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दिल्ली चुनाव जिसपर पूरी दुनिया की नजर है ये केजरीवाल या मोदी के बीच नहीं बल्कि मतदाताओं के दो विशेष वर्ग के बीच है



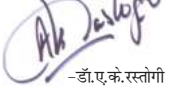
पढ़ा लिखा टीवी सोशल मीडिया से जुड़ा मतदाता जो बाजार भाव से लेकर शेयरों के भावों तक को समझता है जो बेरोजगारी भूख महंगाई साफ सफाई विकास के साथ साथ मुद्रा के उतार चढ़ाव को भी जानता है जो शिक्षा स्वास्थ्य सुरक्षा खेल सहित पूरी दुनिया की खबर रखता है ,जिसे अपनी और परिवार की जिम्मेदारी जीविकोपार्जन की सदैव चिंता रहती है ,जिसे दूध बिजली पानी फोन बिलों के साथ साथ बच्चों के स्कूल की फीस यूनिफार्म ट्यूशन फीस आदि के अतिरिक्त मेड की तनख्वाह देने की फिक्र भी रहती है ! टैक्स भुगतान तो उसके गले की सदैव फाँस बना होता है ! कोर्ट कचहरी अस्पताल से जिसे भय लगता है।

मस्त मलंग पूर्णतया पैरासाइट जो भूख भय से दूर निडर होता है जिसे खाना पानी इलाज शिक्षा बिजली सब सरकार से मुफ्त में उपलब्ध होता है जिसे देश या विकास से कोई सरोकार नहीं होता उसकी दुनिया अपने तक ही सीमित होती है उसका सुरक्षा से कोई वास्ता नहीं होता है वह स्वयं में सुरक्षित होता है।

ये मतदाता अपने मत का इस्तेमाल करना खूब समझते हैं इन्हें मालूम है कि इनकी जरूरतें कौन पूरी करेगा ,इन्होंने अपने मत के भाव पूरे बना रखे है , कोई भी पार्टी हो प्रत्याशी हो इनके सम्मुख नतमस्तक होना उनकी सबसे बड़ी जरूरत मजबूरी होती है इनके वोट ही किसी की लाट्री बन जाते हैं किसी के भी सिर मुकुट बांधने की ताकत इनकी उँगली में ही होती है अतः इन्हें आकर्षित करने के लिए हर प्रत्याशी पार्टी नये नये हथकंडे अपनाती हैं , मुफ्त की तमाम घोषणाएँ इन्हें ही आकर्षित करने के लिए की जाती हैं !

चुनावी बिगुल बज चुका है घोषणाओं के पिटारे खुल गये हैं ,झूठ मक्कारी नौटंकी ड्रामा सब चालू हो गया है देखना होगा कि कौन वोटर्स को कितना ज्यादा प्रभावित कर पाएगा ,ये भाजपा कॉंग्रेस या आप का चुनाव नहीं अपितु वोटर्स के बीच का चुनाव है ! अब देखना होगा कि जीत किसकी होती है ???

5th February 2025 Wednesday को दिल्ली के मतदाताओं को मतदान करना होगा और परिणाम **8th February 2025** को आ जाएगा ।



–डॉ.ए.के.रस्तोगी

GUEST COLUMN:-

The Year That Was and the Road Ahead: Indian Media in 2024 and Beyond

By Shashi Shekhar Vempati



As 2024 draws to a close, Shashi Shekhar Vempati, former CEO of Prasar Bharati, reflects on a transformative year for India and its media landscape. Amidst global uncertainties and tectonic shifts, India has emerged as a beacon of political stability and innovation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Vempati highlights the critical milestones of 2024 and forecasts the pivotal trends that could define 2025 for Indian media and the broader socio-economic framework.

2024: A Year of Resilience and Revolution

Political Stability Amid Global TurmoilIndia's ability to weather the aftershocks of the pandemic, ensure political continuity, and maintain steady policy frameworks has set it apart among major democracies. Vempati attributes this stability to strong governance and a cohesive vision that has steered the nation through global tumult. This foundation, he asserts, has been crucial for India's economic resilience and progress.



AI's Mainstream BreakthroughArtificial Intelligence dominated public discourse in 2024, redefining the way individuals, businesses, and governments operate. In a defining moment, PM Modi utilized AI tools for live translation during speeches, signaling a new era of inclusivity and technological advancement. AI's penetration into mainstream media also marked a turning point, opening avenues for innovation while challenging traditional norms.

A Crossroads for Indian MediaThe media industry underwent significant consolidation and a generational leadership shift in 2024. Traditional television platforms faced declining subscriptions, while digital revenues came under increasing pressure from Big Tech's opaque algorithms. At the same time, AI's disruptive potential loomed large, promising both opportunities and existential challenges for media as we know it.

2025: A Pivotal Year for Indian Media

Vempati envisions 2025 as a make-or-break year for Indian media as it grapples with these disruptions and seizes opportunities to redefine its role in a rapidly changing world.Taking the India Story GlobalNascent efforts by major players like NDTV and India Today to amplify the India narrative globally will gather momentum. A notable development is ANI's collaboration with Sinclair Media Group in the United States to showcase "New India's" transformative journey. Such partnerships, Vempati believes, are vital in shaping global perceptions and asserting India's voice on the world stage.Addressing Big Tech ChallengesA critical challenge for 2025 will be tackling the disproportionate influence Big Tech platforms wield over digital news consumption and monetization. Vempati warns of the growing risks of foreign interference, especially as AI models become increasingly sophisticated. He advocates for stringent measures to ensure algorithmic transparency and fair revenue sharing, protecting the democratic process and the media's independence.Indigenous Technology and Media ConvergenceIndia's technological prowess offers a unique opportunity to level the playing field for its media industry. Vempati highlights Direct-to-Mobile Broadcasting (D2M) as a game-changing innovation that could reduce dependence on foreign platforms. Coupled with advances in AI and other indigenous technologies, D2M has the potential to empower Indian media to tell its stories globally, free from external gatekeepers

Vempati's vision for 2025 is one of optimism and determination. He foresees a convergence between India's burgeoning technology ecosystem and the media's ambitions to take the India story global. As the world's largest democracy and a hub of technological talent, India stands poised to redefine global narratives through homegrown platforms and innovations.

The transformations of 2024 have set the stage for a decisive year ahead. As Indian media navigates the complexities of Big Tech, AI, and global storytelling, Vempati's insights serve as a clarion call for innovation, resilience, and self-reliance. The story of India in 2025 will not just be told but shaped by its media's ability to adapt and lead.

AIADAS, ALCOA exhort MIB to slash LCO registration fee to Rs 2k

The All India Avishkar Dish Antenna Sangh (AIADAS) and All Local Cable Operator Association Delhi (ALCOA) have jointly appealed to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) to reconsider the recently revised registration fee for cable TV operators.

The new regulation, part of the amendments to the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1994, extends the registration period from one year to five years, but the fee has been increased to Rs.5000 an amount both associations deem excessive.

The associations argue that the hefty registration fee places an undue financial burden on cable TV operators (LCOs), who are already grappling with declining revenues due to changes in technology, policy shifts, and evolving market dynamics.

"When the Cable Television Netwo implemented in 1994, the annual regis was later increased to Rs.500 a 1000 p despite protests from operators. Toda hike to Rs.5000 has been imposed, whi current challenges faced by LCOs," ALCO

Since the implementation of the New Tariff Order (NTO) in 2019, LCOs have witnessed a steady decline in their customer base. In 2024, when the registration process was made free on the Broadcast Seva Portal, only 46,500 LCOs registered out of the estimated 1 lakh operators nationwide. AIADAS and ALCOA argue that the Rs.5000 fee will deter even more operators from registering.

Both organizations propose a fee reduction to Rs.2000 for a five-year registration term, citing this as a balanced solution. "At Rs.2000, the government would still generate Rs.20 crores in revenue if all 1 lakh operators register. This is a fair compromise that ensures compliance while not overburdening LCOs," the associations stated.

The associations emphasized that LCOs have been instrumental in providing affordable television services across India, particularly in rural and underserved regions. The increasing financial pressures, coupled with regulatory hurdles, are making it difficult for these small-

t be registered, and the five-year the fee should reflect the realities of astogi, AIADAS President.

ointly urged the MIB to revise the nd adopt a supportive stance toward adjustment is essential for sustaining e operators, which serves millions of households across the country.

The associations hope the government will recognize the critical role of LCOs and act swiftly to alleviate their financial strain.

सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय
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सत्यमेव जयते

Karan Veer Mehra crowned winner of 'Bigg Boss 18'



Actor Karan Veer Mehra emerged as the winner of the highly anticipated finale of 'Bigg Boss 18', defeating fellow finalist Vivian Dsena in a close battle of votes. The finale, held on January 20, 2025, concluded with an emotional and celebratory moment as Karan lifted the coveted trophy, IANS reported.

The finale showdown followed the elimination of Rajat Dalal, leaving Karan Veer Mehra and Vivian Dsena as the last two contestants standing. Both stars garnered immense support from fans throughout the season, making the final vote count a nail-biting affair.

Karan's victory marks a significant milestone in his career, with the actor winning hearts not only through his strategic gameplay but also with his emotional resilience and ability to connect with the audience.

Bigg Boss 18 delivered on its promise of high-octane drama, unexpected twists, and deeply personal moments. This season, hailed as one of the most engaging yet, saw its contestants navigate alliances, conflicts, and challenges that kept audiences hooked week after week.

Karan's journey in the house was marked by his ability to balance diplomacy with authenticity, earning him both respect from housemates and adoration from fans.

Social media platforms erupted in celebration after Karan's win, with fans expressing their joy and appreciation for his journey. The hashtag #KaranVeerMehraBB18Winner trended nationwide as admirers lauded his performance throughout the show.

Prasar Bharati launches 'Kumbhvani' FM channel

In a landmark initiative, Prasar Bharati's radio division, Akashvani, unveiled a dedicated FM channel, 'Kumbhvani,' aimed at disseminating comprehensive information about the Maha Kumbh 2025. The channel, broadcasting on 103.5 MHz, was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during his visit to Prayagraj, PTI reported.

Speaking at the event, CM Adityanath hailed Kumbhvani as a transformative effort to connect millions across the nation, including those in the remotest corners, to the essence of the Maha Kumbh. He emphasized that the channel would serve as a vital bridge for individuals unable to attend the grand event, allowing them to immerse themselves in its spiritual and cultural splendor.

CM Adityanath hailed Kumbhvani as a transformative effort to connect millions across the nation, including those in the remotest corners, to the essence of the Maha Kumbh. He emphasized that the channel would serve as a vital bridge for individuals unable to attend the grand event, allowing them to immerse themselves in its spiritual and cultural splendor.

"The Maha Kumbh is not merely a religious gathering; it's a monumental celebration of Sanatan Dharma's pride, unity, and inclusivity, where distinctions of caste, sect, or gender dissolve in a shared faith," he remarked.

Kumbhvani, operational from January 10 to February 26, will air daily from 5:55 am to 10:05 pm, providing live coverage of Maha Kumbh events, devotional narratives, and cultural insights. This initiative follows similar efforts during past Kumbh festivals in 2013 and 2019, underscoring Prasar Bharati's commitment to innovation in media.



Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. L Murugan and Prasar Bharati Board Chairman Navneet Sehgal, along with other dignitaries, lauded the FM channel's role in amplifying the spiritual significance of the event.

CM Adityanath reflected on Akashvani's pivotal role in preserving and promoting India's cultural heritage, recalling how he listened to Ramcharitmanas broadcasts as a child. Highlighting Prasar Bharati's evolution, he noted the public broadcaster's efforts to adapt to modern media trends while retaining its cultural essence.

Describing the Maha Kumbh as a global confluence of spirituality, CM Adityanath urged people to witness its unifying spirit, where individuals from all walks of life gather in shared faith. "Kumbhvani beautifully captures this essence, reaching even the most distant villages, enabling everyone to partake in this monumental celebration," he said.

