banaya Aapne and Table No. 21 fame. It is produced by Jammwal's production banner Action Hero Films, PTI reported from Mumbai.

The actor shared the news of the film's release date in a post on microblogging site X on Sunday.

"Are you #CRAKK enough to risk it all to follow your dream? The stage is set for the ultimate game of survival on 23rd February2024 @adidatt@norafatehi@rampalarjun@iamamyjackson@abbassayyed771@actionherofilm1@TSeries#CrakkOn23rdFeb#JeetegaTohJiyegaapic.twitter.com/HymN1Gy4eh," Jammwal noted in the post.

'Crakk' is written by Datt, Sarim Momim, Rehan Khan with the additional screenplay and dialogue by Mohendar Pratap Singh. The film also stars Arjun Rampal, Nora Fatehi, and Amy Jackson in pivotal roles.

# Disney, Reliance working on ops merger: Report

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Walt Disney Co. are finalising details of a non-binding term sheet to move ahead with plans to merge their India media and entertainment operations, said executives involved in the matter.

According to the Economic Times, the deal is likely to give the Mukesh Ambani-led group a controlling stake in what will become the country's largest media and entertainment business if the deal goes through.

The plan, as of now, is to create a step-down subsidiary of RIL's Viacom18, which will absorb Star India via a stock swap, said the people cited above. Reliance is pitching to be the larger shareholder with at least 51 percent in the merged company with Disney owning the residual 49 percent, they said. Both businesses are being treated as similar-sized ones, so RIL is likely to pay cash for the controlling stake.

The two sides are also negotiating a business plan to inject cash as immediate capital investment, expected to be $1-1.5 billion.



# News9 Plus triumphs with 'Duologue with Barun Das' at NT A Awards 2023

News9 Plus, the trailblazing news OTT platform, clinched a series of esteemed awards at the illustrious News Television Awards 2023, reaffirming its eminence in the realm of journalism. The crowning glory of the evening belonged to the flagship show 'Duologue with Barun Das,' securing the prestigious Editorial Choice – Most Cerebral Talk Show award.

In a stellar display of commitment to quality journalism and captivating content, News9 Plus emerged as a frontrunner. 'Duologue with Barun Das,' hosted by the dynamic MD and CEO of TV9 Network, Barun Das, claimed the spotlight for its engaging influencer conversations and intellectually stimulating discussions, putting the 'India Story' at the forefront.

As per a press release, the show's latest triumph adds to its accolades, having previously been honored as the 'Most Cerebral Show' on OTT at the IWMBuzz Digital Awards 2023 and securing the esteemed 'Best Set Design' Silver Award at AFAQS Future of News 2022.

Kartik Malhotra, the show director and Executive Editor – Business, News9, expressed elation, emphasizing the importance of intelligent conversations in a media landscape dominated by social media noise.

Sandeep Unnithan, Editor of News9 Plus, credited the platform's dedication to groundbreaking journalism for the accolades received. He highlighted the recognition across various categories as a testament to their commitment to informative and engaging storytelling, expressing gratitude to viewers for their trust.

Apart from the triumph of 'Duologue with Barun Das,' News9 Plus secured eight additional accolades across diverse categories, further solidifying its position as a frontrunner in the news network arena.

The News Television Awards 2023 witnessed a dazzling showcase of talent and innovation, cementing News9 Plus's commitment to pushing the boundaries of news reporting and storytelling excellence.

# BBC World India adjusts ownership, seeks extension for FDI compliance

BBC World Service India, 99.99 percent owned by the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC), is restructuring its shareholding to comply with the Centre's foreign direct investment (FDI) guidelines. These limit foreign holdings in digital news entities to 26 percent.

BBC News deputy chief executive Jonathan Munro is likely to announce the purported change in ownership structure soon, said people in the know. He is scheduled to address a town hall of BBC India staff on Tuesday, the Economic Times reported.

Replying to ET's questions, a BBC spokesperson said, "We will not be making an announcement today. We will let you know if and when we have more to say."




Munro couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

In its regulatory filings, BBC World Service India disclosed that it had received a letter from the Ministry of information and Broadcasting dated March 31, for alleged non-compliance with FDI norms. The company said it has sought time until March 31, 2024, for compliance, and communicated its restructuring proposals to the ministry.

People aware of the development told ET that one of the options being explored by the company is to offer stakes to some of its executives. Some key functionaries in India include Rupa Jha, head of BBC News India; Mukesh Sharma, head of African language services, BBC News; and Sanjoy Mazumdar, deputy managing editor, Asia, at BBC World Service.

# IMG digital trends predict rise of AI, women's sport monetisation



Global sports, events and representation company IMG's Digital Trends Report 2024, which explores technologies and developments that will shape the sport media landscape for rights holders over the next 12 months, predicts growth of smarter stadiums, tactical adoption of generative AI, and monetizing women's sport through digital, amongst other trends.

Featuring insights and analysis from IMG's global team of digital experts (formerly known as Seven League), the report breaks down the biggest developments in the sector and how they will influence the ways sports brands and organisations engage fans and audiences, the company said in a media statement.

For the first time, the report ranks the 10 most important third-party media platforms for the global sports industry with TikTok coming out on top, followed by YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. The platforms are ranked based on a detailed analysis of their audience profile and growth, commercial potential and the functionality they offer both rights holders and users, among others.

IMG's Senior Vice President & Managing Director of Digital Lewis Wiltshire said in a statement: "The unprecedented speed with which AI blew the doors off the technology landscape in 2023 has unquestionably moved us into a new era of digital. We are now in an age of AI, mixed reality, and streaming.

"This year's Digital Trends Report is the first time we've done this under the new IMG brand, which seems fitting. We're proud to present rights holders with a clear view of the technology they need to be aware of over the next 12 months and proud to offer paths through this landscape as part of IMG, with our digital expertise now at the very heart of the organisation's strength and scale."

Some of the trends include the following:

Stadium Will Get Smarter: Driven by technologies that enhance the fan experience, digital engagement will be at the forefront of the stadium experience in 2024. The value of smart stadia will come in many forms, including reduced overhead costs, improved revenue, and deeper fan connections.

Not only will smart solutions help control the stadium's infrastructure more effectively, regulating lighting, heating and cooling, but it will also help rights holders unpackage their sponsorship proposition, enabling the creation of more targeted advertising for brands. Both San Francisco 49ers and Tottenham Hotspur's are already leading in this space.

AI: Cut, Create, Cultivate: Since the launch of ChatGPT last year, the adoption of generative AI has surpassed all expectations. In 2024, sports organisations will have a clearer idea of how to use AI and to unlock efficiencies in their processes, develop new and innovative content formats and marketing campaigns, and identify new commercial opportunities in large data sets.

Early examples will see sports using AI to improve ticket and retail conversion through better user targeting, while rights holders will seek to reduce churn on streaming and membership services and optimise pricing through much deeper predictive analytics.

Web3 shakes down, machine learning powers up: We are at the start of a third age of the internet and some technologies will begin to emerge as category-defining, while others will fall away.

Women's Sport Monetises Through Digital: We've seen for some time that women's sport has a very engaged, digital-savvy audience and highly-engaged pockets of online communities. There is already data to suggest these communities will over-index on support of the brands that commit to it – for example, Michelob Ultra found that fans of women's sport are 30 percent more likely to engage with its brand. 2024 is the moment that rights holders can translate digital engagement to effective commercial partnerships.

Personalisation Critical: Personalised experiences are now an expectation, not a frill, and the driving force behind this trend comes from changing consumer needs. Every sport is faced with concerns about ageing audiences in-stadia and on TV, and competing with a huge variety of attractions for the attention of Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

This means sport is now competing for audiences who are used to algorithmic recommendations or personalised feeds across their platforms, and any league or club-owned product needs to get on board with reaching that level of sophistication.

Stop Saying 'Social' Media: As we enter 2024, it's time for sports rights holders, leagues, and governing bodies to stop saying 'social media'.

The major platforms don't exist simply to connect us publicly with friends and family – that behaviour has moved to private messaging apps and groups. By taking the emphasis off the 'social', sports organisations can and will reassess how they distribute and syndicate content and messaging, while making big decisions on which platforms they focus their efforts on to achieve their objectives.

Rise of Mega Influencer: In the past year, the world saw Cristiano Ronaldo join the Saudi Pro League, Lionel Messi go to Major League Soccer, and Taylor Swift start dating the Kansas City Chiefs' tight end Travis Kelce — creating tidal waves in their respective leagues, attracting new fans and driving growth opportunities. In 2024, sports rightsholders need to take advantage of any initial entry point which helps extend their fan base, even if that means their cap becomes more famous than their team.

# TV18, E18 merge with Network18; Viacom18 will be a subsidiary

India's TV18 Broadcast will merge with Network18 Media & Investments in a $1.2 billion deal that will help the Reliance-owned companies expand their reach and cut costs, according to the companies involved.

The all-stock deal, conveyed via regulatory filing with the stock exchange on December 06, will consolidate the Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance's broadcast and digital businesses, which include business news portal Moneycontrol and streaming platform JioCinema. According to a media statement put out by Network18, the move will enable it to consolidate and further grow its business from a position of strength. This will present a unique opportunity to all shareholders to participate in the media business of the group through one listed entity. The merged entity will comprise the TV portfolio (20 news channels in 16 languages and CNBCTV18.com), digital assets of Network18 (News18.com platform across 13 languages and Firstpost) as also moneycontrol website and app. Viacom18 with its portfolio of JioCinema and 40 TV channels will be a direct subsidiary of Network18.




As consumers and advertisers increasingly gravitate towards omni-channel experiences across different aspects of their lives, having a deep and integrated presence across both TV and digital media will enable the merged entity to serve them better, the media statement explained.

# Disney begins integrating Hulu with its own services

Walt Disney began offering Hulu as part of its namesake streaming service yesterday, bolstering Disney+'s family-friendly content with more general entertainment fare, such as FX's intense kitchen drama 'The Bear' and the popular reality show 'The Kardashians'.

The combined offering, known as Hulu on Disney+, will be available in an early "beta" version to domestic US subscribers to the Disney Bundle of streaming services. The formal launch of the integrated service is scheduled for March, Reuters reported on December 06.



Disney CEO Bob Iger told investors last month that the company would begin offering a "unified one-app experience" that would make Hulu's programs, including 'Only Murders in the Building', ABC's 'Abbott Elementary' and adult animation stand-outs like 'Family Guy', available to certain Disney+ subscribers.

"We expect that Hulu on Disney+ will result in increased engagement, greater advertising opportunities, lower churn, and reduced customer acquisition costs, thereby increasing our overall margins," Iger told investors in November, during the company's fiscal fourth quarter earnings call.

Iger is under pressure from investors to make Disney's streaming business profitable. In the quarter that ended on September 30, Disney reduced operating losses to $420 million, representing a dramatic improvement from the prior year, when operating losses exceeded $1.4 billion.

The company said it is on track to achieve profitability by the end of fiscal 2024. Disney initiated the process of acquiring the remaining stake in Hulu from NBCUniversal parent Comcast, for at least $8.6 billion, which cleared the way for the integration.

Hulu will occupy its own "tile" on Disney+, alongside the company's other entertainment brands, such as Marvel, Star Wars and Pixar, and be included in the promotional carousel at the top of the app, the Reuters report added.

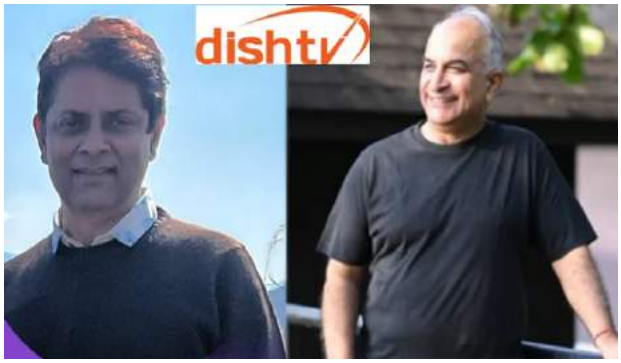


# ROLL ON

## Dish TV India appoints Sunil Khanna, Ravi Bhushan to its board

Dish TV India Limited has made significant board appointments during its recent meeting held on December 18, 2023, awaiting regulatory approvals. The company approved the nominations of Sunil Khanna as an Independent Director and Ravi Bhushan Puri as an Executive Director, with Puri initially designated as an Additional Director within the Executive Director category.

In the BSE statement, these appointments, subject to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's approval in accordance with the 'Policy Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels,' are expected to come into effect upon receiving regulatory clearance or upon the Board's director count dropping below the mandatory minimum of three members, whichever occurs earlier (referred to as the "Effective Date").




Ravi Bhushan Puri, known for his diverse skill set and proven track record in managing broadcast projects, will assume responsibilities encompassing STB (Set-Top Box) product development lifecycle, Broadcast Operations, and the oversight of Compression, Baseband, Electrical, Playout, and RF infrastructure for the Company. Notably, he presently serves as the 'Corporate Head – Broadcasting' and is deeply involved in Project Planning, Team Coordination, Budget and Quality Assurance, Vendor and Risk Management, and driving continuous improvement initiatives within the organization.

Puri's technical proficiency spans various facets of Broadcast Systems, including Compression Headend, Baseband Systems, Playout & Automation Systems, MPEG, DVBS/DVBS2 Delivery Models, Streaming Protocols, Analog/Digital Video Standards, and STB Delivery Mechanisms.

On the other hand, Sunil Khanna, a seasoned professional with a background in B Tech (Hons) from IIT Kharagpur and PGDBM from IIM Bangalore, brings his extensive experience in India's media industry to the table. His illustrious career includes pivotal roles at Zee Network, where he played an integral part in revolutionizing the cable industry's distribution model, launching India's first MSO, and spearheading the inception of Pay TV. Moreover, his tenure as CEO at Dish TV India Limited during 2004-2006 marked the pioneering phase of India's first direct-to-home services.

Beyond his corporate endeavors, Khanna's entrepreneurial spirit led to the co-founding of Grey Cells 18 Media Pvt Ltd, pioneering curriculum-linked TV channels like Greycells 18. Additionally, he is the Founder of Songdew Media Pvt Ltd, actively contributing to mainstreaming indie music and aiding retail brands in crafting sonic identities through music curation.

While Puri will retain his current remuneration as 'Corporate Head – Broadcasting,' Khanna's appointment as an Independent Director shall extend for a period of five years from the Effective Date, exempting him from the retirement-by-rotation policy.

The company is poised to seek shareholders' approval in compliance with relevant regulatory provisions concerning these appointments, which are expected to further augment Dish TV India's strategic vision and growth trajectory in the media and broadcasting landscape.

## Sushma Rajesh joins Viacom18 as Kannada & Marathi cluster head



Sushma Rajesh, an industry veteran, has taken up the pivotal position of Cluster Head – Kannada and Marathi at Viacom18 Media Private Limited, signaling a significant shift in her esteemed career.

Rajesh, formerly associated with The Walt Disney Company as Senior Vice President and Business Head – Kannada, brings over two decades of expertise to her new role.

Announcing her transition on LinkedIn, Rajesh expressed enthusiasm about commencing this new phase. Reflecting on her tenure at Disney Star, spanning almost 2.5 years, she bid farewell and expressed gratitude for the remarkable experiences and accomplishments during her time there.

Rajesh's professional journey boasts a rich tapestry of roles and responsibilities. Joining Star India in 2004, she steadily ascended the ladder, assuming key positions such as Vice President of Marketing and channel Strategy for Life OK and later serving as the Business Head of Star Utsav.

# Kiran Dcruz joins Tips Industries as Senior VP

Tips Industries (TIPS), a player in the music and entertainment industry, has announced the appointment of Kiran Dcruz as senior vice president for brands and partnerships.

In his new role, Dcruz will lead the strategy for the Tips Music brand and build collaborative partnerships between brands, artists and music, The Economic Times reported. With over two decades across various sales and business head roles in the radio and music industry, Dcruz will bring his deep understanding of the entertainment sector to his new role. His expertise in strategy, music licensing, content creation and team management aligns seamlessly with Tips Industries' commitment to innovation and growth, it added.

