Date of Publication 13th of AUGUST 2024/RNI No. 57225/93
Vol 32. Issue 08. AUGUST 2024 / Rs. 150/ Page: 64

20th Chetna Yatra
5th Sept - 20th Oct, 2024



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Prof. S. S. Gupta
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Subscription & Distribution
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Corporate Office:-
Aavishkar Media Group
B-263, Indra Nagar,
Delhi-110033
Tel:- 011-47047410
Editorial & Postal Office
B-263, Indra Nagar, Delhi-110033
E-mail: anurag@aavishkargroup.in
info@aavishkargroup.in
aavishkargroup@gmail.com
Visit us at:
www.aavishkarmedia.com
www.indianbroadcastingworld.com

On the behalf of Aavishkar Publication Printed, Published & Owned By Ragini Rastogi and printed at Bhawna Art Press, 7, Indra Nagar, Delhi - 110033 and Published from B-263, St.10, Indra Nagar, Delhi - 110033
Editor: Anil Kumar Rastogi

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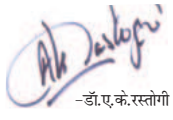
अगस्त के मायने

एक और स्वतंत्रता दिवस की वर्षगांठ उत्सव अर्थात अंग्रेजो से भारत की आजादी को कभी ना भूलने वाली यादों का जशन यानिकी भारत की स्वंत्रता को याद करना होता है पन्द्रह अगस्त यही वह तारिख है जब फिरंगियों के शिकंजे से भारत को मुक्ति प्राप्त हुई थी वर्ष 1947 में लेकिन जिन्हा – नेहरू की महत्तवकक्षाओं ने भारत विभाजन कर इसी भारत को काटकर 14 अगस्त को एक अलग देश पाकिस्तान बनाकर जिन्हा के सुपुर्द किया गया था यह भी भारत को अपनी आजादी की वर्षगांठ मनाने के साथ याद करना चाहिए। याद करना चाहिए कि आखिर क्यों भारत का विभाजन हुआ , क्यों भारत का एक टुकड़ा काटकर अलग देश बनाना पड़ा और आखिर उसका कितना लाभ हुआ, क्या समस्या थी कि भारत को काटना पड़ा ? भारत विभाजन करके क्या समस्या खत्म हो गई?

आजादी की 78वीं वर्षगांठ आ गई नेहरू से लेकर कई प्रधानमंत्री दिल्ली के लालकिले पर ध्वज फहरा चुके लेकिन जिस बुनियाद पर भारत को काट कर अलग से एक मुल्क बनाया गया था वो समस्या ज्यों की त्यों आज भी बनी हुई है। इस पर बात नहीं की जाती बस लालकिले पर तिरंगा फेहरा कर आजादी की वर्षगांठ प्रत्येक वर्ष मना ली जाती है। 78वीं वर्षगांठ 2024 का अगस्त मना रहा है।

आश्चर्य तो तब होता है की अपने देश की आजादी का यह जशन भी जमीन से लेकर आसमान तक बहुत बड़ी सुरक्षा के कवच में मनाया जाता है। सुरक्षा चक्र ऐसा कि परिन्दा भी पर ना मार सके, हजारों सुरक्षा कर्मी काफी पहले से इस दिवस को कुशल कामना के साथ पूर्ण आधुनिक शस्त्रों सहित चाक चोबन्द व्यवस्था में लगे होते हैं, आखिर खतरा किस्से है ? भारत को काटकर, एक पूरा मुल्क भार कीमत के साथ बांट तो दिया था, अब भी खतरा वही बना हुआ है, आखिर क्यों ? क्या नहीं किया तब जो अभी भी आय खतरा बना हुआ हैं ? सोचना चाहिए कि हम अपने देश की आजादी की वर्षगांठ का जशन भी खुल्लम खुल्ला हर्षोउल्लास के साथ क्यों नहीं मना सकते हैं ? धार्मिक त्यौहार – भजन – कीर्तन – संगत सत्संग – होली – रामनवमी आदि भी भारी सुरक्षाघेरों में ही करना नियति बन गई है।

सोचन तो चाहिए कि पूरा मुल्क देने के बाद भी समस्या जस की तस ही क्यों बनी रह गई चूक कहां हुई, क्या सुधार के दरवाजे बन्द हों चुके हैं, वाकई लाइलाज हो चुकी है समस्या या फिर 78 वर्षों में भारत फिर से बंटने के कगार पर पहुंच चुका है? सोचना तो चाहिए कि आखिर भारत का भविष्य किस दिशा की और बढ़ रहा है। नार्थ ईस्ट – साउथ – (तमिलनाडु, केरल, पंजाब ,बंगाल) बदले से प्रतीत होने लगे हैं। बहुत सारे बदलाव उजागर होते जा रहे हैं, सोचना चाहिए की आजादी के 78 वर्षों में भारत कितना बदला है, सोचना चाहिए – सोचना चाहिए।



–डॉ.ए.के.रस्तोगी

Jio, Airtel drive telecom subscriber base growth to 120.5 crore in June

New customer additions by Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel pushed the Indian telecom subscriber base past 120.5 crore in June, according to a Trai report released on Tuesday.

The wireless subscriber base grew marginally to over 117 crore and wireline connections in the country increased to 3.51 crore in June from 116.89 crore and 3.47 crore, respectively, in May, as per data released in Trai's subscriber report for June, PTI reported.

Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel led the growth in both segments.

"The number of total telephone subscribers in India increased from 1,203.69 million at the end of May 2024 to 1,205.64 million at the end of June 2024, thereby showing a monthly growth rate of 0.16 per cent," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in the report.

Reliance Jio added 19.11 lakh new wireless subscribers, while Bharti Airtel's net addition stood at 12.52 lakh during the month.

Loss of subscribers by Vodafone Idea (VIL), BSNL, MTNL, and Reliance Communications dragged down net addition in overall wireless segment to 15.73 lakh.

VIL lost 8.6 lakh subscribers, BSNL 7.25 lakh, MTNL 3,927, while RCom lost 2 wireless subscribers during the month.

In the wireline segment, Reliance Jio topped the chart with addition of 4.34 lakh new subscribers. It was followed by Airtel, which added 44,611 new subscribers, VIL 21,042, and VMIPL 13,996.

BSNL lost the maximum number of wireless customers in June. The company lost 60,644 subscribers. Quadrant lost 37,159 subscribers, Tata Teleservices 32,315, MTNL 6,218, and APSFL 829 subscribers.

Bharti Airtel led the machine-to-machine segment with 2.82 crore connections. It was followed by VIL with 1.45 crore connections, Jio 67.2 lakh, and BSNL 29.3 lakh subscribers.

The total broadband subscribers base in the country increased to 94 crore in June from 93.51 crore at the end of the previous month.

Jio led the broadband segment with a total customer base of 48.89 crore subscribers. It was followed by Bharti Airtel with 28.13 crore subscribers, VIL 12.78 crore, and BSNL 2.5 crore subscribers.

SC Women Lawyers Association calls for a ban on pornography, obscenity on OTT platforms



The Supreme Court Women Lawyers Association (SCWLA) on August 21 urged a complete and effective ban on public viewing of online pornography and unfiltered obscenity on OTT platforms across the country.

The SCWLA said that it was deeply shocked, traumatized, agonised, and pained by the recent spurt of crimes against women, girls, and infants, which were reported in Kolkata, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and other parts of the country at the hands of brutal, insensitive perverted perpetrators.

"These incidents have shaken our collective conscience to the core. While the women of the nation feel insecure and unsafe, no quantum of stringent laws seems to be working as a deterrent, therefore, we urge that there must be a complete and effective ban on public viewing of online pornography and unfiltered obscenity on OTT platforms across the country," it said.

The top court Women's Bar Association also urged for the installation of functional CCTV systems in every workplace and all institutions across the country, adding that Gender Sensitisation Committees come into place in all public and private sectors in consonance with the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Guidelines.

The SCWLA said that it is resolute in its mission to advocate for the safety and dignity of women across India and called upon government officials, legal authorities, and the public to unite in addressing issues relating to the safety and dignity of women with urgency and seriousness.

Randeep Hooda joins cast of 'SDGM'

Actor Randeep Hooda has joined the cast of Gopichandh Malineni's upcoming action film 'SDGM' starring Sunny Deol, he announced on his 48th birthday on Tuesday, PTI reported.



"Excited to be a part of this action feast – #SDGM. Cannot wait to get on sets with @iamsunnydeol Paaji and the entire team. As promised, this will be a MASS FEAST," the Highway actor wrote on Instagram alongside a picture of him.

Malineni also dropped the picture on X and wished the actor on his birthday.

"Welcome aboard the most versatile actor @RandeepHooda sir. Wishing you a very happy birthday from team #SDGM," the director, known for his Telugu films like Veera Simha Reddy and Krack, wrote.

Touted as 'the biggest actioner of the country', SDGM is produced by Neveen Yerneni, Y. Ravi Shankar and T.G. Vishwa Prasad under the banners of Mythri Movie Makers and People Media Factory. Rishi Punjabi serves as the cinematographer. The music for the film has been scored by Thaman S.

Also starring Regina Cassandra and Saiyami Kher, 'SDGM' will go on floors soon.

Randeep last featured in Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, which was also directed, produced and written by him. Before that, he starred in the comedy film Tera Kya Hoga Lovely alongside Ileana D'Cruz.

Disney+ Hotstar to premiere 'Mastery'

Disney+ Hotstar has launched an exclusive documentary series titled 'Mastery', presented by Stonex, which celebrates India's modern-day maestros across various artistic disciplines.



This 11-episode series highlights creative minds from seven genres of art—Music, Sculpture, Painting, Literature, Architecture, Performing, and Film.

Featured artists include renowned names like architect Rooshad Shroff, classical musician Sandeep Narayan, sculptor Subodh Kerkar, and dancer Meenakshi Srinivasan.

'Mastery' offers a behind-the-scenes look at the lives, struggles, and creative processes of these artists, capturing the essence of their artistry through storytelling that resonates emotionally and visually.

Netflix sees surge in upfront ad commitments as NFL Games, 'Squid Game' fuel appeal



Netflix saw a more than 150 percent surge in upfront ad commitments for this year, the streaming giant said on Tuesday, thanks in part to the National Football League (NFL) games coming to the platform on Christmas Day.

In its second year of upfront negotiations – where networks and media companies aim to secure ad commitments for upcoming shows – Netflix successfully closed advertising deals with all major holding companies and independent agencies, Reuters reported.

The California-based company secured partnerships for several high-profile properties, including the popular series 'Squid Game' and 'Wednesday,' as well as the upcoming movie "Happy Gilmore 2.'

It also closed deals for live events, including WWE Raw and the Christmas Day NFL games.

As competition intensifies in the streaming space, major players like Warner Bros Discovery's Max and Walt Disney's Disney+ have also turned to ad-supported plans and streaming bundles to boost growth.

Streaming services are also increasingly investing in sports content to attract a larger, younger audience and more advertisers willing to pay for premium live sports content.

Facing saturation in subscriber growth in the United States, Netflix has been beefing up its advertising business, although the business is not expected to become a primary driver of revenue growth until at least 2026.The company last month reported its ad tier membership grew 34 percent sequentially in the second quarter.

Netflix introduced an ad-supported tier of the service in November 2022 as it tried to offset escalating costs of creating original content and licensing deals to keep viewers on the platform.

The cheaper, ad-supported plan hit 40 million global monthly active users in May.

TRAI directs telco providers to curb misuse of messaging services from Sept.1



The Centre on August 20 mandated access service providers to take concrete measures to curb misuse of messaging services, effective September 1.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has mandated them to migrate telemarketing calls starting with 140 series to an online distributed ledger technology (DLT) platform by September 30 for better monitoring and control, IANS reported.

Effective September 1, all access service providers will be prohibited from transmitting messages containing URLs, APKs, OTT links, or callback numbers which are not whitelisted by the senders.

The TRAI directive further mandated that the trail of all messages from senders to recipients must be traceable from November 1, 2024. Any message with an undefined or mismatched telemarketer chain will be rejected.

To deter the misuse of templates for promotional content, TRAI has introduced punitive measures for non-compliance.

"Content templates registered under the wrong category will be blacklisted, and repeated offenses will lead to a one-month suspension of the sender's services," said the government.

All "headers and content Templates registered on DLT must adhere to prescribed guidelines. Additionally, a single content template cannot be linked to multiple Headers".

In case of misuse of headers or content templates of any sender comes to the notice, TRAI has directed immediate suspension of traffic from all the headers and content templates of that sender for their verification.

The telecom regulator said that the revocation of traffic from the sender shall be done only after legal action is taken by the sender against such misuse.

Further, delivery telemarketers must identify and report entities responsible for such misuse within two business days, failing which they will face similar consequences," said TRAI.

Last week, the Centre directed all access service providers to immediately stop voice promotional calls, whether pre-recorded or computer generated, or from all unregistered senders or telemarketers.

V6 News Telugu sweeps across most TGs in prime time

V6 News has achieved impressive results in recent weeks, solidifying its position as a leader in the Telugu news market.

According to a press release, from Weeks 29 to 32, the channel has demonstrated strong performance across various demographics and regions, securing its spot as the number one news channel in Hyderabad for the Cable & Satellite (C&S) All 15+ demographic.



In the urban areas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, V6 News continues to hold the top position, underscoring its popularity in densely populated regions.

The channel also remains highly competitive in rural areas, nearing the second spot in viewership rankings.

Key demographics show V6 News's wide appeal:

- Male 15+ Viewers: V6 News leads among this crucial audience, who are highly engaged with news content.
- Female ABC 22+: The channel has also seen strong performance with female viewers, showing its broad reach across different age and gender groups.

Ankam Ravi, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of V6 News, attributes the success to the channel's consistent dedication to representing the voices of Telangana's people. "These results reflect our longstanding commitment to providing authentic and impactful news to our viewers," Ravi said.

With these latest results, V6 News has firmly cemented its influence and reach in the Telugu-speaking regions, maintaining its lead in key urban areas while holding a competitive edge in rural markets as well.



Govt. to release draft rules under Data Protection Act in 30 days

The government is likely to release draft rules under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act within a month, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said yesterday in New Delhi.

The minister said the government has first worked on digital implementation of the Act and framed rules accordingly.

"The framework is ready, and the draft rules for consultation are expected to be released within a month," Vaishnaw, who's the Minister for Electronics and IT, and Information & Broadcasting, told reporters in the Capital, according to a PTI report.



The minister said the final draft of the rules was reviewed last week, and it is expected to be in the public domain within a month.

Meanwhile, Outlook Business, quoting an Indian Express report, yesterday said in June this year Vaishnaw told reporters, "Releasing the rules is among our top priorities. We had started working on the rules around December of last year, well before the Lok Sabha elections. Right now, the drafting of the rules is at an advanced stage, and we will shortly begin consultations. We won't rush through with it."

While the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, was passed by Parliament last year, it is yet to be implemented. All enterprises that process personal data in India are subject to the Act, which is India's first cross-sectoral law on the protection of personal data. To add to it, the Bill also considers data fiduciaries responsible for protecting data security and notifying individuals if their data is compromised. Further, the consent of individuals should be obtained before processing their data, unless there are specific exemptions.

JioCinema hosts semis jury for Emmy Awards in Mumbai

JioCinema, the popular Indian streaming platform under Viacom18, proudly hosted the Semi-Final Round of Judging for the 52nd International Emmy® Awards in Mumbai. This prestigious event brought together an illustrious panel of industry experts to evaluate and celebrate top-tier television content from around the world.

According to a press release, the judging panel featured renowned figures such as Tisca Chopra, Ranvir Shorey, Bhavani Iyer, Nitya Mehra, Ranjeet Thakur, Rahul V. Chitella, Suparn Verma, Kirti Kulhari, Sonali Kulkarni, Sameer Saxena, Abhinay Deo, Divya Dutta, Sandhya Mridul, and Oni Sen.



Their collective experience in film and television made for an impressive jury, tasked with the critical responsibility of determining which shows will advance to the final round of the International Emmy® Awards.

Reflecting on his role as a jury member, actor Ranvir Shorey expressed his excitement, stating, "The association with the academy is going to be one of the biggest feathers in my cap. As an actor constantly on the lookout for compelling stories, it's incredibly rewarding to see deserving content and talent being recognized, no matter their scale. Being part of the esteemed jury panel for the International Emmy® Awards 2024 is an honor, and I'm thrilled to contribute to an association that bridges the gap between local and global storytelling, giving diverse voices a platform to shine."

First-time jury member Tisca Chopra added, "It's a privilege to witness the creativity and dedication of such talented individuals and to celebrate their outstanding work. It's great to see platforms like JioCinema supporting the industry on local and global levels."

Sonali Kulkarni, a respected actress with a diverse background in regional cinema, Hindi films, and international cinema, said, "I'm proud to see content from across the globe gaining deserved recognition on this prestigious stage. I look forward to contributing to this celebration of excellence and seeing more content shining worldwide."

The Semi-Final Round of Judging is an integral part of the International Emmy® Awards, which recognize exceptional television content produced outside the United States. Categories include Arts Programming, Drama Series, Non-Scripted Entertainment, and Kids Programming, reflecting the wide range of storytelling celebrated by the Academy.

By hosting this prestigious event, JioCinema continues to play a pivotal role in supporting and promoting global television content, cementing its place as a key player in the international entertainment industry.

Comparing comms OTT to telecom services erroneous: BIF

Industry body Broadband India Forum (BIF) yesterday contested telecom operators' suggestion to bring internet call and messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Google Meet under the ambit of telecom licences.



Broadband India Forum (BIF) President TV Ramachandran, in a statement, said bringing OTT (over-the-top) services under the Telecom Act is in complete violation of Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equal treatment to every person and entity.

"Comparing OTT services to telecom services of voice and SMS is completely erroneous and overlooks the vast and critical differences between the two categories," Ramachandran said.

Meanwhile, other associations, also representing tech companies, have opposed telc os' body COAI position to bring communications OTT services under the new telecom rules.

In a press note summarising counter-submissions, the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) said that "there is a clear distinction in the operational and technical and nature of OTT service providers and TSPs", and that OTT platforms "do not "free ride" as they are greatly driving the revenues generated by telecom service providers.

"OTTs are not covered under the ambit of Telecommunications Act, 2023," Nasscom said in its submission, adding, "There is no need to bring OTTs under Service Authorisation and impose any additional regulatory burden on them."

The industry bodies pointed to IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's statement in Parliament last year explicitly clarifying that OTT platforms are not covered under the Telecom Act, a media report stated.

Telecom operators, however, argue that large data traffic generated by foreign apps should entail infrastructure costs and have requested the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to include OTT services within the new Telecommunication Act, 2023. Industry leaders like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel support this motion for regulatory parity, a media report said.

T-Series announces ex-cricketer Yuvraj Singh biopic



An upcoming biographical movie will chronicle the inspiring journey of former Indian cricketer Yuvraj Singh, the makers announced on August 20.

The yet-to-be-titled biopic will be produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and co-produced by Ravi Bhagchandka, known for 'Sachin: A Billion Dreams' and the upcoming Aamir Khan-starrer 'Sitaare Zameen Par'.

The film is touted as a "grand celebration of Singh's unparalleled journey and contributions to cricket, capturing the essence of his career, unforgettable six sixes in the 2007 T20 World Cup, his courageous off-field battles, and his subsequent return to cricket in 2012", PTI reported from Mumbai.

Singh, who began his career at the age of 13, said he is hoping his life story will inspire people to overcome challenges.

"I'm deeply honored that my story will be showcased to millions of my fans across the globe by Bhushan and Ravi. Cricket has been my greatest love and source of strength through all the highs and lows. I hope this film inspires others to overcome their own challenges and pursue their dreams with unwavering passion," the former India all-rounder said.

Kumar, known for backing blockbuster films such as 'Drishyam 2', 'Animal', 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2', 'Kabir Singh' and 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior', said he is excited to bring out the inspiring journey of Singh on the big screen.

"Yuvraj Singh's life is a compelling narrative of resilience, triumph, and passion. His journey from a promising cricketer to a cricketing hero, and then to a hero in real life, is truly inspiring.

"I'm thrilled to bring a story that needs to be told and heard through the big screen and to celebrate his extraordinary achievements," he said.

The makers are yet to announce the key details about the film, including the director and cast.

Karnataka poised to lead AVGC sector in India: State Minister

The future of gaming and animation in India is bright and Bengaluru is poised to be at the forefront, said Karnataka's Minister Priyank Kharge yesterday.

The State government is committed to supporting start-ups and SMEs in the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) sector and establishing the State as a global hub for AVGC, he said, according to a PTI report from Bengaluru.

"Government is ready with funds and is willing to partner with anyone. In fact, I am seeing the AVGC industry as a foot in the door for electronics manufacturing for gaming accessories. So, it has the potential to create a parallel economy with respect to manufacturing as well," said Kharge, who holds the portfolio of Information Technology.