The Chief Minister also emphasized the growing international interest in the Maha Kumbh, with visitors seeking to explore its profound spiritual dimensions. He lauded Kumbhvani for making the event's message of harmony and inclusivity accessible to global audiences.

Reflecting on the power of media to inspire cultural pride, Adityanath drew parallels with the resurgence in viewership of Doordarshan's Ramayana during the COVID-19 lockdown. He expressed confidence that Kumbhvani would resonate deeply with listeners, especially the youth, given FM channels' popularity in India.

The Kumbhvani FM channel, a milestone in Prasar Bharati's 50-year journey, promises to be a lifeline for devotees and spiritual seekers, ensuring that the Maha Kumbh's grandeur reaches every home across India.



Draft data protection rules aims to balance rules & innovation: Minister



From parental consent for kids' social media accounts to localisation of data in India, India's draft data protection rules aim to address some of the tech concerns that haunt everybody in India. But how would certain proposed rules —like data localisation— impact the M&E industry is still being analysed. It does have bearings on the streamers, experts say as they read between the fine print and lines.

However, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw feels that the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules (DPDPR) drafted by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation, while protecting citizens' rights.

The government has issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Mr. Vaishnaw told PTI in an interview on Saturday last.

The Minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world — the European data protection rule with high level of regulation —but Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in innovation ecosystem developing among start-ups in the country.

He said extensive consultation has been held with the industry and a digital office is being put in place for registration of complaints, their handling and adjudication.

The Minister, according to the PTI report that's based on the interview, said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session (mid 2025) and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to adapt their system and comply with the law.

"All entities covered under the Act will have to review existing consent after the rules are in place," Vaishnaw said, adding the rules may be improvised based on the experience of the new data regime.

"As far as possible, minimum prescription has been kept in the rules to ensure simple implementation of the Act. The rules have carefully addressed the large harm that the digital world may pose to the privacy of people, especially that of children," Vaishnaw said.

The Digital Personal Data Protection draft rules specify that a parent's verifiable consent will have to be obtained by social media or online platforms before children can create an account. Parents' identity and age will have to be checked through voluntarily provided identity proof or virtual tokens.

The Act has the provision to impose a penalty of up to Rs. 250 crore on data fiduciaries.

Vaishnaw said the rules for data processing overseas will be implemented while keeping in mind citizen's rights and national interests. "The country should be able to take benefit of all the new opportunities that are emerging out of the digital economy," Vaishnaw said.

However, the rules will not have an impact on existing norms under which news media operate. "Media rights will continue to remain as it is. Press will continue to function as per the current framework," Vaishnaw added.



Guest Column :-
Revolutionizing Media and Entertainment: The Road to a Hybrid Future

By NK Rouse





The media and entertainment (M&E) industry is undergoing a sweeping transformation, blending legacy formats with technological advancements to meet evolving consumer demands. While Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms have revolutionized content consumption, the resurgence of cable TV and the rise of Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) are redefining the traditional media landscape.

The Shifting Dynamics of Media Consumption

OTT platforms like Disney+ Hotstar, ZEE5, and SonyLIV have set new benchmarks in personalized, on-demand entertainment, capturing a growing share of the audience. In India, the OTT market was valued at ₹17,000 crore in 2023 and is expected to reach ₹20,000 crore by 2025. However, according to Ormax Media's OTT Audience Report, active paid subscriptions have dropped from 101.8 million in 2023 to 99.6 million in 2024. This slowing subscription growth and increased competition present opportunities for traditional media to evolve.

Cable TV, once the dominant entertainment medium, has faced significant disruption. Streaming services accessible on smartphones and tablets have reduced the appeal of traditional cable. Yet, the industry is far from obsolete; it is adapting by leveraging IPTV to integrate modern features and offer a more dynamic viewing experience.

The Evolution of Cable TV Through IPTV

IPTV is breathing new life into cable TV by blending traditional programming with digital innovations. These services combine live TV, video-on-demand, and access to streaming apps on a single platform, creating a unified entertainment experience. Hybrid set-top boxes enable viewers to seamlessly navigate between live broadcasts and OTT content, addressing diverse audience needs.

Technological advancements are key drivers of this transformation. The rollout of 5G networks is enabling ultra-HD streaming and real-time content delivery. AI-powered recommendations and interactive features, such as voice-activated search and live shopping channels, are enhancing engagement. IPTV's ability to integrate with smart TVs and connected devices is further expanding its reach, especially among tech-savvy consumers.

Regional Content: The Common Thread

Regional and hyper-local content continues to dominate viewership in India, with over 60% of OTT consumption in 2023-24 coming from non-Hindi languages. This trend also influences cable and IPTV services, which are investing heavily in regional programming to cater to India's multilingual audience. By focusing on hyper-local storytelling, operators are bridging gaps that global streaming platforms often overlook.

Hybrid Models: The Future of Entertainment

Cable TV and IPTV are evolving into hybrid models that combine the strengths of traditional and digital media. Services like Jio TV Plus are pioneering this approach, offering live TV alongside OTT content in a single interface. Cloud-based solutions now allow users to record shows without the limitations of traditional DVR systems, while AI-driven ad targeting and personalized content are creating tailored experiences.

Challenges and Opportunities in the M&E Industry

The industry faces challenges such as piracy, regulatory disparities, and the rising cost of multiple OTT subscriptions. Yet, these hurdles also present opportunities. Cable and IPTV operators are well-positioned to provide affordable, unified solutions that appeal to cost-conscious audiences. The growing availability of high-speed internet and 5G networks is enhancing the viability of these platforms.One of the significant challenges faced in linear TV lies in capturing the attention of Gen Z audiences, who are increasingly shifting away from traditional linear content. This generational shift has created an imperative for broadcasters to innovate and find ways to attract younger viewers to linear channels. Strategies to engage Gen Z may include integrating interactive elements, gamification, and leveraging social media for cross-platform promotion.



Decision to allocate satcom will benefit consumers: Telecom Minister

India's decision to allocate satellite spectrum, rather than auction it, will give consumers more choice, India's Telecoms Minister said yesterday, playing down concern by Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio that it could lose out to Elon Musk's Starlink.

Starlink has long wanted to launch in India and has in recent months clashed with billionaire Ambani's company over how the country should grant spectrum for satellite services, a Reuters report from new Delhi stated

Reliance had urged an auction but the Indian government sided with Musk who wanted it to be allocated administratively, in line with global trends. Analysts say an auction, requiring much more investment, would likely deter foreign rivals.

Ambani said he wanted a level playing field and has been worried that his telecom company, which spent $19 billion in airwave auctions, now risks losing broadband customers to Starlink and potentially even data and voice clients later as technology advances.

"My job as Telecoms Minister is to make sure that you have as many choices as possible," Jyotiraditya Scindia told Reuters during an interview at his ministry's office in New Delhi.

Asked if there was merit in Reliance's concerns, he said, without naming any company: "Technology is never constant", adding that companies need to keep evolving.

Scindia noted that current satellite technology for communications requires devices to have the sky in their sight, and smartphones cannot use that technology for indoor services that are provided by terrestrial networks. "The minute you come into this building, you're done," he said.

India is one of the world's biggest telecom markets with 942 million users and stiff competition among Reliance and rivals Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. Data prices are among the cheapest in the world and internet connectivity has risen rapidly.

Deloitte predicts India's satellite broadband service market will be worth $1.9 billion by 2030, making it lucrative for players like Starlink, Amazon and Ambani.

Scindia said Starlink and Amazon Kuiper's applications for a licence to launch satellite broadband services in the country were still under review.

Prime Video unveils first-look images of 'Invincible' S3

Prime Video has released a tantalizing glimpse into the much-anticipated third season of 'Invincible', the critically acclaimed adult-animated superhero series. Fans can expect the series to return with even more intense action, drama, and surprises as it introduces a new supervillain, Powerplex.



The first three episodes of 'Invincible' Season Three will debut exclusively on Prime Video on February 6, 2025, in over 240 countries and territories. Subsequent episodes will drop every Thursday until the season finale on March 13, 2025.

Based on the award-winning comic book series by Robert Kirkman, Cory Walker, and Ryan Ottley, 'Invincible' follows the journey of Mark Grayson, a teenager grappling with inheriting superpowers from his father, Omni-Man. The narrative delves into Mark's struggles to protect Earth and his loved ones while confronting personal and ethical dilemmas.

The series has garnered widespread critical acclaim, including "Certified Fresh" rankings on Rotten Tomatoes for its first two seasons and the Golden Tomato Award for Best Animated Series in 2023.

Hotstar to stream Coldplay concert live on R-Day

In a groundbreaking move, Disney+ Hotstar is set to bring the magic of Coldplay's "Music of the Spheres World Tour" to audiences across India with a live stream of their Ahmedabad concert on January 26, 2025, coinciding with Republic Day celebrations.

This monumental collaboration redefines live-streaming entertainment, making the band's largest-ever stadium performance in India accessible to millions across the nation. The concert, held at Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium, promises to be a historic event for both music lovers and the digital entertainment space, the streamer said.

Disney+ Hotstar's extensive reach and state-of-the-art streaming technology will deliver the live performance in stunning quality, ensuring an immersive experience for viewers on every screen. Beyond the concert, subscribers will enjoy exclusive behind-the-scenes access, further enhancing the experience



Paramount, Comcast strengthen ties with multi-year deal renewal

Paramount Global and Comcast have fortified their longstanding partnership with the renewal of a multi-year distribution agreement, ensuring uninterrupted access to Paramount's extensive portfolio of channels and streaming platforms for millions of Comcast subscribers, Reuters reported.

The renewed agreement, which extends the original 2022 deal, guarantees that popular Paramount networks, including CBS, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, and MTV, will remain accessible to over 14 million cable customers and 29 million broadband users via Comcast's Xfinity platform. The partnership underscores the companies' shared vision of delivering premium entertainment while adapting to the ever-evolving media landscape.

As part of the deal, Comcast subscribers will continue to enjoy Paramount's acclaimed streaming services, including Paramount+, Pluto TV, and BET+, offering a blend of on-demand programming, live content, and exclusive features. Notably, the renewal also introduces an option for Comcast to offer Paramount+ with Showtime to eligible Xfinity customers, providing a seamless integration of streaming content into traditional cable subscriptions.

Neil Smit, Chief Executive Officer of Comcast Cable, expressed enthusiasm for the renewed collaboration, stating, "This partnership reaffirms our commitment to delivering exceptional entertainment experiences. With Paramount's rich portfolio of networks and streaming platforms, we continue to meet the diverse needs of our customers, ensuring they have access to world-class content anytime, anywhere."

Similarly, Bob Bakish, President and CEO of Paramount Global, highlighted the strategic importance of the deal, saying, "Paramount's continued relationship with Comcast exemplifies our dedication to expanding our audience reach and providing unparalleled value through innovative content delivery. Together, we are shaping the future of entertainment."

This renewed alliance comes at a pivotal time when media consumption habits are rapidly shifting toward hybrid models that combine traditional cable with on-demand streaming. By offering a versatile package that appeals to both traditional viewers and tech-savvy streamers, the deal positions both companies to maintain their competitive edge in a crowded market.

Under the terms of the agreement, Comcast's Xfinity customers can look forward to a streamlined experience, with enhanced access to Paramount's diverse catalog of movies, shows, live sports, and breaking news.

Paramount+, a key feature of the deal, continues to build its reputation as a premium streaming service, delivering original content alongside beloved classics. Additionally, Pluto TV, Paramount's free ad-supported streaming platform, remains a significant draw for viewers seeking quality entertainment without subscription fees.With this renewal, Comcast solidifies its role as a leading provider of diversified entertainment, while Paramount ensures its content reaches a broad and engaged audience across cable and digital platforms.

Annapurna Studios launches India's first Dolby-certified post-production facility



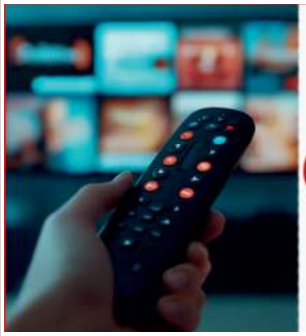
In a monumental stride for Indian cinema, Annapurna Studios has launched the country's first Dolby-certified post-production facility for both cinema and home viewing. The cutting-edge facility was inaugurated by celebrated filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli, with renowned actor Nagarjuna Akkineni, Vice Chairman of Annapurna Studios, in attendance. This milestone further cements India's position on the global cinematic map, The Economic Times reported.