Prior to joining Tips Industries, Dcruz served as head – brand and digital partnerships at Sony Entertainment Talent Ventures, where he played a pivotal role in setting up India's first Metaverse consulting company for brands and talent.

Dcruz has handled ad sales at Media Dreams and later at Nick- MTV Networks India. He was part of the launch team at Fever 104 FM. He has also managed sales at Red FM, Suryan FM, S FM and 94.3 Radio One. At Sony Music Entertainment, he was the director – brand partnerships and music licensing for almost eight years. This was followed by his role as head – brand and digital partnerships at Sony Entertainment Talent Ventures prior to joining TIPS Industries



Kumar Taurani, chairman and managing director, Tips Industries said, "We welcome Kiran to Tips Industries. We leverage his extensive experience to drive strategic brand initiatives and expand the company's footprint in the evolving entertainment and media landscape. This is in line with our commitment of delivering 30 per cent growth to our investors"

# Shemaroo appoints Swati Darekar Hindi GEC prog. head

Shemaroo Entertainment has made a significant addition to its leadership team by appointing Swati Darekar as the Head of Programming for the Hindi General Entertainment Channel (GEC).



With an illustrious career in the domain of General Entertainment Channels, Darekar's expertise is poised to shape the content strategy for Shemaroo's Hindi GEC cluster.

In her new role, Darekar will drive the content strategy, focusing on Shemaroo TV and Shemaroo Umang. Her responsibilities include spearheading content conceptualization, development, and execution. By leading a team of content creators, Darekar aims to craft compelling and relevant content that resonates deeply with the target audience.

Darekar brings a wealth of experience to Shemaroo Entertainment, having held pivotal positions in renowned networks. Previously, she served as the Fiction Head (Vice President of HME Content) at Colors (Viacom18) and held significant roles as Creative Director (Vice President of Content) at Sony Entertainment Television (Sony Pictures Networks) and Creative Director (Vice President- Fiction Programming) at Star Plus (Disney Star).

Darekar's appointment marks a strategic move by Shemaroo Entertainment, emphasizing its dedication to providing high-quality and captivating content for its audience, thereby aiming to elevate the viewer experience across its Hindi GEC platforms.

# Adesh Kumar Gupta steps down as Director from ZEEL

In a recent development, Adesh Kumar Gupta, currently serving as a Director at Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL), has communicated his decision not to pursue re-appointment following the upcoming annual general meeting (AGM).




Gupta conveyed this through a formal letter addressed to the company, citing personal reasons and prior commitments as the driving factors behind his withdrawal.

The announcement was officially disclosed by ZEEL to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on Thursday, acknowledging Gupta's decision to relinquish his role as Director post the AGM.

Upon his exit, Gupta will no longer retain positions within key committees, including membership in the audit committee and chairmanship of the risk management committee and stakeholders relationship committee of the board.

In his letter, Gupta expressed regret about being unable to continue his directorship at Zee Entertainment due to personal obligations. He stated, "I withdraw my re-appointment as director of the company at the AGM." Additionally, he conveyed his best wishes for the company's future endeavors, expressing hope for the timely completion of the pending merger with Sony, while wishing great success for the enterprise.

Gupta's decision marks a notable change within the leadership structure of ZEEL, stirring anticipation and curiosity as the company approaches its imminent AGM and navigates through a crucial phase, particularly concerning its merger plans with Sony.

# Prasanth Kumar re-elected AAAI president; Rana Barua appointed Vice President

Prasanth Kumar, CEO, South Asia of Group M Media (India) Pvt. Ltd was re-elected as President of the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) for the years 2023–24 at the Annual General Meeting of AAAI held on December 1.

Rana Barua, Group CEO, Havas Worldwide India, was unanimously elected Vice-President of the Association.

Other elected members of the board, in alphabetical order, are:

**Sam Balsara (Madison Communications Pvt Ltd)**
**Tanya Goyal (Everest Brand Solutions Pvt Ltd)**
**Vishandas Hardasani (Matrix Publicities and Media India Pvt Ltd)**
**Mohit Joshi (Havas Media India Pvt Ltd)**
**Kunal Lalani (Crayons Advertising Ltd)**
**Chandramouli Muthu (Maitri Advertising Works Pvt Ltd)**
**Sridhar Ramasubramanian (Beehive Communications Pvt Ltd)**
**Vikram Sakhuja (Platinum Advertising Pvt Ltd)**
**K Srinivas (Sloka Advertising Pvt Ltd)**

Anupriya Acharya, Chief Executive of Publicis Group South Asia, will be the ex-officio member of the AAAI Board for 2023–24 as AAAI's immediate past president.

On this occasion, Prasanth Kumar said, "I am deeply grateful to the members of the AAAI for re-electing me as President, a role I accept with great honor and responsibility. Our collective vision is to strengthen an inclusive environment, actively engaging with all stakeholders to shape a dynamic and future-ready organization.

"Our commitment is steadfast in strengthening unwavering support for every member, recognizing that while we have



achieved a few milestones together, there is still a considerable journey ahead. "This prospect excites us; it fuels our motivation. When we collaborate and exert our combined efforts, we not only enhance each year for everyone involved but also solidify our resolve to be architects of change within our industry. We stand dedicated to not just witnessing but actively creating a transformative era, steering our organization towards new horizons of innovation and impact," Kumar added.

On his appointment as AAAI's Vice President, Rana Barua said, "I am passionate about policymaking that leads to impactful and positive changes to the advertising industry, that benefit all the stakeholders, including, media, consumers, and advertising agencies. I believe in the potential of advertising to foster economic development and enhance meaningful social changes. I look forward to collaborating with the AAAI members to bring these shared goals to life."

# UK govt. names Samir Shah as BBC chairman

Dr Samir Shah, an India-born media executive with over 40 years of experience in TV production and journalism, has been named as the UK government's preferred candidate to take over as the new BBC chairman.

The 71-year-old, who was honoured with a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II in 2019 for services to television and heritage, will replace Richard Sharp, who was forced to resign after his communication with former prime minister Boris Johnson came under scrutiny, PTI reported from London yesterday.

Shah will now be quizzed by cross-party MPs of the House of Commons Media Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for pre-appointment scrutiny before formally taking charge of the public service broadcaster.

"With a career spanning more than 40 years in TV production and journalism, Dr Shah has a wealth of experience to bring to the position of BBC Chair," UK Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said on Wednesday, confirming the selection as per the appointment process.

"He has a clear ambition to see the BBC succeed in a rapidly changing media landscape, and I have no doubt he will provide the support and scrutiny that the BBC needs to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future," she said.

The minister said Shah's knowledge of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and his belief in its role as a national broadcaster alongside his extensive work to promote diversity in broadcasting will be invaluable in helping to ensure that the BBC reflects, represents and serves




communities across the whole of the UK.

"The BBC is, without doubt, one of the greatest contributions we have made to global culture and one of our strongest calling cards on soft power," Shah said.

"If I am able to put what skills, experience, and understanding of public service broadcasting I have built up during my career to help this brilliant organisation meet the complex and diverse challenges it faces over the coming years, it would be an honour," he added.

# Moneycontrol appoints Nalin Mehta as Managing Editor




Nalin Mehta, a seasoned journalist and academician with an illustrious career spanning across diverse media landscapes and international institutions, had been appointed as the Managing Editor of Moneycontrol.

This appointment marks a significant chapter in the evolution of the financial news platform, leveraging Mehta's extensive expertise in journalism, academia, and international affairs.

As per a press release, Mehta, who served as Network 18's Group Consulting Editor over the past year, brings a wealth of experience from his leadership roles in distinguished media outlets.

Notably, he held pivotal positions as the Executive Editor at The Times of India-Online and as the Managing Editor of India Today, contributing significantly to shaping the discourse in the realm of Indian media.

Prior to his foray into financial journalism, Mehta served as the Dean and Professor at the School of Modern Media, UPES University. His tenure was marked by the introduction of pioneering courses on digital journalism, reflecting his visionary approach to media education.

With a remarkable international footprint, Mehta's career journey encompassed collaborations with esteemed organizations such as the United Nations and the Global Fund in Geneva, Switzerland. His academic endeavors and contributions as a faculty member spanned various prestigious institutions in Australia, Singapore, Switzerland, and India.

Maintaining his scholarly pursuits, Mehta holds the distinguished position of a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, further solidifying his commitment to fostering nuanced dialogues on regional issues.

Mehta's academic prowess is underpinned by an impressive educational background, having earned a Ph.D. in Politics from La Trobe University, Melbourne, along with an M.A. in International Relations from the University of East Anglia, UK, and a B.A. in Journalism (Honours) from the University of Delhi. His accolades include being a DFID-Commonwealth scholar, embodying his dedication to academic excellence.

His appointment as the Managing Editor of Moneycontrol is poised to steer the platform toward greater heights, infusing it with his multifaceted expertise, global perspective, and a commitment to upholding journalistic integrity.

# As Jerry Dischler departs, Vidhya Srinivasan to lead Google Ads




Jerry Dischler, a longstanding figure overseeing Google Ads, had announced his departure from the tech giant after a remarkable 15-year tenure.

The reins of the Ads team now transition to Vidhya Srinivasan, assuming the role of Vice President/General Manager of Ads, leveraging her extensive experience in product and engineering leadership within the advertising domain, media reports said.

Srinivasan's guidance will directly fall under the purview of Prabhakar Raghavan, Google's Senior Vice 'President.

Dischler, in a LinkedIn post, expressed his readiness for a new chapter after a rewarding tenure at Google Ads. He hailed Srinivasan's leadership, recognizing her as a highly talented individual set to lead the team forward.

# Nielsen appoints Naobumi Otaki as new sales director

Nielsen, a global authority in measurement and analytics, proudly announces the appointment of Naobumi Otaki as its new Sales Director for Japan.

With an extensive background in marketing, media strategy, and business operations spanning over 17 years, Naobumi brings a wealth of expertise to drive Nielsen's sales and foster strategic partnerships within Japan's dynamic media landscape.

In his new role, Naobumi will spearhead Nielsen's Japan Advertiser and Agency team, leveraging his deep understanding of the media ecosystem to bolster sales initiatives and cultivate enduring collaborations within the industry.

Reporting directly to Aaron Rigby, Managing Director of Advertisers & Agencies, Audience Measurement Asia, Naobumi is poised to steer Nielsen's strategic growth trajectory in Japan.

Naobumi's rich professional journey includes leadership roles at esteemed organizations such as Mindshare, Station, McCann Health, and K&L, underlining his versatile experience across diverse platforms and industries.

# BQ Prime is now NDTV Profit; IT Minister to deliver keynote at launch

Even as business and financial news organization BQ Prime is all set to transform into TV business channel NDTV Profit today, Electronics & IT Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar will be the keynote speaker at the launch ceremony in Mumbai.

"BQ Prime is now NDTV Profit. #NDTVProfitIsHere," a post on X (formerly Twitter) by @NDTVProfitIndia stated on December 07, attracting many congratulatory messages from people.

A government statement yesterday said that in his keynote address, Chandrasekhar will shed light on India's transformative journey over the past nine years, showcasing how technology has played a pivotal role in changing lives, fostering innovation and bridging the gaps between the government and citizens. He will also underscore India's growing stature as a trusted tech partner globally, emphasizing that India has evolved from being merely a consumer to becoming a significant producer of technology, actively shaping the future of tech, the statement added.

The board of New Delhi Television, through a circular dated November 28, had approved to restart regular operations of NDTV Profit television channel from December 8, NDTV had said in a stock exchange filing.

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group last year announced the acquisition of a 27.26 percent equity stake in NDTV from founders Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy.

The acquisition was completed on December 30, 2022, on the block deal window of the NSE. Adanis now The acquisition was completed on December 30, 2022, on the block deal window of the NSE. Adanis now owns a 64.71 percent stake in the TV news company, which had witnessed another deal with the founder, Roys, earlier giving the Adani group substantial stake in the news venture.

# New streaming service to provide access to green films

A new streaming service providing free access to a plethora of films on environmental themes, including one on the Bhopal gas tragedy, was launched at the ongoing COP28 summit in Dubai.




Named tve StoryHub, it hosts a collection of film formats, ranging from immersive long-form documentaries providing a bigger picture to innovative television series and short digital videos that encapsulate critical narratives, PTI on December 07 reported from Dubai.

The service, started by tve (Television for the Environment), which specialises in environmental filmmaking, is designed to grant global access to tve's extensive archives of films produced and compiled over the past 39 years.

The themes include climate change, biodiversity loss, development issues, people and rights, pollution, and the role of women in sustainability, among others.

One of the key films featured on tve StoryHub is the documentary on the Bhopal tragedy, which marks its 40th year with no resolution.

The official launch of tve StoryHub, which is a collaborative partnership with sports streaming technology provider Reeble Technology, took place on December 05. Speaking at the launch, tve president Surina Narulao, according to the PTI report, said, "We are thrilled to launch tve StoryHub and make our extensive library of films available.

# TV9 Digital wins historic mandate on poll counting

Maintaining its leadership streak, TV9 Telugu broke all records and retained the No. 1 position on YouTube with an unprecedented 570K+ concurrent viewership during the first few hours of December 3 election result coverage.

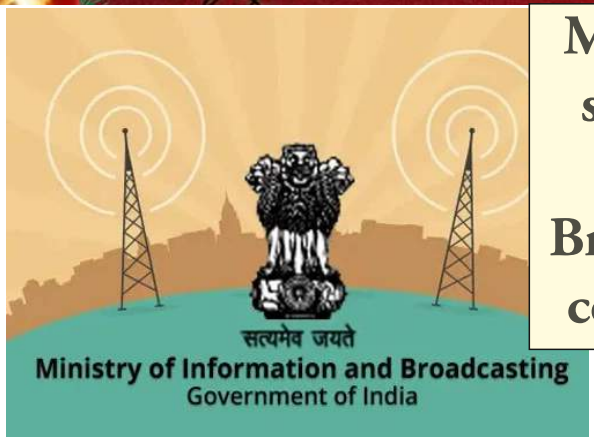
All other channels of TV9 Network capitalised in a big way on the massive viewership on their respective LIVE feeds on digital platforms on the big news on Sunday, a media statement from TV9 Network said on December 06.

TV9 Digital had advertisers lining up to capitalise on the attention of the massive viewership by buying on-screen branding options like L-bands and logos, the news network added.

Speaking of the spectacular performance, Raktim Das, Chief Growth Officer, TV9 Network, said, "Viewers have again given a decisive mandate to TV9 Digital this counting day on December 3. Our YouTube channels, especially TV9 Telugu, saw record numbers in concurrent viewership as votes were counted for the southern state.

"In the Hindi heartland, viewers took a 'pole position' with TV9 Bharatvarsh YouTube Channel. We have been topping the charts with respect to YouTube Concurrent viewership every counting day like we did earlier during the Karnataka and Gujarat elections."

TV9 Digital cornered a sizable chunk of premium brands across sectors and categories. Some of the brands advertising on the network include MDH , V-Guard, Tata AIG, Goldiee Group, Vimal, Sensodyne, Motul, R.Pure Masala, Chambal Fresh, Honda, Nuvoco Cement, Hindware and Catch Foods.




# MIB extends submission date for Broadcast Bill consultation

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has extended till January 15 the submission date for comments on draft Broadcast Services Bill that aims to replace old regulations with new and updated ones.

The government in an advisory announced the extension that was sought by most stakeholders. The draft Bill was put in public domain for consultation almost a month back.

Earlier, media reports had stated that big streaming companies, including the likes of Netflix, JioCinema, Disney+ Hotstar, were planning to lobby the government to either delay the introduction of the Bill or revamp it as the present draft raises fears of censorship and stringent regulations for OTT platforms, which is being brought under broadcast services, amongst other issues.

The government, however, has maintained that the Bill is largely aimed at making contemporary existing rules that are fairly old.

Some of the highlights of the draft Bill includes the following:

- Consolidated legal framework for the entire Broadcasting sector.
- Content Evaluation Committees for adherence to Programme Code and Advertisement Code.
- Broadcast Advisory Council to replace existing Inter Departmental Committee.
- Penalty structure linked to financial capacity of the defaulter.
- Accessibility measures for persons with disabilities.

# Prime Video's 'First Act' chronicles child actors' experiences




First Act', an original docuseries which chronicles the experiences of child actors and their parents as they navigate the Hindi entertainment industry, will start streaming on Prime Video from December 15.