The Minister unveiled the theme and poster for GAFX 2025, the 6th edition of one of India's most eagerly awaited gatherings in the gaming, digital media, and entertainment industries, which will be held between February 27 and March 1, 2025.

The Gaming, Animation and Visual Effects (GAFX) is jointly organised by the Karnataka Government and Association of Bangalore Animation Industry (ABAI).



At the curtain raiser for GAFX 2025, Kharge urged the participants to seize the opportunity to engage in valuable learning experiences, network with peers, and connect with mentors.

Biren Ghose, president of ABAI and Managing Director APAC Technicolor Group, said, "GAFX 2025 is both a celebration and an occasion to reward excellence as well as throw a spotlight on the future growth of the creative technology industry."

According to him, the 6th edition of the GAFX will offer a platform for stakeholders to explore and strategise the growth potential of Karnataka's digital media industry.

Spy thriller 'Berlin' to have direct digital release on Zee5

'Berlin', a spy thriller mystery starring Aparshakti Khurana and Ishwak Singh, is headed for a direct-to-digital release, the makers said yesterday. Set in early 1990s Delhi, the film is written and directed by Atul Sabharwal. It is produced by Zee Studios and Yippee Ki Yay Motion Pictures.



Also starring Rahul Bose, Anupriya Goenka, and Kabir Bedi, "Berlin" was screened at the 15th Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) last week.

According to a press release, 'Berlin' will have its exclusive premiere on ZEE5, a PTI report stated.

While the film will see Singh play a speech and hearing impaired man who is arrested on espionage charges, Khurana will essay the role of a sign language expert. Sabharwal described 'Berlin' as a "labour of love".

"Having the opportunity to collaborate with such versatile stars, alongside our visionary producers and the platform giant ZEE5, is any filmmaker's dream. We've poured our hearts and souls into this project, and I'm optimistic it will strike a chord with viewers," the filmmaker said in a statement.

Manish Kalra, Chief Business Officer at ZEE5, said the film has garnered critical acclaim at international film festivals.

"We are confident it will set a new benchmark in the espionage genre for the Indian streaming market. It will further enhance ZEE5's appeal to both our existing subscribers and new viewers seeking quality entertainment," Kalra said.

"'Berlin' is a movie that pushes the boundaries of the espionage genre in Indian content, and we are very happy that it will soon premiere on the platform for audiences to watch it. We're confident that this partnership with ZEE5 will help us reach a far wider audience," added producer Manav Shrivastav of Yippee Ki Yay Motion Pictures.

‘Bigg Boss’ emerges as powerful platform for brands in Southern India

‘Bigg Boss’, the iconic reality show, continues to dominate India’s entertainment scene, particularly in southern states, proving to be a major force for brand visibility and consumer engagement.

A recent study by Unomer Technologies highlights how brands advertising on ‘Bigg Boss’ Tamil and Malayalam are reaping substantial benefits, showing significant increases in key brand metrics, The Economic Times reported.

The research found a 57 percent boost in top-of-mind awareness, a 26 percent rise in brand consideration, and a 33 percent jump in purchase intent among regular viewers of the show. With over 50 sponsors and 200 advertisers, the show amassed an astounding 150 billion minutes of viewership, reaching an audience of 170 million.

Vinay Bapna, CEO of Unomer Technologies, emphasized the emotional connection ‘Bigg Boss’ creates with its southern audience, offering brands a unique opportunity to stay relevant. “The show fosters deep empathy, driving notable improvements in brand awareness and purchase intent,” he noted.

As ‘Bigg Boss’ Telugu and Tamil prepare for their September 2024 premieres on Star Maa and Star Vijay, regional brands are also seeing significant growth. NS



Satish, President of Haier Appliances India, stated that ‘Bigg Boss’ has been a key factor in expanding their market presence in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.

Similarly, John Alukka, Managing Director of Jos Alukkas, credited their association with the show for boosting both sales and brand recognition, reflecting the show’s strong influence across the region.

Adani BT India@100 Summit: Decoding trends for Mission ‘47

Business Today is all set to host its highly anticipated annual event, the Adani Business Today India@100 Summit, on August 20, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam’s Leader’s Lounge in New Delhi. This marks the third edition of the summit, with the theme, “A Future-Ready India: Decoding the Megatrends for Mission 2047,” and serves as a key platform for leading business leaders, policymakers, politicians, and academics to engage in strategic discussions about India’s future.



The summit will tackle significant issues such as the middle-income trap, green energy advancements, and sustainable infrastructure development. With India on a rapid trajectory of reform and growing global influence, key topics will include artificial intelligence, employment trends, consumption patterns, and agricultural modernization, examining how these elements contribute to India’s leadership in the global economy.

Among the prominent speakers are Ruchir Sharma, Chairman of Rockefeller International; Krishnamurthy Subramanian, Executive Director at the IMF; Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission; and N.K. Singh, former Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission. Key policymakers such as Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Agriculture; and Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, will share their insights on India’s development path.

The business community will also be well-represented, with contributions from leaders such as Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director of ITC Ltd.; Suresh Narayanan, Chairman and Managing Director of Nestlé India; Bhavish Aggarwal, Founder of Ola; and Sumant Sinha, Chairman and CEO of ReNew. Panels will dive deep into economic growth, technological innovation, sustainable development, and geopolitical strategies, positioning India for continued success leading up to 2047.

This summit offers a premier venue for thought leaders to discuss India’s mission for a future-ready economy, laying out actionable insights and strategies to solidify India’s role as a global powerhouse in the years to come.

TV9 Network announces 'The Leaders of Road Transport Awards' S2

The Leaders of Road Transport Awards' S2, held on August 9, 2024, at the prestigious Imperial Hotel in Janpath, brought together the best and brightest in the Indian road transport and logistics sector. Organized by TV9 Network in collaboration with Continental Tires, this event has become a significant platform for honoring outstanding achievements while driving dialogue on the industry's future.

Graced by the Chief Guest, Harsh Malhotra, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, the ceremony was a grand celebration of innovation, road safety, and sustainability. The event featured three pivotal panel discussions addressing the sector's evolution. Topics ranged from India's ambitious logistical advancements to improving profitability through road safety measures, the network said in a statement



The minister emphasized the critical importance of road safety, stating, "With India accounting for over 10% of global road accidents, it is imperative that leaders in the transport sector prioritize safety and leverage cutting-edge technology."

The event also honored key industry figures, including Jasveer Singh of Instant Transport Solution Pvt Ltd / XP India and Minal Mehta of Mile Trade, recognized as Young Business Leaders. The Woman Entrepreneur of the Year category celebrated trailblazers such as Sakshi Singh of Santosh Gill Earth Movers Pvt Ltd and Reema Jogani of Reema Transport Pvt Ltd for their groundbreaking contributions in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

In addition, the Business Person of the Year award was jointly presented to Anand Sankeshwar of VRL Logistics Limited and Mahendra Shah of V-Trans India Ltd, while Ashok Shah of V-Trans India Ltd received the Lifetime Achievement Samman.

The awards also paid tribute to the late Shri Jai Kishan Sharma of Chetak Logistics, posthumously honoring his legacy in the transport sector.

With its powerful recognition of industry giants and roundtable discussions fostering meaningful conversations, the Leaders of Road Transport Awards Season 2 has cemented its role as a leader in road transport excellence in India.

Netflix, PNC reimagine regal romances with 'The Royals'

When an entitled Prince Charming meets a start-up whiz, it's inevitable that they will bump heads! Will their ambitions collide, two worlds clash, or even spark a surprising romance? From palace gates to boardroom debates, 'The Royals' marks the first collaboration between Netflix and Pritish Nandy Communications.



The modern-day Indian royalty rom-com series is anchored by the undeniable chemistry between Bhumi Pednekar, making her series debut, and Ishaan Khatter, a media statement from Netflix stated.

Produced by Pritish Nandy and created by Rangita and Ishita Pritish Nandy, known for their contemporary pop culture and spirited storytelling, shared, "'The Royals' being our very first with Netflix had to be just the right blend of coming-of-age-India, Gen Z storytelling and feisty fun! There is the inevitable romance of old royalty; monarchs without crowns, and the incredible drive of today's start-up warriors for whom crowns hold zero shine. Sparks and insults will fly when these two worlds clash, and that has been great fun for us to create and produce!

"Netflix's commitment to championing exceptional and innovative content has always resonated with us. We're thrilled to be a part of the Netflix family and partner with them to take our tale of a girl-meets-boy, the classic maharaja (king) and aamkumari (commoner) tale, to a global audience."

The series is directed by Priyanka Ghose and Nupur Asthana. Joining Pednekar and Khatter is the legendary Zeenat Aman, making her way to screens once again, in a very special appearance and marking her Netflix debut. Sakshi Tanwar, Nora Fatehi, Dino Morea, Milind Soman, Chunky Panday, Vihaan Samat, Kavya Trehan, Sumukhi Suresh, Udit Arora, Lisa Mishra and Luke Kenny round out this ensemble.



Tata Play Classic Cinema presents movie lineup for I-Day

In celebration of India's Independence Day, Tata Play Classic Cinema is curating a special movie lineup that pays homage to the nation's journey to freedom. On August 15 and 16, viewers can relive the spirit of patriotism and the rich legacy of Bollywood cinema through a selection of iconic films that capture the essence of India's struggle for independence and its cultural heritage.

August 15th Lineup:

• ***'Mother India' – 5 pm***

Directed by Mehboob Khan, 'Mother India' is a timeless epic that portrays the indomitable spirit of Radha, played by Nargis, as she battles poverty and personal loss while raising her children. The film's powerful narrative and Nargis's acclaimed performance make it a poignant reflection on sacrifice and strength. Mother India remains a significant cinematic work, honored with an Academy Award nomination for Best International Feature Film.

• ***'Naya Daur' – 8 pm***

Starring Dilip Kumar and Vyjayanthimala, 'Naya Daur' is a classic that highlights themes of social change and unity during India's post-independence era. The film, known for its memorable songs and dramatic portrayal of village life, captures the spirit of the nation's transition and resilience. Naya Daur was a major box-office success and influenced future Indian cinema, including Aamir Khan's 'Lagaan'.

August 16th Lineup:

• ***'Aas Ka Panchhi' – 5 pm***

'Aas Ka Panchhi' features Rajendra Kumar and Vyjayanthimala in a melodramatic tale of sacrifice and duty. The film explores the life of Rajan Khanna, whose aspirations lead him from an office job to the army, ultimately facing perilous situations. With a memorable soundtrack by Shankar Jaikishan, 'Aas Ka Panchhi' emphasizes themes of honor and sacrifice.

• ***'Amar Shaheed Bhagat Singh' – 8 pm***

Directed by Om Bedi, 'Amar Shaheed Bhagat Singh' is a powerful biographical drama that depicts the life of the revered freedom fighter Bhagat Singh, portrayed by Som Dutt. The film honors Singh's unwavering dedication to India's independence, capturing his journey from a young revolutionary to a martyr. This biopic serves as a stirring reminder of the sacrifices made for the nation's freedom.

Celebrate 78 years of India's independence with these classic Bollywood films on Tata Play Classic Cinema, Channel #318, this August 15 and 16.

Promax India Awards 2024 to host virtual event August 22



The 22nd edition of the Promax India Awards, celebrating the best in media, entertainment marketing and design, is set to take place virtually on August 22, 2024.

The awards ceremony, scheduled for 4 pm, will be streamed live on Promax India's official Facebook page, ensuring accessibility for audiences across the globe.

This year's virtual event will honour outstanding creative work across 57 categories, including Best Brand Image Promo, Best Social Media Campaign, Best Drama Campaign, and more. Promax India's decision to go digital highlights its commitment to inclusivity and broadening the reach of this prestigious celebration of industry talent.

"We're thrilled to bring the Promax India Awards 2024 to a virtual platform, enabling us to reach a wider audience while showcasing incredible work in our industry," said Andy Chua, Conference Director of Promax India.

Mark your calendars for August 22 to tune in and witness the unveiling of this year's winners, celebrating excellence in entertainment marketing and design.

ET NOW, ET NOW Swadesh announce I-Day shows

As India approaches the 78th Independence Day, ET NOW and ET NOW Swadesh are set to commemorate the occasion with a special programming lineup under the theme 'India @100.'

This initiative is designed to celebrate India's rich legacy and look ahead to the nation's centenary of independence in 2047, focusing on crucial aspects shaping its future.

ET NOW and ET NOW Swadesh special programming schedule include the following:

Businesses Of Naya Bharat:- Date & Time: August 14, 1:00 Pm

This 30-minute show will explore the businesses driving India's economy, featuring insights from Vikas Khemani, Founder of Carnelian Asset Management, and Nooresh Merani, Founder of Analyse India. The program will delve into the success of India Inc. and the stocks propelling the nation towards its $5 trillion economic goal.

INDIA @ 100 – Financial Freedom Day:- Date & Time: August 14, 5 pm

Hosted by Kavita Thapliyal, this 30-minute show offers actionable financial strategies and expert tips for achieving financial independence. Featuring Nilesh Shah, CEO of Kotak AMC; Dhirendra Kumar, CEO of Value Research; and Feroze Azeez, Deputy CEO of Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd., the show provides insights into financial planning and model portfolios.

India @ 100: Special Debate:- Date & Time: August 14, 9 pm

Anchor Vikram Oza will lead a special debate with distinguished panelists Gurcharan Das, Author and Commentator, and Siddhartha Sanyal, Chief Economist & Head of Research at Bandhan Bank. The discussion will envision India's journey to becoming a developed nation by 2047, focusing on strategies and milestones for achieving a $5 trillion economy.

Swadeshi Superstar, Kamaai Asardar:- Date & Time: August 14, 9.30 pm (ET NOW Swadesh)

Hosted by Abhishek Satya Vratam, this show will highlight the performance of PSU stocks and homegrown companies. Experts including Gaurang Shah, Whole Time Director at Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Rohan Mehta, CEO & Portfolio Manager at Turtle Wealth, will present standout stocks showcasing India's financial resilience.

India @ 100: Decoding the PM's Speech:- Date & Time: August 15, 12 noon

Sheryll D'Souza anchors a 30-minute special analyzing the Prime Minister's Independence Day speech. With insights from Sanjay Nayar, Founder & Chairman of Sorin Investments, and Rajnish Kumar, Former Chairman of State Bank of India, the show will outline India's path towards self-reliance and global leadership.

India @ 100 Desh Ka Dum:- Date & Time: August 15, 4 pm (ET NOW Swadesh)

This 30-minute panel discussion, led by Abhishek Satya Vratam, will focus on India's economic resilience and border security. Featuring defense experts Major General Rajan Kochhar (Retd.), Augustine Vinod (Retd.), and Col. Shailendra Singh (Retd.), the discussion will address national strength and security amidst rising regional tensions.

Both ET NOW and ET NOW Swadesh's programming will provide viewers with comprehensive insights into India's past, present and future, celebrating the nation's journey and its aspirations for the next decades.

'Kalki 2898 AD' to stream on Prime Video from August 22



Nag Ashwin's 3D spectacle 'Kalki 2898 AD' will make its OTT debut on Prime Video on August 22, the streaming service announced on August 17.

Featuring a star-studded cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Deepika Padukone, Prabhas and Kamal Haasan, the action-adventure film will be available in Telugu as well as Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, with subtitles in English, on Prime Video, PTI reported from Mumbai.

Touted as a marriage of Hindu epic Mahabharata and science fiction, the big-budget film is produced by Vyjayanthi Movies and was released in theatres across the country on June 27.

Since its release, the film has emerged as one of the biggest films of 2024, earning over Rs 1100 crore at the worldwide box office.

Prabhas, who plays the role of Bhairava in the movie, said the experience of working on the film has been "truly exhilarating".

"The film not only pushes the boundaries of storytelling with its blend of mythology and futuristic elements but also delves deep into the complexities of human nature.

Reliance, Disney offer concessions to make merger happen

Reliance and Walt Disney have offered to sell some channels to win faster antitrust approval for their $8.5 billion India media assets merger, but are resisting changes to cricket broadcast rights they own, two sources familiar with the matter said, according to a Reuters report from New Delhi yesterday.



Antitrust experts have warned that the Reliance-Disney merger, announced in February, could face intense scrutiny as it will create India's biggest entertainment player, which will compete with Sony, Zee Entertainment, Netflix and Amazon with a combined 120 TV channels and two streaming services.

The merged company, which will be majority owned by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani's Reliance, will also have lucrative rights worth billions of dollars for the broadcast of cricket, raising pricing power fears and its grip over advertisers.

After the Competition Commission of India (CCI) privately asked Reliance and Disney around 100 questions related to the merger, the companies have told the watchdog they are willing to sell some TV channels — fewer than 10 — to assuage concerns of market power and win an early approval, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The sources said some of the concessions being offered relate to regional Indian language channels where the two companies may have a dominant market share.

Zee and Sony planned to create a $10 billion TV behemoth in India and in 2022 offered concessions by selling three TV channels. That helped them win CCI approval, but the merger eventually collapsed.

CCI's notification approving that deal, which contained details of the competitive landscape, showed that in local language Marathi, Disney and Reliance channels back then had a combined market share of between 65 percent and 75 percent. In Bengali language entertainment channels, the two had as much as a 50 percent market share.

Disney declined to comment. Reliance and the CCI did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

Cricket is another point of contention in the merger process. The sport has a fanatical following in India and matches are sought after by advertisers.

Reliance-Disney will own digital and TV cricket rights for top cricket leagues, including for the world's most valuable cricket tournament, the Indian Premier League.

Falling subscription revenue drags Dish TV to Q1 losses

Dish TV India yesterday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 1.56 crore for June quarter 2024-25 impacted by a decline in subscription revenue.

The direct-to-home firm had reported a net profit of Rs 20.54 crore in April-June FY24, according to a regulatory filing from Dish TV.

Revenue from operation was down to Rs 455.29 crore from Rs 500.16 crore, a PTI report from New Delhi stated. Total expenses declined 2.71 per cent to Rs 462.56 crore. The expenses include cost of goods and services, personnel cost and other expenses.



In the June quarter, Dish TV's subscription revenues were at Rs 306.2 crore as against Rs 397.4 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

However, advertising revenue was up 7.2 per cent to Rs 9.7 crore in the June quarter. Income from marketing and promotional fees also went up by 59.2 per cent to Rs 130.7 crore in the June quarter.

Operating revenue was also lower at Rs 455.3 crore as against Rs 500.2 crore a year ago. Dish TV's operating revenue includes subscription revenues, marketing and promotional fees, advertisement income and other income.Total income of Dish TV, which includes other income also, was down 8.38 per cent to Rs 461 crore.Though the company has not disclosed its subscription base it said, green shoots in rural recovery have started becoming visible and the distribution network of the company remains optimistic about the revival in entertainment spends in the countryside, where a significant DTH subscriber base is situated.

Typically, the third quarter of the fiscal is when some traction in the subscriber base should be visible, it said.

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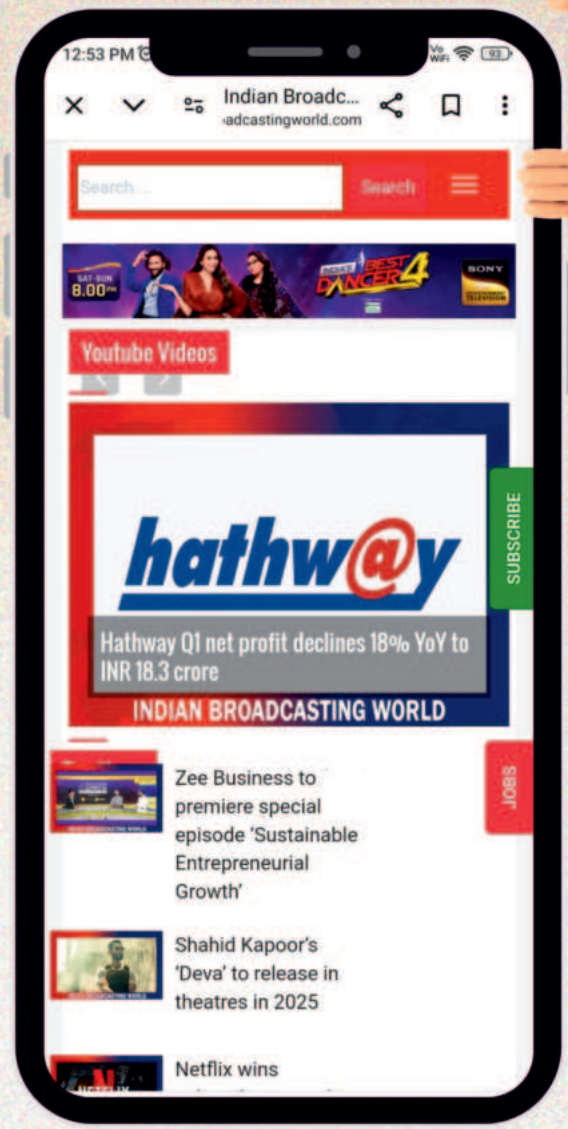
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ROLL ON

SPNI announces strategic leadership reshuffle

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) has announced a series of key leadership changes to drive its strategic growth and operational excellence. The newly appointed leaders, each bringing a wealth of experience and expertise, are set to play critical roles in SPNI's future success, the company said in a press release.