Renowned for pushing creative and technological boundaries, Annapurna Studios has collaborated with Dolby to establish this groundbreaking facility. S.S. Rajamouli, whose film RRR became the first Indian release in Dolby Cinema, shared his excitement at the event.

"During RRR, we had to travel to Germany for Dolby Vision grading. It's thrilling to see this facility in India now," said Rajamouli. He expressed enthusiasm about the prospect of more Dolby Cinemas in India, adding, "Watching a film in Dolby Vision is a unique experience, enhancing every detail with stunning clarity and elevating storytelling to another level.

Marking its 50th year, Annapurna Studios continues to lead innovation in Indian cinema. Nagarjuna Akkineni highlighted the studio's legacy, "From pioneering virtual production to launching this Dolby-certified facility, we strive to bring global standards to Indian cinema. This milestone reaffirms our vision to elevate Indian films on the global stage."

India leading growth market in MPA's video, b'band report



In a transformative shift for the Asia-Pacific video and broadband industry, Media Partners Asia (MPA) released its highly anticipated Asia Pacific Video & Broadband 2025 report yesterday, forecasting remarkable growth in the region's video market over the next five years.

The report highlights an incremental revenue surge of $16.2 billion between 2024 and 2029, driven by the dominance of online video and significant changes in audience preferences.

The APAC video industry is projected to expand from $145 billion in 2024 to over $165 billion by 2029, reflecting a steady 2.2 percent CAGR. This growth will be led by a $24.1 billion rise in online video revenue, which is poised to surpass traditional TV revenue by 2027, according to a media statement put out by MPA.

At the same time, the latter is expected to shrink by $8 billion as consumer preferences lean increasingly toward streaming. Streaming's share in the APAC video industry is predicted to grow from 44 percent in 2024 to 54 percent by 2029, with India and China at the forefront of this transformation.

India and China will collectively contribute nearly 50 percent of the incremental revenue growth in the video market. India, in particular, will emerge as a dominant force in the premium video sector, driving nearly half of the $5.5 billion growth in this segment. While traditional TV revenue will decline in India, online video is set to experience an impressive 16 percent CAGR, bolstered by the adoption of subscription-based and ad-supported models.

The fastest-growing segments over the next five years will include User-Generated Content (UGC) and Social Video, which are set to generate $10.7 billion in additional revenue. Platforms like YouTube, ByteDance, and Meta will lead this charge, leveraging advanced AI technologies to enhance user engagement.

Subscription Video-on-Demand (SVOD) will also play a pivotal role, contributing $8.4 billion in growth, supported by low-cost ad-tier offerings and an expanding portfolio of sports and local content.

Advertising revenue continues to dominate the market, contributing 65 percent of online video growth. Premium ad-supported video-on-demand (AVOD) platforms are witnessing rapid expansion, particularly in markets like India, Indonesia, Australia, and Japan. By 2029, advertising is expected to account for 61% of video industry monetization in APAC, excluding China.

The increasing penetration of connected TVs (CTVs) is another significant growth driver. By 2029, active CTV penetration is projected to reach 85-90 percent in developed markets like Australia, Korea, and Japan, while emerging markets such as India and Indonesia will see penetration levels of 25-50 percent. Fixed broadband growth, fueled by fiber-optic deployments, will further support this trend, with an estimated 4.2 percent CAGR in broadband adoption across key APAC markets, excluding China.

Global players such as YouTube, Netflix, Disney, Amazon Prime Video, and TikTok currently dominate the online video market, holding a combined 67 percent revenue share in 2024. However, this share is expected to dip to 62 percent by 2029 as local platforms gain prominence. In India, JioStar leads in premium VOD, while regional players are also making strides in Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and Thailand.

MPA's Executive Director Vivek Couto emphasized the transformative potential of the APAC video market, noting that while streaming profitability is emerging in certain regions, challenges remain in local streaming markets. Consolidation and mergers are likely to accelerate in response to these challenges, particularly in India, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

With streaming poised to take center stage, the Asia-Pacific video industry is set to redefine its landscape, offering new opportunities for innovation and monetization. As 2029 approaches, the shift from traditional television to digital platforms will mark a new era of entertainment in the region.

Warner Bros to re-release 'Interstellar' in IMAX theatres across India

Celebrating a decade of Christopher Nolan's cinematic brilliance, Warner Bros Pictures India has announced the re-release of 'Interstellar', the acclaimed 2014 sci-fi epic. This highly anticipated event will hit Indian theatres and IMAX screens on February 7, offering audiences a chance to relive the groundbreaking masterpiece on the big screen, PTI reported.



'Interstellar', starring a stellar ensemble cast including Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Chastain, and Michael Caine, explores humanity's quest for survival beyond Earth. The story follows a group of space explorers who journey through a wormhole in search of a habitable planet, grappling with themes of time, love, and sacrifice.

Known for his visionary storytelling, Christopher Nolan has established himself as a master filmmaker with iconic works like 'The Dark Knight trilogy', 'Inception', 'Dunkirk', and the recent 'Oppenheimer'. With 'Interstellar', Nolan delivered a visually stunning narrative complemented by Hans Zimmer's evocative score, making it a hallmark of modern cinema.

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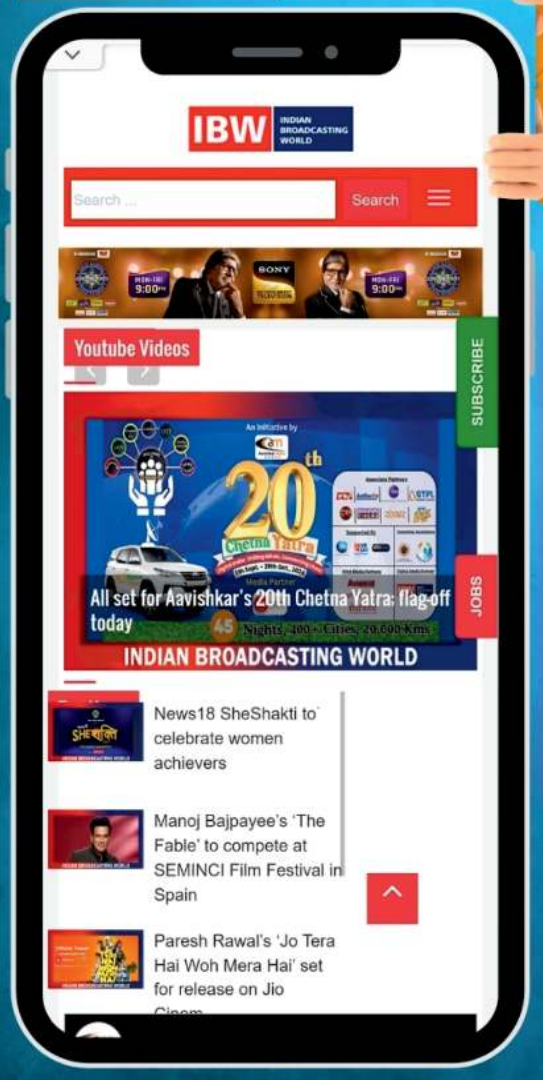
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GUEST COLUMN:- By Sunil Punj
Roadmap for DTH, cable TV, CTV, FreeDish

As the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI's) report for Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators for July24 - Sept 24 is published, the worst fears of the DTH (and Cable TV players) are coming true.

There is an inherent feeling that the actual figure is far more damaging than this reported figure of 59.9 million of Indian DTH base (by the end of Sept 24)as this includes the subscribers who have been inactive or temporarily suspended for not more than 90 days as well.

This figure was 64.18 million a year ago in Sept 23 Secondly if the current churn trend of the Industry is factored in for the quarter Oct 24-Dec 24 as well, then the 2025 figures will be less than even approx 57 million active base for DTH.

Similar will be a trend for Cable TV (which might be going downward to around 50 million-52 million by year end)

Positives for 2025 :

TV households : They are estimated to increase from 320 mn to 340 mn. So a good oppprtunity for the entire ecosystem .

Connected TV: Currently CTVs estimated reach is around 40 mn households and this number is expected to grow significantly with projections suggesting it could reach around 50 million by end of 2025 .

DD FreeDish : Expected to increase from current estimated 45 million and touch 50 million by year end.

'TV Dark' Homes – There will be a reduction of Approx 5 mn 'TV Dark' households from the current 100 million + TV Dark households .

Future Outlook for DTH/ Cable TV:

It's time the key stakeholders in the Industry value chain (esp DTH+ Cable TV players , Broadcasters , LCOs, Hardware manufacturers etc) come together, put their collaborative thinking Hats on and make the players shift their focus from poaching each other's existing stbs …and align their minds to find some Innovative, constructive, Out Of the Box ideas for a huge opportunity still up for grabs :



With rapid electrification of rural areas, deep penetration of Digital transactions for online payments , rising affluence amongst people , more proliferation of 5G network, expected sale of approx 18 mn to 20 mn new TVs in the year , ….. fresh ideation is needed for

upconverting DD FreeDish universe (estimated to touch approx 50 million)

target 100 million plus 'TV Dark' homes .

Put together it has a humongous 150 million + market.

DTH / Cable TV Industry players can look to explore :

1) Pooling in resources by making a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to have a focused approach to tap the huge above mentioned 150 million plus market of Free Dish + 'TV Dark' households

2) Rather than spending huge amounts of money in buying fresh stbs and using it for free swapping of each other's existing stbs, divert these funds to onboard part of this 150 million plus opportunity.

3) Explore Public-Private model in subsidizing hardware for below poverty line households (TV plus stbs/ TV with inbuilt receivers) for addressing the TV Dark market .

4) Try synergising with Prasar Bharti when it plans the conversion of the entire mammoth base to an Addressable one (if recommendations of TRAI are accepted).

5) Offer stbs at a one time cost (with some margin to LCO) with inbuilt FTA content for a 2/3 years for rural / upcountry/ hilly/ remote mkts with no recurring monthly subscription .

6) Customised exclusive content for urban up-market subscribers.

7) Collaborate with broadcasters for small cost effective regional packs esp to lure low ARPU, BPL DD Freedish universe / rural base and try activate the huge inactive inventory.

8) Explore infra / platform sharing amongst players incl DHEs/ telco Links/ last mile connectivity for full/ partial services . Barter/ exchange of unviable territories/ links

9) Follow up for dedicated Tax / other benefits for TV/ hardware manufactures under various Govt – Industry initiatives/ schemes .

Just a food for thought to get things going before it's too late.

(Sunil Punj is a veteran of electronic Media Distribution Industry)

‘Black Warrant’: Motwane’s aimed to make an entertaining jail series



Tell a story set in jail but make it more entertaining is how Vikramaditya Motwane approached the adaptation of ‘Black Warrant’, his new series that sheds light on the world inside the high-profile prison complex of Tihar (in New Delhi) through the eyes of a rookie jailer.

A dramatised retelling of Sunil Gupta, the former superintendent of Tihar Jail, and journalist Sunetra Choudhury’s book ‘Black Warrant: Confessions of a Tihar Jailer’, the series is set to premiere on Netflix on December 10, a PTI report from New Delhi stated yesterday.

Motwane, who is returning to the streamer for a series after the much acclaimed ‘Sacred Games’, said there was something inherently “masala” (spicy) in the 1980s-set story.

“The overall approach, I think, was just the fact that there’s something very masala about that. I wanted to deliberately take an entertaining approach to tell a jail story as opposed to taking a dark approach to telling a jail story. I was conscious of the fact that I wanted to make it masala, entertaining, and funny in places,” Motwane told PTI in an interview.

“You are just following Gupta’s life and you don’t know whether he will survive in the job, go back the next day or just give up at some point in time. That keeps you really riveted for the show,” he added.