The series is written, produced, and directed by Deepa Bhatia under the banner of MalaKan Motion Pictures, with Amole Gupte serving as creative producer, a press release said, according to a PTI report from Mumbai.

'First Act' presents narratives shared by former child artists who have transitioned into lead actors, such as Sarika, Jugal Hansraj, Parzaan Dastur, and Darsheel Safary. It also features insights from filmmakers Shoojit Sircar, Amole Gupte as well as casting directors Mukesh Chhabra, Honey Trehan and Tess Joseph.

# Allu Arjun hails 'Animal' as Indian cinema classic



Pushpa: The Rise star Allu Arjun on Friday said he was blown away by the "cinematic brilliance" of 'Animal' and praised the protagonist Ranbir Kapoor for his inspiring performance in the action drama.

Directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, the film earned Rs 563.3 crore gross at the worldwide box office in the first week of its release, the makers said.

In a lengthy post on X, Arjun congratulated the cast and crew of 'Animal', describing the movie as one to have joined "the classics of Indian Cinema List", PTI reported from New Delhi.

"#Animal. Just mind-blowing. Blown away by the cinematic brilliance. Congratulations! # Ranbir Kapoor ji just took Indian cinema performances to a whole new level. Very Inspiring. I am truly at a loss for words to explain the magic you've created. My deep Respects to the highest level," the National Award-winning actor wrote on the microblogging site.

Arjun said Vanga had "exceeded all cinematic limitations".

"The intensity is unmatchable. You made us all proud once again. I can see how your films are going to change the face of Indian cinema now and in the future!" he added.

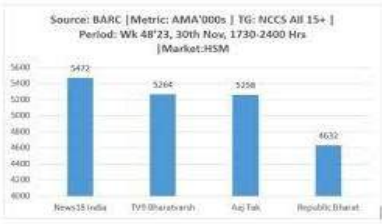
Animal was released on December 1 in theatres in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam. It also stars Rashmika Mandanna, Bobby Deol, Anil Kapoor, and Triptii Dimri.

Arjun lauded the performance of the entire Animal cast and wrote: "@iamRashmika Brilliant & Magnetic! Dear this is your best performance by far & much more to unfold. The Deol Ji's impactful performance silences us. Your Terrific presence commands respect. @AnilKapoor Ji's was effortless & intense. Your experience speaks volumes, sir."

# News18 India's exit poll coverage tops BARC ratings

The latest data released by the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India has solidified News18 India's number one position during the five-state Exit Polls for the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram, the network said on December 07.

During the crucial hours of the Exit Poll results, a press release from News18 India said, it secured 5,472 AMA'000s, positioning itself as the top choice among viewers for comprehensive Exit Poll coverage. TV9 Bharatvarsh followed closely at 5,264 AMA'000s, trailed by Aaj Tak at 5,258 AMA'000s, and Republic




Bharat at 4,632 AMA'000s, among others. (Source: BARC | Metric: AMA'000s | TG: NCCS All 15+ | Period: Wk 48'23, 30th Nov, 1730-2400 Hrs | Market: HSM | 14 channels considered)

Asserting its dominance throughout the day, News18 India said it retained the spotlight with 10,194 AMA'000s, while TV9 Bharatvarsh stood second at 10,164 AMA'000s and Aaj Tak stood third at 9,697 AMA'000s. Competitors such as India TV and Republic Bharat trailed behind with 9,065 AMA'000s and 8,488 AMA'000s, respectively, the statement added.

On the counting day, across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, News18 Rajasthan's live YouTube stream commanded an exceptional 706k concurrent views (Source: Playboard live concurrent on YouTube, 3rd December, 9 am to 12 pm peak – concurrent numbers), setting a new standard for digital engagement. News18 MP-Chhattisgarh achieved a remarkable 130k concurrent views during the pivotal counting hours. (Source: Playboard live concurrent on YouTube, 3rd December, 11:30 am)



# Digital India Act unlikely to be in place before May: IT Minister

The government may not be able to put in place the Digital India Act, which aims to replace over 23 years old IT Act 2000, before the next general election (ending with a new a government in May), as there is not much time left for extensive consultation, India's Minister of State for Electronics and InfoTech Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on December 06. While speaking at the Global Technology Summit 2023, the Minister, however, said the rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act will be out later this month for consultation and are expected to be notified by the end of December or early January, a PTI report from New Delhi stated. Chandrasekhar said the existing IT Act doesn't even have the word internet, and there is a consensus that it can be safely superseded and replaced."The successor Act to that is something called the Digital India Act, which is a work in progress. We have the draft ready and a lot of work has gone into it.

"I suspect that before the next elections, we will not be able to legislate it because one of the things that the Prime Minister insists on is that we need every digital legislation to be extensively consulted. Therefore, I don't think we have enough time to get that done," Chandrasekhar said.

The proposed Digital India Act (DIA) has a lot of focus on the online segment.

It will focus on making the internet open with rules to check on the dominance of certain players, focus on online safety and user harm with provisions like age-gating by regulating addictive technology, discretionary moderation of fake news by social media, and define and regulate emerging technologies, among others.

The DIA also proposed stringent regulation for privacy-invasive devices, such as spy camera glasses and wearable tech, by adding know-your-customer rules for retail sales backed by appropriate criminal law sanctions.

Talking about emerging technologies, Chandrasekhar said India's approach towards AI is around emphasising its role in transforming lives and enhancing good governance.




# 903 govt.-cleared TV channels; active DTH subs 65 mn: TRAI




About 903 private satellite TV channels have been permitted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) for uplinking and downlinking, which includes uplink only entities also, broadcast regulator TRAI said on December 05.

In its 'Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators April–June, 2023' report, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India also stated that there has been a marginal increase in the DTH subscribers too in the period under review — a number that industry observors said is heartening.

As per the reporting done by broadcasters in pursuance of government guidelines, out of the 892 permitted satellite TV channels available for downlinking in India, 360 are pay channels.

Out of 360 pay channels, 256 are SD and 104 are HD TV channels.

Since the introduction of DTH sector in the year 2003, Indian DTH (direct- to-home) services have displayed a phenomenal growth, TRAI said in a statement, adding as of June 2023, there were four pay DTH service providers in the country, apart from pubcaster Doordarshan's FreeDish.

Pay DTH, according to latest TRAI data, attained a total active subscriber base of around 65.50 million, which is in addition to the subscribers of the DD FreeDish. The total base increased from 65.25 million in QE March 2023 to 65.50 million.

Neither TRAI, nor the government have official figures regarding the subscriber base of DD FreeDish, though the industry estimates puts the figure anywhere between 40-50 million, powered mostly by households in rural and far-flung areas of the country.

Apart from the radio channels operated by the national radio broadcaster All India Radio, as of June 2023, there were 388 operational private FM radio channels in 113 cities operated by 36 private FM operators.

As compared to the previous quarter, there is no change in the number of operational private FM radio channels, cities and operators, TRAI said. The advertisement revenue reported by FM radio operators stood at Rs.389.97 crore as against Rs.388.97 crore in the previous quarter.

Meanwhile, total number of internet subscribers increased from 881.25 million at the end of March 2023 to 895.83 million at the end of June 2023, registering a quarterly rate of growth 1.65 percent. Out of the 895.83 million internet subscribers, number of wired subscribers were 35.54 million and wireless customers numbered 860.29 million.

The internet base comprises broadband subscriber number of 861.47 million and narrowband customer base of 34.36 million.

The broadband subscriber base increased by 1.76 percent from 846.57 million at the end of March 2023 to 861.47 million at the end of June 2023.

Wireline subscribers increased from 28.41 million in the previous quarter to 30.31 million for the June quarterwith a quarterly growth rate of 6.70 percent. Y-O-Y, wireline subscriptions also increased by 18.58 percent at the end of June 23.

Monthly ARPU for wireless service increased by 2.33 percent from Rs.142.32 in QE March 2023 to Rs.145.64 in the next quarter. On Y-O- Y basis, monthly ARPU for wireless service increased by 9.05 percent this quarter.

The license fee for telcos increased from Rs.5,159 crore in March quaretr to Rs.5,246 crore for the April-June period.

# SET to present 'Srimad Ramayan' starting Jan

Sony Entertainment Television is set to unveil a captivating new series titled 'Srimad Ramayan' on January 1, 2024. Scheduled to air every Monday to Friday at 9 PM, the show pledges to vividly portray the revered Indian epic of Lord Ram, capturing the essence of his divine virtues and valor.




Promising to immerse viewers into an ancient era of spiritual significance, 'Srimad Ramayan' aims to resurface timeless values and profound life lessons that hold relevance even in contemporary times, UNI reported from Mumbai.

A recently released promo from the channel offers a glimpse into the world of Maryada Purushottam Prabhu Shri Ram, breathing life into the cherished deity and inviting audiences to embark on a spiritual journey through this legendary narrative.

Television actor Sujay Reu has been cast in the pivotal role and has expressed immense gratitude and enthusiasm for the opportunity to portray this highly worshipped figure. Acknowledging the profundity of his role, Reu views this portrayal not merely as a character but as a sacred responsibility and an unparalleled spiritual expedition.

Reu, who feels honored and exhilarated by this opportunity, emphasizes the significance of embodying a figure of such revered stature. His connection and reverence for the timeless saga of Lord Ram have made this role in 'Srimad Ramayan' a dream realized for the actor.

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# TV viewing surges; pay TV HH viewership up 7%; women 59% of total base



India's linear and pay television, beating predictions of naysayers and an onslaught of streaming platforms, is very much alive — and thriving. A set of data released yesterday by IBDF, an industry body, proves the point.

The Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation (IBDF) said that in a compelling testament to the enduring allure of television, viewers in India are dedicating an additional 53 minutes per week to watching TV compared to the previous year.

This significant increase signals heightened engagement and a reinforced connection with the medium, defying trends in evolving media consumption.

In a dynamic content consumption landscape, Indian television not only holds its ground but also thrives, IBDF said in a statement, adding that it showed a notable 5.1 percent growth in year-to-date data for FY'24, which emphasises TV's enduring appeal and solidifies its position as the preferred medium for a diverse audience.

The set of data released by IBDF, based on numbers from Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India, also highlights that the category of younger audiences, in the age group of 15-30 years, has, in fact, seen a higher growth in TV viewership compared to the overall average with growth in viewership seen across all economic strata and markets, reaffirming television's appeal across diverse age groups.

This growth surpasses specific regions or language segments and extends to the majority of language markets, accounting for 87 percent of the Indian TV population.

A standout trend is the significant contribution of Indian women to television's growth, with an impressive 59 percent contribution to the overall TV viewership growth. This highlights their pivotal role as key influencers and consumers shaping television viewership trends, IBDF stressed.

Deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of India, television continues to be a unifying force, bringing families together. With a massive 70 percent penetration and headroom for further growth (90 million households), television remains the largest reach medium, inspiring and entertaining countless families.

A notable 7 percent increase in pay household viewership, with 5.8 million households transitioning from free-to-air (FTA) to pay, showcases the magnetic pull of quality programming, said the industry body, comprising major TV broadcasters as member-companies.

Television viewership growth transcends economic strata and town classes, demonstrating its inclusive nature. This growth is observed across NCCS A, B, C, DE, and various town categories, including metros, large cities, smaller towns, and rural areas.

Madhavan, President of IBDF and Country Manager & President of Disney India and Star India, opined, "The impressive rise in television viewership underscores India as one of the few international markets witnessing consistent television growth, in spite of digital media's rapid expansion.

"In today's 'AND' world, where digital media excels in precise targeting and immediate rewards, television maintains its distinct advantage in the realm of long-term brand building. Television creates compelling stories that deeply connect with its audience, building trust and leaving an indelible mark across age groups."

IBDF says its members provide channels and programmes that deliver about 90 percent of television viewership in India.

# Lionsgate Play to live stream top awards in Jan 2024




Lionsgate Play, renowned for its premium English content, is set to captivate audiences across India, the Philippines, Indonesia, and SAARC nations (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan) with exclusive live streaming of prestigious global awards ceremonies in January 2024.

Following its successful streak with the exclusive live streaming of the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards for four consecutive years, Lionsgate Play has now elevated its offerings.

In a groundbreaking move, it will exclusively stream not just the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards but also the 81st Golden Globe Awards and the 29th Critics Choice Awards.

Amit Dhanuka, the Executive Vice President of Lionsgate Play, expressed enthusiasm for bringing global entertainment closer to Indian audiences. He remarked, "We have set a benchmark for bringing the best of international content to our audience. Lionsgate Play, once again, is the 'Home of Global Awards.'"

Emphasizing their commitment to transcending ordinary entertainment experiences, Dhanuka added, "In addition to the 75th Emmy Awards in January 2024, we are now excited to LIVE stream the 81st Golden Globes and the Critics' Choice Awards for viewers in the same month."

With a promise to continue curating unparalleled experiences, Lionsgate Play intends to deliver the best of global entertainment to its audience in India.

# TRAI urges clarity on terms for unlimited 5G data packs from Jio, Airtel

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had asked Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel to clearly state the terms and conditions of their unlimited 5G data offerings to customers.

While giving a clean chit to both the operators on the predatory pricing complaint by Vodafone Idea, the regulator has concluded that the tariffs are not below costs as alleged by Vodafone Idea, officials familiar with the matter told ET. They added that Vodafone Idea itself has been offering unlimited 4G data, Economic Times reported.

Trai's directive to Jio and Airtel means that both players can continue to offer unlimited 5G data but would need to explain the terms and conditions more elaborately.Both the telcos have complied and updated their terms and conditions for the tariff plans. Airtel has updated its fair usage policy (FUP) for 5G unlimited data and has specified that commercial usage is considered where data usage is beyond 300 GB in 30 days.

"It is clarified and stated that these offers are only meant for personal and non-commercial use, and are not intended for any commercial use, or special or enterprise plans. Airtel reserves the right to end/suspend/modify the offer/services in specific cases of commercial use, or any fraudulent use," Airtel's terms and conditions said.

# Prime Video orders 'Cruel Intentions', based on 1999 film

Prime Video yesterday announced a series order for the drama 'Cruel Intentions', inspired by the iconic 1999 film of the same name, featuring Sarah Catherine Hook, Zac Burgess, Savannah Lee Smith, Sara Silva, Khobe Clarke, John Harlan Kim, Brooke Lena Johnson and Sean Patrick Thomas (Till).

The series is produced by Sony Pictures Television, Amazon MGM Studios, and Original Film.



The show, according to a PTI report, is meant to serve as a TV update to the original film, which is based on the classic novel 'Dangerous Liaisons'. The story will be set at an elite Washington, DC, college, where two ruthless step-siblings will do anything to stay on top of the cutthroat social hierarchy.

After a brutal hazing incident threatens the entire Panhellenic system at their school, they'll do whatever is necessary to preserve their power and reputation, even if that means seducing the daughter of the vice president of the United States, the official plotline reads.

Claire Forlani, Nikki Crawford, Isabella Tagliati, Zeke Goodman and Jon Tenney round out the cast.

Sara Goodman and Phoebe Fisher serve as writers and executive producers on the series. Neal H Moritz and Pavun Shetty of Original Film also executive produce along with Roger Kumble, who wrote and directed the original film. Moritz was also the producer on the original, which starred Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe, Reese Witherspoon, and Selma Blair.

"From the '90s cult-classic film to the 18th-century novel from which it was adapted, 'Cruel Intentions' has captivated audiences with a story that transcends time," said Lauren Anderson, head of AVOD originals.

# Watcho surpasses 3mn subscriptions in a year

Dish TV's robust OTT aggregation platform, Watcho, had achieved a remarkable milestone by surpassing 3 million paid subscriptions within just a year of its launch. This accomplishment underscores the platform's rapid growth and solidifies its standing as a dominant player in the competitive OTT entertainment realm.

Since its inception in 2022, Watcho has not only amassed a staggering user base exceeding 90 million but has also established itself as a leading OTT solution, offering a diverse range of entertainment options for audiences across generations and regions, encompassing both urban and rural demographics.