Nachiket Pantvaidya has been appointed as the Business Head of Sony Entertainment Television (SET), marking his third stint with SPNI. A seasoned media professional, Nachiket will also retain his position as General Manager at Sony Pictures International Productions (SPIP).



His career, characterized by leadership roles at various top media companies, has seen him successfully manage P&L for SET, develop iconic franchises, and significantly boost advertising and distribution revenues. In his expanded role, Nachiket will leverage his strategic vision and industry insights to enhance entertainment experiences across both SET and SPIP.

Ajay Bhalwankar, a veteran of SPNI since 2014, has been entrusted with the additional responsibility of leading Sony SAB as its Business Head. Ajay, who has already made a significant impact as the head of Sony Marathi, has a proven track record of delivering high-quality, engaging content that resonates with audiences.

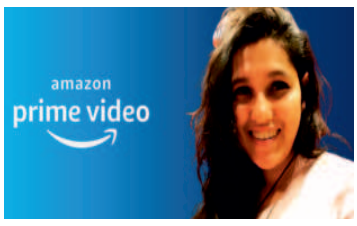
Under his guidance, Sony Marathi has captured a 9 percent market share in the competitive Marathi General Entertainment Channel (GEC) market. Ajay's creative insight and strategic foresight are expected to bring fresh, engaging content to Sony SAB, further solidifying the channel's position in the market.

Tushar Shah has been appointed to oversee Sony MAX, Sony MAX HD, Sony MAX 2, Sony WAH, and Sony PAL in addition to his current responsibilities as the Business Head of English, Bengali, and Infotainment Channels, and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at SPNI.

Tushar's leadership has been instrumental in the growth and profitability of channels such as Sony PIX, Sony AATH, and Sony BBC Earth. His successful expansion of Sony AATH in West Bengal is a testament to his strategic capabilities. In his expanded role, Tushar is expected to drive further innovation and market presence across the channels under his purview.

These leadership changes at SPNI reflect the company's commitment to adapting to the evolving media landscape and ensuring its continued growth. With Nachiket, Ajay, and Tushar taking on these pivotal roles, SPNI is well-positioned to deliver innovative and engaging content to its diverse audience across India.

Sonal Kabi joins Amazon Prime Video as CMO



Amazon Prime Video India has announced the appointment of Sonal Kabi as its new Chief Marketing Officer. Kabi's appointment marks a significant step in bolstering the platform's marketing strategy as it continues to expand its footprint in the Indian streaming market.Kabi, who shared the news on her LinkedIn profile, brings a wealth of experience to her new role. Prior to joining Amazon Prime Video India, she served as the Director of Marketing at Netflix for the past year. Reflecting on her time at Netflix, Kabi noted, " My one year at Netflix was nothing short of incredible, leading campaigns for The Railway Men, Chamkila, Heeramandi and The Great Indian Kapil Show, among others. Fortunate to have met strong leaders with very large hearts and stellar business acumen. Monika Shergill, Srivats TS – this journey was a joyride and thank you for being amazing. Saying bye to my very talented team was tough; I still miss them dearly. Kabi's career is distinguished by her extensive experience in the media and marketing sectors. She previously spent nearly six years at Amazon India, where she held several key roles, including Lead – Originals at Amazon Prime, Head of Title Marketing at Amazon Prime Video, and Head of Marketing at Amazon miniTV. Her deep familiarity with Amazon's ecosystem and her strategic insights will be valuable assets in her new role. Before her tenure at Amazon, Kabi worked with notable organizations such as Shuttl, McDonald's, Star TV Network, Leo Burnett, and Lowe and Partners Worldwide. Her diverse background spans various facets of marketing and media, reflecting her versatility and expertise.

Network18 identifies new focus areas, Avinash Kaul and Puneet Singhvi to drive business growth

Network18 had announced new focus areas for its leadership team to better navigate the evolving media landscape and enhance focus on product innovation, technology, and audience growth. These strategic moves are designed to boost revenue and improve cost efficiency amidst a rapidly changing news delivery environment.

In a memo to senior management, CEO Rahul Joshi outlined the challenges facing the global news industry and emphasized the need to adapt to new distribution formats and the growing influence of artificial intelligence across various business functions.

Puneet Singhvi, currently the Chief Executive Officer of Network18 (Digital) and President of Corporate Strategy, has been tasked with leading digital audience growth, overseeing the off-platform business, and establishing and managing the Centre of Excellence (CoE). Singhvi will also prioritize cost management and focus on driving revenue through strategic partnerships with platforms such as Google, Taboola, and Amazon, as well as exploring opportunities with AI providers and connected TV brands.



Avinash Kaul, the Chief Executive Officer of Network18 (Broadcast) and Managing Director of A+E Networks, TV18, will see his role expanded to include direct revenue growth across TV, digital, and print, excluding Moneycontrol. Kaul will continue to drive TV ratings and oversee operational aspects of TV and print. His responsibilities will also include a greater emphasis on revenue generation through IPs and branded content, collaborating closely with vertical heads and CEOs to meet revenue targets.

Both Singhvi and Kaul will continue to report directly to Rahul Joshi as they implement these changes and drive Network18's strategic objectives forward.

Nitish Sharma joins Sun TV Network as business head

Sun TV Network has appointed Nitish Sharma as the Business Head of its Hindi Entertainment Channel (GEC), Sun Neo.

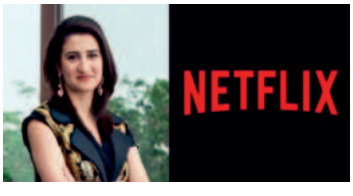
Sharma brings over three years of experience from ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd, where he served as Chief Channel Officer and Business Head at Zee Anmol & Big Magic. His career began with Zeel in 2021 as the Business Head for Big Magic.



With a background that includes roles at Star Sports, Aditya Birla Group, and Sony Pictures Networks India, Sharma is set to bring his extensive industry experience to Sun TV Network.

In his new role, he will report to Aparna Bhonsle, who joined Sun TV Network in June.

Mahima Kaul joins Netflix India as director of public policy



Netflix India has appointed Mahima Kaul as its new Director of Public Policy. Kaul shared her excitement for the role in a LinkedIn post, highlighting her enthusiasm for the challenges and opportunities in the OTT and streaming sectors in India.

"Absolutely delighted to have joined Netflix today to lead public policy in India," Kaul said. "After considerable time spent in social media/apps, I am really excited about the challenges and opportunities ahead for OTTs and streaming services, and the broader policy work ahead of us."

Kaul previously served as Director of Public Policy for APAC at Bumble, where she established public policy priorities and initiated the "Brunch with Bumble" series. She also supported research on online gender-based violence in India. Before Bumble, she advanced from Head of Public Policy & Government Partnerships to Director at Twitter.

Her career began at the Center for Policy Research, and she has worked with organizations such as Ventana Productions, Hendrick Communications, Orion Publishing, The Indian Express, NewsX, and Observer Research Foundation.

SPNI's Neeraj Vyas quits to pursue entrepreneurship

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) has announced that Neeraj Vyas, Business Head of Sony Entertainment Television, Sony SAB, PAL, and Sony MAX Movie Cluster, will leave the company effective August 31, 2024. After nearly three decades of service, Vyas has decided to embark on a new entrepreneurial journey.

Vyas has played a pivotal role in shaping SPNI's flagship General Entertainment Channels (GECs), including Sony Entertainment Television, Sony SAB, Sony PAL, and the Hindi movies cluster. His career at SPNI began in sales for Sony Entertainment Television (SET), where he quickly rose to the position of National Sales Head by 2005. He was appointed Executive Vice President for Sony MIX, the network's Hindi music channel, showcasing exceptional leadership and strategic vision, the network said in a press statement.



In 2011, Vyas took on the responsibility for Sony MAX, followed by Sony SAB and Sony PAL in 2017, and Sony Entertainment Television in 2023. Under his guidance, Sony SAB was successfully repositioned as a premium entertainment brand, achieving significant growth through a revitalized programming line-up and content strategy.

N.P. Singh, Managing Director and CEO of SPNI, commented, "Neeraj Vyas's journey with Sony Pictures Networks India has been remarkable. His vision and leadership have been pivotal in transforming our entertainment channels into market leaders. Neeraj has an innate ability to understand the pulse of the audience and create content that resonates deeply with viewers. On a personal level, Neeraj's passion for excellence and his innovative spirit have always inspired those around him. His departure marks the end of an era for us, but we are excited about the new ventures he will undertake. Neeraj leaves behind a legacy of success, and we wish him all the best as he embarks on his entrepreneurial journey."

Reflecting on his tenure, Neeraj Vyas said, "My time at Sony Pictures Networks India has been an incredible journey filled with learning, growth, and countless memorable moments. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities to lead dynamic teams and work on groundbreaking projects. As I move on to explore new entrepreneurial ventures, I carry with me the invaluable experiences and relationships built over the years. I am excited for what lies ahead and remain confident that the teams at SPNI will continue to achieve great heights."

Ritesh Khosla appointed general counsel of SPNI

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) had announced the appointment of Ritesh Khosla as the new General Counsel, effective September 1, 2024. He will succeed Ashok Nambissan, who is retiring after a distinguished tenure.

Ritesh Khosla, with over two decades of experience, began his career as a practicing lawyer before joining SPNI. He has served as Deputy General Counsel for the past six years. His expertise encompasses mergers and acquisitions (M&A), joint ventures (JVs), regulatory frameworks, compliance, corporate governance, complex litigation, and intellectual property rights (IPR) protection and enforcement, the SPNI said in a press release.



In his new role, Ritesh will oversee SPNI's corporate relations, legal and regulatory affairs, secretarial, and standards & practices functions. He will provide legal guidance, manage the company's legal risks, and serve as the company's Ombudsperson, reporting directly to the Managing Director & CEO of SPNI.

Ritesh will also lead initiatives to enhance SPNI's compliance framework, particularly in digital and IPR areas. He will strengthen the company's legal infrastructure in international markets and oversee SPNI's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, ensuring alignment with legal and ethical standards. His dedication to mentoring and developing emerging legal talent underscores his commitment to the company's future.

Known for his strategic thinking and decisive legal skills, Ritesh brings a commercial mindset to problem-solving and risk mitigation. His leadership in complex legal situations has significantly contributed to the company's growth and compliance efforts.

Reflecting on his appointment, Ritesh Khosla said, "I am deeply honoured to become General Counsel at SPNI. My journey here has been incredibly enriching, and I am eager to continue working with our talented team. This role offers a unique opportunity to build on the strong legal foundation established under Ashok Nambissan's leadership. I am committed to upholding the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct and advancing SPNI's mission to deliver exceptional content and experiences to our audiences."

Sony Pictures Networks India welcomes Ritesh Khosla to his new role as General Counsel, confident that his legal expertise and leadership will be invaluable as SPNI navigates the complexities of the media and entertainment landscape. His commitment to excellence and integrity aligns perfectly with SPNI's core values, and the company looks forward to his positive impact in this role.

Mahesh Sharma elevated to President of Chaupal OTT

Chaupal OTT, a rapidly growing platform in the digital streaming industry, has announced the elevation of Mahesh Sharma to the position of President – Revenue Strategy, Strategic Partnerships & Alliances. This marks a significant step in Chaupal OTT's strategic growth and expansion plans.

Expressing his enthusiasm about the new role, Mahesh Sharma shared, "I'm happy to share that I'm starting a new position as President – Revenue Strategy, Strategic Partnerships & Alliances at Chaupal OTT! I look forward to driving revenue strategies and forging impactful partnerships that will contribute to the platform's continued success."

With this new position, Sharma will focus on enhancing revenue streams, building strategic partnerships, and forging alliances that will further cement Chaupal OTT's position in the competitive OTT market. His expertise and vision are expected to bring innovative strategies and growth opportunities to the platform.

Sharma's elevation reflects Chaupal OTT's commitment to bolstering its leadership team with experienced professionals who can steer the company toward new horizons in the digital entertainment landscape.

Mahesh Sharma brings over 23 years of combined experience in various aspects of the digital and media industries, including OTT (SVoD) subscription revenue, CTV (FAST) business strategy, strategic partnerships, marketing alliances, sales and marketing, media buying, P&L management, business development, and strategic planning. His meticulous approach to planning and execution has been instrumental in driving success in these areas.

A proactive leader and planner, Sharma excels in subscription revenue generation, strategic planning, market execution, and competitor analysis. He



has a proven track record of increasing revenues, achieving sales targets, streamlining workflows, and creating team environments that enhance productivity.

Sharma is also a skilled communicator with exceptional presentation skills and the ability to forge business partnerships across diverse industries. He leads cross-functional teams effectively and establishes beneficial relationships with key industry players.

With his extensive experience and strategic vision, Mahesh Sharma is poised to lead Chaupal OTT to new heights, driving growth and innovation in the digital streaming space.

Mona Jain exits Zee Media after 1.5 Years as CRO

Mona Jain, Chief Revenue Officer at Zee Media Corporation Limited (ZMCL), is departing the organisation after a tenure of 1 year and 6 months. Jain's plans remain undisclosed.



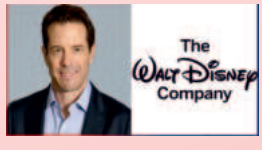
At Zee Media, Jain was instrumental in overseeing the network's revenue strategy, focusing on both linear and digital platforms. Her role included managing branded content pitches and advertising strategies.

Before her role at Zee Media, Jain served as Executive Vice President of Advertising Sales at Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) from 2013 to 2019. Jain brings over 30 years of media marketing and promotions experience.

Prior to ZEEL, she was the CEO of Vivaki Exchange for nearly nine years, where she led strategic investments in India. Her career also includes significant roles at Contract Advertising and Mudra Communications, where she held positions as Media Group Head and Media Director, respectively.

Disney hires Adam Smith as chief product and technology officer for entertainment, ESPN

Disney has taken a significant step to strengthen its technology leadership by appointing Adam Smith, a long-time YouTube executive, as the new Chief Product and Technology Officer for Disney Entertainment and ESPN. Smith will oversee the development and deployment of technology across Disney's vast entertainment portfolio, including its sports network, ESPN.



Smith will lead a global team of technologists, which includes engineers, product managers, designers, data scientists, and technical operations teams. His role will involve shaping Disney's digital infrastructure to enhance its entertainment and sports offerings.

TRAI starts consultation on b'cast, cable services audit provisions

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had released a consultation paper yesterday, addressing the audit-related provisions of the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017, as well as the Telecommunication (Broadcasting nd Cable) Services Digital Addressable Systems Audit a
Manual.

This move aligns with the full digitization of the cable TV sector, following TRAI's notification of the Regulatory Framework for Broadcasting and Cable Services on March 3, 2017, which included the Interconnection Regulation. TRAI later issued the Audit Manual on November 8, 2019, to further solidify the regulatory framework.

TRAI's overarching goal is to foster a fair and equitable environment for all stakeholders within the broadcasting and cable services industry. The Interconnection Regulation, in particular, establishes a trust-based system through third-party auditors. This system is designed to balance the varied interests of service providers, including broadcasters and distributors, while ensuring that consumer interests remain a priority. Independent audits are central to the principles outlined in the Interconnection Regulations. However, feedback from stakeholders has indicated that certain amendments to these audit provisions are necessary.

Furthermore, following the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's (MIB) acceptance of TRAI's recommendations on "Sharing of Infrastructure in Television Broadcasting Distribution Sector," issued on March 29, 2017, new guidelines for infrastructure sharing have been introduced. As a result, it has become essential to review and update the current framework, incorporating these enabling provisions into both the Interconnection Regulation 2017 and the Audit Manual.

The consultation paper seeks to address several key issues, including:

Proposed amendments to the audit-related provisions in the Interconnection Regulation 2017.

Necessary changes to the Audit Manual.

Incorporation of enabling provisions for infrastructure sharing within the Interconnection Regulation 2017 and the Audit Manual. TRAI is inviting comments and suggestions from stakeholders to ensure that the revised regulations and audit procedures reflect the needs and concerns of the industry, while continuing to protect the interests of consumers.

Banijay Asia, Sajid Nadiadwala, to invest Rs.100 cr in films and shows

Banijay Asia, known for producing popular shows like Bigg Boss and The Kapil Sharma Show, has announced a significant partnership with Sajid Nadiadwala's Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment (NGE).

The two entertainment giants will co-produce a wide array of content, with a focus on expanding their presence across OTT platforms, television, and theatres. This collaboration marks a strategic move to create original intellectual properties (IPs) and adapt international formats for Indian audiences.

With a combined investment of Rs.100 crore, Banijay Asia and NGE are set to revolutionize the Indian entertainment landscape. The partnership will focus on delivering diverse and innovative content that appeals to a broad audience. Their collaboration is expected to bring fresh ideas and high-quality production values to the screen, reinforcing both companies' reputations as leaders in the industry.

Deepak Dhar, CEO and Founder of Banijay Asia, expressed excitement about the partnership, stating, "This



collaboration with Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment is a step towards creating a new wave of content that is not only entertaining but also culturally relevant. We are thrilled to be working with Sajid Nadiadwala, a visionary in the film industry, and look forward to producing content that will resonate with audiences across different platforms."Sajid Nadiadwala, the powerhouse behind NGE, echoed these sentiments, adding, "This partnership with Banijay Asia aligns with our vision of creating content that is both innovative and impactful. By combining our strengths, we are confident in our ability to produce shows and films that will set new benchmarks in the industry."

The collaboration will begin with several high-profile projects already in the pipeline, spanning various genres and formats. Both companies are committed to pushing the boundaries of Indian entertainment and setting new standards in storytelling and production quality.

Tata Play revives iconic Star Plus serials with new service 'Tata Play Superhit Serials'

Tata Play has unveiled a nostalgic new offering, 'Tata Play Superhit Serials,' a Value-Added Service set to captivate audiences with beloved TV shows from the 2000s. The service will relaunch several iconic Star Plus serials, which have remained etched in the memories of viewers for years. This move responds to the substantial demand for these classic shows, which are no longer broadcast on television.



'Tata Play Superhit Serials' will showcase a range of hit shows that defined Indian television in the 2000s. Subscribers can look forward to reruns of legendary serials such as 'Kasautii Zindagi Kay,' 'Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii,' and 'Kumkum – Ek Pyara Sa Bandhan.' The lineup will also include other notable series like 'Kaahin Kissii Roz,' 'Hatim,' 'Dharti Ka Veer Yodha Prithviraj Chauhan,' and the romance drama 'Navya.' These shows, known for their compelling characters and intricate family dynamics, will be available ad-free to Tata Play subscribers for just INR 2 per day, the platform said in a press release.

Pallavi Puri, Tata Play's Chief Commercial and Content Officer, highlighted the strong viewer interest in these classic shows. "Our research revealed a significant demand for beloved classic shows. With a sizeable audience reminiscing about iconic properties like Kasautii, Kahaani, etc., we recognized the need to revisit and curate these groundbreaking programs that still enjoy a strong resonance in the minds of the viewers," Puri stated. The collaboration with Star Plus aims to rejuvenate these classic shows and make them accessible to today's viewers.

Gurjeev Singh Kapoor, Head – Distribution and International at Disney Star, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership. "We are thrilled to collaborate with Tata Play to bring back some of Star Plus' most beloved serials that have left an indelible mark on Indian television," Kapoor said. "This initiative goes beyond merely reviving classics; it's about reigniting the excitement and anticipation among our viewers who cherish these timeless stories and characters. Audiences, across generations, can fully immerse themselves in these shows, which still resonate today, through a seamless, ad-free viewing experience."

The reruns will feature a star-studded cast, including actors like Sakshi Tanwar, Shweta Tiwari, Ronit Roy, Urvashi Dholakia, Cezanne Khan, Ali Asgar, Rupali Ganguli, Hussain Kuwajerwala, Juhi Parmar, Sudha Chandran, Hiten Tejwani, Kiku Sharda, Anita Hassanandani, Eijaz Khan, and Iqbal Khan. Iconic characters such as Prerna, Parvati, Komolika, Mr. Bajaj, and Anurag Basu will once again entertain viewers in Indian homes.

The introduction of 'Tata Play Superhit Serials' adds to Tata Play's extensive portfolio of 45+ entertainment and infotainment Platform Services. These services cater to various age groups and offer content across genres including Entertainment, Kids, Learning, Regional, and Devotion.

Celebrate Raksha Bandhan with toon shows on Sony YAY!