A self-confessed history buff, the director, known for critically-acclaimed films such as ‘Udaan’, ‘Lootera’, ‘Trapped’, ‘CTRL’ and web series ‘Jubilee’, said he was instantly hooked to the book when he read about Gupta’s first interaction with notorious killer Charles Sobhraj.

“When the book came to me for the first time, I loved it. In the book, the first time when the real Sunil meets the real Charles Sobhraj, you’re like, ‘Wow, this is such a great scene, a great moment, and a great little bit of history that one never actually knew about.’ And that hooked me.

“The more you read, the more you’re like, ‘Okay, I love where this is going.’ The material is strong. Sunil Gupta’s life, how he and Sunetra have put it together, was very strong. The challenge was to expand this book because it (spans) 35 years in 200 pages. So, how do you expand this into, hopefully, a proper drama series that you want to go on for a few years,” he said.

Asked whether he hopes the series propels people to read further on what transpired during the era, Motwane said he would be happy if people dived deeper into the world.

“I’m a history buff and a student. I’m interested in anything. But modern Indian history is something that I think is very overlooked in general. We tend to kind of forget our recent history quite easily. It gives me a chance to also deep dive into things because it explains a lot of things,” Motwane added.

For the show, the filmmaker said he has mostly stayed in Tihar, but there are also events outside that influence what’s happening within the high-profile prison complex, considered one of the largest in the country.

“You understand that, ‘Okay, that’s what the political, social or cultural situation is outside.’ You’re giving hints, which are interesting for anybody who’s into history. You will understand where you are in the timeline of recent Indian history,” he added.

Whether it is the popular cold drink Gold Spot of the era, the blue bottle of Camel glue, Bajaj scooter or Reynolds pens, the attraction for Motwane was in etching out the little period details.

Shashi Kapoor’s grandson, Zahan Kapoor, who made his movie debut with Hansal Mehta’s ‘Faraaz’ in 2022, auditioned for ‘Black Warrant’ and seemed perfect to play Gupta.

“I saw his audition and really liked it, then I met him. Zahaan has been literally brought up in Prithvi Theatre, which his father (Kunal Kapoor) runs. He’s been a part of that world and part of that life for so many years. His insight into character, drama and stuff was quite phenomenal and amazing for someone his age,” Motwane said about the 32-year-old actor.

Casting Siddhant Gupta, who broke out with his performance as the rising actor-filmmaker Jai Khanna in Motwane’s ‘Jubilee’, was an idea that came from casting director Mukesh Chhabra. The actor plays the role of suave serial killer Charles Sobhraj, who earned the moniker Serpent for his numerous jail breaks.

While adapting ‘Sacred Games’, rich as it was in material, was an easier adaptation, ‘Black Warrant’ had a different set of challenges for the filmmaker, who wanted to expand the story as much as possible.

“The challenge for us on ‘Black Warrant’ was more about creating that little bit of the flesh around the bones,” he said. Since most of the incidents in the series take place inside the Tihar jail, Motwane said he once visited the premises to get an idea.

Airtel, VI exit Wi-Fi JV Firefly Networks

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have announced their decision to exit the joint venture, Firefly Networks, a Wi-Fi infrastructure provider, by selling their respective stakes to iBus Network and Infrastructure Private Limited, a digital infrastructure solutions provider.

Each telecom giant will receive Rs 4.5 crore from the deal, as disclosed in separate filings with the stock exchange.

Firefly Networks, which began as a joint venture between Airtel and Vodafone Idea in 2014, will cease to be a shared entity between the two companies following this transaction. The agreement, signed on January 6, is expected to be completed within 30 days. Firefly operates as a technology-neutral company, deploying a shared network that can be used by telecom operators and internet service providers, offering them better service quality at a reduced cost.

This exit has been in the works since 2023, as both Airtel and Vodafone Idea sought to divest from the Wi-Fi infrastructure company. In November 2023, the telcos had reached an agreement with Singapore-based Manipura Digital Infrastructure OPCO Pte Ltd. for a combined deal valued at Rs. 12.1 crore. However, that deal was cancelled after failing to secure the necessary regulatory approvals.

SPN secures top brands for Australian Open 2025 b'cast

Sony Sports Network has announced a stellar lineup of advertisers, including Rolex, Kia Motors, Apple, and Amul, for its exclusive broadcast of the Australian Open 2025, set to take place from January 12 to 26.

The tournament will be telecast in English, Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu, ensuring broad accessibility across India, The Economic Times reported.

and Novak Djokovic (10-time Australian Open winner and World No. 7). The women's draw will see a fierce battle between top seeds Aryna Sabalenka (World No. 1) and Iga Swiatek (World No. 2).

The tournament will also highlight Indian talent, with players like Rohan Bopanna, Yuki Bhambri, Sriram Balaji, and debutant Rithvik Bollipalli participating. Bollipalli, ranked No. 72 in doubles, is coming off a breakthrough 2024 season, while veteran Rohan Bopanna will aim to defend his men's doubles title.



Joju George's 'Pani' to stream on Sony LIV starting January 16

Marking his first venture as a director, acclaimed actor 'Joju George' brings the intense and emotionally charged 'Pani' to Sony LIV, premiering on January 16. After receiving critical acclaim during its theatrical release, the film promises an equally gripping experience for its streaming audience.

Set against the backdrop of a single catastrophic event, 'Pani' dives deep into themes of loyalty, justice, and truth, questioning the emotional and psychological costs of uncovering hidden realities.

Joju George, who not only directed and acted in the film but also contributed to its writing, describes it as a blend of action and introspection.

"Pani isn't just an action thriller; it's a journey into the human psyche. It explores what happens when loyalty, family bonds, and justice come into conflict, and the heavy price of revealing truths.

We're thrilled to share this emotional journey with an even wider audience on Sony LIV," said George.

'Pani' boasts a stellar ensemble cast, including Sagar Surya, Junaiz V.P., Bobby Kurian, Abhinaya, Abhaya Hiranmayi, Seema, Chandini Sreedharan, Prashanth Alexander, Sujith Shankar, and Rinosh George.

With Venu ISC and Jinto George handling cinematography, the visuals promise to elevate the film's thrilling narrative. The movie is produced by M. Riaz Adam and Sijo Vadakkan under the banner of AD Studios.

Following its theatrical success, 'Pani' is set to captivate a global audience with its intense storyline and emotionally resonant themes.

GTPL Hathway reports stable performance in Q3 Fy25



GTPL Hathway Limited, one of India's largest digital cable TV service and broadband providers, has announced its financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2024 with solid numbers.

Q3 FY25 total revenue stood at Rs. 8,957 million, a growth of 4 percent Y-o-Y, while the EBITDA for Q3 FY25 stood at Rs. 1,138 million with an EBITDA margin of 12.7 percent and an operating EBITDA margin of 21.8 percent.

In digital cable TV, active subscribers were 9.60 million as of December 31, 2024, with an increase by 200K Y-o-Y. Paying subscribers stood at 8.90 million, reflcting an increase by 200K Y-o-Y. Total subscription revenue from cable TV stood at Rs. 3024 million

In broadband, the subscribers increased by 37,000 Y-o-Y, thus standing at 1042K. Homepass as on December 31, 2024 stood at 5.95 ,illion, an addition of 350K Y-o-Y. Of the 5.95 million, 75 percent were available for FTTX conversion.

Broadband average revenue per user (ARPU) stood at Rs. 465 per month per subscriber for the quarter and increased by Rs. 5 Y-o-Y. Average data consumption per user per month was 365 GB, an increase of 6 percent Y-o-Y.

Commenting on the results, Anirudhsinh Jadeja, GTPL Hathway Limited MD said, "GTPL continues to consistently grow subscriber base across both business divisions, reflecting our commitment to provide best in class and innovative products and services to our customers. Our focus on providing a holistic experience for our subscribers has enabled us to maintain our position as the largest MSO in the country.

"We are confident of our growth in upcoming quarters in both the business segments based on favourable industry dynamics towards continued consolidation."

Particulars (₹ in million)	Q3 FY25	Q3 FY24	Q2 FY25	FY24
Digital Cable TV Revenue	3,024	3,249	3,129	12,604
Broadband Revenue	1,383	1,352	1,367	5,268
TOTAL Revenue	8,957	8,607	8,620	32,460
EBITDA	1,138	1,305	1,138	5,111
EBITDA Margin (%)	12.7%	15.2%	13.2%	15.7%
Operating EBITDA* (%)	21.8%	24.2%	21.8%	24.4%
Profit After Tax	102	238	129	1,069

WAVES postponed to late April, relocated to Mumbai



The World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit or WAVES, which was announced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting last year and was to be held in the first half of February this year, has been postponed to late April and early May.

Sources told Indiabroadcastingworld.com all the industry organisations involved in organizing WAVES have also been informed about the development and a formal announcement is awaiting clearance from the Prime Minister's Office.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his last 'Mann ki Baat' address recently had dwelt on WAVES, saying that that the inaugural event will not only highlight the rich and diverse media and entertainment industry of India, but also the soft power of Indian content and its creative community that's now being hailed world over more than ever.

The PM had also compared the WAVES to other global events like the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Earlier last year, while having announced WAVES (https://wavesindia.org/challenges-2025), MIB officials had said the event would see a close coordinated effort between the M&E industry and technology.

WAVES aims to be a premier forum, fostering dialogue, trade collaboration and innovation within the evolving M&E industry landscape, government officials have stated, adding the summit will convene industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to explore opportunities, tackle challenges, attract trade to India, and shape the sector's future.

DD FreeDish opens door to pvt. sector HD TV channel

Prasar Bharati has introduced a groundbreaking revision to its e-auction policy for DD Free Dish slots, marking a new chapter in the evolution of India's largest free-to-air platform. For the first time, High Definition (HD) channels have been granted eligibility to bid for slots, a move that is set to enhance the viewing experience for millions of households across the country, The Storyboard18 reported.

Under the updated guidelines, HD channels will now be able to participate in the bidding process for MPEG-4 slots. The reserve price for these slots has been set at Rs.80 lakh, with subsequent slots offered at an incremental rate of Rs.1 lakh. This policy shift significantly expands the platform's offerings, with the MPEG-4 slots now equivalent to approximately 40 Standard Definition (SD) slots, a steep increase from the earlier provision of 11-12 slots.

The e-auction process for MPEG-4 slots will follow a bucket-wise format, ensuring an organized and efficient allocation of resources. A maximum of two HD slots will be up for bidding in this category or fewer if the number of applications is limited. This initiative not only sets a benchmark in free-to-air broadcasting but also aligns with the growing consumer demand for high-quality content.

Industry icon Rajeshwar Lal Chaudhry passes away; Dr. AK Rastogi pays tribute his legacy in the Cable TV Industry

The Indian broadcasting and cable TV industry mourns the loss of one of its most influential figures, Rajeshwar Lal Chaudhry. Known for his vibrant personality and remarkable contributions to the industry, Rajeshwar passed away on January 5, 2025, after a courageous battle with illness. Today, colleagues, friends, and industry well-wishers gathered to pay their respects and honor his memory.

Dr. AK Rastogi, a distinguished leader in the industry, extended his heartfelt condolences to Rajeshwar's family. In his tribute, Dr. Rastogi acknowledged the incredible impact Rajeshwar had not only as a broadcasting and cable TV industry expert but also as a compassionate and hardworking individual.



"Rajeshwar was a remarkable human being who devoted his life to advancing the Indian Broadcasting and Cable TV industry. His intelligence, courage in the face of challenges, and unwavering dedication to his work will be remembered by all who had the privilege of working with him. His passing has left an irreplaceable void, but his legacy and memory will inspire us for generations to come," said Dr. Rastogi.

Rajeshwar's passing marks the end of a life dedicated to excellence and unity. Despite the personal tragedy of losing his elder son, Rajeshwar remained resilient and focused on his work. His spirit was evident even in the face of illness. On November 21,2024, industry friends gathered to celebrate his birthday and provide him with moments of happiness during a difficult time. However, despite his best efforts to fight through the challenges, he passed away peacefully on January 5, 2025.