A key factor contributing to Watcho's success is its innovative approach of bundling leading OTT platforms into a single subscription, alongside its exclusive content under 'Watcho Exclusives'. This unique strategy provides users with a seamless and comprehensive entertainment experience, featuring 16 popular platforms, including Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, Sony Liv, and more.

Moreover, Watcho's extensive collection of original content, comprising 45+ captivating web series, user-generated content like Swag, popular shows, and exclusive live TV, covers a wide spectrum of genres, ensuring an engaging experience for its subscribers.

The platform's achievement not only signifies its substantial user growth but also highlights its commitment to delivering high-quality entertainment solutions, catering to the diverse tastes of its audience.

Watcho's remarkable ascent in subscriptions reaffirms its pivotal role as a frontrunner in the OTT landscape, setting a strong precedent for comprehensive and inclusive entertainment solutions in the digital era.

# Spotify announces 17% job cut in third 2023 layoff round

Music streaming giant Spotify on December 04 announced to eliminate about 17 percent of its workforce across the company as it looks to become "both productive and efficient". Spotify founder and CEO Daniel Ek said in a note to staff that right-sizing the workforce is critical for the company to face the "challenges ahead".

He cited slowing economic growth and increased capital costs as reasons for the layoffs, claiming that the company used lower-cost capital in 2020 and 2021 to invest heavily in the business, IANS reported from New Delhi.

"I have made the difficult decision to reduce our total headcount by approximately 17 per cent across the company. I recognize this will impact several individuals who have made valuable contributions. To be blunt, many smart, talented and hard-working people will be departing us," Ek said.

Spotify employs about 8,800 people, and this job cut move will impact over 1,500 employees, according to TechCrunch.

Under Severance pay, the company will start with a baseline for all employees, with the average employee receiving approximately five months of severance. This will be calculated based on local notice period requirements and employee tenure.

The company will continue to cover healthcare for employees during their severance period. All employees will be eligible for outplacement services for two months.

"I realize that for many, a reduction of this size will feel surprisingly large given the recent positive earnings report and our performance. We debated making smaller reductions throughout 2024 and 2025," the CEO wrote.




This is Spotify's third round of layoffs this year.

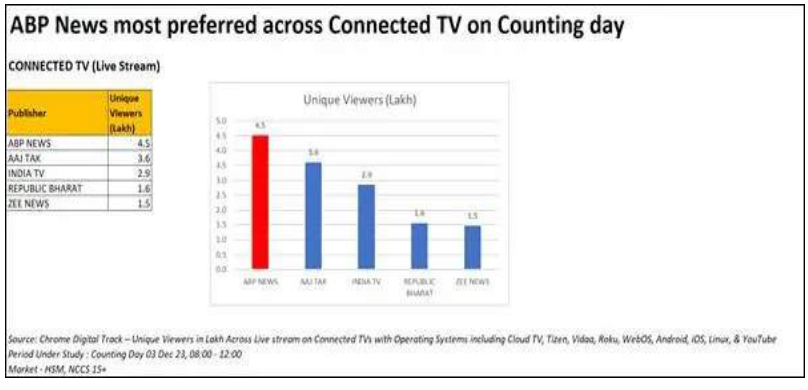
In June, the company sacked 200 employees, or 2 percent of its workforce, from its podcast division as part of a corporate reorganisation, while in January, it slashed 6 percent of its workforce, or about 600 staffers, globally.

# ABP News dominates connected TV viewership on counting day

ABP News, recognized for its unwavering credibility and expansive coverage, had reaffirmed its media dominance by clinching the highest unique viewership during the crucial period of Counting Day on December 3rd, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Recent data disclosed by Chrome Digital Track highlights ABP News's supremacy as the preferred choice for viewers seeking comprehensive and trustworthy coverage across various Connected TV platforms.

The comprehensive data, collected across a spectrum of operating systems including Cloud TV, Tizen, Vidaa, Roku, WebOS, Android, iOS, Linux, and YouTube, underscores ABP News as the go-to destination for news consumption. Within this pivotal time frame, ABP News garnered an impressive 4.5 Lakh unique viewers across Connected TVs (Market – HSM, NCCS 15+), cementing its stature as the foremost source for breaking news and profound analysis.




ABP News had firmly established itself as the primary hub for news consumption across a diverse array of platforms. Its availability on popular operating systems underscores the network's commitment to reaching and engaging a broad audience.

This widespread accessibility significantly contributes to ABP News's unparalleled viewership on Connected TV platforms, solidifying its position as the most trusted news source among numerous channels.

Encouraged by this remarkable achievement, ABP News remains dedicated to providing top-tier journalism, furnishing up-to-the-minute updates on an array of global subjects to its audience. As it continues to lead in delivering comprehensive coverage, ABP News is committed to upholding its standard of excellence in delivering impactful news that resonates with its viewers.

The data-backed ascendancy of ABP News on Connected TV platforms underscores its unwavering commitment to delivering credible, comprehensive, and engaging content, solidifying its position as a leader in the competitive news landscape.

# FanCode aims to double paid subscribers by 2024

Dream Sports-owned sports streaming platform FanCode, which boasts of having 100 million users, is looking to double its paid subscriber base in 2024, a top company official said.



"Our user base grew by over 5 times in the last 3 years, and we expect our subscriber base to grow over 2x in 2024 vs. 2023," said Yannick Colaco, co-founder of FanCode, which received $50 million in funding from Dream Sports in 2021, the Economic Times reported.

In recent times, FanCode has partnered with content aggregators like Prime Video Channels, Airtel XStream, and Watcho to reach new audiences and acquire more paid subscribers.

Launched in April 2019, FanCode's revenue model is built around subscription revenue. However, it also allows limited targeted advertising, which helps brands connect with premium-paying audiences.

"Our business model is predicated on a strong subscription model that leverages this D2C relationship and is supported with contextual advertising," Colaco said.

# News18 hits record YouTube viewership on poll counting day




Amid the pivotal counting day for assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, News18 Rajasthan, and News18 Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh achieved ground-breaking live concurrent viewership on their YouTube platforms, setting remarkable records in digital news coverage.

During the crucial morning hours from 9 am to 12 noon, News18 Rajasthan's live YouTube stream commanded an exceptional 706k concurrent views. In stark contrast, competitors like First India News peaked at 82k, and Zee Rajasthan reached 50k concurrent views, clearly indicating News18 Rajasthan's dominance in this critical time slot, News18 said in a press release.

The statement added that the source of the data quoted was from Playboard live concurrent on YouTube, December 3, 9 am to 12 pm, peak-concurrent numbers.

Simultaneously, News18 MP-Chhattisgarh emerged as the front-runner in state election coverage on YouTube, amassing a staggering 130k concurrent views during the decisive counting hours. Competitors like IBC 24 trailed at 128k views, followed by MP Tak at 26k views, and Zee MP Chhattisgarh at 22k views.

# ABP Ananda's 'Sera Bangali' celebrates 19 years




ABP Ananda, a prominent Bengali News Channel, culminated its esteemed annual event, 'Sera Bangali 2023,' with resounding success.

Recognizing outstanding talents from various domains, the event glorified the exceptional achievements of nine exemplary personalities hailing from Bengal. These luminaries were celebrated across diverse fields including literature, science, film, music, business, sports, and industry, showcasing the pinnacle of excellence within the state, the channel said in a press release.

The prestigious 2023 Sera Bengali Award was bestowed upon remarkable individuals, each a stalwart in their respective domains:

Chanchal Chowdhury – Acting, Iman Chakraborty – Music, Masud Ahmad – Literature, Anjan Chatterjee – Business, Subrata Chowdhury – Art, Ayhika Mukherjee & Sutirtha Mukherjee – Sports, Dhritiman Chatterji – Lifetime Achievement, Debojyoti Dhar – Serar Sera

Reflecting on the cultural significance of the event, Avinash Pandey, CEO of ABP Network, expressed pride, stating, "Sera Bangali embodies Bengal's cultural opulence, acknowledging the extraordinary contributions made by the region's finest minds and talents. ABP Ananda feels privileged to curate this platform, inspiring the upcoming generation to strive for brilliance in their chosen paths."

Suman De, Senior Vice President of ABP Network, reiterated the commitment to recognizing Bengali excellence, remarking, "Sera Bangali is a testament to our dedication in acknowledging the unparalleled achievements of Bengali luminaries. Heartiest congratulations to all the awardees for their outstanding accomplishments."

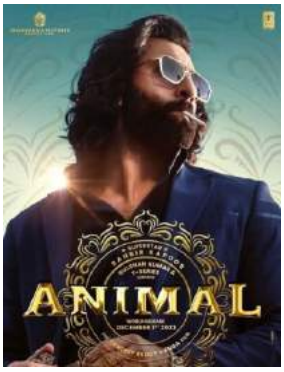
The event celebrated the interconnected tapestry of achievements woven by these luminaries, resonating deeply with Bengal's ethos and identity. The evening also featured an enthralling performance by the acclaimed artist, Shreya Ghoshal.

Sponsored by Bandhan Bank, Anmol Biscuits, and Dabur Chyawanprash, along with co-powered sponsors Sahababur Adi Dhakeshwari, Shalimar Chef Spices, Dear Government Lotteries, and Senco Gold & Diamonds, in partnership with Salical, Alteus, Mio Amore, Mehai LED, Sparx, and ZED Black Premium Agarbatti, the event showcased Bengal's vivacity and talent on a global platform. ABP Live served as the digital partner.

# 'Animal' roars at box office

The dynamic and compelling performance of Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Animal' is rewriting the records at the box office, nearing the impressive mark of Rs 500 crore in collections.

According to trade reports, the film amassed a whopping Rs 283.74 crore domestically, with its fifth day adding a substantial Rs 38.25 crore nett to its triumph,PTI reported from Mumbai.




Kicking off with a tremendous bang, 'Animal' stormed the box office by amassing an astounding Rs 63.8 crore nett on December 1st. The Hindi version alone contributed a formidable Rs 54.75 crore nett to this exceptional opening. The momentum surged into the first Saturday, witnessing a slight uptick as the film garnered Rs 66.27 crore nett. Day 3 witnessed a further ascent, propelling 'Animal' to new heights with a collection of Rs 71.46 crore nett.

This Sandeep Reddy Vanga-helmed action-packed film, also featuring stellar performances by Anil Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, and Bobby Deol in pivotal roles, successfully passed the litmus test of Monday, raking in an impressive Rs 43.96 crore nett.

In a testament to its extraordinary five-day performance, 'Animal' now stands as the second-highest grossing Hindi film of 2023 in terms of domestic collections, trailing just behind the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Jawan,' which amassed a colossal Rs 319 crore nett during the same timeframe.

The triumphant run of 'Animal' signifies its immense popularity and the audience's embrace of its compelling storyline and stellar performances, marking it as a significant milestone in the Hindi film industry's box office history. With its trajectory pointing towards the Rs 500 crore mark, 'Animal' continues to roar as a dominant force in the cinematic landscape.

# Telecom sector agr surges to rs 65k+ Cr in Q1, Up 1.75 percent



The telecom sector recorded 1.75 percent sequential growth in adjusted gross revenue (AGR) in the April-June quarter, during which Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio saw a rapid uptake of 5G services, further accelerated by sporting events like the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The latest data released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Tuesday showed Bharti Airtel notched up the highest sequential AGR gain in the first quarter of 2023-24, with Jio and Vodafone Idea (Vi) also reporting a quarter-on-quarter increase in AGR, Economic Times reported.

Bharti Airtel's quarterly AGR, or revenue from licensed services, increased 4.08 percent sequentially to '19,256 crore in the April-June period, while Jio and Vi's increased 2.05 percent and 0.8 percent to '23,457.11 crore and '7,267.76 crore, respectively, Trai data showed.

The overall telecom sector's AGR increased 1.75 percent sequentially to '65,624 crore in the June quarter.

Higher quarterly AGR translated into higher licence fee and spectrum usage charge (SUC) collections for the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). The licence fee mop-up climbed 1.69 percent sequentially to '5,246 crore while SUC collections increased 8.32 percent quarter-on-quarter to '818 crore, data collated by the regulator showed. Analysts said the sequential growth in SUC collections was sharper – on a low base – as Vi is believed to have cleared some past dues.

# Meta ends Insta-FB cross-app chats



Meta has announced that cross-app communication between Facebook and Instagram will be discontinued starting mid-December.

According to a new support page update on Instagram, users will not be able to start new conversations or calls with Facebook accounts from Instagram. To continue a conversation with Facebook accounts, users can start a new chat on Messenger or Facebook using their Facebook account, IANS reported.

Once the cross-app communication shuts off, any existing chats on Instagram with a Facebook account will become read-only, even if these Facebook accounts are removed from the chat. This means that users with Instagram accounts can't send new messages in these chats.

Additionally, any existing chats that an Instagram user had with Facebook accounts will not move to their inbox on Facebook or Messenger. Instagram Activity status will also automatically become unavailable for viewing using a Facebook account. Meta announced Messenger support for Instagram in 2020. The feature allows cross-platform messaging support between Facebook and Instagram accounts.

# AMC+ to cease streaming service in India Feb 2024

Premium streaming service AMC+, which is available as part of the channel services on Apple TV and Prime Video, will cease its services in India from February 2024.

AMC+ first launched in India as an Apple TV channel on the Apple TV app in March 2022 and later was made available on Prime Video Channels too.

According to a mail from Amazon Prime Video, seen by Indianbroadcastingworld.com, "We are writing to let you know that AMC+ will cease its service in India and as a result AMC+'s content catalog will no longer be available on Prime Video Channels with effect from February 6, 2024."

AMC+ is owned and operated by AMC Networks, which also manages services like We TV, Sundance TV and the art house movie theater IFC Center in New York City. Its parent is the US' largest theatrical exhibition company, AMC Entertainment, which, according to media reports, has been facing some financial problems.

The Prime Video mail added that existing subscribers of AMC+ would get a refund if their subscription period extended beyond February.

"If your AMC+ subscription is active beyond February 6, 2024 then a pro rata refund will be issued by Prime Video Channels to the original payment method you used to subscribe toAMC+.

We endeavour to process refunds in seven to ten business days," the Prime Video statement added.

AMC+ features exclusive original series, including the high-octane vampire thriller 'Firebite' with Yael Stone of 'Orange is the New Black' fame; hit stop-motion animated comedy 'Ultra City Smiths' featuring all-star voice talent including Kristen Bell, Dax Shepard ('Parenthood'), John C. Reilly ('Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty') and Debra Winger ('Terms of Endearment') and films like 'Nitram', among many other popular series.

While AMC+ parent AMC Entertainment, according to a Reuters report on November 8, 2023, beat third-quarter revenue estimates, riding on the success of 'Barbie' and 'Oppenheimer' movies as volumes of theatrical releases also improved at the box office, other media reports said it still needed cash to finance its various projects.

The movie theater chain posted revenue of $1.41 billion for the quarter ended September 30, compared with estimates of $1.26 billion, according to LSEG data, Reuters stated.

However, the Investopedia.com on November 9 reported that the AMC Entertainment Holdings shares plunged after the struggling movie theater chain announced another stock sale to raise needed cash.

# Dunki drop 4 trailer unveiled: Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu's hilarious Journey to London

On December 05 the highly anticipated trailer for Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming film, Dunki, was released, captivating fans with its promise of laughter, tears, and nostalgia.

The movie follows a group of friends determined to reach London by any means, resorting to the unconventional 'Donkey Flight' after failed attempts to enter the UK legally.

In the trailer, SRK shines as Hardayal Singh Dhillon (Hardy), alongside Taapsee Pannu portraying his close friend Mannu.

The storyline delves into their misadventures, labeled 'ullu de patthen,' initiating a rollercoaster journey for viewers.

Sharing the trailer, King Khan expressed, "Yeh kahani maine shuru ki thi, Laltu se! Isey khatam bhi main hi karunga... apne Ullu de patthon ke saath." He added, "Dunki's trailer will show you a journey that began with Raju Sir's vision. It will take you through a madcap ride of friendship, the comedy and tragedy that life is, and a nostalgia for home & family. Intezaar khatam hua, #DunkiDrop4 – Out Now! #Dunki releasing worldwide in cinemas on 21st December, 2023."



Promising an emotional yet comedic narrative, Dunki marks SRK's first collaboration with director Rajkumar Hirani. The star-studded cast includes Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal, Boman Irani, among others.