This Raksha Bandhan, Sony YAY! is making sibling bonds even more special with its lineup of toons that perfectly capture the unique dynamics between brothers and sisters. Whether you're always in playful arguments or the type who gets into mischief together, there's a show for every sibling duo to enjoy.

According to a press release, the hilarious sibling rivalry in 'Oggy and the Cockroaches' to the adventurous bond of 'Naruto: Shippuden', each show resonates with different sibling experiences. 'Honey Bunny' takes you on mischievous rides, while 'Shin chan' brings out the laugh-out-loud moments of chaos.

Celebrate this Raksha Bandhan with Sony YAY!'s variety of fun-filled toons that reflect your sibling story, making the day even more memorable. Available in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Bangla, the channel offers a range of content designed to entertain every kid and their sibling.

So, grab your sibling and dive into the toon world that feels like it was made just for the two of you!



Govt. withdraws draft of B'cast Bill; new version after more consultations

Tntertainment industry there's something to cheer about: the Indian government yesterday, according to multiple media reports, withdrew the latest draft of the Broadcast Bill, which had generated lot of heat over State's efforts to control freedom of expression, journalistic freedom and censorship.\

According to The Hindustan Times, which cited five people aware of the matter, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Monday withdrew the latest draft of the Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2024 or BSRB by asking all stakeholders to return physical copies given to them between July 24 and 25. The stakeholders were told that their comments were no longer required.

The draft was circulated for feedback as part of an ongoing process of consultations that began in November 2023 when the first draft was uploaded by the ministry.

An official on the condition of anonymity, The Hindustan Times further added, revealed that it is currently not yet clear whether the BSRB will be redrafted in its entirety or if only particular sections would be redrawn from the latest draft,which was not shared publicly but with some stakeholders, who received watermarked copies.

The latest version of the Bill, which was reviewed by HT, drew significant concerns over some of the provisions and how the consultation process was being carried out. In particular controversy were draft provisions that could potentially tag most online influencers as broadcasters if they dealt with matters of current affairs in their work.

A report in Network18-owned Moneycontrol.com highlighted that several stakeholders received calls from the MIB on August 12 asking them to return the physical copies of the draft without any feedback. (https://www.moneycontrol.com/technology/govt-asks-stakeholders-to-return-copies-of-controversial-broadcasting-bill-sources-article-12794175.html)

The government has held consultations with select groups of stakeholders, although it did not release the new draft publicly. The approach has drawn criticism from various groups who are urging the government to release it to the public, the moneycontrol.com report said.

The Bill also proposes several other compliance requirements of creators, a move which has evoked concerns of stifling freedom of speech and of censorship.

Late yesterday evening the MIB on its X account posted a message that seemed to be a response to media reports earlier on Monday.

The post read: "The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is working on a Draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill. "The draft Bill was placed in public domain on 10.11.2023 along with the explanatory notes for comments of the stakeholders and the general public.

mib.gov.in/broadcasting/s...

"In response, multiple recommendations/ comments/ suggestions were received including from various Associations.

"Ministry is holding a series of consultations with the stakeholders on the draft bill.

"Further additional time is being provided to solicit comments/ suggestions till 15th October, 2024. A fresh draft will be published after detailed consultations."

Bhumi Pednekar, Ishaan Khatter to star in 'The Royals'



Actors Bhumi Pednekar and Ishaan Khatter are set to feature in an upcoming series, titled 'The Royals', which will also mark the return of Bollywood veteran Zeenat Aman.

Created by Rangita and Ishita Pritish Nandy, 'The Royals'is a modern-day Indian royalty rom-com series, PTI reported.

"When an entitled Prince Charming meets a startup whiz, it's inevitable that they will bump heads! Will their ambitions collide, two worlds clash, or even spark a surprising romance?" read the official description of the show.

'The Royals' will also feature Sakshi Tanwar, Nora Fatehi, Dino Morea, Milind Soman, Chunky Panday, Vihaan Samat, Kavya Trehan, Sumukhi Suresh, Udit Arora, Lisa Mishra and Luke Kenny.

Star Sports to b'cast Premier League in 4K in India starting Aug 17

Star Sports Network, the official broadcaster of the Premier League in India, has announced a groundbreaking upgrade for football enthusiasts across the country. For the first time, the 2024/25 Premier League season will be broadcast in 4K resolution on Indian linear television, offering viewers an unprecedented level of clarity and immersion as they follow the excitement of the top-tier English football league.

Starting August 17, fans can experience the thrill of the Premier League in stunning 4K resolution exclusively on Star 4K. The season opener will feature a much-anticipated clash between Manchester United and Fulham at 12:30 am IST, setting the stage for this historic broadcast. The first weekend of the new season will also see other high-stakes matches aired in 4K, including Ipswich Town vs. Liverpool and the eagerly awaited showdown between Chelsea and Manchester City.

Star 4K, which made its debut earlier this year during TATA IPL 2024, will be available exclusively as a value-added service (VAS) on Airtel Xstream and TATA Play Binge+. Current subscribers and new 4K adopters are encouraged to contact their DTH providers to access this premium service.

Throughout the season, Star 4K will selectively broadcast matches featuring the 'Big 6' teams—Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea, Liverpool, Arsenal, and Tottenham—ensuring that fans of these iconic clubs can enjoy their games in unmatched detail and with enhanced audio quality.

Since its launch, Star 4K has revolutionized the viewing experience of major sports events, including the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, Wimbledon 2024, and the Tamil Nadu Premier League 2024. This latest milestone with the Premier League underscores Star Sports' commitment to delivering cutting-edge sports content to Indian audiences.

Beyond the Premier League, Star 4K has also expanded its offerings by featuring the 4K TV premieres of blockbuster Bollywood movies like 'Brahmastra' 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior', and '83', further enhancing the channel's value proposition.

In addition to Premier League action, Star 4K will also broadcast an exciting lineup of upcoming sports events, including the Caribbean Premier League, ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024, and the much-anticipated Pro Kabaddi League Season 11.

By bringing the Premier League in 4K to Indian viewers, Star Sports is once again setting a new standard for high-quality sports broadcasting, ensuring that football fans can enjoy every moment of the action in the most vivid and immersive way possible.

Catch all the Premier League action live and exclusive on the Star Sports Network and Disney+ Hotstar, starting August 17, 2024.

Zee's South African channel to promote local content, language

After capturing the imagination of South African viewers with Indian content dubbed in Zulu, Zee Zonke now plans to go for stories that are "made here by the locals for the locals," according to a senior executive of the channel.

According to a PTI report from Johannesburg, Zee Zonke, which translates as 'Zee for All' in isiZulu, is a TV channel started by Indian telecaster Zee Limited in South Africa to cater to the majority isiZulu-speaking community.

The channel, which completes one year this month, had already achieved the highest ranking among the scores of pay TV channels in the country in the first seven to eight months.

The only channels with higher viewership being those of the South African public broadcaster and commercial broadcaster e-tv, both carrying free-to-air channels.

Almost 27.5 million people out of the 62 million population of South Africa speak or understand the isiZulu language.

"Nobody else had ever taken the risk of launching an exclusive isiZulu channel ...We took the plunge, and the rest is history," Somnath Malakar, CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd , told PTI.

Explaining the mix of content on the channel, he said, Zee had a lot of content available in almost all Indian regional languages and they could be dubbed into isiZulu.

"Not only did we want to bring more stories from India and to be told in a language that people converse in their lounges, but we also want to pick up stories that are made here by the locals for the locals," Malakar said.

SET secures 22 brand partnerships for 'KBC' S16

Tony Entertainment Television is all set to captivate audiences once again with the 16th season of the iconic quiz show Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC), premiering on August 12. The show, which has been a symbol of hope, knowledge, and aspiration for millions, continues to be hosted by the legendary Amitabh Bachchan, who returns to guide contestants through life-changing moments in the hot seat.

This season, KBC's campaign, 'Zindagi Hai. Har Modh Par Sawaal Puchegi. Jawab Toh Dena Hoga', delves deep into the notion that life, at its crucial junctures, poses challenges that test our resolve. The answers to these challenges can lead us down new paths, reflecting the enduring spirit of the show.

In its 16th edition, KBC introduces an exciting new feature, the 'Super Sawaal.' Positioned between questions 5 and 6, the Super Sawaal challenges contestants to answer without any lifelines or options. A correct response not only advances the contestant but also unlocks the 'Dugnaastra,' a powerful tool that allows them to double their winnings on any one question between questions 6 and 10.

The fast-paced 'Super Sandook' also makes a return this season, adding an extra layer of intensity. Contestants who reach INR 3,20,000 will face a rapid-fire round of 10 questions, which must be answered in 90 seconds.



The upcoming season has attracted significant commercial interest, with 22 brands coming on board as partners. The season is co-presented by Hyundai Motor India Limited and Aditya Birla Group and is co-powered by Mountain Dew PepsiCo India, Mondelez India, Ultratech Cement, and Parag Milk Foods (Gowardhan Ghee). Additional partners include Special Partner Patanjali Dantkanti, Ceat, Lauritz Knudsen Electrical & Automation, and Banking Partner State Bank of India. Associate sponsors include Asian Paints, Kalyan Jewellers, Raymond, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Bikaji, Dorset, RC Plasto Tank and Pipes Pvt Ltd, Amazon.in, and Aakash Educational Services Ltd. The show also boasts partnership deals with the Reserve Bank of India, GSK, and Dr. Morepen.

Amitabh Bachchan, reflecting on his continued role as the host, said, "Kaun Banega Crorepati is more than just a game show; it's a shared journey of dreams and aspirations, with millions of viewers rooting for the contestants on the hot seat. Hosting KBC keeps me connected to my fans, who I consider my extended family. Meeting contestants from all walks of life, each with unique stories of resilience, filled with trials and tribulations, yet always smiling and dreaming big, deeply moves and inspires me."

He further emphasized that Season 16, embodying the spirit of modern India, continues to celebrate knowledge as a great equalizer. The season promises to offer viewers an even more enriching and thrilling experience, building on the show's legacy.

'Kaun Banega Crorepati' S16 premieres on August 12 and will air every Monday to Friday at 9:00 p.m. on Sony Entertainment Television.

NDTV's Jai Jawan: John Abraham pays tribute to Indian armed forces in Ladakh

NDTV is set to air its special flagship program, 'Jai Jawan', this Independence Day, featuring Bollywood star John Abraham as he spends a day with the Indian Army in the challenging terrain of Ladakh. This patriotic special, celebrating the valor and dedication of India's defenders, showcases John Abraham engaging with soldiers stationed in one of the world's most arduous battlegrounds.

According to a press release, 'Jai Jawan' special was filmed in Ladakh, at altitudes of 15,000 feet where the oxygen levels are notably low, adding to the challenges faced by the Indian Army. The episode emphasizes the tireless efforts of the troops stationed in this high-altitude region, highlighting their vigilance in safeguarding the country's borders.

John Abraham, celebrated for his fitness and patriotic film roles, spends time with Subedars, Hawaldars, and Agniveers, sharing moments of camaraderie and light-heartedness. In a unique and endearing segment, John and the soldiers engage in a fun dance-off, with the Bollywood star performing to his popular tracks and the soldiers showcasing their own impressive dance moves.



New news channel Live Times soon to be launched

India is on the brink of a significant transformation in its news media landscape with the upcoming launch of 'Live Times,' the country's first global multicast news hub. Spearheaded by Dilip Singh, this cutting-edge platform marks a monumental leap in news delivery, blending advanced technology with a commitment to truth and transparency.

Live Times is designed to provide multi-screen, multi-stream news across D2C, FAST, OTT platforms, and other future technologies. Dedicated to integrity, the hub aims to build a truth-based World Information Order, aligning with the Indian value system of 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram.'

Under the visionary leadership of Singh, who has been instrumental in pioneering several groundbreaking projects in the Indian broadcast industry, Live Times promises to offer unbiased, factual journalism in an era often clouded by misinformation. His focus on truth over TRP and public interest over sensationalism defines the mission of Live Times: to deliver reliable and unadulterated news to a global audience.

"In an era where truth and fiction often collide in a haze of misinformation, Live Times stands as an uncompromising beacon of clarity and integrity. It is a revolutionary commitment to the highest echelons of journalistic commitment. We pledge to deliver news in its purest form, free from distortion, adulteration and manipulation. Our mission is to ensure that every individual, anywhere in the world, has access to news that is not only reliable but also unassailable in its accuracy." Singh emphasized.

With its launch, Live Times is poised to become a beacon of clarity and integrity in the global news landscape.

18 TV news channels' permissions cancelled in last 5 years: MIB

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has said that while 14 satellite news channels were permitted to start operations in 2023, penal actions against 18 defaulters were taken for breach of various regulations in the last five years.

"Under Clause 25 of the Policy Guidelines, 2022, penal actions are taken against broadcasters who violate these guidelines. In the last five years, permission to 18 satellite news channels have been cancelled and transmission of three satellite news channels were suspended for a certain time period," Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting L. Murugan said in Rajya Sabha (Upper House) last Friday.



The Minister was replying to a query from a fellow parliamentarian in the Upper House who had asked for information on licences/permissions granted to start satellite news channels in the country during the last five years along with associated details.

According to Murugan, permissions to private satellite TV channels are granted as per the policy guidelines of 2022 for uplinking and downlinking of satellite TV channels, which are also amended from time to time.

Netflix to premiere crime-thriller 'Sector 36' Sept 13

Netflix is set to premiere 'Sector 36', a gripping crime-thriller inspired by true events, on September 13.



The film, produced by Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films and Jio Studios, marks the directorial debut of Aditya Nimbalkar and promises to deliver a chilling exploration of power, crime and social inequality, Netflix said in a media statement yesterday.

'Sector 36' delves into the unsettling disappearance of several children from a local slum, thrusting a dedicated police officer into a dark and twisted investigation. As the officer unravels the truth, he finds himself pitted against a cunning serial killer in a high-stakes game of cat and mouse.

The film features acclaimed actors Vikrant Massey and Deepak Dobriyal in intense roles that push their acting boundaries.

Govt says cable TV subs down; OTT services partially responsible



The Indian government has said that there has been a decline in cable TV subscribers in India — which does not include the DTH consumer numbers — and that the proliferation of the over the top (OTT) platforms could be one of the reasons for the slowing down of numbers.

"Number of cable TV subscribers has shown decline over successive years from 103 million in March 2020 to 64 million in March 2023, excluding DTH and free Dish subscribers as mentioned in the Annual Reports of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India," Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting L. Murugan said in Rajya Sabha on August 9.

The Minister, who was replying to a query from a fellow parliamentarian in the Upper House on the last working day of parliament's Budget session last week, added, "The decline (in cable TV subscribers) may be partly attributable to the advent of Over-The-Top platforms."

Asked whether the government had taken steps to bridge the "content flexibility disparity" between OTT and cable TV services, Murugan stated that while OTT platforms were regulated as per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, cable TV was governed by the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Regulations.

"Government is guided by a differentiated approach for content regulation on OTT platforms and cable TV networks as the content in the former is consumed (on) on-demand basis whereas in the latter, it is in a linear manner," Murugan added.

Creativeland Studios teams up with Amish for Krishna epic

Author Amish Tripathi is set to collaborate with Creativeland Studios Entertainment for a global epic 'Shri Radha Ramanam', based on lord Krishna.

Described as "a magical tale of Lord Krishna's love", 'Shri Radha Ramanam' will be written by writers Prakash Kapadia and Raam Mori after a research of over two years, PTI reported from Mumbai.

Filmmaker Hardik Gajjar, who has previously helmed the mythology-based series 'Siya Ke Ram', will take on direction whereas Ayananka Bose is attached as a cinematographer. VFX artists from three studios based in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Mumbai have been brought together to recreate the mythical images of ancient Vrindavan, Barsana and Dwarka.



Tripathi, 49, has sold over seven million copies of his publications and is best known for writing 'The Shiva Trilogy' and 'Ram Chandra Series'. His books have been translated into 20 Indian and international languages since 2010.

The author said he is "proud" to be associated with the project. "Traditional Indian stories have a deep narrative in which you can get pleasurably lost, but also teach you deeper lessons, so that you can live better," he said.

"I love the script of this movie, not just for its fantastic scale and research, but also how it helps us explore different aspects of love, through the story of Lord Krishna."

Founder & MD of Creativeland Studios Entertainment, C Sajan Raj Kurup said, "The story of Lord Krishna is one that speaks of compassion, love and protection, resonating with audiences across the globe. It is great to have Amish and the rest of the strong and passionate global team we have been able to put together to bring this project to life."

The shooting of the film is slated to begin in the month of November and the release is expected to be in February 2026.

'Avatar 3' title revealed as 'Fire and Ash' at D23 Expo



The highly anticipated third installment of James Cameron's Avatar saga now has an official title: 'Avatar: Fire and Ash'. The revelation was made during the D23 Expo on Friday, where Cameron, along with stars Zoe Saldana and Sam Worthington, unveiled the title to an eager audience.

Though Cameron did not showcase any footage from the film, he did reveal concept art, including a striking image of Neytiri (Saldana) dancing over flames and riding banshees. "You'll see a lot more of Pandora that you've never seen before," Cameron teased. "It's an insane adventure and a feast for the eyes, but it's also got very high emotional stakes, more than ever before. We're going into really challenging territory for all the characters you know and love," ANI reported from Los Angeles.

Avatar: Fire and Ash was shot back-to-back with the 2022 release Avatar: The Way of Water. The sequel depicted the ongoing war between humanity and the Na'vi, focusing on Jake Sully (Worthington) and Neytiri (Saldana) as they defend the aquatic Metkayina clan against the Resource Development Administration (RDA). The film concluded with a bittersweet victory for the Na'vi, marred by the loss of Jake and Neytiri's eldest son and the continued presence of the RDA on Pandora. The third film, Fire and Ash, will explore new dimensions of Pandora,introducing the "Ash People."

Suresh Wadkar launches first radio show 'Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le' this Diwali

Renowned singer Suresh Wadkar is set to embark on a new journey as he makes his radio debut with the upcoming show 'Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le'.

The announcement, which coincided with his birthday, has created a wave of excitement among his fans and music enthusiasts alike. The show, produced by Studio Refuel, is scheduled to premiere around Diwali, adding a special touch to the festive season.

The news of Wadkar's radio debut was unveiled during his birthday celebrations, making the day even more memorable for the singer and his fans. The event was graced by his wife, Padma Wadkar, who stood by his side as he shared the exciting news. Also in attendance were key figures from Studio Refuel, including Kumarr, the show's anchor, Sachin Tailang, CEO for India, and Raman Chibber, CEO for Dubai.



The title of the show, 'Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le', is inspired by the timeless song from the 1983 film Sadma, which Wadkar originally sang. The show is set to take listeners on a nostalgic journey through the rich tapestry of Indian music, as well as the singer's illustrious career. It promises to be a treasure trove of sweet and sour moments, offering a unique glimpse into Wadkar's life and the fascinating stories behind some of the music industry's most iconic tracks.

According to anchor Kumarr, the show will delve deep into the lesser-known aspects of Wadkar's life and career. It will feature behind-the-scenes stories, personal anecdotes, and reflections that have shaped Wadkar's journey in the music industry. This radio show aims to connect with the audience on a personal level, making them feel a part of Wadkar's musical voyage.