Remembered by friends and colleagues for his sharp mind, quick wit, and creative approach to the cable TV industry, Rajeshwar was also known for his ability to bring people together. His popular CableAnand Ashram served as a gathering place for industry peers, and his kindness and efforts to build strong, lasting relationships left a profound impact on all who met him.



Rajeshwar Lal Chaudhry
(21 November 1967 - 5 January 2025)

In his tribute, Dr. Rastogi invited all members of the cable TV industry to come together and share their fond memories of Rajeshwar. "Let us honor Rajeshwar's legacy by celebrating his remarkable life, his contributions to our industry, and the unforgettable moments we shared with him," he said.

The ceremony held today allowed industry professionals to reflect on the significant influence Rajeshwar had on their careers, while also reminiscing about the moments they shared with him. His legacy will forever live on in the hearts of those who knew him, and his invaluable contributions to the Indian broadcasting and cable TV industry will not be forgotten.

This tribute to Rajeshwar Lal Chaudhry serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of human connection and the lasting impact of a life lived with purpose and passion.

ROLL ON

Sajith Sivanandan joins Jio mobile digital services as President

Industry veteran Sajith Sivanandan has been appointed President of Jio Mobile Digital Services at Jio Platforms, marking a pivotal addition to the company's leadership team, The Economic Times reported.

In his new role, Sivanandan will spearhead the development of AI-driven digital services for Jio Mobile, focusing on elevating user experiences and scaling innovative digital solutions across the platform.

Sivanandan's illustrious career spans over two decades, with significant contributions to digital media, business strategy, and analytics. Most recently, he served as the head of Disney+ Hotstar from October 2022 to December 2024.

During his tenure, he successfully guided the platform's strategy, growth, and product development, solidifying its position as a leader in India's competitive streaming market.

Sivanandan stepped down from his role following Disney's merger of Star India with Reliance Industries' Viacom18, which marked a strategic shift in the Indian media landscape.

Before joining Disney+ Hotstar, Sivanandan's spends 15 years at Google, he held multiple leadership roles in India and the Asia Pacific region. From October 2018 to September 2022, he served as the Managing Director and Business Head for Google Pay and the Next Billion Users Initiatives, driving innovation and financial inclusion. He also at Star TV and The Gallup Organization where he gained expertise in digital media and analytics, and Affle UK where he focused on mobile marketing and business strategy.



Sivanandan's appointment comes at a time when Jio Platforms is doubling down on digital innovation. His vast experience in leading tech-enabled transformations is expected to further Jio's ambitions of creating cutting-edge AI-driven services tailored to Indian consumers.

As the President of Jio Mobile Digital Services, Sivanandan will play a key role in shaping the future of India's digital ecosystem, leveraging AI to deliver seamless and intuitive solutions for Jio's extensive user base.

Sonia Huria joins Maddock Films as Head of Brand, Consumer, Social Communications



Sonia Huria, a seasoned communications professional, has taken on a new role at Maddock Films as the Head of Brand, Consumer, and Social Communications. Huria brings over four years of experience from her previous position as Head of Communications for Asia Pacific at Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios.

In a LinkedIn post announcing her new role, Huria expressed her excitement: "New year, new beginnings. Thrilled to embark on this new chapter with a studio that consistently sets benchmarks in both theatrical and streaming entertainment."

Maddock Films, known for creating stories that strike an emotional chord with audiences, is a prominent name in both theatrical releases and digital platforms. As the new communications head, Huria aims to connect the dots between storytelling, social engagement, and consumer communications.

Mona Jain joins BrandPulse Global as CGO



Mona Jain has been appointed as Chief Growth Officer at BrandPulse Global, bringing over 35 years of extensive experience in media and advertising. Based in the company's Noida office, she will oversee revenue growth, streamline operations, and enhance profitability for the organization.

According to a press release, BrandPulse Global is India's largest primary research infrastructure, engaging with over 3.5 lakh respondents across 3,300 urban towns and 5,90,000 villages. With insights in 22 regional languages, the company delivers unparalleled consumer behavior and market trend analyses.

Mona Jain's illustrious career spans leadership roles at top advertising agencies, publishers, broadcasters, and client-side operations. She has played pivotal roles in launching iconic brands such as Pepsi, Whirlpool, Horlicks, Maggi, Samsung, McDonald's, and Hyundai.

Her expertise extends to media strategy, having led operations at organizations like Vivaki Exchange, Contract Advertising, and Mudra Communications. Mona has also been instrumental in launching television channels like Zindagi and &TV, introducing unique content to Indian audiences. Before joining BrandPulse Global, she served as Chief Revenue Officer at Zee Media Corporation Limited (ZMCL) and ABP Network, where she significantly boosted revenue growth.

Expressing her enthusiasm, Mona Jain stated, "Joining BrandPulse Global is a thrilling opportunity. The future lies in data, analytics, and insights that transcend categories and geographies. The scale and reach of the company, coupled with its commitment to data integrity, provide an incredible platform to create meaningful impact. I look forward to contributing to its growth and driving value for our clients."

Pankaj Krishna, Founder, CEO, and Lead Investor of BrandPulse Global, welcomed Mona's appointment, highlighting her wealth of experience, "We are delighted to have Mona on board. Her extensive experience and strategic vision will be instrumental in elevating BrandPulse Global's operations and value to clients. Our primary aim remains data integrity, and Mona's leadership will help us achieve greater heights."

With Mona Jain at the helm, BrandPulse Global is poised to strengthen its position as a leader in consumer insights, offering innovative and impactful solutions for clients across India's diverse markets.

Vikram Chande joins ZEE5 as National Sales Head – Digital



Vikram Chande has been appointed as the National Sales Head – Digital at ZEE5, a leading OTT platform. Chande announced his new role on LinkedIn earlier on Jan 06.

Prior to joining ZEE5, Chande served as General Manager and Sales Lead for India at Samsung Ads. During his tenure, he spearheaded the establishment of sales and operations for Samsung Ads.

In his new role at ZEE5, Chande will be tasked with leading the platform's digital sales initiatives, leveraging his expertise to drive revenue growth and strengthen advertiser partnerships.

Rajaraman Sundaram joins SPNI as head of content strategy



Rajaraman Sundaram, a seasoned media professional with over two decades of experience, has joined Sony Pictures Network India (SPNI) as the Head of Content Strategy. Sundaram, who previously worked at Disney Star, announced his new role on LinkedIn, expressing excitement for this significant career milestone.

Taking to LinkedIn, he posted, "I'm happy to share that I'm starting a new position as head – content strategy at Sony Pictures Network."

Rajaraman Sundaram has built an impressive resume in the Indian media industry, working with top-tier organizations like Viacom18 Media, Hathway Cable & Datacom, NDTV Imagine, and Asianet STAR Communications. His deep understanding of content dynamics and financial strategy has made him a sought-after leader in the entertainment sector.

Enterr10 Television welcomes Harshad Wadadekar as director, syndication & partnerships

Enterr10 Television, a leading player in the Indian entertainment space, has onboarded Harshad Wadadekar as its Director of Syndication & Partnerships. Known for his expertise in content licensing and syndication, Wadadekar brings over 12 years of experience in the media and entertainment industry to his new role at Enterr10, the home of India's No. 1 Hindi TV channel.



Harshad Wadadekar's career is a testament to his deep understanding of the syndication landscape. He began his journey with early roles at Indian Magic Eye, Reliance Entertainment, and B4U Television, where he honed his skills in production and content syndication.

Wadadekar made a significant mark during his nearly decade-long tenure at GoQuest Media, where he advanced to the position of General Manager. His time there was instrumental in shaping his expertise in international content licensing and partnerships.

Subsequent roles included stints at Sony Pictures Networks and Shemaroo Entertainment, where he continued to build his reputation as a syndication specialist.

Speaking about his appointment, Wadadekar shared on LinkedIn, "I'm happy to share that I'm starting a new position as Director – Syndication & Partnerships at Enterr10 Television." bachelor's degree in Mass Media & Production Management, a master's degree in Business Administration, and a Post-Graduate Program (PGP) in Media and Communication.

Under the leadership of Manish Singhal, Enterr10 Television continues to expand its footprint in the entertainment industry. The appointment of Wadadekar signals the company's focus on strengthening its content licensing and partnership initiatives to cater to an ever-evolving audience base.

As Enterr10 Television forges ahead, Wadadekar's expertise is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping its syndication strategies and fostering global partnerships.

Surbhi Nagpal appointed National Sales Head for Wion, Zee Business

Surbhi Nagpal, a seasoned sales leader with over two decades of experience, has taken on a new role as the National Head of Sales for Wion and Zee Business, part of the Zee Media Group. Based in Noida, Nagpal will lead efforts to drive revenue, optimize sales operations, and bolster profitability for both channels.

Nagpal's illustrious career spans both linear and digital sales, with stints at renowned organizations like NDTV India, Disney+ Hotstar, Discovery Communications India, and Outbrain. She brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of delivering results across various facets of the media and entertainment sector.

Her career began in 2001 at Taj Hotels in Delhi, where she quickly ascended to Deputy Manager Sales. She then transitioned to American Express before delving into television sales with NDTV India, managing sales for NDTV Good Times and NDTV Lifestyle.



Following her tenure at NDTV, Nagpal held senior leadership roles at Aidem Ventures, NDTV Lifestyle, and Star India, where she served as the National Head of International Business. Her expertise expanded further at Disney+ Hotstar, where she led FMCG vertical sales, and at Discovery Communications, where she worked as Director of Sales.

In recent years, Nagpal ventured into the digital space, working with Vikram Chandra's Editorji before joining Outbrain.

Nagpal's comprehensive understanding of the media landscape, coupled with her ability to adapt to evolving market conditions, positions her as a pivotal figure in Zee Media's strategic growth. Her leadership is expected to drive significant advancements in revenue generation and sales strategies for Wion, the international news platform, and Zee Business, a prominent business news channel.

This latest appointment underscores Zee Media's commitment to strengthening its sales operations and enhancing its market presence under the guidance of experienced professionals like Surbhi Nagpal.

Shobit Arora joins Network18 as National Head of Connected TV



In a strategic move to strengthen its Connected TV business, Network18 has appointed Shobit Arora as the National Head of Connected TV for its flagship news channels—CNN News18, CNBC TV18, and CNBC Awaaz. Arora, a seasoned media professional with over 14 years of industry experience, brings a wealth of expertise to his new role. Prior to joining Network18, he served as Deputy General Manager of Connected TV at India Today, where he played a key role in expanding the brand's digital presence. His career trajectory also includes pivotal stints at Oracle and BTVI, further establishing his credentials in the media and technology sectors.

Arora's journey in the media industry began in 2008 at Bennett Coleman & Co. (Times Group), where he honed his skills and gained deep insights into the evolving media landscape. His diverse experience positions him uniquely to lead the growth and innovation of Network18's Connected TV initiatives, ensuring the group remains at the forefront of digital transformation in the news broadcasting space.

In his new capacity, Arora will oversee the expansion of Connected TV strategies for Network18, focusing on delivering engaging and innovative content across CNN News18, CNBC TV18, and CNBC Awaaz. His appointment reflects Network18's commitment to adapting to the rapidly evolving viewing habits of audiences and leveraging cutting-edge technology to enhance user experiences.

Manish Kalra resigns as CBO of global markets at ZEE5



Manish Kalra, the Chief Business Officer for Global Markets at ZEE5, has stepped down from his position, marking the end of his tenure with India's homegrown streaming platform. ZEE5 recently expanded Kalra's responsibilities to include managing its business operations across international markets, underscoring his pivotal role in the platform's global growth strategy.

According to the Storyboard18, Kalra's resignation has prompted ZEE5 to appoint an internal leader to oversee his responsibilities. The transition signals a shift in leadership as the platform continues its efforts to expand its footprint in global markets.

Kalra joined ZEE5 in 2020, bringing with him a wealth of experience in online business and marketing. During his tenure, he spearheaded initiatives to boost audience engagement, build strategic partnerships, and drive the platform's expansion beyond Indian borders. His efforts aimed to position ZEE5 as a formidable player in the international streaming industry.