Set to hit screens on December 21, 2023, Dunki is poised to deliver an engaging blend of laughter, camaraderie, and heartfelt moments, enticing audiences worldwide.

# Tata Play Binge adds Fuse+ for Gen Z and Millennial fans

Tata Play Binge, a prominent OTT app aggregator in India, had announced a new addition to its extensive array of aggregated OTT apps. Fuse+, the latest entrant, caters to multicultural and youth audiences, marking its entry into the Indian market through Tata Play Binge.




Catering specifically to the tastes of millennials and Gen Z, Fuse+ offers original series, documentaries, and films aiming to resonate with unique perspectives. Boasting a lineup featuring renowned and emerging talents, including music specials and unscripted series, the platform provides over 500 hours of original content, complemented by 30 hours of new licensed content annually, the platform said in a statement.

Pallavi Puri, Chief Commercial and Content Officer at Tata Play, expressed enthusiasm about Fuse+'s diverse and contemporary programming, emphasizing the expanding entertainment choices for viewers on Tata Play Binge. Puri highlighted the platform's commitment to introducing fresh content while catering to specific audience preferences.

Miguel Roggero, Chairman and CEO of Fuse Media, emphasized the natural alignment between Fuse+'s vibrant, culturally diverse stories and Tata Play Binge's global expansion strategy. Roggero expressed excitement about introducing empowering original programming and music-focused specials to the Indian audience.

The partnership marks Fuse+'s collaboration with Brandwith, a premier representative and distribution company in the Asia Pacific Region.

Fuse+ joins a lineup of popular OTT platforms on Tata Play Binge, offering a diverse range of content, including entertainment, gaming, and documentaries. The subscription provides access to a consolidated library of content from over 25 apps, accessible via a single subscription and user interface.

Tata Play Binge subscribers can access Netflix and Amazon Prime Video plans separately. The extensive content library is accessible on large-screen connected devices through Tata Play Binge+ Android Set-Top Box, the Tata Play edition of Amazon FireTV Stick, and www.TataplayBinge.com.

# PIB fact check unit exposes 9 YouTube channels for spreading fake news

The Press Information Bureau's fact check unit had busted nine YouTube channels allegedly spreading fake news and misinformation in India, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said on Friday.

These nine YouTube channels identified by the PIB's fact check unit are 'Bharat Ekta News', 'Bajrang Education', 'Bj News', 'Sansani Live TV', 'GVT News', 'Daily Study', 'Ab Bolega Bharat', 'Sarkari Yojana Official' and 'Aapke Guruji', according to a list released by the ministry.

"The PIB Fact Check Unit (FCU) had busted nine YouTube channels spreading fake news and misinformation in India. The Fact Check Unit released multiple fact-checks in nine separate Twitter threads to counter the false information spread by these channels," the ministry said.

Their subscribers' base ranges from 11,700 to 34.70 lakh, PTI reported.

These YouTube channels "misattributed" derogatory statements to persons occupying constitutional positions, including the Chief Justice of India, Prime Minister, and Chief Election Commissioner," the ministry said in a statement.

"Some channels falsely claimed imposition of the President's Rule in certain states, a ban on electronic voting machines (EVMs), resignation/death of Union ministers, etc," the ministry said.

Some of them claimed a ban on Rs 200 and Rs 500 currency notes, closures of banks, and false information related to the schemes and policies of the Government of India, the ministry said.

False claims related to natural disasters and deaths of Indian citizens, deployment of armed forces, closure of schools, etc were also made by some of the nine Youtube channels busted by the PIB's fact check unit, the ministry said.

"The YouTube channels concerned were found to have over 83 lakh subscribers (altogether)," it added.

The ministry said monetization of fake news on YouTube is a "serious concern".

Channels spreading fake news drive traffic and monetize their content with the "use of clickbait, sensational false thumbnails," it said, adding that the "Government of India has also previously flagged concerns related to monetisation of fake news on YouTube".




Since December 2022, the PIB has exposed 26 such YouTube channels which regularly publish false information, the ministry said.

"Additionally, over 120 YouTube channels have been blocked by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under the provisions of The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021," it added.

# Parliamentary panel discusses GST burden on cable TV distributors

India's parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and IT, which also had the cable TV broadcast sector under its jurisdiction, discussed recently in detail the issue of GST levied on cable TV distributors and its impact, apart from other industry related matters.

According to a report in the Hindustan Times earlier this week, the 90-minute meeting saw presentations made by Meenakshi Gupta, Acting Chairperson of broadcast and telecom regulator TRAI, and representations from the All India Digital Cable Federation (AIDCF).



The financial burden on viewers imposed by being forced to subscribe to bouquets of television channels and the burden of GST on local cable operators dominated the Wednesday meeting of the parliamentary panel, the HT report stated. (https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/house-panel-focuses-on-gst-on-cable-operators-viewers-financial-burden-101701286245989.html)

It is understood that the members raised the issue of companies forcing channel bouquets upon viewers which increases the cost for the end user.

When an MP queried TRAI why channels could not be unbundled and why the local cable operators (LCOs) should not be allowed to offer individual channels, the regulator's representative is understood to have explained that bundling was better as it reduced the costs for TV channels and the burden on the consumers.

Apart from some representation from the AIDCF, which is a cable industry body of MSOs, senior officials from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, including the secretary Apurva Chandra, also attended the meeting.

The multi-system operators (MSOs) that were present in the room, including Hathway, said that they were forced to pay GST on what the local cable operator (LCO) charged its customer. The problem arose because LCOs were usually small operators who generally did not fall within the GST's ambit, and may have a different billing system and/or plan for different customers. Officials from MIB said any decision on GST has to be taken by the Ministry of Finance, according to the HT ereport.

# Netflix dominates Digital Reinvent Awards 2023




The Digital Reinvent Awards 2023, an esteemed event lauding excellence in India's streaming entertainment sphere, concluded its latest edition with a virtual ceremony on December 1st, 2023, streamed live via the Digital Reinvent Facebook Page.

Netflix emerged as the frontrunner, securing an impressive total of 13 medals—7 Golds and 6 Silvers—across a diverse array of categories.

The platform showcased its storytelling prowess with victories like the gold recognition for the compelling documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers' in the Documentary or Non-Fiction Program or Series category.

Additionally, triumphs in categories like Supporting Actress of the Year further highlighted Netflix's exceptional content, with Shefali Shah in 'Darlings' and Tillotama Shome in 'Delhi Crime S2' securing top honors.

Netflix's consistency shone in the Movie/Mini-Series category, where 'Darlings' and 'Monica O My Darling' clinched gold, reaffirming its industry-leading status. The crowning achievement came with Netflix winning the prestigious Platform of the Year award. Zee Entertainment Enterprises made a significant impact, securing a total of 8 awards—4 Golds and 4 Silvers—across diverse categories. Notable wins included 'TVF Pitchers Season 2.

# Varun Dhawan unveils Prime Video Dec. 2023 lineup

Varun Dhawan, the charismatic face of Prime Video, had ignited excitement by revealing a stellar December lineup, promising an immersive experience across 15 riveting shows and movies.




In a unique twist, Varun showcases his home's transformation into a cinematic hub, adding multiple screens to savor every moment of Prime Video's latest offerings.

In a promotional shoot for 'The House Tour', Varun kicks off the spectacle with a prank on the show's host, Viraj Ghelani, before leading viewers on a whirlwind tour through his revamped home. From the living room to the kitchen (complete with a tablet in the oven) and even the bedroom, Varun showcases his personalized viewing setup, teasing glimpses of the diverse content lined up for December.

As per a press release, the surprise crescendos as Varun's friend, taken aback by the myriad viewing options, playfully declares Varun's residence as his December sanctuary. However, Varun's newfound role as the host comes with the unexpected duty of supplying snacks, and turning the tables on his entertainment-filled evening. Varun Dhawan, fondly referred to as 'Prime Bae', emphasized the eclectic lineup's diversity, spanning genres from young adult romcoms to action thrillers and stand-up specials. Highlighting titles like 'Reacher S2', 'Flames S4', and the multilingual supernatural thriller 'Dhootha'.

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# News18 revives 'Kehta Hai Voter' for Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh polls




News18 has once again propelled its celebrated 'Kehta Hai Voter' initiative coinciding with the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan.

Recognizing the pivotal role of the electorate, News18 has championed this initiative to give prominence to the voices, concerns, and aspirations of the common people during these crucial electoral periods.

The initiative, aimed at amplifying citizens' issues, provides a platform for viewers to share videos highlighting their concerns directly on the channel.

Launched on News18 Madhya Pradesh/Chhattisgarh on November 8 and News18 Rajasthan on November 16, 'Kehta Hai Voter' has seen widespread promotion not only on these channels but also across digital, social, and mobile platforms. Leveraging influencers in respective markets, the campaign has sought to engage a wider audience.

The response has been resoundingly positive, with the campaign reaching over 30 million individuals and amassing more than 100,000 registrations.

To streamline participation, an intuitive application was made available, enabling users to effortlessly record and upload videos, shedding light on pertinent issues they wish to bring to the forefront.

News18 had actively showcased the most impactful entries on the channel, ensuring that the public's concerns are spotlighted and urging political leaders to address these issues with priority in the upcoming state governance.

'Kehta Hai Voter' stands as a testament to News18's commitment to empowering the electorate by providing them with a platform to voice their concerns and aspirations, fostering a democratic dialogue that resonates within the heart of state politics.

As the elections progress, News18 continues its dedicated efforts to spotlight the citizens' voices, facilitating a discourse that drives meaningful change and accountability in the political landscape of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan.

# IPL head feels media rights value can touch $ 50 million

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal believes that the media rights value of the league has the potential to touch a staggering $ 50 million over the next two decades, provided it keeps innovating and improvising with fans' interests in mind.

"If I have to see how it has gone over the last 15 years and if I have to go by estimates going forward, we are expecting media rights (of the IPL) to go somewhere close to $ 50 billion by around 2043," said Dhumal while speaking at the RCB Innovation Lab's Leaders Meet India in Bengaluru earlier this week, a PTI report stated on December 01.



The current media rights value of the league stands at $ 6.2 billion (approx Rs 48000 crore) for a five-year period starting from 2022.

Even by this estimate, IPL is the second-most high-valued league after the National Football League (NFL), as the American sporting entity struck a $ 110 billion media deal for an 11-year period starting from last year.

Dhumal, who is also a former BCCI (the Indian cricket governing body) treasurer, also pinned his hopes for a financial windfall on the advent of the Women's Premier League (WPL) and cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"We need to keep innovating, keep doing better in terms of fan engagement, and keep making it better in terms of the quality of games," he said.




"Now that cricket is becoming part of the Olympics and with the WPL taking it to a different level for women's cricket, I see a lot of hope and light at the end of the tunnel," said Dhumal.

The media rights value of the IPL had grown exponentially in the last decade and half from the Rs 6000 crore in 2008, going past several other major sporting leagues across the world.

Dhumal dissected the growth and ever-swelling popularity of the IPL by opining, "IPL is the most-watched cricket league in the world. Personally, I feel IPL is the best Make in India brand we can think of post-Independence."

# Good story with universal message can reach global audience: Douglas

Oscar Award winning Hollywood actor Michael Douglas, who was honoured with the prestigious Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema on November 28, said that a good story with a universal message has the potential of reaching a global audience.

"A good movie making material, something which is personal and close to one's home country and having the global potential in its message, can appeal to world cinema," Douglas said on the concluding day of the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji, Goa.

He also remarked that in terms of cinema, India is quite different compared to most other places as it has an extraordinarily large film industry and a huge population — hence, the need and desire to go outside the country is not there as compared to other countries.

Engaging with film enthusiasts, filmmakers, and industry professionals, Douglas, along with Indian producer Shailendra Singh, took part in an In-Conversation at IFFI with the session theme being 'Is It Time for One World Cinema?'

The discussion, according to a briefing of the proceedings put out by the organisers of the IFFI, threw light on films seeking to transcend geographical boundaries, bringing together filmmakers, storytellers, and audiences from every corner of the globe.

Talking about the global appeal of 'RRR', the renowned producer and actor remarked that it was a big hit not only in India, but also around the world because the film was made based on India's own story and with a universal message.




However, he did admit that to see a film succeed, one should make the material for themselves and not think if it will reach the rest of the world.

Reminiscing about his initial days in the field of production, he said it all started with the book 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' at the young age of 23, when his father, the late legendary actor-producer Kirk Douglas, acquired the book



and developed a play. This is when Michael Douglas stepped in and took charge to make a film based on the book.

He went on to make the film that became a hit with the lead character played by Jack Nicholson and also starring the talented Danny de Vito.

Speaking about his cinematic exploration and what moves him as an actor in selecting a script, he said, "The core for me as an actor is to be a part of a good movie, no matter if it is a small part. I would rather do a small role in a good film than do a big part in a bad movie."

Speaking about challenges he faced as an actor and overcoming stage fright, Douglas said, "Cameras can always catch a lie and the first few years were a challenge. To overcome stage fright, I conditioned my mind in such a manner to make myself understand that acting is pretending and trying to convince others, something that we do every day.

"This very thought helped me in overcoming my fears and master the craft of acting and I began to enjoy it."

With a career spanning several decades and marked by great success, in his message for the youth of India, Douglas said " I have the most faith in the younger generation as the younger generation owns social media and they understand the need to work closely together to try and solve global problems like Climate Change "

Douglas, accompanied by his spouse, the BAFTA Award winning actor and philanthropist Catherine Zeta-Jones and their actor-son Dylan, was in India for the IFFI where he was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema, has been previously bestowed upon luminaries such as Martin Scorsese, Bernardo Bertolucci, Dilip Kumar, Carlos Saura, Krzysztof Zanussi and Wong Kar-wai. The recognition celebrates individuals whose unparalleled contributions have enriched the cinematic landscape.

# 'Jigarthanda DoubleX' set for Netflix digital premiere

Filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj's highly-anticipated Tamil action gangster drama, 'Jigarthanda DoubleX', featuring Raghava Lawrence and SJ Suryah, is slated for its digital debut on Netflix starting December 8.




This announcement follows the film's theatrical release on November 10, marking a significant move to captivate a broader audience through the streaming platform.

Serving as a prequel to the 2014 blockbuster 'Jigarthanda', helmed by Subbaraj himself, the movie takes viewers deeper into the intriguing narrative of the earlier installment, PTI reported.

The news of the film's Netflix premiere was disclosed by the South India arm of the streaming giant on its official X page. "Roll-camera-action! Indha Pandyaa Blockbuster paaka ellarum vaanga! Jigarthanda DoubleX is coming to Netflix on 8 December in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi! Coming soon in English. #JigarthandaDoubleXOnNetflix," announced the streamer in a post.

'Jigarthanda Double X', extensively shot across diverse locations in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, boasts production credits by Kaarthekeyen Santhanam and S Kathiresan under the banners of Stone Bench Films and Five Star Creations, respectively.

# Average smartphone data traffic in India highest globally: Ericsson

5G is expected to account for nearly 68 per cent of all subscriptions by 2029, while average data traffic per smartphone may rise more twofold, according to a report released yesterday.




5G subscriptions are projected to reach around 130 million this year and 860 million by the end of 2029, the Ericsson Mobility Report November 2023 said.

The average data traffic per smartphone is projected to grow from 31 GB per month in 2023 to around 75 GB per month in 2029, the average data traffic per smartphone in India being the highest globally, it added, according to a PTI report.

However, 4G subscriptions are expected to decline from 870 million in 2023 to 390 million by 2029 with the rise of new generation technologies, the report added.

The report confirms enhanced mobile broadband, fixed wireless access, gaming and AR/VR/-based services as the most common early consumer use cases for 5G.

Ericsson Executive Vice President and Head of Networks Fredrik Jejdling said: "With more than 600 million 5G subscriptions added globally this year, and rising in every region, it is evident that the demand for high-performance connectivity is strong.

"The roll-out of 5G continues and we see an increasing number of 5G standalone networks being deployed, bringing opportunities to support new and more demanding applications for both consumers and enterprises."

5G mid-band combines high capacity with good coverage, making it an ideal choice for delivering the full 5G experience. Global 5G mid-band population coverage is currently more than 40 per cent, an increase from 30 per cent in 2022, PTI further quoted from the Ericsson report.