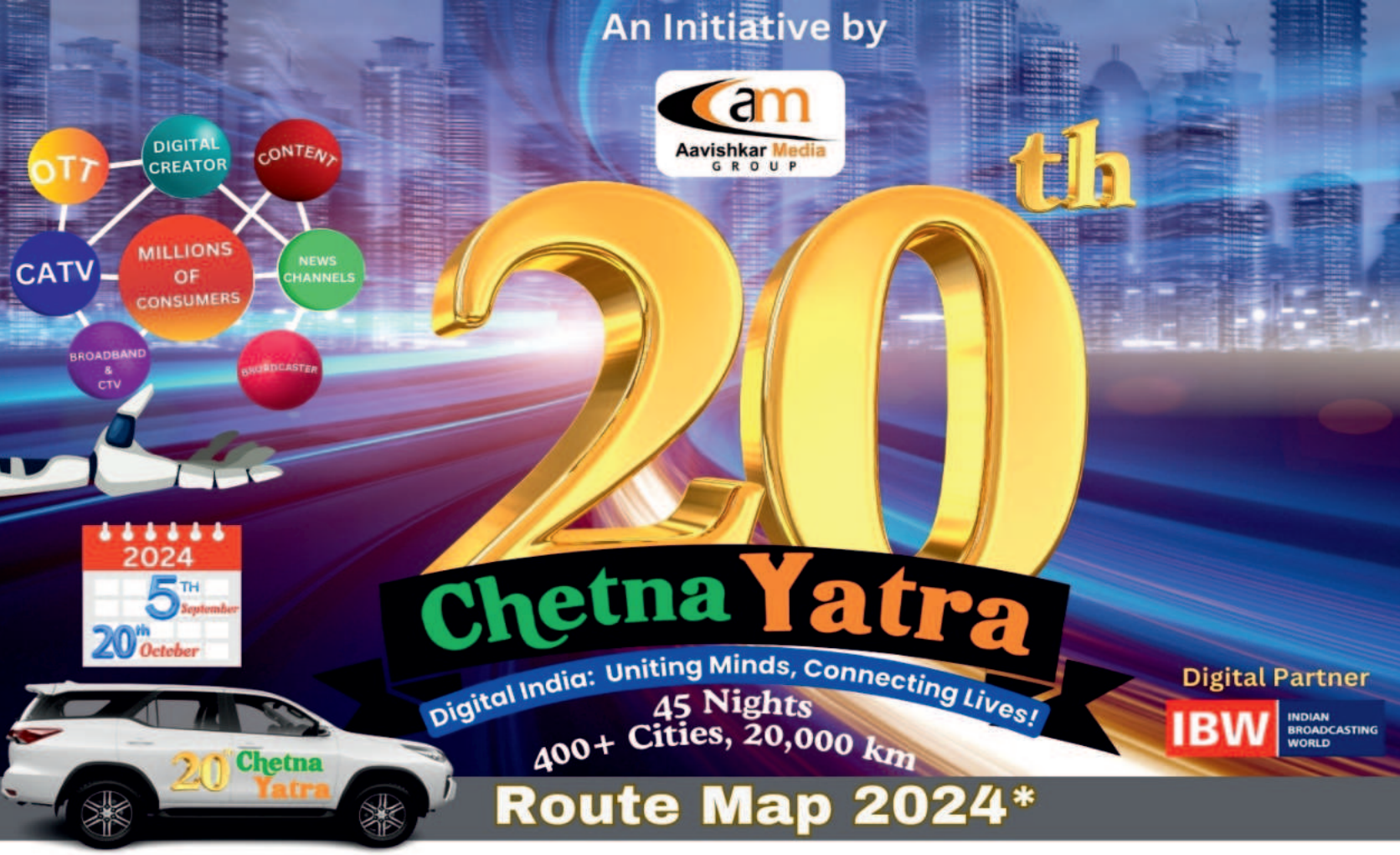
Wadkar expressed his excitement about this new venture, sharing that the radio show format will allow him to connect with his audience in a more intimate and engaging way. He hopes to revive the golden era of Indian music and share the joy and nostalgia of that time with his listeners.

The launch event for 'Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le' was a musical extravaganza in itself. Wadkar, known for his soulful voice and timeless melodies, performed some of his most beloved songs, leaving the audience spellbound. The event turned into a celebration of music, love, and nostalgia, setting the perfect tone for what the radio show promises to deliver.

As the premiere of Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le draws closer, anticipation is building among fans, music lovers, and cinephiles. The show is expected to be a hit, bringing back the charm of yesteryears through the voice of one of India's most revered singers.

With Ae Zindagi Gale Laga Le, Suresh Wadkar is not just making his debut in radio but also reviving an era of music that holds a special place in the hearts of millions. As the show promises to unveil untold stories and cherished memories, it is poised to be a significant addition to the legacy of Indian music.

Stay tuned for the premiere around Diwali and prepare to be taken on a heartfelt musical journey with Suresh Wadkar.



Route Map 2024*

5th Sept. Delhi – Rohtak – Bhiwani – Hansi- Jind – Kaithal – Ujhana – Sangrur – Malerkotla – Ludhiana – **6th Sept.** Jalandhar - Beas – Amritsar – Batala – Gurdaspur – Pathankot – **7th Sept.** Kathua – Samba - Jammu – **8th Sept.** Udhampur – Doda – Bhadarwah - Chamba - **9th Sept.** Khajjiar – McLeodGanj – Dharamshala – Palampur – JoginderNagar – Mandi – Bilaspur - Shimla – **10th Sept.** Solan – Kasauli – Chandigarh - **11th Sept.** Ambala – Yamunanagar – Saharanpur – Haridwar - **12th Sept.** Najibabad – Nagina - Dhampur – Seohara – Moradabad – **13th Sept.** Kashipur – RamNagar – Nainital - **14th Sept.** Haldhwani – Rudrapur – Bareilly – Shahjahanpur – Sitapur - Lucknow - **15th Sept.** Kanpur – Urai – Jhansi – Nivari – Mahoba – Khazuraho - **16th Sept.** Panna – Katni – Bandhavgarh - **17th Sept.** Maihar – Rewa – Prayagraj - Varanasi - **18th Sept.** Gazipur – Buxar – Ara – Patna - **19th Sept.** Fatuha – Bakhtiarpur – Harnaut – Biharsharif – Nalanda – Jamui – Sono – Chakai – Devghar - **20th Sept.** Madhupur – Jamtara – Asansol – Raniganj – Durgapur – Bardhaman - Kolkatta - **21st Sept.** Kharagpur – Midnapore – Jaleshwar – Balasor - Bhadrak – Jajpur – Katak - Bhubaneswar - **22nd Sept.** Puri – Konarak – Khurda – Chatrapur – Behrampur (Brahmapur) – Srikakulam – Vizianagaram - Visakhapatnam - **23rd Sept.** Rajahmundry - Vijayawada- Machilipatnam - **24th Sept.** Guntur – Ongal – Kavali – Nellore – Tirupati – Chittur - Thiruttani – Chennai - **25th Sept.** Chengalpattu - Tindivanam – Puducherry – Cuddalore – Virudhachalam – Chidambaram – Sirkali – Karaikal - **26th Sept.** Nagapattinam – Velankanni – Ettugudi – Tirutturaipundi – Vedaranyam - Kodaikanal – Pattukkottai – Peravurani – Karaikudi – Devakottai – Devipattinam – Ramanathapuram - Rameswaram - **27th Sept.** Dhanushkodi – Rameswaram – Ramanathapuram – Sayalkudi – Vilathikulam – Thoothukudi – Palayamkottai – Nanguneri – Radhapuram – Vattakkottai – Kanniyakumari – Nagercoil - Thiruvananthapuram - **28th Sept.** Kollam - Ochira – Kayamkulam – Mannarasala – Alappuzha – Cherthala – Ernakulam – Kodungallur – Thrissur – Guruvayur – Ponnani – Malappuram – Manjeri – Kozhikode – Lakkidi – Kalpetta - Sultan Bathery - **29th Sept.** Waynad – Bandipur – Chamarajanagar – Mysore – Bangalore - **30th Sept. Tumakuru** – Chitradurga – Davanagere – Haveri – Shiggaon – Hubli - Dharwad – **1st Oct.** Alnavar – Londa – DudhSagar Water Fall - Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary Range – Darbandora - Tisk Usgao – Ponda – Old Goa - Panji – **2nd Oct.** Mapusa – Kudal – Oros Budruk – Fonda – Kolhapur – Karad – Satara - **3rd Oct.** Khandala – Pune – Pimpri - Mumbai - **4th Oct.** Bandra – Palghar – Talsari – Silvasa – DadarNagri Haveli – Daman – Valsad – Navsari – Surat – Bharuch – Vadodara – Anand - Ahemdabad - **5th Oct.** Dakor – Godhra – Dahod – Jhabua – Rattlam – Ujjain - **6th Oct** Dewas – Indore – **7th Oct.** Omkareshwar – Khandwa – Asirgarh – Burhanpur – Betul -**8th Oct.** Nagpur - Adilabad – Nirmal – **9th Oct.** Parket - Armoor – Jagtial – Mancherail – Sirancha – Bhopalpatnam - **10th Oct.** Dantewara – Jagdalpur - Bastar - **11th & 12th Oct.** Kondagaon – Keshkal - Kanker - **13th Oct.** Dhamtari – Mahasamund – Raipur - **14th Oct.** Bilaspur – Chilpi – **15th Oct.** Mandala Fort – Jabalpur -**16th Oct.** Sagar – Guna – Shivpuri – Sheopur – Sawauimadhopur - **17th Oct.** Gwalior – Mureina – Agra - **18th Oct.** Bharatpur – Dousa – Jaipur – **19th Oct.** – Delhi **20th Oct.**

GLIMPSES

























45 Nights,

20,000 Km, 400+ Cities

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20,000 Km, 400+ Cities

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45 Nights,

20,000 Km, 400+ Cities

WBD takes $9bn write-down amid fee, sports rights uncertainty



Warner Bros Discovery said on August 07, it wrote down the value of its TV assets due to the uncertainty of fees from cable and satellite distributors and sports rights renewals.

The film and entertainment studio, which owns sports network TNT and streaming service Max, recorded a $9.1 billion non-cash goodwill charge in the second quarter. This charge, stemming from a reassessment of the assets' value since the merger of WarnerMedia and Discovery, contributed to a $10 billion net loss for the quarter, a Reuters report stated.

The media landscape has significantly changed in the past two years, impacting valuations and expectations for traditional media companies and this current situation is reflected in the write-down, CEO David Zaslav said in a call with analysts.

Asked whether the company was considering hiving off assets, CFO Gunnar Wiedenfels said on the call: "We've said before, you shouldn't be surprised to see us engaging in you know, whatever M&A processes are going on out there."

The shift of viewers from traditional television to streaming services has led to a decline in advertising revenue and affiliate fees, impacting the profitability of Warner Bros. Discovery's television assets. This decline is further compounded by the escalating costs of acquiring sports rights.

TNT failed to renew a broadcast deal with National Basketball Association games, at a time when live sports have become crucial for companies to increase viewership. The company sued the NBA last month. Losing the lawsuit would accelerate the decline of its TV business, analysts said.

Prime Video to premiere 'Chandu Champion' on Aug 9



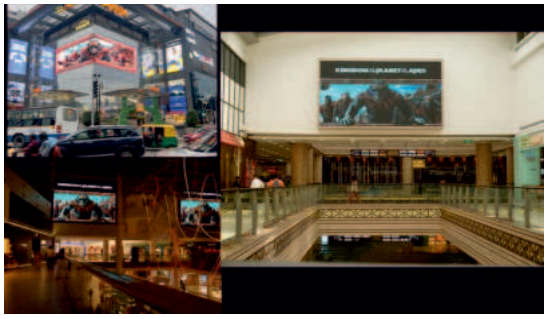
Prime Video had announced the global streaming premiere of the highly anticipated biographical sports drama 'Chandu Champion', directed by Kabir Khan.

The film, produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment and Kabir Khan Films, is now available for streaming in India and over 240 countries and territories worldwide.

Chandu Champion features a powerful performance by Kartik Aaryan, who portrays Murlikant Petkar, India's first Paralympics gold medalist. The ensemble cast also includes Vijay Raaz, Bhuvan Arora, Yashpal Sharma, Rajpal Yadav, Aniruddh Dave, and Shreyas Talpade in key roles.

The film tells the extraordinary true story of Murlikant Petkar, a soldier in the 1965 Indo-Pak War who, after sustaining severe injuries, defied all odds to become a champion sportsman, winning India's first Paralympic gold medal in 1972. The film explores themes of perseverance, resilience, and the indomitable human spirit.

Disney+ Hotstar unveils 3D billboards for 'Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes'



Disney+ Hotstar had elevated its marketing game with the introduction of 21 3D anamorphic billboards across Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru to promote the release of 'Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes'.

These cutting-edge billboards, located at key sites such as Jio World Drive, Cyber Hub, and Garuda Mall, bring the movie's thrilling world to life with lifelike visuals that seem to leap off the screen, the platform said in a press note.

The 3D billboards, a first for Disney+ Hotstar, showcase apes from the film appearing to break free from the screen, creating a sense of depth and motion that captivates onlookers. This innovative approach underscores Disney+ Hotstar's dedication to delivering immersive experiences to its audience.

'Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes', directed by Wes Ball, debuted on Disney+ Hotstar on August 2, 2024, in multiple languages including English, Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu.

The film continues the Planet of the Apes saga, set generations after Caesar's reign, with a new tyrannical ape leader and a young ape's journey that challenges the past and shapes the future of both apes and humans.

Mirchi announces 'Aazaadi Ki Kahaani Mirchi Ki Zubaani' campaign

Mirchi is marking India's 77th Independence Day with a return of its acclaimed campaign, 'Aazaadi Ki Kahaani Mirchi Ki Zubaani'. This year's initiative, launching on August 9 and running through August 15, promises a week-long tribute to India's rich history, featuring an impressive array of celebrities who will bring to life stories of India's freedom struggle.

'Aazaadi Ki Kahaani Mirchi Ki Zubaani' S2 will showcase 49 compelling stories narrated by 49 prominent figures from the entertainment industry. Each day, listeners will be treated to seven new stories, each presented by a different celebrity voice, all of which will also be available for streaming on the Gaana app.

The star-studded lineup includes Taapsee Pannu, Maniesh Paul, Chirag Paswan, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Shekhar Suman, Vikrant Massey, Chitrangada Singh, Gurmeet Chaudhary, Sonali Kulkarni, Salim Khan, Piyush Mishra, Rajpal Yadav, Urvashi Rautela, Milind Soman, Sunny Kaushal, and many more.

The campaign will highlight the stories of unsung heroes from India's freedom struggle, such as Kadakkal Revolt, Bina Das, Rani Rashmoni, Kanailal Bhattacharjee, Saraswati Rajamani, Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, Nanibala Devi, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Matangini Hazra, Judge Kingsford, and Chamaru Parida. These stories aim to educate and inspire, shedding light on the bravery and sacrifices made by these remarkable individuals.

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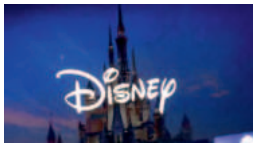
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Disney's streaming business turns profitable for first time

Disney returned to a profitable third quarter as its combined streaming business started making money for the first time, along with a very strong showing in theaters for the movie 'Inside Out 2.'

Operating income for the entertainment segment, which includes its movie studio and parts of its television wing, nearly tripled to $1.2 billion. Disney's run at the box office continues with ' Deadpool & Wolverine, ' giving the company the top two films of the year, Associated Press reported on August 07.



The Walt Disney Co. said ON August 08 that its direct-to-consumer business, which includes Disney+ and Hulu, reported a quarterly operating loss of $19 million, which was much smaller than its loss of $505 million a year earlier. Revenue climbed 15 percent to $5.81 billion.

The results were announced a day after Disney said that it would be boosting prices for Disney+, Hulu, and ESPN+, starting on Oct. 17.

Sun TV Q1 standalone net profit declines 6%

Sun TV Network has reported a 6 percent decline in its standalone net profit for the first quarter of the fiscal year, driven by a drop in advertising revenue. The company's net profit fell to INR 547 crore, down from INR 582 crore during the same period last year.

Revenues for the quarter also saw a decrease, standing at INR 1,276 crore, a 3 percent drop from the INR 1,318 crore reported in Q1 of the previous fiscal year. Advertising revenue dipped to INR 324 crore, compared to INR 339 crore in Q1 FY24, The Economic Times reported.

Domestic subscription revenue for the quarter was slightly lower at INR 426 crore, down from INR 435 crore last year. The company's EBITDA also saw a decline, reaching INR 706 crore, compared to INR 786 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2023.

On a consolidated basis, Sun TV's profit after tax decreased by 5 percent year-on-year, falling from INR 592 crore to INR 560 crore.

Top Indian TV channels stop Nepal services over payment issue

A number of Indian television broadcast companies have stopped relaying their channels in Nepal for the past one week citing delays in settlement of dues by Nepalese cable TV service providers, local media reports from Kathmandu stated.

Networks including Star, Sony, Zee and Colors (part of Viacom18) have halted their broadcasting in Nepal as local service providers reportedly are yet to clear dues worth around Rs 1 billion to the Indian roadcast bcompanies, a Nepali news outlet myRepublica reported on Wednesday. (https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/four-indian-broadcasters-halt-70-associated-television-channels-in-nepal-over-rs-1-billion-dues/)

"The transmissions have been disrupted due to problems seen in financial transactions between channel broadcasters and their local distributors," read the notice displayed by the concerned service providers, the Nepalese news outlet stated.

It quoted Gajendra Kumar Thakur, spokesperson for the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, as saying that the Indian channels have been disrupted after the companies concerned have refused to abide by the 'a la carte' price system enforced by the Nepal government since last year.

Two Nepali companies Net TV and Mega Max Digital have been working as local distributors of the four Indian television channels.

Jio Studio films generate Rs. 700 cr. at BO; released Across platforms

Jio Studios, the media and content arm of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, has garnered Rs 700 crore at the box office, according to the latest annual report of the oil-to-chemicals company.

The company has an "action-packed year" with 11 theatre releases, 35 direct-to-digital releases, and 8 original web series across languages and genres produced by the company, which is "the largest by any film studio" in 2023-24.

These were released across theatres, OTT, and broadcast platforms, including Jio Cinema, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar, Colors and Star Network, PTI reported from Mumbai yesterday.



"With eight consecutive hits, Jio Studios' films garnered a whopping Rs 700 crore at the box office – with every second film in Q4 FY2024 being a Jio Studios film," it said.

Besides, Jio Studios also has an "extensive pipeline of theatrical spectacles", the report added.

"Jio Studios has strategically expanded its presence beyond the Hindi market, making significant inroads in regional language markets, through meticulous craftsmanship and a deep understanding of diverse cultural nuances," it said.

It has brought Marathi cinema to 'center stage' with the release of films like 'Baipan Bhari Deva', which was one of the highest-grossing Marathi films.

"Additionally, our foray into Tamil, with projects such as 'Thangalaan' starring Vikram, and into Bengali with releases such as 'Dawshom Awbotaar' and 'Kabuliwala' underscores our commitment to explore and embrace the vast potential of non-Hindi language markets," the annual report added.

Reliance is India's largest media conglomerate comprising Network18, TV18, Viacom18, Jio Studios, and other investments.

"With a portfolio of 63 TV channels, OTT platforms, digital news and information platforms, Reliance connects with consumers across platforms with tailored content spanning entertainment, news, sports, movies, and live events," it said.

Currently, Reliance has 12.7 percent share in the TV network viewership. Its OTT platform Jio Cinema's average monthly reach is 225 million.

Its partnership with Disney "will not only help to capture the growth opportunities presented by India's rapidly growing media landscape but also to shape its evolution", it added.

The JV with Disney will combine the businesses of Viacom18 and Star India to form "one of the largest Indian M&E companies".

Tata Play celebrates 18 years in the industry



Tata Play, one of India's leading direct-to-home (DTH) service providers, has reached a significant milestone, celebrating 18 years of innovation and service in the entertainment industry.

The company, known for its diverse range of channels and excellent customer service, continues to lead the way in transforming how India consumes television and digital content.

Harit Nagpal, CEO of Tata Play, expressed his heartfelt gratitude on LinkedIn, acknowledging the support and contributions of everyone involved in the company's journey. "A big 'Thank You' to everyone who got us here, subscribers, partners, and colleagues, from all these years," he wrote, emphasizing the collective effort that has propelled Tata Play to its current success.

Since its inception, Tata Play has been at the forefront of bringing entertainment to Indian households. From offering a wide array of channels to integrating digital services, Tata Play has continuously evolved to meet the changing demands of viewers. Its commitment to innovation is evident in its adoption of new technologies and expansion into the digital space, ensuring that subscribers have access to high-quality content anytime, anywhere.

Tata Play's success is also attributed to its strong partnerships and collaborations. The company has worked closely with various stakeholders, including content creators, technology providers, and retail partners, to deliver a seamless and enriching viewing experience. This collaborative approach has helped Tata Play maintain its competitive edge and stay ahead in the dynamic entertainment landscape.

As Tata Play celebrates this milestone, it looks forward to continuing its legacy of excellence. The company remains dedicated to enhancing customer experience, expanding its content library, and exploring new opportunities in the digital entertainment sphere.

With 18 years of remarkable achievements, Tata Play's journey is a testament to its unwavering commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. As it embarks on the next chapter, Tata Play aims to keep redefining entertainment, bringing joy and excitement to millions of homes across India.

Olympian Manu Bhaker's mother praises GNT

Sumedha Bhaker, mother of Olympian Manu Bhaker, who made India proud by winning two consecutive bronze medals in shooting at the Paris Olympics 2024, has praised Good News Today for its positive impact.

A media statement from the TV channel quoted Sumedha as saying, "I love this channel more than any other."

The TV channel said it was honoured to receive this 'Medal of Love,' symbolizing its commitment to delivering uplifting news that resonates deeply with viewers.

This accolade reflects the channel's dedication to spreading positivity and celebrating achievements, both big and small, it added.

News18 India emerges leader in Hindi news segment

News18 India has emerged as the leader in the Hindi news segment, according to the latest Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India ratings. The channel said it has moved percent percent ahead of Aaj Tak, commanding 74,576 AMA'000s compared to Aaj Tak's 73,249 AMA'000s.