ITG elevates Siddharth Zarabi to BT multiverse Editor



The India Today Group had announced the promotion of Siddharth Zarabi to the role of Editor of Business Today Multiverse.

In this expanded capacity, Zarabi will lead the editorial direction across Business Today's print, digital, and streaming platforms, strengthening its position as a premier business news brand.

A seasoned journalist with over 27 years of experience, Siddharth Zarabi has consistently demonstrated his acumen in delivering impactful and insightful content. Since joining Business Today as Managing Editor in 2021, he has been instrumental in defining and driving the brand's editorial vision, ensuring its growth and relevance in an ever-evolving media landscape.

Under his leadership, Business Today is expected to continue its tradition of delivering credible business journalism while exploring new avenues in the multiverse of media offerings.

News18 Lokmat tops Marathi news market, outshines Tv9 Marathi, ABP Majha

News18 Lokmat, a prominent regional channel in the Marathi news genre, has emerged as the leading player in Maharashtra, leaving its closest competitors, TV9 Marathi and ABP Majha, trailing behind. The latest Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) ratings solidify its dominance with a market share of 22.2 percent, surpassing TV9 Marathi's 21.4 percent and ABP Majha's 16.5 percent.

This milestone reinforces the channel's commitment to delivering impactful and relevant journalism. Its cumulative reach in Mumbai stands at an impressive 4,462, comfortably surpassing TV9 Marathi, which recorded a reach of 4,091. This exceptional performance is credited to News18 Lokmat's ground-level reporting, real-time coverage of political and social events, and its ability to present a balanced perspective, blending regional and national issues.

News18 Lokmat's rise to the top has been driven by its relentless focus on issues that resonate deeply with the people of Maharashtra. From addressing everyday challenges faced by local communities to providing nuanced takes on national and international developments, the channel ensures its viewers remain informed and engaged. Its consistent delivery of high-quality content has not only strengthened its position on television but also extended its leadership to social media and digital platforms, making it a comprehensive source of news in the Marathi language.

Additionally, the channel's website continues to set benchmarks in the Marathi news genre, drawing significant viewership and reinforcing its dominance in the digital space. News18 Lokmat's success adds to the legacy of Network18, India's largest news network. The network operates 16 national and regional channels, including CNN-News18, News18 India, and CNBC-TV18, each of which has maintained leadership in its respective genre.

CNN-News18, the leading English news channel, has held the top spot for over two years, while News18 India commands primetime viewership in the Hindi news segment. CNBC-TV18 continues to be the leader in business news. The group's regional channels, including News18 Lokmat, exemplify Network18's ability to connect deeply with diverse audiences across the country.

Mitul Sangani, CEO – Indian Languages, News18, expressed his gratitude and pride over the channel's achievement, stating, "News18 Lokmat's BARC ratings reaffirm its unwavering commitment to impactful journalism, which shines through its ground-level reporting and real-time coverage. By addressing issues that matter most to the people and offering a balanced perspective, the channel has set a gold standard in the Marathi news segment, leading the way across television and digital platforms with trust and excellence."

He also thanked advertisers and sponsors for their continued support, emphasizing how their trust motivates the channel to raise its standards consistently.

News18 Lokmat has built a reputation for objective news coverage, insightful analysis, and diverse opinions, making it a trusted source for millions. Its success is a testament to Network18's ethos of connecting with audiences through credible journalism and unparalleled reach.

Prasar Bharati invites tenders for OTT marketing, PR agency

Media conglomerate TV Today Network has said it'd shut down its radio business, operated under the Ishq 104.8 FM brand, within the next six months, citing tough market scenarios and challenges.

The decision was approved by the company's board of directors during a meeting held on Thursday, as detailed in a regulatory filing. TV Today Network currently operates three FM radio stations in Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata under the 104.8 FM frequency. These operations accounted for just 1.7 percent of the company's revenue in the financial year 2023-24 (FY24).

In the filing, TV Today Network explained that the decision to wind down FM radio broadcasting was made in the company's best interest "given the state of the industry, its dynamics, and the evolution of the FM radio broadcasting business, the board considered it more prudent to close the radio segment rather than continue its operations."

The company's radio business reported a turnover of Rs.16.18 crore in FY24 but incurred a significant loss of Rs.19.53 crore during the same period.

Even as the broadcast and telecom regulator TRAI is in the process of overhauling its infotech system to further assist stakeholders, its chief Anil K. Lahoti did not outline any timeline for submitting recommendations on satellite spectrum that would pave the way for high-speed broadband via satellites.



No timeline yet for satcom spectrum recommendations: TRAI chief

In an interview to news agency PTI, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) chairman Anil K. Lahoti declined to comment on the specifics or timeline for release of the satcom spectrum recommendation except to say "all comments are being examined on their merits and we will take a balanced view".

On TRAI's list of priorities for 2025 are recommendations on satellite communications spectrum — arguably one of the most keenly watched events in a high-stakes game involving telcos like Jio and Airtel on one side, and Elon Musk's Starlink on the other.While Indian telcos like Jio and Airtel are rooting for auctioning of satcom spectrum, Elon Musk's Starlink, which is yet to get initial approvals for a satellite broadband service from the Indian government, has openly backed administrative allocation of such spectrum.

According to the PTI report, TRAI's 2025 to-do list also includes framing recommendations for network authorisation, new authorisation framework for broadcasting and revamp of national numbering plan for fixed line, while work will continue on combating and curbing spam calls and pesky messages.

The regulator is also all set to initiate a massive rehaul of its IT system, a move, it expects, would lead to rationalisation and reduction in multiple instances of filings by telecom companies and other industry stakeholders. Deloitte, which has been roped in as a consultant, is on the verge of submitting its report on revamp of its IT systems.

The regulator will thereafter appoint an agency for the revamp and the entire exercise will be prioritised and completed this year, Lahoti said.

Lahoti said the regulator will firm up its recommendations on millimetre wave spectrum band (auction of spectrum in 37-37.5 GHz, 37.5-40 GHz and 42.5-43.5 GHz bands) in about a month's time and also bring out a consultation paper on backhaul spectrum by March this year.

"Another thing which we will be working on is digital consent acquisition. Although the provision for this exists in the regulation (TCCCPR), the practical constraint has been the legacy consents... because there are volumes of consent which have been acquired on paper or reside in the past systems of principal entities, the challenges has been about how to take those consents onboard to the DLT (distributed ledger technology), because you cannot completely discard them," Lahoti said in the interview to PTI.

TRAI will start, this month, a pilot to onboard paper-based and past permissions given by customers for receiving commercial communications onto its digital distributed ledger technology platform, a process that in the long-run would include scrubbing and verifying their current validity and offering opt-outs to those keen on it.

Jio Star proposes price hike for channel packages

Jio Star, the broadcasting powerhouse formed from the merger of Star India and Viacom18, has submitted its new broadcast tariff to regulators, revealing a significant price increase for its channel packages, according to The Times of India.

The broadcaster has launched 83 channel packs featuring a total of 134 channels, spanning genres such as entertainment, sports, news, and infotainment. The new Star Value Pack (SVP) Hindi and SVP Hindi Basic for SD channels are priced at Rs.110 each, reflecting an 18 percent increase compared to the earlier standalone Hindi base packs from Star India and Viacom18.

Jio Star's channel lineup includes marquee names such as Star Plus, Colors, Star Gold, and Star Sports, with exclusive broadcasting rights for high-profile cricket events like the IPL, ICC tournaments, and BCCI matches. These premium offerings position Jio Star as a leader in commanding higher prices among broadcasters.

Zee Studios unveils new content lineup

Zee Studios has announced an impressive slate of films for 2025, featuring a mix of high-profile projects across various genres and languages. With celebrated filmmakers, versatile actors, and compelling narratives, the lineup reaffirms the studio's commitment to delivering diverse and impactful cinematic experiences, PTI reported from Mumbai.
The year kicks off with Sonu Sood's directorial debut, 'Fateh', a gripping tale exploring cybercrime, set to release on January 10. Sharing the release date is 'Game Changer', a Tamil-Hindi multilingual project starring Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, directed by Shankar.
The much-anticipated 'Emergency', directed by and starring Kangana Ranaut, is scheduled for January 17. This historical drama revisits India's controversial Emergency era imposed by Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977. The action-packed thriller 'Deva', featuring Shahid Kapoor, follows on January 31.
Zee Studios' 2025 slate includes Anurag Kashyap's 'Kennedy', a Mumbai-set police noir that gained global recognition at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival. While its release date remains under wraps, expectations are high for the critically acclaimed film.
Other notable releases include the romantic drama 'Loveyappa', starring Khushi Kapoor and Junaid Khan, set for February 7, and 'Dhadak 2', a sequel to the 2018 hit, featuring Siddhant Chaturvedi and Triptii Dimri, releasing on February 28. 'Phule', a historic tale featuring Pratik Gandhi and Patralekhaa, will hit theaters on April 11.
The lineup also features several regional projects, such as 'Beauty' (Telugu) and 'Kingston' (Tamil), both slated for March 7, along with 'Nilai Varun' (Tamil), releasing in March.
Zee Studios is also betting big on regional cinema, with movies like 'Majaka', marking Sundeep Kishan's 30th film, and 'Kaalidhar Laapata' and 'Shaunki Sardar', showcasing its pan-India appeal.
"Zee Studios is proud to present a carefully curated lineup for FY25, blending compelling narratives with regional diversity to redefine Indian cinema. With this slate, we aim to innovate and create benchmarks in the entertainment industry," the studio said in a statement.
With its 2025 slate, Zee Studios promises a dynamic year filled with gripping stories, star-studded performances, and diverse cultural narratives, solidifying its position as a trailblazer in Indian cinema.

Meta challenges CCI's Rs. 213 cr penalty over WhatsApp



Meta Platforms has moved the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) to contest a Rs. 213.14 crore penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) in relation to WhatsApp's contentious 2021 privacy policy update.
The appeal was filed yesterday, with Meta arguing that the CCI's order has significant implications for the tech industry and warrants urgent judicial review, an IANS report stated.
The controversy centers on WhatsApp's 2021 policy update, which the CCI deemed unfair. According to the regulator, the update forced users to accept expanded data-sharing terms with Meta's other services, such as Facebook and Instagram, without providing an opt-out option. The CCI categorized this as an abuse of WhatsApp's dominant market position under the Competition Act.
In its November 2024 ruling, the CCI not only imposed the financial penalty but also barred WhatsApp from sharing user data with other Meta entities for advertising purposes for five years. WhatsApp, with over 500 million active users in India, has maintained that it disagrees with the CCI's findings and intends to pursue all available legal remedies.

‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ returns on Tata Play Comedy from Jan 6

The iconic sitcom ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ is all set to make a comeback, promising laughter-filled evenings for fans old and new. Starting January 6, viewers can catch this timeless family drama every day at 8:30 PM on Tata Play Comedy channel #135.

Known for its razor-sharp wit, unforgettable characters, and iconic dialogues, the show remains a benchmark for intelligent humor in Indian television., the platform said in a press release.

Set in a posh South Mumbai apartment, ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ revolves around the lives of the quirky Sarabhai family. The show hilariously portrays the class conflicts and familial chaos between the snooty, elitist Maya Sarabhai, played by the impeccable Ratna Pathak Shah, and her middle-class daughter-in-law Monisha, portrayed by the effervescent Rupali Ganguly. Adding to the drama are Indravadhan’s cheeky one-liners, Sahil’s efforts to maintain peace, and Rosesh’s cringeworthy yet endearing poetry.



The show’s unique ability to blend relatable family dynamics with sharp social commentary has cemented its place as a cult classic.

More than a decade since it first aired, the humor in ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ remains fresh and engaging. The series steers clear of slapstick comedy, relying instead on clever, observational humor that resonates with viewers across generations. Whether it’s Maya’s disdainful remark, “Monisha, how middle-class!” or Indravadhan’s mischievous antics, the writing is timeless, making it a joy to rewatch.