The increase is mainly driven by large mid-band deployments in India, but also several mid-band deployments in Europe.

Head of Ericsson India Nitin Bansal states that the company, together with partners, has enabled one of the fastest 5G network deployments across the world.

"Today we are seeing strong 5G adoption in the country. Our global deployment experience and technology "Today we are seeing strong 5G adoption in the country. Our global deployment experience and technology leadership has enabled us to support India in its 5G journey. Mobile networks continue to play a pivotal role in driving social and economic inclusion in India, thereby supporting the government's vision to transform the country into a digitally empowered society," he added.



# Viacom18, Netflix, others to lobby for B'cast Services Bill revamp

Netflix, billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Viacom18 and other streaming companies plan to collectively lobby the Indian government to delay or revamp a broadcast bill they fear will be onerous for the sector, sources familiar with the matter said, according to a Reuters report.




India last month introduced the new draft law to regulate the broadcasting sector that will also apply to streaming giants. It proposes the formation of individual content evaluation committees with members from various social groups who will review and sign off on shows before they are released.

Though all films in Indian cinemas are reviewed and certified by a government-appointed board, streamed content is not.

In a closed-door meeting this week, the Reuters report from New Delhi added, top executives of several streaming companies, including Netflix and Viacom18, which runs the JioCinema platform, discussed a plan to approach the government to delay and consider overhauling the Bill, said the sources, who declined to be named as the talks were private.

The bill is open for public consultation until December 10, having been put out in public domain by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Netflix and others raised concern the content committees would lead to excessive pre-screening checks, raising implementation problems as a high number of content that goes online will need to be reviewed first, said one of the sources.

Netflix and Viacom18, as well as India's Information and Broadcasting Ministry, which has proposed the law, did not respond to a request for comment, the Reuters report said.

The first source said streaming executives during this week's meeting flagged risks the law could impact the industry's growth.

Platforms like Netflix, Amazon, Disney and JioCinema have become hugely popular in India, which is set to grow into a $7 billion market for the sector by 2027, according to Media Partners Asia.

# Apple, Paramount mull bundling streaming services: WSJ report




Apple and Paramount Global have discussed bundling their streaming services at a discount, the Wall Street Journal stated yesterday, a Reuters report stated, quoting from the original news story.

The companies have talked about rolling out a combined Paramount+ and Apple TV+ offering that would cost less than subscribing to both services separately, the WSJ report said, citing people familiar with the discussions, according to the Reuters news dispatch.

A pairing between the two rival streaming giants could likely help attract cost-conscious customers who have been grappling with higher costs for everything from food to electronics.

Verizon is also planning to offer the ad-supported versions of Netflix and Warner Bros Discovery's Max streaming services for about $10 a month combined instead of about $17, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters last month.

# ET NOW launches 'Tracking Trends with Nikunj Dalmia'

ET NOW, a leading English business news channel, has unveiled its latest offering, 'Tracking Trends with Nikunj Dalmia'.

Scheduled to air from Monday to Friday at 2 pm, the show aims to provide an insightful view into the ever-evolving financial landscape, deciphering dynamic market trends for its viewers, the business news channel said in a press statement.




Fronted by Nikunj Dalmia, who serves as the Managing Editor of both ET NOW and ET NOW Swadesh, the programme pledges to unravel influential market trends.

Nikunj's vast experience and deep-seated understanding of financial markets, businesses, and macro-economic movements form the backbone of the show, offering viewers expert analysis, invaluable insights, and financial acumen to navigate India's growth trajectory, the channel's statement added.

'Tracking Trends with Nikunj Dalmia' brings together a diverse range of perspectives by featuring eminent market voices such as Vallabh Bhanshali, Chairman of Enam Group; Nilesh Shah, MD & CEO of Envision Capital; Kunal Bothra, technical expert and chartist; Sanjiv Bhasin, Director at IIFL Securities and Gautam Baid, Equity Advisor at Complete Circle Stellar Wealth PMS, among others. Expressing his thoughts about the show, Dalmia emphasized, "True to our motto, Rise With India, ET NOW has been instrumental in opening avenues for every discerning Indian to actively participate in the country's growth narrative. Continuing this commitment, our latest show seeks to equip viewers with a deeper comprehension of market dynamics and emerging trends. I am confident that the amalgamation of expert analysis and the show's interactive format will provide our viewers with a strategic advantage in the dynamic world of investments."

# Young guns say OTT helps create low-budget films; more creative freedom now

Young filmmakers are breaking new grounds every day making fresh, new cinema that are deeply rooted in local themes and are innovatively crafted. However, in their pursuit of redefining the language of cinema, the youngsters must surmount a series of formidable obstacles to ensure that their voices are heard.

A session, held at the 54th IFFI on Saturday in Panaji, Goa, provided a platform for the young filmmakers to share their stories of struggles, challenges and joys in making the films that's admired, an official brief on the session, issued by the organisers of the film fest, said.

Sagar Puranik, a two-time National award-winning filmmaker with a focus on Kannada cinema, revealed his journey from a child actor to a storyteller. Expressing the shift from waiting for desired roles to creating compelling narratives, the director emphasized the freedom today's filmmakers have in crafting content without external constraints.

"I always had multiple stories thinking about...they all come from my heart," shared Puranik, challenging the notion of having a single story in one's heart. He reflected on the responsibility that comes with accolades, deliberating the balance between financial considerations and the pursuit of quality films.

Jasmeet K. Reen, director of 'Darlings', talked about her transition into filmmaking from chartered accountancy and the unique challenges she faced during the production of her debut film.

'Darling', starring Alia Bhatt, Shefali Shah, Vijay Verma and Roshan Mathew

, was released on Netflix and had the highest global opening for a non-English language Indian film.




She discussed the changing landscape with the rise of OTT platforms, which allow more filmmakers to create small-budget films. She emphasized the importance of patience in the directorial journey, cautioning against cynicism and bitterness.

On the importance of character sketches, Jasmeet said that characters are very important as they drive the story. "I need to know each and every character in the story even if they are appearing for five minutes in the film. I work a lot on psychology and background of characters", she explained.

Rajdeep Paul, a two-time National Award-winning filmmaker-writer, delved into the unique challenges faced by Bengali cinema.

"Conflicts between art house and commercial cinema harmed Bengali cinema," Paul noted. His film 'Kalkokkho' (House of Time) shot during the COVID-19 pandemic, not only navigated challenges but achieved remarkable success.

Paul also stressed on the importance of patience in filmmaking, highlighting the need for passion in storytelling. Acknowledging the role of film schools, he emphasized on practical, on-the-job learning over theoretical knowledge.

Replying to questions on the importance of dubbing in films, Paul said that bigger films fare better with dubbing but small art house films need only good subtitles.

Nikhil Mahajan, a writer, producer and director renowned for 'Godavari', which won him the prestigious Golden Lotus for Best Direction as well as the Filmfare award for Best Direction and Best Screenplay, shared challenges faced by Marathi cinema, including the competition for screens with Hindi movies and bigger regional counterparts.

He highlighted the impact of films like 'Sairat' in proving that there is a substantial audience for Marathi cinema.

"Unless you love films, you cannot make one since it involves a time consuming and difficult process," Mahajan affirmed, addressing the question of many people expressing their wish to be a director.

Reacting to whether he would like to make a Bollywood film, the filmmaker said that he has no specific fascination for Bollywood but emphasized that he would be willing to make a film in Hindi only if the subject demanded the use of that medium.

Mayank Shekhar, Entertainment Editor, Mid-day newspaper and Ramnath Goenka award winner, moderated the session.

# Google inks deal to pay for Canadian digital news

Google struck a deal with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government over a contentious law requiring digital platforms to pay for news.

Google agreed to contribute C$100 million ($74 million) in financial support annually, indexed to inflation, for a wide range of news businesses in Canada, Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge said in a statement on November 29.




"It's C$100 million that doesn't exist right now in the system. It's new money, new revenue. It's good for the news sector," St-Onge told reporters Wednesday in Ottawa, adding Canada can renegotiate if there's a better deal struck in other countries, Bloomberg reported.

The deal — which came after months of negotiations and strong opposition from both Google and Meta Platforms Inc. — can avert the news block expected next month in Canada on the world's most popular search engine. News is still not available on Meta's Facebook and Instagram platforms in Canada.

The announcement is a win for Trudeau's Online News Act, also known as Bill C-18. The law is aimed at trying to force both Meta and Google to pay local publishers for featuring news content on their platforms. The measure is an attempt to boost an industry that has suffered from massive losses of advertising revenue. Governments in the US, UK, and elsewhere are also pursuing similar legislation to aid journalism.

"We are pleased that the government of Canada has committed to addressing our core issues with Bill C-18, which included the need for a streamlined path to an exemption at a clear commitment threshold," Kent Walker, president of global affairs at Google and Alphabet, said in a statement. "We will continue sending valuable traffic to Canadian publishers."

Meta didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Meta and Google had argued they don't see much financial benefit themselves from the news — that they're providing a service to media outlets, large and small, helping them reach readers, potential subscribers, and advertisers.

In response to Canada's law, Meta blocked all links to news content in Canada on Facebook and Instagram since August to avoid making payments. Google had earlier threatened to remove news from search results before the law came into effect on Dec. 19.

"This shows that this legislation works, that it's equitable," St-Onge said. "Now it's on Facebook to explain why they're leaving their platform to disinformation and misinformation instead of sustaining our news system and participating in the viability of our news sector."

# PVR, Inox to invest Rs 500 cr, add 150 screens next fiscal

The country's largest multiplex operator PVR Inox will open 150 screens in the next fiscal with an investment of about Rs 500 crore, a top company official has said. The company, which opened a six-screen luxury cinema at Maison Inox here on Thursday, already runs 118 screens across 23 properties in the megapolis.

Overall, including its property in Colombo, it operates 1,711 screens at 359 properties across 114 cities.

We are planning to add 150 more screens at an investment of around Rs 500 crore next fiscal, Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, an Executive Director at PVR Inox, PTI reported.On the Maison Inox, he said normally a screen required an investment of Rs 5 crore




but given that it's a luxury collection hat it's a luxury collection attached bar (Gastby Bar), the per screen cost is about Rs 7 crore.

On the company's overseas expansion plans, he said they will have more screens in Sri Lanka only and not anywhere else.

Despite the civil war and the deep financial difficulties, "Sri Lanka has been an extremely good market for us so far", Bijli said.

"Given the response to our first screen in the capital of the island nation, we are planning to have more properties there. But we have no other overseas market in mind for expansion," Bijli said.

# ‘Doctor Who’ does time travel to Disney+ 60 years after BBC launch

Six years before man first set foot on the moon in real life, the time-and-space traveling ‘Doctor Who’ materialized on the BBC.

The iconic British sci-fi series, which follows the Doctor’s intergalactic adventures opposite such iconic foes as the tyrannical Daleks and Cybermen, premiered in November 1963. It celebrates its 60th anniversary in November.

The show had more than a cultural impact. A just-released economic report from the BBC estimates that the last 13 series contributed more than £256 million ($321 million) to the UK economy, through channels like job creation and set and costume design.

Generations watched the original series, which ran from 1963-1989, on family TVs from their sofas, and sometimes crouched behind them. Now, ‘Doctor Who’ finds itself in a much more modern universe dominated by the streaming giants.

On November 25, the show had a global relaunch, marked by the first of three special episodes appearing exclusively on Disney+ outside of the UK, a Bloomberg report said.

The deal between the BBC and Walt Disney Co., first reported by Bloomberg, broadens the brand’s international reach; all new episodes will run on Disney+. UK viewers will still access the show through the BBC, where the back catalogue (over 800 episodes) is available to stream under the new brand, the Whoniverse.

The forthcoming 2024 series – which will arrive in the new year – will officially be known as Season One both at home and abroad.

“It opens (‘Doctor Who’s) accessibility … to have that moment where it’s new to some, and beloved and well known to others,” says the show’s executive producer Joel Collins, “There’s no barrier to entry … you can either come



afresh or you can enjoy everything that’s been.”

Collins insists that the show’s distinctive British character will be maintained with the Disney partnership: “It’s the opportunity to share that work … on a much bigger platform for people to enjoy.”

He adds that the show now has the opportunity to engage a new audience, “that are used to all the new streamers, and [the] money they can spend.”

Analysts agree that this is a good opportunity for the UK broadcaster. “The future of the BBC at this point as an international player may be to strike deals with [streaming companies],” says Francois Godard, senior media and telecoms analyst at Enders Analysis, the media research firm.

Platforms are, he continues, looking for “outside content, third party content, because they are cutting costs.”

Godard also noted the advantages for companies that have produced popular shows to partner with streaming media companies: “Disney has a capacity to leverage, to monetize brands that the BBC doesn’t have.”

But he added a caveat: “The only worry for me about the BBC is that they find themselves dependent on Disney. Dependent on Disney for the budget of new episodes … and the international brand of ‘Doctor Who’.”

The show had generated a constellation of collectibles, with 13 million action figures sold since 2005, along with more than one million tickets for live events, from concerts to exhibitions. The show’s online reach has also been steadily growing, with 100 million video views on YouTube in the last year alone.

‘Doctor Who’ had its snags. It was pulled off the air in 1989 due to a slump in viewership and behind-the-scenes tensions at the BBC.

Before its return in 2005, a dedicated fanbase kept the brand alive during its 16-year hiatus.

Actor David Tennant, perhaps the most famous of the title characters, is returning to pilot the Tardis, the Doctor’s time machine, for the three special episodes. Then, Ncuti Gatwa takes over as the series’ 15th doctor, the latest in a line of actors to play the Timelord.

The decision to cast Gatwa, best known as Eric in Netflix’s ‘Sex Education’, signals the BBC’s desire to expand the show’s reach among a new generation. He has a personal Instagram following of 2.8 million, dwarfing the show’s official account at 825,000.

Once again, the time-traveling Doctor Who shows that it can move with the times.

# APAC mobile services revenue to soar 8% by 2028



The total mobile communications services revenue in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8 percent to $479.1 billion in 2028 from $326.2 billion in 2023, driven by the mobile data segment, as the availability and adoption of 5G services across several countries in the region ramp up, data and analytics firm GlobalData said in a report on November 27.

According to the Economic Times, which filed a report on the GlobalData analysis, China is currently the largest 5G market in the world with an estimated 1.5 billion 5G subscriptions in 2023, and is expected to have 3.3 billion 5G subscribers by the end of 2028, driven by investments and the regulatory efforts to expand 5G network and boost adoption.

"With 5G services already available in most countries like China, Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, India and Korea, and set to be launched soon in countries like Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, the revenue prospect for the mobile data segment will remain strong throughout the forecast period," Srikanth Vaidya, telecom analyst at GlobalData, said.

Operators like Dialog and Airtel in Sri Lanka, and Grameenphone, Robi, and Teletalk in Bangladesh, for instance, conducted 5G network trails in major cities in their respective countries and are gearing up for 5G service rollout by 2024, he added.

# Telcos anticipate limited gains despite WC data surge

Offering dollops of data to attract data subscribers might return to haunt India's top three telcos – Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea – as revenues remain a relative straggler to data usage.



Case in point: while the just-ended cricket World Cup may have boosted mobile data usage by over 4% sequentially in the December quarter for the top three telcos, that will translate only into relatively modest sequential revenue growth — at best 1 percent — since consumers invariably have large hunks of unused data, precluding mass upgrades to higher-value plans.

Furthermore, some of the digital viewing of World Cup action on smartphones was via WiFi and not mobile data.

But the saving grace this quarter is likely to be the festive season and the slew of assembly elections in multiple states (Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, MP, and Mizoram), coupled with 5G user additions by Jio and Airtel and extra days during the October-December period, Economic Times reported.

This, analysts, estimate could potentially boost overall data usage levels by almost 7-8 percent sequentially, which, in turn, could drive around 3-3.5 percent sequential growth in sectoral India mobile revenues during the current quarter.

# WION gets b'cast rights for Carnegie India's Global Tech meet

WION, one of India's leading global news networks, had announced its exclusive partnership as the official broadcast platform for the Carnegie India's Global Technology Summit 2023.