According to a press note from the News18 group, TV9 Bharatvarsh followed in third place with 62,397 AMA'000s, while India TV and Republic Bharat secured 54,323 and 53,671 AMA'000s, respectively.

News18 India credited its success to a strong line-up of prime-time shows and prominent anchors like Kishore Ajwani, Amish Devgan, Rubika Liyaquat, Prateek Trivedi and Aman Chopra, who offer unique insights and make complex issues accessible to viewers.

News18 Network continues to dominate viewership across both TV and digital platforms, reinforcing its position as a trusted source for news across India, it added.

SPN to broadcast 133rd edition of Durand Cup

Sony Sports Network (SPN) will broadcast the prestigious IndianOil Durand Cup, continuing its association with Asia's oldest football tournament.

SPN acquired exclusive media rights last year to broadcast the event in India from 2023 to 2024. The 133rd edition is also being broadcast in Afghanistan, Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

The Durand Cup, deeply rooted in a 136-year-old legacy intertwined with the Indian Armed Forces, is often referred to as 'Desh Ka Cup.' This year's tournament features 24 teams across six groups in four cities, with the group winners and the two best second-placed sides advancing to the quarter-finals.

President Droupadi Murmu unveiled the three coveted trophies up for grabs — the President's Cup, the Shimla Trophy, and the Durand Cup —at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on July 10, while also flagging off the Trophy Tour. The grand finale is scheduled for August 31, 2024 at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) in Kolkata.

Group league games are being played in Jamshedpur, Shillong, Kokrajhar, and Kolkata, with Jamshedpur and Shillong hosting the tournament for the first time. Fans can watch all the action on the Sony Sports Ten 2 channel and livestream matches exclusively on Sony LIV.

Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer – Distribution & International Business and Head – Sports Business, Sony Pictures Networks India, expressed pride in broadcasting the Durand Cup. He said, "It's an honour for us to have a competition of football heritage and immense prestige as the Durand Cup on our roster. This year's edition brings a lot of promising competition to the table, and fans can look forward to some top-quality games as the new football season kicks off in style."

Lt. Gen. RC Srikanth, VSM, Chief of Staff, HQ Eastern Command and Chairman of the Durand Cup Organizing Committee, highlighted the tournament's significance in providing a platform for budding footballers to compete with top talents.

He stated, "The Durand Cup is no ordinary tournament as it provides a unique platform for budding footballers from every corner of the country to rub shoulders with world-class legends."

The Durand Cup, first held in 1888 and named after its founder Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, pits Indian Super League teams against top I-League and other invitational teams, including those from the Armed Forces. This year, a team from the Royal Nepal Army is also participating.

Zakir Khan to debut on TV with 'Aapka Apna Zakir' on Sony

Popular comedian, poet, actor, writer, and producer Zakir Khan is set to make his television debut as a host with Sony Entertainment Television's new show, 'Aapka Apna Zakir.' Launching on August 10, the show promises a unique blend of humor, storytelling, and heartfelt life lessons, airing every Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 pm.

'Aapka Apna Zakir' will elevate the talk show experience with Zakir's signature comedic storytelling. The show will feature segments like celebrity interviews, audience interaction, and stand-up routines, all delivered with Zakir's unique take on life's ups and downs. Promising 'Khushiyon Ki Guarantee' and 'Manoranjan ka Waada,' the show aims to capture the essence of everyday experiences with a comedic twist.



Joining Zakir on this laughter-filled journey are notable personalities including:

Gopal Datt: Zakir's old friend.

Shweta Tiwari: TV actress and Zakir's next-door neighbour.

Rithvik Dhanjani: Zakir's cricket buddy, known for his energy and dance moves.

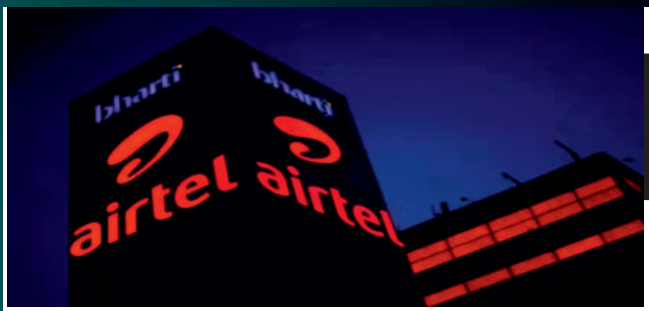
Paresh Ganatra: A character obsessed with money and food, always keeping Zakir on his toes with wacky investment schemes.

Khan expressed his excitement about the show, saying, "This show is for everyone – from the youngest to the wisest in your family. Get ready for a laughter-filled journey filled with relatable stories and unexpected moments. This show isn't just about comedy; it's about finding joy in the little things and learning from the big ones, reminding us that we are all in this together."

Produced by Only Much Louder and Sakht Films, and co-presented by Volkswagen India and Smith & Jones Ginger Garlic Paste, 'Aapka Apna Zakir' is set to be a cherished addition to Sony Entertainment Television's weekend lineup.

Neeraj Vyas, Business Head at Sony Entertainment Television, stated, "With this fresh format, we are attempting to bring comedy with an edge of apnapan; Zakir Khan's unique blend of humour and soulful storytelling makes this show an outstanding addition to our content slate."

Gunjan Arya, CEO of Only Much Louder, added, "Working with Zakir Khan on 'Aapka Apna Zakir' has been an incredible journey. He connects with people through genuine stories from his life and those around him, filled with wit and wisdom. We believe that 'Aapka Apna Zakir' has everything it takes to become a landmark show on Indian television."



Bharti Airtel Q1 profit up 2.5x on higher ARPU

Telecom giant Bharti Airtel has posted a meteoric rise in its consolidated profit, which soared by more than 2.5 times to Rs 4,160 crore for the first quarter ending on June 30, 2024, compared to Rs 1,612.5 crore in the same period last year.

According to a PTI report from New Delhi, the company's consolidated revenue from operations saw a 2.8 percent uptick, reaching Rs 38,506.4 crore during the reported quarter, up from Rs 37,440 crore in the previous year's corresponding period.

Notably, Bharti Airtel's India revenue experienced a 10.1 percent year-on-year growth, climbing to Rs 29,046 crore. The key performance metric, mobile average revenue per user (ARPU), also increased to Rs 211 from Rs 200 in the same period a year ago, indicating sustainable growth in the market.

"During the quarter ended June 30, 2024, the net exceptional gain of Rs 7,350 million comprises of gain of Rs 13,991 million on account of favourable judgement by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India regarding the waiver of interest on tax treatment of adjusted revenue linked variable license fee payable to DOT, gain of Rs 2,746 million pertaining to the divestment of Airtel Lanka," Airtel said in a statement.

"First quarter of FY '25 was yet another steady quarter with India revenue growing at 1.9 per cent sequentially and sustained EBITDA margins expansion to 53.7 per cent. Our stringent focus on driving cost efficiencies is reflected in strong operating leverage. Africa continues to deliver strong underlying constant currency revenue growth," Bharti Airtel, Managing Director, Gopal Vittal said in a statement.

Vittal said that Airtel accelerated pace on FWA (fixed wireless access) services expansion across key towns.

"Our Wifi services (FTTH and FWA) are now available in over 1300 cities. Our digital portfolio is shaping up well and it is geared for accelerated growth to add strength to our already diversified portfolio," Vittal said.

Airtel's customer base grew by 7.3 per cent to Rs. 56.75 crores from Rs. 52.89 crores on YoY while in India it grew by about 7 per cent to Rs. 40.92 crores from 38.28 crores on a yearly basis.

Airtel claims to have a leadership position in the postpaid segment with net adds of 8 lakh in the June quarter of 2024.

ABP News to host 'Jhanda Uncha Rahe Hamara'

ABP News, a leading national channel known for its innovative journalism, is set to host the much-anticipated event, 'Jhanda Uncha Rahe Hamara' (JURH), on August 7, 2024. Since its inception in 2014, this annual celebration has become a hallmark of patriotism, reflecting India's spirit of courage and determination.



According to a company press release, this year's edition is dedicated to honoring the remarkable contributions of India's armed forces and paramilitary personnel.

The event will shine a spotlight on the valiant efforts of soldiers from the Indian Army, NDRF, Indian Air Force, CRPF, and DRDO, who have exemplified extraordinary bravery and inspired millions nationwide. General Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, AVSM, Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army, will be the Chief Guest, joining ABP News' dynamic hosting team to commemorate these unsung heroes.

Business Today prepares for 'Adani BT India@100' with insightful webinar

Business Today hosted a precursor webinar for its flagship event, 'Adani BT India@100,' featuring prominent speakers Rahul Kanwal, Siddharth Zarabi, Sourav Majumdar, and Shailendra Bhatnagar. The discussion centered on India's trajectory toward becoming a global leader by 2047, marking its 100th year of independence.



The webinar delved into Prime Minister Modi's vision of a 'Vikasit Bharat' and the challenges in escaping the middle-income trap. Sourav Majumdar, Editor of Business Today, emphasized the need for sustained 7-10% growth over the next few decades to realize this vision. Key growth drivers discussed included energy transition, digitalization, and manufacturing, the channel said in a press release.

Rahul Kanwal highlighted the importance of the "India@100" initiative, aiming to outline strategies for economic development and global leadership. Shailendra Bhatnagar provided insights into the capital markets, noting a significant increase in monthly SIP contributions, reflecting local money-driven growth.

‘KBC’ new season has ‘interesting changes’, says Bachchan

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who is set to host the 16th season of ‘Kaun Banega Crorepati’ (KBC), yesterday said the new chapter of the popular quiz show will introduce “interesting changes” in the game.

The latest installment of ‘KBC’ will air on Sony Entertainment Television from August 12. It will premiere on the channel weekdays at 9 pm, a PTI report from Mumbai stated.



In a lengthy post on his personal blog, Bachchan wrote the show offers a platform to the contestants to not only win a handsome cash prize but also share their personal stories.

“Some fresh new interesting changes in the GAME and the impact it will have and the learnings .. but above all the ’emotions’ that overcome us all when the outcome of the contestant before us narrates his or her story ..

“The dire circumstances they exist in and then the volume of their years of distress .. and suddenly they find themselves here on the ‘garam kursi’ and they get taken up by the emotion of the moment ” the 81-year-old actor said.

One of those new changes is ‘Dugnaastra’, through which the amount won by the contestant would be doubled after they correctly answer the ‘super sawaal’. The catch is that the contestant would have no options to choose the right answer from, according to a video shared by the channel on social media.

Bachchan, who is currently shooting for ‘KBC’, said listening to the contestants talk about their struggles in front of millions of audience members in the past few days has been a “moving” experience.

“BUT .. with that most endearing smile which just melts us ..for the past few days the contestants and their lives that come before us have been most emotional and moving .. and we sit in the wonder of their narratives .. and try to extend helping hands for their needs and to try and overcome their harsh lives ...

“...may they be given all the strength that the Almighty can ever bestow upon those that struggle and set examples .. and teach a lesson to these ” he added.

The cinema icon has hosted ‘KBC’ since its inaugural season in 2000, except the third chapter in 2007, which was hosted by superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

IOC chief reviews b’cast ops as Paris ‘24 reaches record audiences

During a tour of the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) in Paris, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach viewed the extensive operations that take place behind the scenes and thanked those responsible for sharing the Olympic action with a global audience.



At a press conference ahead of the IBC visit, the IOC president said: “The Olympic Games create a magic that inspires the world. The broadcast and digital figures are going through the roof.”

“The audiences benefit from the incredible images going to the world from Olympic Broadcasting Services and our Media Rights-Holders. We are on track for more than half the world’s population to follow the Olympic Games Paris 2024,” Bach added in a statement issued by the IOC on August 03.

OBS serves as the host broadcaster for each edition of the Olympic Games, providing the live television, radio and digital coverage of Olympic events and ceremonies to media rights holders (MRHs) around the world.

For Paris 2024, according to the IOC statement, OBS is producing over 11,000 hours of content — more than any previous Olympic Games — allowing the MRHs to share comprehensive coverage with viewers in their respective countries and territories.

The record output across both TV and digital platforms represents a 15.8 per cent increase on the amount of content produced for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and includes a number of innovations to take Olympic broadcasting to a new level of storytelling and redefine how viewers around the world experience the Games.This includes more athlete-centric coverage and behind- the-scenes material, as well as cinematic lenses with a shallow depth of field to enhance the overall visual experience for the viewer.

COAI says TRAI QoS norms fail to address telcos' challenges

Telecom regulator Trai's new quality of service norms with stricter provisions have come without much change in challenges that telecom operators face on ground in terms of roll-out, illegal transmitters etc, industry body COAI said on August 04.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has issued new quality of service rules on Friday, making it mandatory for telecom operators to compensate subscribers in case of service outages for more than 24 hours at a district level, a PTI report from New Delhi stated.



Trai has also increased the penal amount to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 50,000 for failing to meet each quality benchmark under the new rules.

The regulator has introduced a graded penalty system of Rs 1 lakh, Rs 2 lakh, Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh for different scales of rule violations and submitting false report under revised regulations – 'The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wirelines and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024'.

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, BSNL etc., said that the new rules will increase compliance cost for service providers without any commensurate benefits for the customers.

"While Trai has tightened the QoS benchmarks over the years, the ground realities remain unchanged. TSPs still grapple with Right of Way (RoW) issues when acquiring permissions for infrastructure deployment in public and private land for the installation of cell towers and fiber-optic cables," COAI Director General S P Kochhar said.

He said that the situation is further aggravated due to additional requirement of street furniture for 5G networks.

"Moreover, interference from various sources, such as other wireless devices and electromagnetic interference, degrade signal quality and network performance. Further, illegal boosters and repeaters used by unauthorised agents, as well as the cases of theft of equipment are also external factors which, nevertheless, impact the QoS," Kochhar said.

Besides, frequent takedowns of the overhead fiber by the authorities have a significant impact in QoS as well, he said, adding, "TSPs have limited control over these external sources which adversely impact the Quality of Services."

He said that the industry has embraced advanced technologies and automation tools, including predictive maintenance and AI-driven analytics, to proactively address network issues and major initiatives are underway to fiberize towers across India, which is a crucial step for the efficient deployment of 5G services.

Under the new rules, Trai has fine-tuned monitoring to tower level as well as mandated telecom operators to report several parameters on a monthly basis instead of every quarter under the old norms.

Kochhar said that the industry has concerns over the proposed regulations, which not only tighten benchmarks but also shift from quarterly to monthly reporting and site to cell level reporting in many cases.

"In fact, the QoS parameters prescribed in the new regulations have not been introduced by any other regulator in other similar economies. These changes are expected to significantly increase the compliance as well as the cost burden on telecom operators, and without commensurate benefits for the customers," Kochhar said.

COAI expressed disappointment with the stringency of these new regulations.

Music streaming sees growth slowdown, says report

Universal Music Group (UMG), the world's largest music label, has acknowledged a slowdown in subscriber growth for music streaming services like Apple Music, Times of India said quoting a Bloomberg report.

UMG's Chief Financial Officer Boyd Muir noted disappointing revenue from streaming services, attributing the decline to large platforms like Apple and Amazon struggling to drive global adoption. This slowdown has led to a 30 percent drop in UMG's shares.

Despite the setback, UMG believes this is temporary and expects a recovery in the coming months. To counteract the trend, music companies are implementing cost-cutting measures, including layoffs and restructuring. New pricing tiers for streaming services are also anticipated to help sustain growth.

Apple Music, which hasn't updated its subscriber numbers since 2019, is not alone in this trend. Spotify and Amazon Music are also seeing a flattening of their growth curves. The industry is exploring new revenue streams and strategies to navigate this challenging period.

Govt. to crackdown on surrogate ads; firms, endorsers to face heat

India, which bans direct advertising of liquor, is set to announce sweeping rules that will bar even surrogate ads and sponsoring of events, which could force firms such as Carlsberg, Pernod Ricard and Diageo to redraw marketing campaigns.

Such "surrogate ads" often get round the ban by ostensibly showing less desirable items instead, such as water, music CDs or glassware garbed in logos and hues linked to their key product, and often promoted by popular stars.



Now, according to a Reuters report, they could bring fines for companies and bans for celebrities endorsing tobacco and liquor ads deemed misleading, according to the top civil servant for consumer affairs.

"You can't take a circuitous way to promote products," the official, Nidhi Khare, told Reuters, adding that final rules were expected to be issued within a month.

"If we find ads to be surrogate and misleading, then even those who are endorsing (products), including celebrities, will be held responsible," she added.

For example, brewer Carlsberg promotes its Tuborg drinking water in India, with an ad showing film stars at a rooftop dance party and the slogan "Tilt Your World", which echoes its beer ads elsewhere, emblazoned with the message: "Drink Responsibly".

Competitor Diageo's YouTube ad for its Black & White ginger ale, which has drawn 60 million views, features the signature black-and-white terriers from its scotch of the same name.

The changes threaten a sea change for liquor makers in India, the world's eighth-biggest alcohol market by volume, with annual revenues Euromonitor estimates at $45 billion.

Growing affluence among its 1.4 billion people makes India a lucrative market for the likes of Kingfisher beer maker, United Breweries, part of the Heineken Group, which has more than a quarter of market share by volume.

Popular for their whiskies, Diageo and Pernod taken together, have a market share of about a fifth, while for Pernod, India contributes about a tenth of global revenues.

The new rules call for "prohibition against engaging in surrogate advertisement", which extends to sponsorships and ads for products viewed as "brand extensions" that share the characteristics of an alcohol brand, the draft said.

Penalties under the new rules rely on consumer law, opening manufacturers and endorsers to fines of up to Rs. 5 million ($60,000), while promoters risk endorsement bans running from one to three years.

SPNI responds to Tata Play's removal of Sony channels from bouquets

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) had expressed concern over Tata Play's unexpected decision to remove Sony channels from the bouquets of nearly 10 mn subscribers. The company believes this move was made without prior notice to SPNI or consideration for subscribers' preferences.

SPNI said in a press note, that Tata Play's decision may be retaliatory, linked to SPNI exercising its audit rights on Tata Play's subscriber management system. Over the past few years, SPNI has identified and communicated several discrepancies to Tata Play. The claim of "loss of viewership" made by Tata Play is described by SPNI as misleading.

"We believe this decision was made without due consideration for our viewers. Our loyal audience, which values diverse and high-quality content, will continue to access our channels through other platforms nationwide," an SPNI spokesperson stated.

Despite Tata Play's actions, SPNI remains committed to delivering top-notch entertainment. The company assures its audience that they will continue to have access to their favourite shows and channels, regardless of Tata Play's decisions.

SPNI's dedication to providing quality content remains unwavering, and it continues to explore alternative platforms to ensure uninterrupted service for its viewers.

Jammu & Kashmir may soon have private FM radio station

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on August 01, released a consultation paper on 'Reserve Prices for Auction of FM Radio Channels', which highlights that the FM network will be expanded to 18 additional cities and towns.

The regulator said that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) had in March sought its recommendations on reserve price for auction of FM radio channels in 18 cities and towns in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu & Kashmir for the expansion of private FM Radio.

The government has decided to introduce a new category ('E') of places for expansion.

"This Consultation Paper has been prepared to seek the comments/views of the stakeholders on the determination of reserve prices for auction of FM Radio channels, under FM Phase-Ill Policy.," TRAI added in its statement.

As per the existing FMPhase-III policy guidelines, the cities are divided into 'A+', 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D' and 'Others' categories based on the population of a city. For each city category technical parameters have been specified in the policy guidelines.

One of the points in the consultation paper states that due to the non-availability of an updated radio listenership data and Market Intensity Index, whether the data as used in 2020 recommendation could be used in the present exercise as well.

Aaj Tak leads Union Budget 2024 coverage across all platforms

Aaj Tak has set a new benchmark with its comprehensive coverage of the Union Budget 2024, reaffirming its position as the leading Hindi news channel.

The latest BARC data shows that Aaj Tak was the most-watched channel during Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's live speech and throughout Budget Day.

According to a press release, during the live telecast of the Finance Minister's speech on July 23 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm, Aaj Tak led the Hindi news segment with a notable 15.2 percent viewership share. This dominance extended throughout the entire day, with the channel maintaining a 14.9 percent share over the 24 hours, highlighting its strong audience engagement.

Aaj Tak also achieved a significant milestone in digital viewership. The channel's YouTube Live stream of the Finance Minister's speech garnered an impressive average concurrent user count of 127.9k, demonstrating its leadership and impact on digital news viewership.

During the Finance Minister's live speech, Aaj Tak secured a 15.2 percent viewership share, leading the Hindi news segment. The speech, which detailed the Union Budget 2024, was a crucial event, and Aaj Tak's coverage ensured viewers received in-depth analysis and insights.

Aaj Tak's dominance continued throughout Union Budget Day, maintaining a 14.9 percent viewership share. The channel's comprehensive coverage, including expert analyses, panel discussions, and detailed breakdowns of the budget's implications, resonated with viewers.