The brilliance of ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ lies in its ensemble cast. Ratna Pathak Shah and Satish Shah deliver masterful performances as Maya and Indravadhan, the snobbish yet lovable couple. Rupali Ganguly’s Monisha embodies the perfect blend of innocence and chaos, while Sumeet Raghavan’s Sahil plays the quintessential straight man amid the madness. Rajesh Kumar’s portrayal of Rosesh, with his exaggerated poetic aspirations, adds a comedic edge that’s impossible to forget. Each character is expertly written and performed, making the Sarabhai family’s quirks delightfully endearing.

The show’s dialogues have transcended television, becoming part of everyday conversations among fans. Maya’s scathing jabs at Monisha, Indravadhan’s savage retorts, and Rosesh’s unintentionally humorous poetry are just a few examples of the brilliant writing by Aatish Kapadia. The show’s lines continue to live rent-free in the minds of its audience, proving its lasting impact.

Unlike many sitcoms, ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ offers clean, clever humor that appeals to viewers of all ages. Beyond the laughs, it delivers sharp social commentary, tackling class differences and cultural quirks with subtlety and grace. Maya’s elitism versus Monisha’s simplicity highlights societal contrasts, making viewers laugh while nudging them to reflect.

The brilliance of ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ was recognized early, with the show sweeping major awards in 2005. It won accolades for Best Serial (Comedy) at both the Indian Telly Awards and Indian Television Academy (ITA) Awards. Ratna Pathak Shah and Satish Shah were honored as Best Actress and Actor in the comedy category, while Deven Bhojani bagged the award for Best Director. Aatish Kapadia’s dialogues and Omung Kumar Bhandula’s art direction also received critical acclaim, cementing the show’s place in television history.

As Tata Play Comedy brings ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ back to screens, it’s the perfect opportunity for fans to relive the hilarity and for newcomers to discover what makes this show a classic. Tune in every evening at 8:30 pm to experience the Sarabhai family’s unmatched charm and wit.

Catch ‘Sarabhai vs Sarabhai’ daily from January 6, exclusively on Tata Play Comedy channel #135. Prepare to laugh out loud!



Disney+ Hotstar unveils 'Power of Paanch'

Disney+ Hotstar is set to kick off 2025 with its highly anticipated new series, 'Power of Paanch', premiering on January 17. The show promises a thrilling blend of magic, mystery, and emotional depth, exploring the bonds of friendship amid dark secrets and betrayals. The streaming platform announced the project on its official social media handles, stating, "New Superheroes on the block! Elements come to life with #PowerOfPaanch Streaming



from Jan 17."

Accompanying the announcement was a tantalizing 30-second teaser that offered glimpses into a vibrant, magical world where elemental powers unite to create extraordinary superheroes. The clip's tagline, "When the power of nature unite, superheroes are born," has already sparked intrigue among viewers.

'Power of Paanch' dives into the lives of five young friends whose relationships are tested by unforeseen events and unimaginable betrayals. With a mix of elemental magic and profound human connections, the series promises to be an engaging journey of self-discovery and resilience.

The series boasts an impressive cast, including Riva Arora, Aditya Raj Arora, Jaiveer Juneja, Bianca Arora, and Yash Sehgal. Veteran actors like Urvashi Dholakia, Barkha Bisht, Tanvi Gadkari, Anubha Arora, Omar Kandhari, Sagar Dholakia and Bhanuj Sood also lend their talents, ensuring a captivating performance for audiences of all ages.

Produced under the banner of Balaji Telefilms Ltd., 'Power of Paanch' marks another ambitious project by renowned producer Ektaa R Kapoor.

SEBI rejects settlement plea, deepens probe into Zee

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had rejected a settlement application filed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL) and its CEO Punit Goenka.

The probe's scope has been broadened to include ZEEL's former chairperson, Subhash Chandra, amidst allegations of fund diversion and other irregularities.

The settlement plea, filed in connection with accusations of non-compliance with SEBI's Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, was dismissed by SEBI's Whole-Time Members panel. Instead, the matter has been referred for further investigation under Section 11B of the SEBI Act, 1992. SEBI emphasized that findings from the ongoing investigation will subsume allegations detailed in a July 2022 show-cause notice.



The regulator's adjudication order, issued on Thursday, the Storyboard18 report added, stated that additional investigation would incorporate evidence from earlier probes, including examination reports and related documents. These materials will form the basis for new show-cause notices to ZEEL, Chandra and Goenka.

Disney to merge Hulu + Live TV with FuboTV

The Walt Disney Company has announced a landmark deal to merge its Hulu + Live TV business with FuboTV Inc., forming a new virtual multi-channel video programming distributor (MVPD).

The deal will make Disney the majority owner of the combined company, with a 70 percent stake, subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals, Reuters reported.

The merger combines Hulu + Live TV's entertainment programming with FuboTV's robust sports offerings, creating a versatile streaming platform with over 6.2 million subscribers in North America.

David Gandler, Co-founder and CEO of Fubo, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership, "This combination enables us to deliver greater choice and flexibility to consumers while strengthening Fubo's balance sheet and positioning us for positive cash flow. It's a win for consumers, shareholders, and the streaming industry."



Europol dismantles illegal sports streaming, pirated content network

A Europol operation during last summer's European Championship and Paris Olympics dismantled a network of several hundred providers of illegal streaming of sports and other pirated content, Spain's top soccer league has said.

The European Union's law enforcement agency identified more than 560 resellers of pirated content that included streaming of movies, series and TV channels. La Liga, which cooperated in the investigation, said on Thursday more than 100 suspects were identified and 11 were arrested, an AP report from Madrid, Spain stated on January 3.

"The operation was carried out in the context of major sporting events this summer such as UEFA EURO 2024 and the Olympic Games, with the main objective of combating digital piracy in the form of the publication, distribution and broadcasting of digital content subject to copyright and related rights," the league said.

More than 100 searches took place, with the seizure of nearly 30 servers and 270 IPTV devices, as well as 100 domains linked to illegal activities. Drugs and weapons were also seized, and cryptocurrency worth about 1.6 million euros ($1.64 million) was confiscated, along with 40,000 euros in cash.

The network distributed more than 2,500 TV channels and reached over 22 million users worldwide without the consent of the copyright holders, the Spanish league said.

The operation involved 15 countries, including Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

'Operation Kratos' took place from June to September and brought together law enforcement authorities from EU and non-EU members, as well as EU agencies and private digital content companies.

Hathi Ram returns in gripping 'Paatal Lok' S2 teaser



Prime Video has officially unveiled the teaser for 'Paatal Lok' Season 2, marking the much-anticipated return of Jaideep Ahlawat as the rugged and determined police inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary.

This time, the stakes are higher, and the mystery darker, as Hathi Ram plunges once again into the murky depths of crime and chaos in the underworld of 'Paatal Lok', PTI reported from Mumbai on Jan 03.

The teaser, shared across Prime Video's social media platforms, opens with a cryptic and chilling monologue from Hathi Ram, drawing parallels between life's struggles and the tale of a man who thought he had conquered a single enemy.

"Poor guy," Hathi Ram muses, "he thought he killed one insect and the game is over. That's not how it works, not down here in Paatal Lok." The sinister undertone sets the mood for a thrilling season, promising unexpected twists and revelations.

As in the first season, mythology and reality intertwine seamlessly. Hathi Ram's storytelling style returns, blending his gritty narrative with allegorical tales from the Hindu epics. This time, his new investigation appears to unravel a larger, more complex web of corruption, crime, and human depravity, challenging him like never before.

Returning to the cast are Ishwak Singh and Gul Panag, reprising their roles from the debut season. Joining the ensemble are acclaimed talents Tillotama Shome, Nagesh Kukunoor and Jahnu Barua, whose presence promises fresh perspectives and riveting performances.

The new season is crafted by Sudip Sharma, the creative force behind the original series, ensuring the same level of nuanced storytelling that captivated audiences. Directed by Avinash Arun Dhaware, the show is a collaborative production between Clean Slate Filmz and Eunoia Films LLP, known for their dedication to quality content.

Set to premiere on January 17, 2025, the eight-episode season will once again transport viewers to the dark alleys of crime and the shadowy corridors of human emotions. Prime Video's teaser has already ignited a wave of excitement among fans, who have been eagerly awaiting the continuation of Hathi Ram's journey since the first season's release.

ITG launches 'Stage Aaj Tak' with Yo Yo Honey Singh's Millionaire Tour

The India Today Group has unveiled its latest venture, 'Stage Aaj Tak', a dynamic platform dedicated to delivering premium live entertainment experiences. This new vertical promises to redefine how audiences engage with live performances by curating a variety of ticketed events, including music festivals, stand-up comedy shows, theatre productions and concerts.

As its inaugural offering, 'Stage Aaj Tak' is set to roll out the highly anticipated Millionaire Tour by the legendary rapper and music icon Yo Yo Honey Singh.

Scheduled for February-March 2025, this all-India, 10-city concert series is poised to be the artist's most elaborate and ambitious tour yet. With Honey Singh's massive fan base and unparalleled popularity in the Indian music scene, the Millionaire Tour aims to set a benchmark for live performances in the country.



The India Today Group's foray into the live event space marks a strategic expansion into consumer-focused entertainment. 'Stage Aaj Tak' is designed to cater to diverse tastes, offering a blend of cultural and contemporary performances.

Speaking about the new venture, a representative from the India Today Group stated, "'Stage Aaj Tak' is more than just a platform; it's a movement to bring world-class entertainment to every corner of India. We're thrilled to kick off this journey with Yo Yo Honey Singh, an artist who perfectly embodies the energy and vision of our new initiative."

In addition to concerts and music festivals, the platform plans to host a range of events that cater to all age groups and preferences.

Maddock Films unveils horror-comedy films with 'Stree 3', 'Munjya 2' and more

Maddock Films, led by filmmaker Dinesh Vijan, has announced a thrilling slate of movies in its ever-expanding horror-comedy universe, including highly anticipated sequels like 'Stree 3' and 'Munjya 2', along with new titles such as Shakti Shalini, Chamunda, Pehla Mahayudh, and Doosra Mahayudh.



This announcement follows the buzz created by the ongoing shoot of 'Thama', the latest addition to the universe, starring Ayushmann Khurrana, PTI reported from Mumbai.

'Thama': Scheduled to debut on Diwali 2025, this movie introduces Ayushmann Khurrana as a vampire, supported by Rashmika Mandanna, Paresh Rawal, and Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

'Shakti Shalini': Slated for release on December 31, 2025.

'Bhediya 2': Arrives in theatres on August 14, 2026.

'Chamunda': Set for December 4, 2026.

'Stree 3': The eagerly awaited sequel to the 2018 blockbuster is set to premiere on August 13, 2027.

'Mahamunjya' ('Munjya 2'): Hits cinemas on December 24, 2027.

The production house has also teased an additional title, 'Doosra Mahayudh', expected to further enrich the cinematic tapestry of this universe.

The Maddock Films horror-comedy universe began with the runaway success of 'Stree' in 2018, starring Rajkummar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor. Subsequent titles like 'Roohi' and 'Bhediya' expanded the narrative world, while 'Munjya', featuring a fresh cast, proved a commercial success in 2024, earning ?130 crores worldwide. 'Stree 2' dominated the same year, becoming the biggest Hindi hit with over ?500 crores in revenue.

Dinesh Vijan shared his grand vision for this cinematic journey, "Our mission at Maddock has always been to innovate and entertain. We've crafted compelling characters grounded in India's rich culture and heritage. This deep connection has made our stories relatable and meaningful. With a passionate fanbase, we're now setting the stage for something even bigger—a cinematic universe that brings unforgettable characters and their stories to life. We're just getting started."

While details on the cast and directors for the newly announced films remain under wraps, Maddock's commitment to delivering culturally resonant and visually grand narratives continues to fuel anticipation.

As the universe expands, fans can expect an annual dose of horror-comedy delights, blending humor, chills, and stories deeply rooted in Indian heritage.