In collaboration with India's Ministry of External Affairs, the summit is scheduled to take place from December 4 to 6 in New Delhi, focusing on the pivotal theme 'Geopolitics of Technology'.




The summit stands as a pivotal gathering, drawing together luminaries from governmental, industrial, academic, and policy spheres on a global scale. It aims to facilitate incisive dialogues exploring the intricate interplay between technology and geopolitics.

The collaboration between WION and the summit is poised to expand the reach of these critical discussions to a diverse and international audience, the TV channel said.

Madhu Soman, Chief Business Officer of WION, emphasized the significance of the collaboration, noting, "The Global Technology Summit 2023 is a beacon illuminating the evolving tech landscape. As the exclusive broadcast partner, WION is committed to ensuring that audiences are engaged in impactful discussions about digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and the geopolitics of technology."

With an overarching focus on digital public infrastructure (DPI), artificial intelligence (AI), and various emerging technologies, this year's summit aims to shed light on the importance of DPIs, encompassing their design, adoption strategies, and economic rationale.

# Google, Facebook, Amazon top Comscore's June 2023 India digital rankings




Manoj Bajpayee says he is happy that his two films, 'Gulmohar' and 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai', have been embraced by the audiences and he hopes to end the year on a high note with 'Joram', a story that deals with issues of displacement and environmental crisis.

Bajpayee started 2023 with Disney+ Hotstar's 'Gulmohar', a family drama movie which was directed by Rahul V Chittella and also starred veteran actor Sharmila Tagore. He followed it up with Apoorv Singh Karki's courtroom drama 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai', which premiered on ZEE5.

The two movies were screened at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) on Friday as part of the Indian Panorama section. Bajpayee attended the screening of both the movie with Chittella and Karki, according to a PTI report on November 25 from Panaji, Goa.

"It's so amazing that this year has been quite massive for me. Two of my films — 'Gulmohar' and 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai' — have really entertained the audience and they've really achieved the success which was miraculous for any film to achieve on OTT. And now we are ending with 'Joram'.

"So what else can I expect from my career? This has been a blessed year for me with 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai' and 'Gulmohar' becoming such cult films and appreciated by one and all," the actor told PTI in an interview.

'Joram' reunites Bajpayee with Devashish Makhija, the writer-director of his 2018 movie 'Bhonsle' for which the actor had won the National Film Award.

In the new movie, Bajpayee plays a father, who must be on the run with his baby girl across half the country to safeguard her fate from the "ghosts of his past and the forces that want him dead at any cost".

"I said yes to 'Joram' long ago but it was taking time for Devashish to really find a way to do it and for me to find a producer for the film. I really feel so surprised and happy that Zee Studios immediately agreed to back the film.

"And once a big corporate like Zee Studios is convinced about a subject like 'Joram', you know that your journey is going to be far easier. While 'Bhonsle' dealt with themes of loneliness, identity and belonging, 'Joram' explores the conflict between man and nature," he said.

"'Joram' is dealing with displacement. It is dealing with the conflict between environment and man. I am so surprised that Devashish has such a great mind, he dealt with both the worlds (in 'Bhonsle' and 'Joram') and both the problems so well.

"As if he was an expert on loneliness in 'Bhonsle' and as if he's an environmental ambassador who knows about the problems of environment and displacement so well, he said, adding coming up with a convincing performance was a hard task.

"You are portraying a guy whom you don't know. You have seen him but you've seen him from a distance. To really feel that you belong to that world is the biggest challenge. It's not an easy thing to portray a person who feels that he's always choked and doesn't have a voice.

# Austrian privacy complaint targets Meta's ad-free service

Meta Platforms' paid no-ads subscription service launched in Europe this month faced one of its biggest tests as advocacy group NOYB on November 28 filed a complaint with an Austrian regulator, saying that it amounted to paying a fee to ensure privacy.

Meta announced the service for Facebook and Instagram last month. It said the move complied with EU rules that users must be given a choice on whether their data can be collected and used for targeted ads, Reuters reported.

The ad-free service costs 9.99 euros ($10.90) monthly for web users and 12.99 euros for iOS and Android users. Meta has said that a subscription model is a valid form of consent for an advertising-funded service and was in line with a July ruling from Europe's top court. Users can opt for a free, ad-supported service.

Vienna-based NOYB (None Of Your Business), the digital rights group founded by privacy activist Max Schrems, said it disagreed with Meta on the concept of consent.

"EU law requires that consent is the genuine free will of the user. Contrary to this law, Meta charges a 'privacy fee' of up to 250 euros per year if anyone dares to exercise their fundamental right to data protection," NOYB data protection lawyer Felix Mikolasch said in a statement.

NOYB filed the complaint with the Austrian Data Protection Authority. It also criticized the amount of the fee.

A Meta spokesperson pointed out that the pricing was in line with similar subscription offerings in Europe.

Netflix charges 7.99 euros for a basic subscription plan, while Alphabet's YouTube Premium costs about 12 euros and Spotify's Premium service is priced at about 11 euros.

The complaint will likely be forwarded to the Irish data protection watchdog which oversees Meta because it has its European headquarters in Ireland.

# Prime Video highlights VFX's application in modern filmmaking




Prime Video conducted an engaging session on how VFX technology is an emerging and rapidly evolving avenue of artistic expression at the Film Bazaar at the ongoing 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji.

Using the popular Original series 'Mumbai Diaries' Season 2 as an example, the session elucidated how VFX helps in moving the narratives forward by creating worlds and storylines that defy traditional boundaries, a statement from Prime Video said on November 24.

The session was spearheaded by Nikhil Madhok, head of Hindi Originals, Prime Video; Monisha Advani and Madhu Bhojwani, Producers, Emmay Entertainment; Malay Prakash, Director of Photography and Vishwas Savanur, VFX Head.

To give the attendees an experience of the VFX behind the much-loved series, Prime Video had also set up a zone at the Tech Pavilion at Film Bazaar that was visited by Anurag Thakur, Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

"If storytellers are the ones who inspire us and open our minds by taking us into new worlds, then it is VFX that acts as the wind beneath their wings," said Madhok, highlighting that VFX is helping creativity transcend the boundaries of imagination and changing the game in the global entertainment landscape.

He further explained that VFX goes beyond just creating visually stunning spectacles, and gives storytellers the power to envision worlds and narratives without being bound by practical constraints.

He added: "Earlier, storytellers faced constraints at the very inception of a project, often holding back ambitious visions at the script stage due to uncertainties about execution. If someone wanted to narrate a story that involved significant world building, they often first had to question their own belief and answer questions on execution even before they had finished writing their story.

"However, today, thanks to the advancements in VFX technology, storytellers can dare to dream big. They now place the narrative at the forefront of their creative process, and are able to focus on creating immersive worlds on paper, fully knowing that VFX will help them bring their vision to life."

By bringing in elements of realism, scalability, cost-effectiveness and safety, VFX is helping creativity transcend the boundaries of imagination and changing the game in the global entertainment landscape.

However, Madhok also cautioned the industry to avoid looking at VFX as just a way to reduce costs. "While the cost advantages are great and we must make the most of it, but focusing on the cost would be like missing the wood for the trees. We must think of VFX as this powerful tool that helps unleash the imagination of our storytellers!" he explained.

The insightful address by Madhok was followed by an interesting talk on 'Mumbai Dairies' Season 2 and the role of VFX in it by Monisha Advani, both producers.

Cinematographer Prakash and Savanu, VFX producer, held forth on how technology and its potential to be a game changer in film making. The session concluded with an incisive panel discussion among these presenters on the contribution of VFX technology in moving the story narratives forward.

Prime Video had used VFX technology in a number of their Originals, as well as co-productions. From recreating Afghanistan in Film City to creating an immersive underwater marvel in the co-production 'Ram Setu' and spine-chilling effects in the supernatural Original 'Adhura', apart from using tech in the period Original 'Jubilee's recreation of a bygone era for incredible detailing and creating a world beyond the realm of reality in the first Tamil Original horror series 'The Village' that premiered at the IFFI.

Prime Video's participation at the IFFI is a testament of the pivotal role the video streaming sector is playing in enabling the growth of India's creative economy, and acting as a robust platform to showcase Indian stories, talent, and creators in the global arena.

# 'Kantara's Shetty feels streamers need to back Kannada films

Renowned film director Rishab Shetty said Kannada cinema is waiting for the OTT platform to open their doors.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji, Goa on November 28, Shetty said Kannada movies used to generate revenue after participating in initiatives like NFDC Film Bazaar.



"But after the COVID19 pandemic and due to the OTT platforms, the markets have collapsed. The OTT platforms are refusing to accept Kannada films because one commercial film (from Kannada) backfired," the 'Kantara' actor-director said, according to a PTI report from Panaji in Goa.

"Now, the OTT platforms are saying that they are not open for Kannada films. That is really bad. Just because of one film, you cannot say that there is no market for the film or there are no subscribers," he added.

Shetty said he had done three films in Kannada, which are doing festival circuits. "OTTs are saying that they will take time to accept Kannada films. We are waiting for their doors to open," he added.

Shetty claimed that if OTT platforms do not open the doors, then these would be the last films that he has done for any festival circuits.

# Viacom18 in pact with SFA to air school-level sports

Viacom18 and Sports For All (SFA) have joined forces to revolutionize the portrayal of school-level sports in India.

This collaboration aims to make school sports accessible to millions of viewers across the country through digital and television platforms, Economic Times had reported.




The announcement revealed that the SFA Championships, a flagship event by SFA, will now be presented on JioCinema, Sports18-2, and Sports18 Khel channels.

This move marks a significant step in transforming the landscape of school sports, providing an unprecedented opportunity for young athletes to shine on a national stage.

This collaboration not only strives to showcase the raw talent within schools but also underscores the joint commitment to promoting youth sports across India, the ET report stated.

# On 'Aap Ki Adalat' Minister Puri says PoK will soon be part of India



Union Petroleum and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri is optimistic about Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) joining India "soon".

Replying to questions from Rajat Sharma in 'Aap Ki Adalat' show, telecasted on November 25, Puri said, "The economic situation in Pakistan has deteriorated so much that after sometime, some parts of that country may like to merge with India".

Asked by Sharma when will people of India see Pak Occupied Kashmir joining India, Puri replied: "Jaldi." (soon) He did not elaborate, a press release from India TV stated.

Puri, who had been a diplomat for 39 years, said: "There had been a sea change in India-Pakistan relations in the last nine years. No more is India tagged with Pakistan. This has been possible because of Prime Minister Modi. Modi has three big characteristics: One, he does what he promises. Two, his dream of making India a developed nation by 2047 will become a reality. Three, in a deeply divided world, Modi is playing the role of a unifier. This became clear at the recently held G20 summit in India."

On the demand for Khalistan by separatists based in Canada, Puri said: "Let them create Khalistan in Canada, because most of the Khalistanis are based there. I consider this a cuckooland. Our 10th Guru Gobind Singh had formed the Khalsa. Today, Sikhs constitute less than two per cent of India's population, and yet Punjab dominates in agriculture, transport, medicine, law and other fields.

"With India fast emerging among the top three economies of the world, very soon we will find Indians living in US and Canada returning to India because of better economic opportunities," he said.

On a recent report by Financial Times, London about the US foiling a plan by Indian operatives to kill separatist Khalistani leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, Puri said: "I have a different opinion about Financial Times. It publishes news reports about oil daily, which I do not trust. It is not India's policy to eliminate terrorists on foreign soil."

Asked by Sharma why enemies of India like Pannu should not be eliminated, Puri only replied: "Let me keep my feelings in my heart. I should not say more. But let me tell you, this is not our policy, nor is it our system... Will they say Indian operatives carried out the Air India Kanishka bombing in 1985? Why is there violence, extremism and drugs in Canada?

# Under PM Modi, Minister Thakur Indian film industry becoming bigger: Michael Douglas

Satyajit Ray was a "renaissance man" and it will be a great honour to receive a lifetime achievement award named after the 'Pather Panchali' filmmaker, Hollywood star Michael Douglas said on N ovember 27, even while adding that the Indian film industry has taken great strides under the stewardship of PM Modi and Information & broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur.

Douglas will be felicitated with the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award during the concluding ceremony of the International Film Festival of India being held in Goa, a PTI report from Panaji stated.

The actor, accompanied by his actor-wife Catherine Zeta-Jones, walked the red carpet at the festival yesterday,.

"Thank you all for being here since it is an honour for Catherine and I and our son. Our family loves India. This is our fourth visit, first three times it is in North and now we have the pleasure, the joy and the honour of being here in Goa in the South, very grateful to IFFI to get this wonderful honour," he said.



The 79-year-old actor said he had read the history of Satyajit Ray back in college in the 1960s while taking a film class. He became aware of some of the filmmaker's work as well during that time.

"I think, he (Ray) sort of created, not the beginning of the Indian films but the idea of multiple jobs. He did so many things as an author, musician and editing as well as a director. So it's a tremendous honour to receive this award and see the other people that have received it before," the actor said.

Douglas said that when he heard about the award, he and his family were very happy. "They were happy for me… One day all of a sudden, it's a career life achievement," he said.

The eldest son of actor Kirk Douglas, the actor has won multiple awards, including two Oscars, five Golden Globe trophies as well as the Cecil B DeMille award.

He is most famous for his roles in films such as 'Wall Street', 'Fatal Attraction', 'The War of the Roses', 'Basic Instinct', 'The American President' and 'Wonder Boys'.

Meanwhile, another report stated that while praising the organisiers of IFFi for having brought together such diverse films from various parts of the globe, Douglas said that India is investing more money into production of movies in the last few years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister for Information & Broadcasting Anurag Thakur.

Interacting with the media in Panaji, Douglas, along with his actress-wife Catherine Zeta-Jones, said that this was the best time for the Indian cinema industry, and the representation of more than 78 foreign countries at the 54th IFFI is a reflection of its strength.

"Indian films are renowned all around the world and are travelling more and more to various corners of the world. Streaming platforms are playing an important part in this growth", he added, according to an official briefing of the interaction put out by the organisers.

Highlighting the role of movies in uniting the world, Douglas said that movies share same language and "brings us closer together". "The audience from all around the world can understand what is going on in movies. Movies create this international connection. This is the magic, beauty and joy of this industry and that's why I love this business very much," he exulted.

Praising Indian film 'RRR's success at the Oscars, Douglas said that it is a spectacular achievement for India and it will boost confidence and encourage the industry to craft many more such big films.

Speaking about his father Kirk Douglas, acclaimed American actor and filmmaker, the five time Golden Globe Award winner said that stepping out of his father's shadow took a very long time.

"During earlier part of my career, I was playing softer kind of roles. People used to compare me with my father. Winning Academy award nomination for the movie 'Wall Street' was a tremendous moment. It was a validation received from my peers," he candidly shared.

Reinforcing his liking for content than budget, Douglas clarified that while selecting a film, material is the most important thing for him.

"I will prefer something that emotionally moves me. I would rather play a small part in a good movie than a big part in a bad movie", he said. On his plans of venturing into Indian film, Douglas remarked that producer Shailendra Singh is working on an outline of the script in which he is interested.

Catherine Zeta-Jones Loves 'Om Shanti Om' : Douglas' wife and the BAFTA award winning actress Zeta-Jones also revealed her love for Indian films and expressed her interest to be part of Bollywood films.

"'The Lunchbox' is one of my favourite Indian movies. I watched it twice back to back. The film really touched me", Zeta-Jones said. She also shared her liking for Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone-starrer 'Om Shanti Om', which she has watched many time with her family and friends.

"I have always been a huge fan of Bollywood and being a singer and a dancer, I dreamt (that) maybe the British film industry would do the Bollywood type of films and I would be able to be cast," she told reporters in Panaji.

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# 'Scoop', 'Sirf Ek Banda..', Bajpayee, Netflix big winners at OTT Awards

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta-directed 'Scoop' won the best series award at the fourth edition of Filmfare OTT awards 2023 in Mumbai.The show's leading lady, Karishma Tanna shared the best female actor, critics, award in a series with Sonakshi Sinha ('Dahaad'). The event was held on November 26, according to reports by PTI and ANI.




Filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane was recognised as the best director for his period drama 'Jubilee' and best director, critics, award went to Randeep Jha for 'Kohrra'. Actor Suvinder Vicky was awarded best actor for the Punjab-set drama, while his colleague Barun Sobti received best supporting actor award for the show.

Several B-town celebrities were in attendance at the award show. 'Darlings' Alia Bhatt's web debut, earned her the Best Actor (female) award. Alia wore a black body-hugging outfit inspired by a saree for the event.




Manoj Bajpayee, who won the Best Actor, Web Original Film (Male) for the judicial drama 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai', looked dapper in a white jacket that he teamed up with black pants. His same movie also got the award for Best Film, Web Original.

The event acknowledged the best talents in the OTT industry, including actors, directors, producers, writers, singers, and technicians. The nominations were picked from web series and films that were released on OTT platforms between August 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023.

# Prime Video highlights global appeal of Indian content




In a stimulating roundtable session at the ongoing 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa, Prime Video, India's premier entertainment platform, engaged in a captivating discussion on the distinctive appeal of Indian content on a global scale.

Led by Sushant Sreeram, country director of Prime Video, India, the session, moderated by Rajeev Masand, COO at Dharma Cornerstone (DCA), featured esteemed panelists including Prithul Kumar, Joint Secretary (Films), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Managing Director, NFDC, alongside other influential leaders from the industry.

Sreeram highlighted India's imminent breakthrough moment on the international stage, expressing confidence in the growing global resonance of Indian stories. Emphasizing the significance of authentic local storytelling, he underscored the remarkable success of Prime Video's local language content, revealing that 50 percent of viewership comes from outside the home states and 25 percent from beyond India's borders, the company said in a press release.

Citing examples such as 'Pushpa: The Rise' and 'Kantara,' Sreeram emphasized the rising prominence of Indian narratives finding traction worldwide. He lauded the enriched storytelling landscape in India, acknowledging creators and talent shaping compelling narratives that transcend borders.

Notable Prime Video Original series like 'Farzi,' 'Jubilee,' and 'Made in Heaven' received acclaim internationally, resonating with audiences in numerous countries.

Prithul Kumar highlighted the transformative impact of streaming services for independent filmmakers, providing a home for diverse, low-budget, and experimental films. He outlined how streaming platforms have enabled filmmakers to dream big and access wider audiences, fostering a more inclusive creative landscape.

Addressing concerns about streaming becoming exclusive to big-budget star-driven ventures, Sreeram emphasized Prime Video's commitment to diverse storytelling, showcasing a plethora of titles and talents, both established and emerging.

He highlighted the platform's investment in new creators while continuing successful franchises like 'Mirzapur' and 'The Family Man.'

The discussion delved into the Direct-to-Streaming (DTS) model's influence on creativity and customers, with Sreeram expressing Prime Video's approach to bringing captivating stories to global audiences.

# Global M&E needs to rethink strategies; women's elite sports to gain in '24: Deloitte



Even as consulting firm Deloitte predicted some global trends in the TMT sector for 2024, highlighting that women's elite sports stand to gain in terms of revenue and broadcast airtime, it added that the media sector would have to put profitability and growth into correct perspectives.

Annual global revenue for women's elite sports will cross the billion-dollar threshold for the first time in 2024, Deloitte said on November 29.



The predicted $1.28 billion revenue based on matchday earnings, broadcast and commercial revenue is "at least 300 per cent higher" than their previous valuation three years ago, Deloitte said, according to a Reuters report.

"Women's sport is increasingly being viewed as a unique product that is becoming ever more distinct from men's elite sport," said Jennifer Haskel, insight lead for Deloitte's Sports Business Group.

"This surge in fan and investor engagement is leading to new and improved opportunities for clubs and leagues," she added.

Commercial deals by leagues and teams would bring in the majority of the revenue at 55 percent, while broadcast would account for 27 percent, Deloitte said.

Matchday revenue is expected to grow by five per cent from 2023 and contribute 19 percent to the pool.

Soccer and basketball are predicted to be the most lucrative sports for women in 2024, bringing in 71 percent of the total global revenue.

"In 2024 women's elite sports will continue to be allocated additional prime time broadcast slots, making the women's events easier to find and watch," Deloitte said, according to the Reuters report.

Meanwhile, a media statement put out by the company on Deloitte Technology, Media & Telecom 2024 Predictions, accessed by Indianbroadcastingworld.com, said apart from women's elite sports, the M&E in general needs a reset globally putting profitability and growth in perspective.

The statement said more than a decade into the streaming revolution, the media and entertainment (M&E) sector faces the challenge of balancing growth with profitability. Pay TV subscriptions have been declining, along with billions in lost revenue and lower profits. The streaming video services M&E companies, launched to replace pay TV, have been mostly successful in attracting large audiences, but unprofitably.

Deloitte predicted the landscape could become even more complicated, with leading US streaming video-on-demand providers more than doubling their tier offerings from an average of four options in 2023 to eight or more by 2024.

It added that user-generated content in gaming is expected to be a game-changer. Platforms are projected to pay out almost US$1.5 billion to content developers in 2024.

As this space grows, it risks disrupting the dynamics of the gaming industry by making inexpensive 3D content available. The practice could challenge top-tier games and services even as it democratizes content creation, encouraging more favourable economics for both platforms and independent creators.

The audio entertainment market is on the cusp of significant growth. The market is predicted to surpass US$75 billion in 2024, a 7 percent hike across formats like podcasts, streaming music, radio, and audiobooks. Podcasts offer untapped potential for per-user revenue.

Kevin Westcott, Deloitte Consulting LLP's Global Telecommunications, Media & Entertainment Sector Leader said, "Next year will mark a pivotal juncture in the media and entertainment sector. As we see women's elite sports crossing the billion-dollar threshold, it's not just a win for athletes but a signal of a more inclusive future in entertainment.

"On the streaming front, the expansion of subscription tiers is a significant leap toward profitability, moving beyond just subscriber acquisition. This dual focus—on social impact and fiscal responsibility—represents a balanced approach to growth that's imperative for long-term resilience."

# Shemaroo Entertainment surpasses 50 mn subscribers on YouTube




Shemaroo Entertainment, a pioneer in delivering Bollywood cinematic experiences, had achieved a remarkable feat by surpassing 50 million subscribers on its YouTube channel.

This monumental milestone underscores the widespread appeal and unwavering support garnered by the platform's diverse content offerings.

Saurabh Srivastava, the COO of Digital Business at Shemaroo Entertainment, expressed elation, stating, "We are thrilled to have reached the extraordinary milestone of 50 million subscribers on our YouTube channel. This accomplishment stands as a testament to the steadfast support of our audience throughout this incredible journey."

Shemaroo Entertainment's success on YouTube is a result of its commitment to delivering high-quality content that transcends boundaries and generations.

With a content portfolio ranging from classics to contemporary hits, the channel had become a treasure trove for Bollywood and entertainment enthusiasts worldwide.

The company boasts a robust presence with over 50 YouTube channels and a cumulative subscriber base of 138 million.

Noteworthy channels in the Bollywood category, including Shemaroo (50M), Shemaroo Movies (30M), and Shemaroo Comedy (19M), contribute significantly to this achievement.

Furthermore, the collective viewership across all Shemaroo YouTube channels is staggering.

# Javed Akhtar all praise for young cast of Netflix's 'The Archies'

The Archies' had been a talking point more for its main cast, all of them new and three the children of showbiz biggies, than perhaps anything else. And, have now got a thumbs up from industry veteran Javed Akhtar who says they are very good, confident and talented.



t is difficult to believe they are facing the camera for the first time, Akhtar said about the youngsters who form the mainstay of his daughter Zoya Akhtar's Netflix musical that adapts the world of the popular American comic to a small town in India in the 1960s, a PTI report stated.




"All of them are very good. They're really talented kids and very confident. Earlier, actors would have rough edges and gradually they would get polished and they would find their genre but these children come with a total chin up," Akhtar told PTI in an interview.

The film marks the acting debut of Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan's daughter Suhana Khan (Veronica), the late Sridevi and Boney Kapoor's daughter Khushi Kapoor (Betty), and Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda (Archie). Newcomers Dot, Mihir Ahuja, Vedang Raina and Yuvraj Menda round out the primary cast of the film.

# NDTV Profit TV channel to get back on air from Dec 8

The board of New Delhi Television through a circular dated November 28 approved to restart regular operations of NDTV Profit television channel from December 8, 2023, New Delhi Television (NDTV) said in a stock exchange filing.

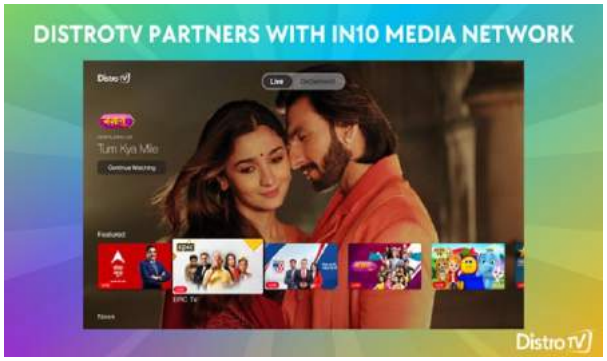
"We wish to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Company vide circular resolution dated November 28, 2023 has granted approval to re-commence the regular operations of NDTV Profit channel w.e.f. December 8, 2023," the regulatory filing stated.

According to a report in the Economic Times on November 28 evening, NDTV on June 1, 2017, had informed its shareholders of the temporary discontinuation of regular business programming on the business news channel, NDTV Profit.

"NDTV does not rule out reviving a business channel when the circumstances are appropriate," the ET report quoted the then press release issued by NDTV.

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group last year announced the acquisition of a 27.26 percent equity stake in NDTV from founders Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy. The acquisition was completed on December 30, 2022, on the block deal window of the NSE. It now owns a 64.71 percent stake in the TV news company.

# Two IN10 Media channels join DistroTV platform




DistroTV, a prominent ad-supported streaming TV (FAST) platform, had ignited excitement in the streaming landscape with the announcement of a groundbreaking partnership with IN10 Media Network, a distinguished name in media and entertainment.

This strategic alliance paves the way for an enriched content experience and an innovative integration approach that promises to redefine how viewers engage with streaming services.

As per a press release from DistroTV, the collaboration sees IN10 Media Network's flagship channel, EPIC, and the Hindi general entertainment channel, Nazara, joining DistroTV's expansive library of content.

This infusion significantly diversifies DistroTV's offerings, presenting audiences with a wide array of top-quality entertainment choices.

A notable highlight of this partnership is the integration of DistroTV's streaming service within IN10 Media Network's OTT platform, EPIC ON, through a seamless app-in-app integration.

This technological innovation aims to deliver an effortless and cohesive viewing experience for consumers, ensuring easy access to a plethora of content, including popular Indian and international channels, across various devices.

Navdeep Saini, co-founder and CEO of DistroScale, the parent company of DistroTV, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "We are thrilled to partner with IN10 Media Network, a renowned name in the entertainment industry. This partnership not only enriches our content library but also strengthens our commitment to providing diverse and quality entertainment to our audience worldwide."

Aditya Pittie, Managing Director of IN10 Media Network, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the alignment of this partnership with their mission to deliver high-quality content globally.

# Manoj Bajpayee for OTT platforms supporting independent filmmakers



New voices should be applauded and given a platform, said Manoj Bajpayee on November 24 as he lamented the lack of mentorship provided by the streaming services to independent filmmakers.

At a panel discussion at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) at Panaji, Goa, the actor said when the streaming services started in India, they backed independent storytellers, but now these platforms are giving priority to blockbuster films, a PTI report stated.

"One thing that all streaming services started with initially was that they were making independent cinema but that got lost somewhere. For some reason, it has gone down completely and now we see blockbuster films making their way big time.




"But the independent cinema movement that started and was getting such mentorship from the OTT platforms, is gone. And that is a very sad development," Bajpayee said.

If there is no independent cinema, then the Indian film industry will not evolve, he stressed.

"We will only grow in terms of money but we will not grow as creative people. New voices should be applauded and given platforms. I think they were doing so beautifully well earlier," he added.

Bajpayee said it is unimaginable for independent films to get funding at par with tent-poles such as 'Jawan', 'Pathaan' or 'Tiger 3'.

"It can't stand a chance and if you're giving shows at 9 am for an independent film, it will never do well. It will fall flat. I really request from this stage to all these platforms that they should revive that mentorship," the actor said.

Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, the co-creators of Bajpayee's popular OTT series 'The Family Man', agreed with Bajpayee.

"Earlier, all these films were directly made or shown on OTT. Now it is a clause that it had to play in theatres and only then we will take it," Nidimoru said.

Krishna added, "This is happening worldwide right now. There used to be a time when there would be a film and then there would be an OTT movie. But The Russo Brothers made 'The Gray Man' for Netflix and it is as big as any theatrical film. So now every film is a big film."

Apoorva Bakshi, who backed International Emmy-winning series 'Delhi Crime' and 'Hunt for Veerappan', said streamers are pouring in resources into making "blockbusters".

"There is no safe home left for independent films and that is happening because a lot of resources are going into the blockbusters. I believe independents help filmmakers to become better show creators and directors," she said.

Raj said being an independent filmmaker taught him and Krishna to be self-sufficient.

"We didn't know anyone in the industry, we taught ourselves. So this whole package of indie cinema gave us the confidence that wherever you give us, we can make a film.

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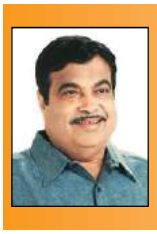
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National Head, Distribution
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## News Nation Network Pvt Ltd.

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## TOTAL TV

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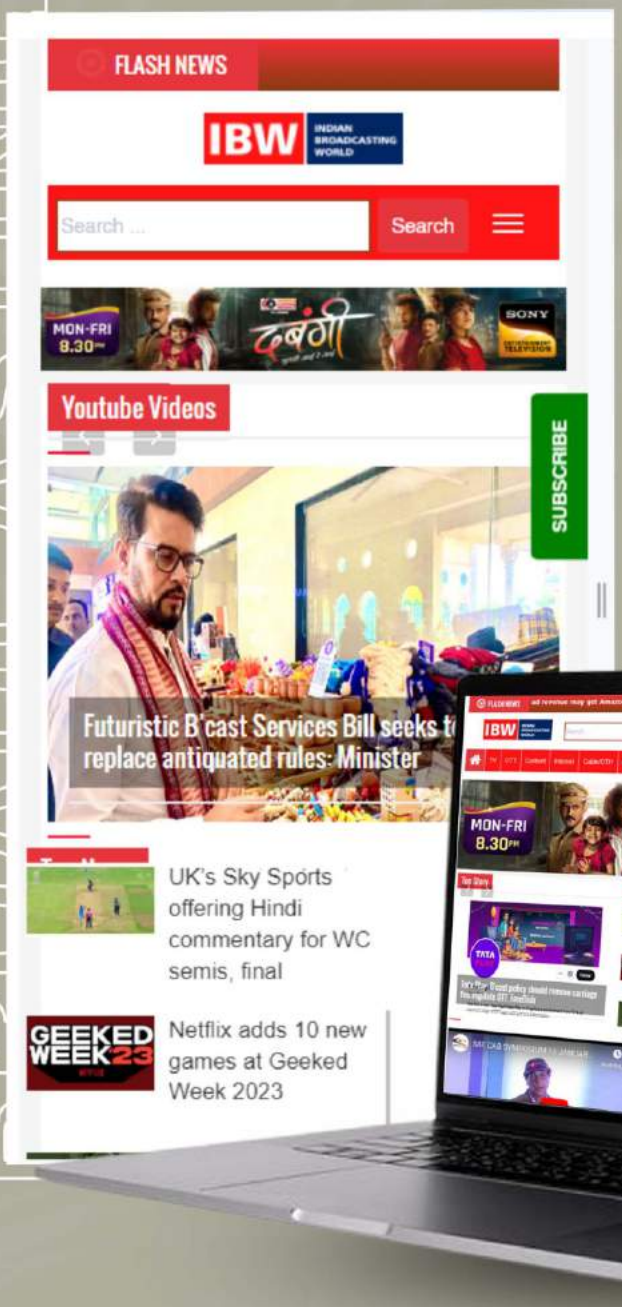
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