In addition to its television success, Aaj Tak's digital presence also shone brightly. The YouTube Live stream of the Finance Minister's speech attracted an average concurrent user count of 127.9k. This achievement underscores Aaj Tak's significant impact in the digital realm, cementing its role as a key player in both traditional and online media.

The channel's success across platforms showcases its ability to deliver high-quality, engaging content to a wide audience. Aaj Tak's comprehensive coverage of the Union Budget 2024 highlights its commitment to providing viewers with reliable, in-depth news.

Aaj Tak's unmatched coverage of the Union Budget 2024 has solidified its position as the leading Hindi news channel. With impressive viewership shares on both television and digital platforms, Aaj Tak continues to set the standard for news coverage in India.

18 OTT platforms blocked for carrying obscene content: Minister

The government of India, while taking action against inappropriate content on streaming platforms, had blocked 18 OTT services in March earlier this year, Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting L. Murugan informed his parliamentary colleagues on July 31.



Replying to a question from parliamentary colleagues in Lok Sabha (Lower House) on obscene content, the Minister said in a written reply, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting "has taken action and blocked 18 OTT platforms for publishing obscene and vulgar content under the provisions of section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000".

He further clarified that the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, enacted on February 25, 2021, under the IT Act, 2000, provides for a Code of Ethics for digital news publishers and publishers of online curated content, popularly known as OTT platforms. The code prescribes certain norms as safeguards against age-inappropriate content for children, along with adequate access control measures.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had been asked by few parliamentarians whether the government had taken any steps to curb child nudity and obscene content on OTT platforms and whether it was noticed that the content shown on OTT platforms should be monitored to prevent obscenity and vulgarity in the name of entertainment

Zee Entertainment returns to black with Rs. 118 cr. net profit

Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd July 31 reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 118.10 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2024.

The company had reported a net loss of Rs 53.42 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd said in a regulatory filing, according to a PTI report from New Delhi.

The total income of the company was up 7.56 per cent to Rs 2,149.52 crore during the quarter under review. It was at Rs 1,998.26 crore in the corresponding quarter.

Total expenses of ZEEL was at Rs 1,941.12 crore, marginally up in the June quarter of FY25.

"While Q1 has already started on a positive note with significant step up in margins, we expect gradual margin improvement to continue through the rest of the year," the company said in the investor presentation, according to a news report in CNBC-TV18.

The quantum of the improvement in margins though, is subject to the pick-up in advertising revenues in the second half of the financial year, Zee said in its investor presentation.

Market research firm Elara Capital, in an advisory on Zee, observed, "We expect ad revenue momentum to pick up in the near term, helped by i) positive impact from the festive season, ii) higher spends by FMCG companies and iii) traction in regional GECs."

It added: "Ad revenue for Zee may grow in the range of 3-5 percent YoY in the near-to-medium term, as TV medium shows resilience amongst other traditional media genres."

'Squid Game' S2 to premiere on December 26

The wait is finally over! Netflix has announced that the highly anticipated second season of Squid Game will premiere on December 26, 2024.

Fans around the world have been eagerly awaiting the return of the thriller-drama series that became a global sensation in 2020.



Additionally, a final season is set to follow in 2025, promising even more gripping and intense episodes, PTI reported.

In a heartfelt letter, Hwang Dong-hyuk, the Executive Producer, Writer, and Director of Squid Game, shared the exciting news with fans. The announcement was accompanied by a teaser featuring a track race where survival, not a medal, is the ultimate prize. As bodies fall and chaos ensues, the enigmatic Frontman prepares the audience for the new season's deadly games.

Hwang Dong-hyuk's letter expressed his gratitude to fans for their unwavering support and hinted at the thrilling twists and turns that lie ahead. "Red Light...Red Light...Green Light! Our Young-hee doll has reported that people are more eager than ever," he wrote, capturing the anticipation surrounding the show's return.

British Gen Z watching less of traditional broadcast TV

For the first time, less than half of 16-24-year-olds are now watching broadcast TV in an average week, according to British communications regulator Ofcom's annual study into the nation's media habits.

Just 48 percent of young audiences tuned in in an average week last year, down from 76 percent in 2018. Children aged 4-15 are tuning out at a similar rate, with only 55 percent watching broadcast TV each week in 2023, compared to 81 percent in 2018.

Overall, the weekly reach of traditional TV fell by a record amount in the last year, Ofcom said in a statement on July 31.

Younger audiences aged 16-24 aren't just watching broadcast TV less frequently, they're also watching for shorter periods at only 33 minutes each day — down 16 percent year on year. Of this, a mere 20 minutes is spent watching live TV.

In comparison, they're spending three times as long each day (1 hour 33 minutes) watching video-sharing platforms such as TikTok and YouTube.

Other findings include the following:

TV and Video

Overall, people in the United Kingdom (UK) watched more TV and video content at home in 2023, averaging 4 hours and 31 minutes a day (an increase of 6 minutes/2 percent since 2022). This was primarily driven by an increase in daily viewing to video-sharing platforms (up 12 percent to 49 minutes) and to broadcasters' video-on-demand services, such as iPlayer and ITVX (up 29 percent to 20 minutes).

TV screens are rapidly becoming more popular for watching YouTube content.

Thirty-four per cent of time spent watching YouTube at home is now on a TV set – up from 29 percent in 2022. This increases to 45 percent among children aged 4-15 – up from 36 percent in 2022.

Daily viewing to subscription video-on-demand services saw more marginal growth in 2023 (up 6 percent to 38 minutes). Netflix remains the most popular service — watched for an average of 21 minutes per person per day, and accounting for more than half of all SVoD viewing.



With live broadcast TV still dominating the viewing diets of the over-45s, big TV 'moments' capturing live national and international events rank highly in 2023's list of most-watched programmes, including the New Year's Eve Fireworks (12.1 million viewers), The Coronation of The King and Queen Camilla (12 million viewers) and the Eurovision Song Contest (10.1 million viewers).

The most-watched event so far in 2024 has been the UEFA Euro 2024 men's final between England and Spain, with the BBC's and ITV's coverage together averaging 15.1 million viewers that day.

Radio

The first quarter of 2024 saw the highest number of weekly radio listeners across all devices in the past 20 years (just under 50 million). Listening time is also up year on year to an average of 20.5 hours per week.

Much of this is down to commercial radio's continued success — just over seven in 10 people aged 15+ tune into commercial stations at least once a week (70.4 percent) compared to 55.6 percent for BBC stations.

Online radio listening continues to grow steadily, overtaking analogue radio (AM/FM) for the first time this year and now accounting for over a quarter (28 percent) of all live radio hours, mostly through smart speakers.

"Gen Z and Alpha are used to swiping and streaming, not flipping through broadcast TV channels. They crave the flexibility, immediacy and choice that on-demand services offer, spending over three hours a day watching video, but only 20 minutes of live TV. It's no surprise that the traditional TV is fast becoming a device of choice to watch YouTube.

Star terminates $1.5 bn deal with Zee

Disney-owned Star India has terminated its alliance agreement with Zee Entertainment for the USD 1.5 billion International Cricket Council (ICC) TV rights on June 20, according to a regulatory filing by Zee.

However, the broadcaster has decided to seek damages during the arbitration proceedings, which have not yet been quantified. Star had initiated arbitration proceedings against Zee before the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) on 14 March, The Economic Times reported.

On August 26, 2022, Star had entered into an alliance agreement with Zee to sublicense ICC TV rights for Men's and Under-19 (U-19) global events for a period of four years till 2027.

Zee didn't go ahead with the alliance agreement due to the failure of its merger deal with Sony Pictures Networks India. As a standalone entity, Zee would have found it challenging to service the ICC TV rights deal.

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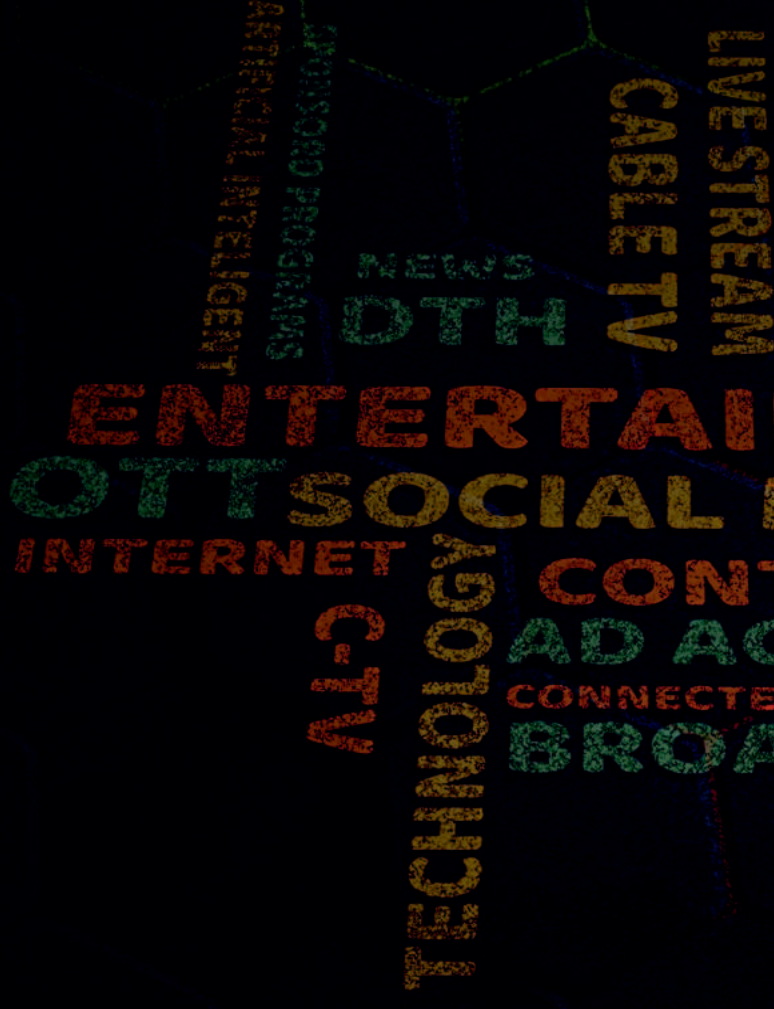
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Juggernaut Productions expands into Television

IN10 Media Network's Juggernaut Productions, renowned for its successful OTT shows, has announced its foray into television production. This strategic expansion signifies a pivotal moment in the company's growth, underscoring its dedication to delivering diverse and high-quality entertainment to a wider audience.

Dipti Kalwani, a media industry veteran with over 20 years of experience, has been appointed to spearhead the new television production division. As Senior Vice President – TV & AVOD, Kalwani will oversee the development and production of innovative TV content, drawing on her extensive background as a TV producer, content creator, and writer, the company said in a press release.

"We are thrilled to have Dipti lead our television production business," said Samar Khan, CEO of Juggernaut Productions. "Her vision, creativity, and deep understanding of the television landscape will be invaluable as we embark on this new venture. We are confident that under her leadership, our television content will set new standards for quality and innovation."

Kalwani expressed her enthusiasm for the role, stating, "I am excited to join Juggernaut Productions and lead this new chapter in the company's journey. Television production offers unique opportunities and challenges, and I look forward to creating content that resonates with audiences and continues the Juggernaut legacy of excellence. Our goal is to produce shows that not only entertain but also leave a lasting impact."

Chrome DM, COTT release in-depth report on India's CTV Market

Chrome DM, in collaboration with Chrome OTT (COTT), has unveiled their latest industry report titled India CTV Market Size & Share Analysis 2024. This comprehensive study offers a detailed exploration of the Indian Connected TV (CTV) landscape, providing crucial insights for businesses, marketers, and industry stakeholders.

The report covers a broad range of topics, including historical data from 2019 to 2023 and projections for 2024 to 2029. Key areas of analysis include:

- Regional Market Share: Breakdown of the TV universe across India's East, North, South, and West Zones.
- CTV Evolution: Examination of the development of CTVs and their future trajectory.
- State-Wise Analysis: Detailed insights into CTV adoption, overlap with linear TV, and consumption patterns across states.
- Consumption Metrics: Data on CTV consumption frequency, internet connection types, and external versus integrated connections.
- Future Outlook: Projections and trends for the CTV market, including viewership statistics from major events like the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023.
- Genre Trends: Analysis of genre-specific viewership patterns and audience transitions from linear TV to CTV.
- OTT Insights: Information on the top OTT platforms, shows, and Hindi news streams by unique viewers.

Key Highlights:

- Regional Variations: Detailed market share analysis reveals significant regional differences in CTV adoption.
- Overlap Analysis: Insight into how traditional linear TV and CTV overlap, with state-wise data.
- Consumption Patterns: Comprehensive data on CTV usage frequency, types of internet connections, and the distribution between external and integrated connections.
- Viewership Trends: In-depth look at viewership trends during major events and the performance of top OTT platforms and content.

Pankaj Krishna, Founder & CEO of Chrome DM, remarked, "We are excited to present this detailed analysis of India's dynamic CTV market. As the media landscape evolves, understanding these trends is essential for businesses and marketers aiming to stay ahead. This report underscores our commitment to providing the most accurate and actionable insights."

SC moves cable TV rules challenge to Delhi HC

In a significant legal development, the Supreme Court of India has transferred multiple petitions challenging the Cable TV Networks (Amendment) Rules 2021 to the Delhi High Court.

This decision was rendered by a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar, following a request from the Union of India's counsel. The aim is to ensure a unified and efficient hearing on the issues, given their similarity to challenges posed by the IT Rules, 2021, The Livelaw reported.

Senior Advocate Arvind P. Datar, representing the respondents, noted that the disputes in both the IT and Cable TV Rules primarily concern the three-tier grievance redressal mechanism for media content. This mechanism includes:

- **Self-regulation by broadcasters**
- **Self-regulation by broadcasters' self-regulating bodies**
- **Oversight by the Central Government**

The amendments were designed to address complaints about television content breaching the Programme Code or Advertising Code. However, the respondents sought protection from coercive actions under these rules, leading to various High Courts issuing interim orders to prevent the Union from enforcing the rules until a final decision is made.

The Supreme Court's decision follows a similar move on March 22, when it transferred challenges to the IT Rules, 2021, to the Delhi High Court. This consolidation aims to streamline the legal process, providing a more coherent examination of the shared issues surrounding media content regulation.





NDTV Q1 loss widens despite election-induced ad revenues

Indian broadcaster NDTV reported a wider first-quarter loss yesterday, as a rise in expenses overshadowed revenue from political advertisements during the country's general elections.

The Adani Group-owned news broadcaster reported a loss of Rs. 467.5 million ($5.6 million) in the April-June period, compared to a loss of Rs. 81.3 million a year before, a Reuters report from Bengaluru stated.

Quarterly expenses were surged around 77 percent, with production costs, among broadcasters' biggest expenses, up 80 percent and marketing spends related to a newly-launched regional channel tripling.

Advertising, a news channel's biggest source of revenue, has been frail for over a year as businesses cut back on marketing spends amid high inflation, dragging NDTV and Reliance Industries-owned Network18 Media to a string of losses.

Earlier this month, Network18 said it benefited from the general elections, which lasted from April to June.

Political advertisements boosted NDTV's revenue by 34 percent to Rs. 939.2 million, its second straight rise after five consecutive quarters of a revenue fall.

Since its takeover by the Adani Group in late 2022, NDTV has launched new channels, such as NDTV Profit, as it looks to catch up and compete with Network18 and Zee Media.



Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurates 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM' at IIMC Aizawl



Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated India's 500th community radio station, 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM,' at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in Aizawl.

The milestone event was attended by the Union Minister of State for I&B Dr. L. Murugan and the Chief Minister of Mizoram Lalduhoma.

In his speech, Minister Vaishnaw emphasized the transformative impact the new station will have on the local community. He highlighted the significance of this launch as a key element of the Government's Act East policy, aimed at enhancing connectivity and development in the northeastern region of India.

The Minister also noted the record allocation in the Union Budget for the North East railway infrastructure, reinforcing Mizoram's aspiration for improved railway connectivity.

Chief Minister Lalduhoma underscored the importance of Apna Radio for Mizoram, an agrarian state. He noted that the station would serve as a vital resource for farmers by providing timely weather updates, information on government schemes, and agricultural guidance.

Ministry of I&B and all stakeholders for their dedication to making this project a reality.

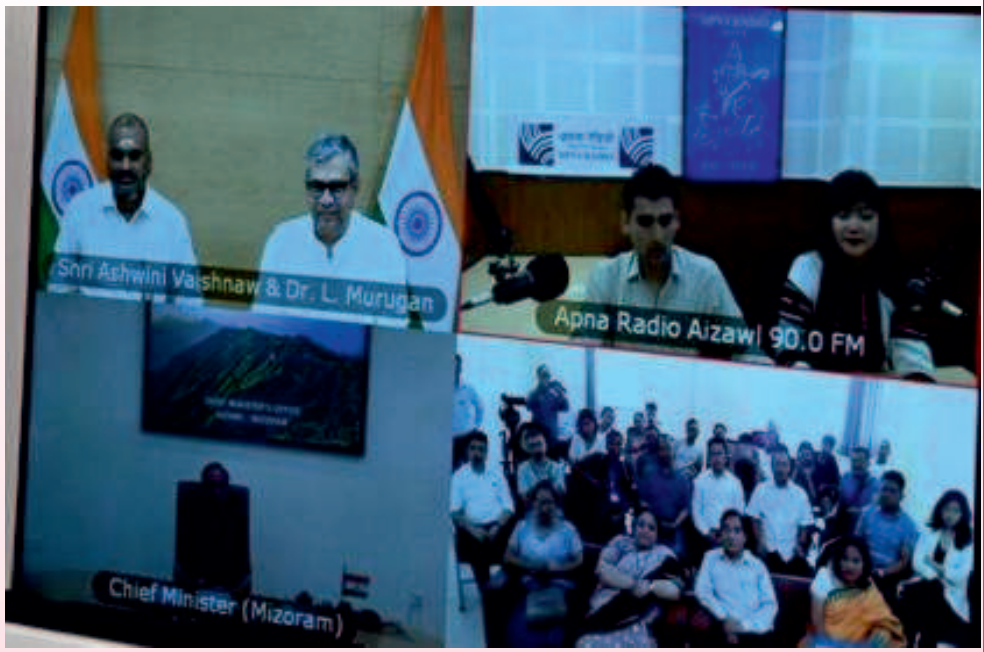
Union Minister of State Dr. L. Murugan highlighted the unique social benefits of community radio stations, contrasting them with the commercial nature of private radio channels. He emphasized their critical role in disseminating information during natural disasters and ensuring last-mile communication.

Secretary of the Ministry of I&B Sanjay Jaju reiterated the pivotal role of community radio stations in disseminating crucial information related to agriculture, government schemes, and weather updates. He pointed out that these stations offer a platform for alternative voices and cater to the poor and marginalized sections of society by delivering content in local dialects and regional languages. Jaju affirmed the Ministry's commitment to fostering the development of community radio stations nationwide.

Vice Chancellor of IIMC, Dr. Anupama Bhatnagar, described the inauguration of 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM' as a new chapter in Mizorams history. She highlighted the station's potential to bring communities together through dialogue, promote local culture, and empower citizens.

Instituted in 2011-12, the National Community Radio Awards encourage innovation and healthy competition among Community Radio Stations (CRS). Each category includes first, second, and third prizes of Rs. 1.0 lakh, Rs. 75,000, and Rs. 50,000 respectively.

The inauguration of 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM' and the recognition of outstanding community radio stations underscore the government's commitment to enhancing communication and empowering local communities across India.



Dish TV to raise Rs 1,000 crore, approves establishing subsidiary

Dish TV India Ltd. had announced its plan to raise Rs 1,000 crore through the issuance of shares and debt.

The decision was made during a recent board meeting where the company also approved the establishment of a wholly owned subsidiary. This new subsidiary will focus on distributing products and services through a digital platform and providing ancillary services, NDTV reported.

The method for raising the capital is yet to be determined. However, the company is considering various options including "issue of equity shares, convertible bonds, debentures, warrants, preference shares, foreign currency convertible bonds, and other equity-linked securities." These options could be executed through preferential issue on a private placement basis, qualified institutional placement, or other methods, whether listed or unlisted, as stated in an exchange filing.

To proceed with the capital raise, Dish TV had approved a notice of postal ballot to seek shareholder approval. The proposed subsidiary, pending approval from concerned authorities, will have a capital of Rs 10 lakh, which will be fully subscribed under cash consideration towards the company's share capital.

This strategic move aims to bolster Dish TV's financial position and expand its digital distribution capabilities, positioning it for future growth in the competitive market.

'Laila Majnu' to re-release in theatres in Kashmir

ctor Avinash Tiwary announced on July 25 that his debut film, 'Laila Majnu,' will re-release in theatres in Kashmir next month due to popular demand.



The 2018 romance drama, which stars Tiwary and Triptii Dimri, is set to return to the big screen, giving audiences another chance to experience the modern-day adaptation of the classic folklore, PTI reported.

Written and presented by acclaimed filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, 'Laila Majnu' was directed by his brother Sajid Ali. The film was produced by Preety Ali, Imtiaz's former wife, and television producer Ekta Kapoor.

When 'Laila Majnu' was first released in 2018, it received a lukewarm response at the box office. However, over the years, it has developed a cult following, especially among fans of romantic dramas.

'Laila Majnu' is a contemporary take on the age-old tale of star-crossed lovers. The film portrays the intense and tragic love story of Laila and Majnu, set against the picturesque backdrop of Kashmir. Despite its initial box office performance, the film's evocative storytelling and poignant performances by Tiwary and Dimri have earned it a dedicated fan base.

In his announcement, Avinash Tiwary expressed his excitement about the film's re-release. He mentioned that the decision was driven by the overwhelming demand from fans in Kashmir, who have shown immense love and appreciation for the film over the years.

Fans of the film have taken to social media to share their enthusiasm for the re-release. Many have praised the film's beautiful cinematography, soulful music, and heartfelt performances, expressing their eagerness to watch it again on the big screen.

New draft of B'cast Bill proposes to regulate news influencers



Individuals who routinely upload videos to social media, make podcasts or write about current affairs online could be classified as digital news broadcasters, according to the new draft of the broadcasting bill that the government shared with stakeholders.

The new version — HT has reviewed a copy — is the second draft of the Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2024 that is meant to replace the cable television networks act of 1995, The Hindustan Times reported.

When the Bill was first released for public consultation in November 2023, it set out to combine all regulation for broadcasters under one law. From the beginning, it has been dogged by concerns around whether or not news content creators online, who are not associated with legacy media or registered digital media, can attract obligations imposed on streaming platforms ('OTT broadcasting services'). The 2024 version proposes to bring them under the ambit of the law by introducing the new category called digital news broadcasters.

Government of India

www.goidirectory.nic.in

सत्यमेव जयते
Goverment Of India



Smt. Droupadi Murmu

Hon'ble President of India
President's Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhavan,
New Delhi, India-110004
Tel: +91-11-23015321
Fax: +91-11 23017290/+91-11-23017824



Shri. Jagdeep Dhankhar

Vice President
House, 6, Maulana Azad Road,
New Delhi-110011
Telephone: 011-23016422, 23016344
E-mail: vpindia@nic.in



Shri. Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office, South Block,
Raisina Hill, New Delhi-110011
Telephone: 91-11-23012312
Fax:+91-11-23019545 /+91-11-23016857



Shri. Amit Shah

Minister of Home Affairs
Room No. 104, North Block, New Delhi-110001
Tel.: +91-11-23092462, 23094686
Fax: +91-11-23094221



Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan

Minister of Human Resource Development
C-Ving, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
minister.hrd@gov.in
Ph: +91-11-23782698, 23782387
Fax: +91-11-23382365



Dr. Jitendra Singh

Ministry of Science & Technology
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Minister of Earth Sciences
Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli Road,
New Delhi-110016
Email : dr.harshvardhan@sansad.nic.in
Tel : +91-11-26567373, 26962819



Shri. Piyush Goyal

Minister of Commerce & Industry
Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
Email : officeofmr@gov.in
Tel: +91-11-23061008, +91-11-23061492
Fax: +91-11-23062947



Shri. Nitin Gadkari

Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
Room No. 501, Transport Bhawan, Sansad Marg,
New Delhi-110001
Tel: +91-11-23710121, +91-11-23714095
Fax: +91-11-23719023



Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

New Delhi-110001
Tel: 011-23015544, 23015545
Email: minoffice@nic.in, minister.rd@gov.in



Dr. Subramanyam Jaishankar

Ministry of External Affairs
South Block, New Delhi-110001
Tel: +91-11-23011127, +91-11-23011463,
+91-11-23013254 Fax: +91-11-23011463



Shri C R Patil

Minister of Jal Shakti
22, Mother Teresa Crescent Road, New Delhi-110011
Telefax : (011) 23017125, 23017126, 23017121, (M)
09013869752, 09911218278

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

www.mib.nic.in

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

A-Wing, 5th Floor, Shastri Bhawan,
Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110001
Tel.: +91-11-23384340 Fax : +91-11-23384286



Shri. Ashwini Vaishnaw

Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics & Information Technology
A-Wing, Shastri Bhawan
Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110001
Email : ravis@sansad.nic.in
Tel: +91-11-23386615, +91-11-23387557
Fax: +91-11-23793691



Shri. L.Murugan

(Minister of State)
Tel: +91-11-23382639, Fax: +91-11-23383513

Sanjay Jaju(Secretary)

Tel: +91-11-23382639, Fax: +91-11-23383513
email: secy.inb@nic.in

Shri Jayant Sinha

(Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser)
Tel: +91-11-23383775, Fax: +91-11-23386915
email: asfainb@gov.in

Neerja Sekhar
Additional Secretary & CVO
Tel: +91 23387558, Fax: +91 23387617

Sanjiv Shankar
Joint Secretary (B)
Tel: 011-23383857, Fax: 011-23384785

Vikram Sahay
Joint Secretary (P&A)
Tel: +91-11-23073775, Fax: +91-11-23388771

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

www.trai.gov.in

Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan,
(Next to Zakir Hussain College)
Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, (Old Minto Road),
New Delhi-110002
Phone: 011-23236308, 23233466, 23220534, 23213223
Fax: 011-23213294, E-mail: ap@trai.gov.in

Anil Kumar Lahoti (Chairman)
Email: cp@trai.gov.in Phone No: 011- 23212015

Meenakshi Gupta (Member)
Email: trai@trai.gov.in Phone No: 011- 23212015

Bhaskar Ramamurtji
Member (PT)

Atul Chaudhary
Secretary
Tel: +91-11-23237448, Fax: +91-11-23222816
Email: secretary@trai.gov.in

Abhay Shankar Verma
Pr. Advisor (B&CS)
Tel: +91-11-23236119, Fax: +91-11-23237923
Pradvbcs@trai.gov.in

Sheo Bhadra Singh
Pr. Advisor (NSL)
Tel: 011-23233291, Fax: 011-23230056
Email: pradvns@trai.gov.in

Dr. M.P. Tangirala
Pr. Advisor (F&EA)
Tel: +91-11-23221856, Fax: +91-11-23235249

Deepak Sharma Advisor (B&CS)-II
Tel: +91-11-23237922
Email: advbcs_2trai.gov.in

Akhil Saxena Advisor (Legal)
Tel: 011-23237024, Fax: 011-23237749
Email: advlegal@trai.gov.in

Tejpal Singh (Advisor (QoS)
Tel: 011-23230404, Fax: 011-23213036
Email: advqos@trai.gov.in

Mr. Kaushal Kishore
Advisor (F&EA-1)
Tel: +91-11-23230752, Tel: +91-11-23236650
Email: advfea1@trai.gov.in

Mr. Amit Sharma
Advisor (F&EA)-II
Tel: 011-23234367, Email: advfea2@trai.gov.in

Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)

www.tdsat.nic.in

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dhirubhai Naranbhai Patel
(Chairman)
2-Tuglak Lane, New Delhi
Tel: +91-11-26882176
Email: chairperson.tdsat@nic.in

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ram Krishna Gautam
(Member)

Mr. Subodh Kumar Gupta
(Member)

Shri. JK batra
Tel:- +91-11-26882173

Admin Section
Room No.478 (4th Floor), Tel: +91-11-24102563
Hotel Samrat, Chanakyapuri, Kautilya Marg,
New Delhi-110021
Tel: 011-26876882, Fax: 011-24105171, 011-24122218
Email: tdsat@nic.in

Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India)

www.ddindia.gov.in, www.allindiaradio.org

Shri. Gaurav Dwivedi
CEO, Prasar Bharati Board
2nd Floor, PTI Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001
Tel: +91-11-23118803, 23118804
Email: ceo@prasarbharati.gov.in

Shri. D.P.S Negi
Member, (Finance)
Tel:- +91-11-23118808
email: dpsnegi@prasarbharati.gov.in

Shri. Maneesh Chugh
ADG (Admin)
Tel:- +91-11-23118810
Email:- adg-admin@prasarbharati.gov.in

Shri. RK Joshi
DDG (Admin)
Tel:- +91-11-23118811
email: rkjoshi@prasarbharati.gov.in

Shri. Alok Kumar Sharma
Director (Pers.)
Tel:- +91-11-23118410
email: alokddccpc@prasarbharati.gov.in

Doordarshan

www.doordarshan.gov.in

Shri. Gaurav Dwivedi
CEO, Doordarshan, Prasar Bharati
Doordarshan, Doordarshan Bhavan, Mandi House, New Delhi-110001
Tel: +91-11-23386055, Fax: +91-11-23385843
Email: dgdd.doordarshan@gmail.com

Mr. C. B. S. Maurya (Engineer-In-Chief)
Tel: 23114501, 23114502
Email: eincdoordarshan@gmail.com

Shri. Maneesh Chugh
ADG (Admin)
Tel:- +91-11-23118810
Email:- adg-admin@prasarbharati.gov.in

Smt. Kalpana Singh
ADG (Finance)
Tel:- +91-11-23114533
Email:- adgfindgdd@gmail.com

Shri. Anurag Kulshreshtra
Add.DG
Tel:- +91-11-23114514

Shri P.K. Subhash
Add. Director General (Prog.)
Doordarshan Bhawan, Delhi-110001
Tel.: +91-11-23114517/506, +91-11-23114543
Email: pksubhashadg@gmail.com

Rajeev Kumar Jain
Additional Director General (News)
Tel: 011-23097604, Email: rkjain.nsd@gov.in

Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited

56-A/17, Block-C, Sector-62, Noida-201301
Ph.: 0120-433272-90

All India Aavishkar Dish Antenna Sangh. (Regd.)

Dr. A. K. Rastogi (President)
B-263, Indra Nagar, Delhi-33
Ph. 011-27672736, 27682112, M:. 09811110410
E-mail: dr.akrastogi@gmail.com
Website: www.aavishkarmedia.com

CATV ENTREPRENEURS CLUB

Dr. A. K. Rastogi (Convener)
B-263, Indra Nagar, Delhi-110033
M:. 09811110410, E-mail : dr.akrastogi@gmail.com

Sansad TV

Ravi Kapoor, CEO-Sansad TV
Tel: 011-23035160/23095163
FB-116, Parliament Library Building,
Parliament House Complex, New Delhi-110001

STAR INDIA

Gurjeev Singh Kapoor
President-Distribution, Star India Private Limited
33rd Floor, Star House, Urmi Estate, 95
Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel (W), Mumbai-400013
Tel: 022-66305555
E-Mail:- gurjeev.kapoor@startv.com

Summit Grover
Executive Vice President-Distribution

ZEEL

Anil Malhotra
17th Floor, A Wing, Marathon Futurex,
NM Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400013
Tel: 7506113377, 7506114477
Website: www.zeetelevision.com

SONY TV

Rajesh Kaul
Chief Revenue Officer, Distribution & International Business, Head -Sports Cluster
Sony Pictures Networks India Pvt. Ltd.
5th floor, Interface Building no 7 off Malad Link Road,
Malad, West Mumbai 400064, Mahatashtra
Tel: +91-2267081111

Enterr10 Television Pvt. Ltd.

Akshat Singhal
Lotus Grandeur, 601-602, 6th Floor, Veera Desai Rd,
opp. Gundecha Symphony, Andheri West,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400053

DISCOVERY

Bibhash Jha
Affiliate & Distribution, Sales & Marketing, Warner Bros. Discovery
Building No 9, Tower-A, 9th Floor, DLF Cyber City, Gurgaon-122002
Ph.: +91-124-4349100

ASIANET

Murthy Chaganti
MD & CEO
3rd Floor, Karimpanal Arcade, East Fort,
Thiruvananthapuram Fort, Thiruvananthapuram - 695023
(Near Attukal Shopping Complex)

TRAVELXP

Prashant Chothani
Celebrities Management Private Limited
5th Floor, Tech Web Centre, Link Road, Oshiwara,
Mumbai-400102, India
Tel : +91 22-42001000, E-mail: prashant@mediaworldwide.in

INDIACAST

Piyush Goyal
President
703, 7th Floor, HDIL – Kaledonia,
Opp. Vijay Nagar Society, Andheri East,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400069

In10 Media



Shibu Chacko
Ground Floor, Techweb Center, New Link Road, Oshiwara, Jogeshwari (W), Mumbai 400102, Maharashtra, India,
Tel:- +91 22 6130 6800, E-Mail:- contact@in10media.com

INDIA TODAY

Krishan Arora, COO
FC-8, Sector-16A, Film City, Noida-201301
Tel: +91-120-4807100

Network18

Avinash Kaul, CEO
1st Floor, Empire Complex, 414- Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013, Maharashtra
E-Mail:- complaint@nw18.com

ZMCL

Hemlata Sharma
Distribution Head
F.C. 19, Sec.-16A, Filim City, Noida-201301(U.P.)
Mob. :- +91-9819410075, Tel:- 0120-33139000

Republic TV

Kishan Cheranda
Republic Media House, Forest 158 FC6V+7RF, Sector 158, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201310

India TV

Priya Mukherjee
B-30, Sector 85, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
Tel:- 0120-3051000 (60 lines),
Email:- mail@indiatvnews.com
Websites:- www.indiatvnews.com, www.indiatv.in

TV9 BHARATVARSH

Dheerendhar Singh
Head Distribution
Associated Broadcasting Company Private Limited
Mob:- +91-9899888309
Fc 01, Film City, Sector 16A, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301

BBC WORLD

Sunil Joshi
BBC Worldwide Media Pvt. Ltd.
Construction House A, 5th floor, 24th road, Khar (W), Mumbai-400052
T:- 022 26606517, Email:- sunil.joshi@bbc.com

ABP NEWS

Sanjay Roy
National Head, Distribution
1st and 2nd Floor, Sovereign Capital Gate, FC-12, Film City, Sector 16A, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301

TIMES NETWORK

Sandeep Bharadwaj
Head Distribution
Trade Garden, 5th Floor, Kamala Mills Compound,
Senapati Bapat Marg, Mumbai-40013
Tel:- 022-23999944 ext-837, Dd# 022-24810837
E-Mail:- sandeep.bharadwaj@timesgroup.com

News24

Anurradha Prasad, CMD & Editor-in-Chief
Fc-23, Near Film City, Near Zee News,
Sector 16a-201301
info@bagnetwork.in

India Daily Live

R.K. Arora (CEO)
2nd Floor, A-154 A, Sector 63,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301
rkarora@theindiadaily.com

News Nation Network Pvt Ltd.

Jitender Kumar Verma
Plot No. 14, Sector 126, Noida 201 301, UP India
Tel:- +91-120-7138600
Email Address: info@newsnation.in

TOTAL TV

Anil Gaba
Total Telefilms Pvt.Ltd.
A-29, Nodia Sector 63, Nodia-201301
Tel: +(91)-120-4160832, www.totaltv.in

MH ONE

MH One TV Network Pvt. Ltd.
6, SSI Industrial Area, G.T. Karnal Road, Jahangirpuri
Industrial Area, Jahangirpuri, New Delhi, Delhi-110033
Tel:- 011 4040 2000

ETV

I. VENKAT
Ushodaya Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.
Shantiskhara Complex, Rajbhawan Road,
Somajiguda, Hyderabad–500082, Ph.040-2331-8181

CHANNEL NEWS ASIA INTERNATIONAL

SIDHARTH SRIVASTAVA
MCN International P Ltd.
C-9/9401, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070(India)
Tel: 011-26139988, Fax: 011-41755580, Mob: +91-9810155580

SANSKAR TV

Manoj Tyagi
Sanskar Info TV Private Limited
Fc-16, Sector-16A, Film City Noida-201301
Tel:- 0120-4950000,
www.sanskargroup.in

Sudhakar Desai
Mumbai. M-08108110111

AASTHA

PRAMOD JOSHI, CEO
VEDIC BROADCASTING LIMITED
Aastha Bhawan, A-105, Sector 5, Noida 201301
Ph. 0120-4520000, 09999806661, Fax: 0120-4520075
Email: pramod.joshi@aasthatv.co.in,contact@aasthatv.co.in, www.aasthatv.co.in

HATHWAY CABLE & DATA COM/WIN CABLE

Tavinderjit Singh Panesar
Hathway Cable & Datacom 802, 8th Floor
Interface11 Mindspace,
Malad West, Mumbai - 400 058

SITI NETWORK Ltd.

Yogesh Sharma, CEO
Siti - Corporate Officefc 19, Sector 16a, Film
Citygautam Budh Nagar, Noida-201301
E-mail:- yogesh.sharma@siti.esselgroup.com

DEN NETWORKS LTD.

S.N. SHARMA
B-236, Okhla Indl.Area, Ph-3 New Delhi-110020
E-Mail:- sns@denonline.in, Ph.:011-40501719, 40522200

FASTWAY TRANSMISSION PVT.LTD.

GURDEEP SINGH
Grand Walk Mall, 5th Floor, Opp. Gurdev Hospital,
Ferozpur, Road, Ludhiana-141002(PB)

GTPL Hathway Ltd.

KANAKSINH RANA
2nd Floor, Sahjanand Shopping Centre, Opp. Swaminarayan Temple,
Shahibaug, Ahmedabad-380004, Ph: 079-30280340

ICNCL

Suresh Sethiya (Director Indian Cable Net Co Ltd.)
J- 1 / 15, Block EP, Sec.- V, Salt Lake Electronics Complex,
Kolkatta (W.B.)- 700 091, Tel:- 033 40025020

Metrocast

Nagesh Chhabria
Metro Cast Network, 3rd Floor, Samsukha complex,
Khade Bazar, Belgaum-590001

HITS

Vynsley Fernandes, Whole Time Director
Hinduja Global Solutions, CEO, NXTDIGITAL
In Center, 49/50, MIDC, 12th Road,
Marol, Andheri East, Mumbai city, Maharashtra-400093

DD DIRECT

VINOD KAPOOR
Doordarshan Bhawan Copernicus Marg,
Mandi House, Delhi-110001

TATA SKY

HARIT NAGPAL (CEO)
Unit 301 to 305, 3rd Floor, Windsor, Off C.S.T. Road,
Kalina, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 098, Maharashtra, India
Telephone: 022 6613 3000
Email: help@tataplay.com

BHARTI TELETECH

Sunil Taldar (CEO & Director)
Bharti Teletech P. Ltd.
Sec-39, Unitech Cyber Park, Tower-B, Floor-8, Gurgaon (Haryana)
Ph.:0124 4244000/08

DISH TV

Manoj Dobhal, CEO
Dish TV India Limited
FC-19, IInd Floor, Sec-16A, Noida- 201301, Ph.: 0120-2511064/78

OTT PLAY

Anil Dua (CRO)
Sixth floor, Lotus Tower, Block A, Friends Colony East,
New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110025

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

Sonal Kabi, CMO
Amazon World Trade Center, Brigade Gateway, 8th floor,
26/1, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Malleshwaram(W),
Bangalore-560055, Karnataka, India.

JIO CINEMA

Sharang Sharma, Head-Content Licensing and Partnerships
Grandeur, 8th floor, Veera Desai Extension Road,
Andheri West, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400053
Phone Number: 02249666000; **Email:** jiocinema@jio.com

MX PLAYER

Karan Bedi, Founder & CEO
2nd Floor, Kanakia Wall Street Andheri - Kurla Road Chakala,
Hanuman Nagar, Andheri East,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400093

DISNEY + HOTSTAR

Sajith Sivanandan, President and Head of Disney+Hotstar
Building No - S 14, Solitaire Corporate Park,
Guru Hargovindji Rd, Marg, Chakala, Andheri East,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400093

ZEE5

Archana Anand, Global
4WFF+JCQ, Chandan Nagar, Vikhroli West,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400083

SONY LIV

Saugata Mukherjee, Head of Content
3rd Floor, Interface Building No. 7,
Off Malad Link Road, Malad West,
Mumbai - 400 064

NETFLIX

Monika Shergill, Content Head
Floor 11 & 12, G Block BKC,
Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400051

ALT BALAJI

Sanjay Dwivedi, Group COO, CFO
3rd Floor, Satyadev Plaza, Behind Hard Rock cafe,
Fun Republic Road, Andheri West,
Mumbai, 400053

SHEEMAROO

Hiren Uday Gada, CEO
221, Okhla Industrial Estate Phase 3 Rd,
Okhla Phase III, Okhla Industrial Estate,
New Delhi, Delhi 110019

CHAUPAL

Sandeep Bansal, Founder & MD
Plot 161 Ind, Industrial Area Phase II,
Chandigarh, 160002

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Pramit Kumar | pramitk@eigroup.in
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