Aavishkar Media GROUP & IBW INDIAN BROADCASTING WORLD

WISHES YOU A VERY

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025

Here's to a year of Breaking Stories and Endless Joy! May headlines of success and happiness fill your journey this New Year!



BCS RATNA AWARD | SATCAB SYMPOSIUM | Chetna Yatra www.ChetnaYatra.in | Holi ke Rang | INDIAN INDIA | दोस्ती के नाम | All India Aavishkar Dish Antenna Sangh (Regd.) | Media Club of India | MKMZ | SmallScreen CARNIVAL | AVISHKAR | AVISHKARदर्पण | वोटर वाणी

JANUARY 2024



3rd January

Streamers in India pack 2024 calendar with returning, new shows

3rd January

India Today Group elevates Kalli Purie to executive editor-in-chief



6th January

Broadcasters raise channel bouquet prices due to higher content costs



12th January

GTPL Hathway hits 1mn active broadband subscriber

GTPL Entertain | Connect



13th January

Tata Play chief Harit Nagpal foresees TV, OTT coexisting



15th January

DD to install 40 4K' cameras for live broadcast



18th January

Adani Group raises stake in news agency IANS

22nd January

Merger off as Sony sends termination letter to Zee: Report



30th January

Centre names Anil Kumar Lahoti as the new TRAI chairman



FEBRUARY 2024

Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation

5th February

IBDF flays B'cast Bill; says OTT must be kept outside its purview

7th February

IT Minister hints at rules to make Big Tech pay for news content



7th February

Aaj Tak Bangla surpasses 1mn YouTube subs

आज तक বাংলা

17th February

Ministry cancels registration of Non-Compliant MSOs for Cable Television Services





20th February

Rajat Sharma surpasses 11 mn followers on X



21st February

Rajnish Ahuja steps down as editor from Zee News



22nd February

PM Narendra Modi to deliver keynote address at News9 Global Summit 2024

23rd February

Anurag Thakur unveils LCO National Register, other portals for modern media



26th February

MIB establishes CBFC facilitation office in Chandigarh



MARCH 2024



1st March

Govt. to be entertainment biz enabler, says MIB Secy Jaju

5th March

M&E industry to top Rs. 3 lakh cr. by '26: Ficci-EY report



9th March

Former Prasar Bharati CEO sheds light on AI & marketing





13th March

Anurag Thakur launches 'Swaraj' S1 on Prime Video

15th March

MIB orders 18 OTT platforms' takedown for obscene content



22nd March

JioCinema ropes in 18 sponsors for IPL 2024

23rd March

DEN chief Sharma advocates reinvention & adaptation in evolving industry





29th March

India's TV industry attempting to adapt to evolving landscape

30th March

NXTDIGITAL partners with 7Star for broadband expansion

APRIL 2024

2nd April

Trai urges pay-TV companies keep DPO signals on

11th April

Karan Johar secures North theatrical distribution rights for Jr NTR's 'Devara'





13th April

Aaj Tak launches revolutionary Helicopter-powered election coverage: 'Rajtilak'

16th April

GTPL Hathway achieves ₹3,000cr revenue milestone in FY24



17th April

60 top ex-cricketers to star in new podcast series '180 not out'

17th April

DEN Networks appoints Omesh Uppal as COO



20th April

SC tells petitioner to take plea on OTT platforms to govt.

27th April

Netflix's CCO Bela Bajaria, Kapil Sharma celebrate success of 'The Great Indian Kapil Show'"





29th April

Diljit Dosanjh makes history with 'Largest ever Punjabi show outside India'

MAY 2024

1st May

ABP LIVE introduces India's first android app for in-car entertainment and news

1st May

Netflix hosts exclusive screening of 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' in LA





2nd May

NDTV Marathi, 6th news channel from the stable, launched

6th May

Jack Dorsey quits Bluesky board





7th May

Anil Malhotra handed distribution, revenue responsibilities at ZEEL

13th May

Jio offers 15 premium app services



14th May

Prasar Bharati to launch family-oriented OTT Platform

15th May

Vibhu Agarwal announces first mythology OTT platform Hari Om

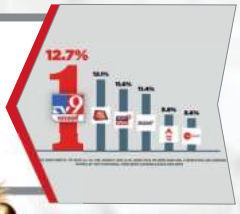


16th May

At Cannes, MIB Secy Jaju bats for more audio-visual collabs between India, world

17th May

TV9 Bharatvarsh maintains leadership position as India's No.1 Hindi News channel





21st May

Disney Star inks new show deal with Bodhi Tree

24th May

NP Singh announces search for successor; will continue as MD & CEO until successor is appointed





JUNE 2024





1st June

Bharti Airtel appoints Sharat Sinha as CEO of Airtel business

4th June

MIB mandates self-declaration for new ads





11th June

Ashwini Vaishnaw will have to hit the ground running at MIB

12th June

Ex-CEO of Prasar Bharati Vempati joins BARC board





12th June

Sumeet Raghvan celebrates 1,000 episodes of 'Wagle Ki Duniya'

12th June

Aaj Tak leads Hindi news with 50% reach on poll results day





13th June

MIB warns TV channels against live coverage of anti-terror ops

17th June

IETE elects Sunil, Ex Additional DG - Prasar Bharati, as President





18th June

Disney+ Hotstar introduces pause ads on CTV

18th June

Nachiket Pantvaidya named GM of SPI India





18th June

Netflix renews 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' for S2

19th June

Panchayat' S3 ranks among the top 3 most-watched Indian originals on Prime Video





22nd June

Atul Chaudhary appointed as TRAI Next Secy

24th June

Aparna Purohit to lead Aamir Khan Productions





24th June

Gaurav Banerjee takes over as SPNI MD & CEO from NP Singh

25th June

MIB schedules LCOs' meet to discuss National Register's creation





27th June

Varun Kohli appointed COO of Times Network's news biz

28th June

Avinash Pandey quits ABP Network





JULY 2024



1st July

SET presents 'Aapka Apna Zakir' with Zakir Khan





4th July

MIB dilutes norm on ads' self-declaration; restricts it to food, health sectors

6th July

Adil Zainulbhai reappointed Network18 chairman; Rahul Joshi as MD





5th July

Govt. notifies additional provisions in Telecom Act 2023

8th July

·Senior journalist Arun Nautiyal passes away





9th July

TRAI removes NCF ceiling; ups DPO bouquet discounts; suggests tech upgrades to FreeDish

9th July

India TV chairman Rajat Sharma elected president of NBDA





10th July

Karan Abhishek Singh joins ZMCL as CEO

15th July

GTPL secures govt. approval to offer HITS services





13th July

Sony secures deal with GTPL, DEN, Hathway

15th July

SC stays Karnataka HC order banning broadcast of Kannada news channel





16th July

'Mirzapur' S3 scripts history as most-watched show ever on Prime Video India

18th July

Ashwini Vaishnaw's 54th Birthday: A Peek into the MIB Minister's journey so far





25th July

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

27th July

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





AUGUST 2024





1st August

18 OTT platforms blocked for carrying obscene content: Minister

1st August

Star terminates $1.5 bn deal with Zee





1st August

Mona Jain exits Zee Media after 1.5 Years as CRO

8th August

Prasar Bharati offers b'casters 65:35 revenue share to join OTT platform





8th August

Tata Play celebrates 18 years in the industry

10th August

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





12th August

Govt says cable TV subs down; OTT services partially responsible

14th August

Reliance, Disney offer concessions to make merger happen





23rd August

MIB announces 25 challenges as part of WAVES

27th August

SPNI welcomes Gaurav Banerjee as new MD & CEO





28th August

NBDA flags DD FreeDish, TRP issues in meeting with PM

30th August

NBF raises FreeDish, CTV issues in meeting with PM



SEPTEMBER 2024

2nd September

GTPL launches 'GTPL Buzz' customer app

3rd September

Subhash Chandra accuses SEBI chief of scuttling Zee-Sony merger





5th September

All set for Aavishkar's 20th Chetna Yatra

5th September

AIDCF protests Prasar Bharati OTT platform exploring onboarding TV channels

9th September

Prasar Bharati OTT platform launch likely mid-Sept: report

9th September

20th Chetna Yatra flagged off from Delhi to promote positive awakening across India





12th September

PIL seeks autonomous body to regulate OTT content

23rd September

'Laapataa Ladies' selected as India's official entry for Oscars 2025



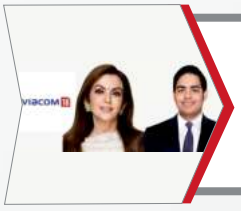


24th September

Punjabi OTT platform KableOne launches on JioStar

25th September

Prasar Bharati invites film proposals for its new OTT platform



27th September

Nita, Akash Ambani join Viacom18 board

28th September

TRAI considers withdrawal of OTT licensing consultation

OCTOBER 2024



1st October

DirecTV, Dish network announces merger

3rd October

Cable operators begin tariff hike amid rising costs from broadcasters





4th October

Is govt. working on new rules to 'beep out' OTT profanities?

10th October

GTPL Hathway reports consistent subscriber growth in Q2 FY25

10th October

Former AltBalaji executive Dixit joins One Health Assist

11th October

Ratan Tata's media flirtations: 'Aetbaar', Simi Garewal talk show





17th October

MIB grants 1 new MSO license, 6 surrender registrations

19th October

ZEEL reappoints Punit Goenka as MD & CEO for five years





21st October

Archana Anand quits ZEE5 Global

25th October

Hotstar chief Sajith Sivanandan quits



28th October

Dish TV, C21Media announce Content India 2025

11th October

ZEE5 names Manish Kalra as CBO Global



NOVEMBER 2024



5th November

Jio IPO likely in 2025; firm valuation estimated at $100bn

8th November

SPNI appoints Sibaji Biswas as new CFO



9th November

Jio, Airtel, Amazon, Starlink clash over satellite spectrum in TRAI OHD

12th November

TV9 Network launches inaugural News9 Global Summit in Germany





15th November

Kevin Vaz, Kiran Mani, Sanjog Gupta to head 3 verticals of JioStar

18th November

President Droupadi Murmu to honor winners of 'Aaj Tak Sahitya Jagriti Samman' on November 23





19th November

ZEEL's Punit Goenka steps down as MD, retains role as CEO

19th November

Pubcaster Prasar Bharati's OTT platform to launch at IFFI Goa

21st November

Prasar Bharati launches OTT platform Waves

21st November

Balaji Tele names Sanjay Dwivedi as Group CEO





22nd November

Pubcaster's WAVES OTT to offer shows in 12+ languages in 10+ genres & games

25th November

Punit Goenka makes himself unavailable for Zee MD post ahead of AGM





25th November

'CID' returns to Sony TV on Dec. 21

26th November

Prasar Bharati, RailTel, PlayboxTV launch 'Freedom Plan'



27th November

S.N. Sharma appointed President of AIDCF

28th November

Minister Vaishnaw bats for stricter content rules for SM, OTT platforms





29th November

Nivedita Basu joins Dangal as Vice President – Fiction

30th November

SC refuses to interfere in TRAI tariff case; directs b'casters to TDSAT

30th November

DD b'cast partner for Hockey India League 2024-25



30th November

Hathway Cable acquires remaining stake in Hathway Nanded; shares gain 2.88%

30th November

Australia approves social media ban for kids under 16



DECEMBER 2024

2nd December

BSNL partners with Skypro to offer next-gen IPTV service across India



3rd December

AIFF signs football events' b'cast pact with Shrachi Sports, Sony

3rd December

AIDCF commissions E&Y for survey; findings to be shared with govt.



4th December

Bangladesh court petition seeks ban on Indian TV channels

6th December

Ambani wedding, IPL, Serbian 'moye moye' most-trending '24 YT topics



9th December

MIB handeled 73 complaints over obscene ads in three years

9th December

Aaj Tak, India Today win top honors at ITA Awards 2024





10th December

OTT to grow@14%; digital advertising to have double digit growth till '28: PwC India

12th December

DD FreeDish reaches approx. 45 mn TV homes: Minister Murugan



12th December

ZMCL achieves unprecedented growth in viewership, reach

13th December

Prasar Bharati, Hockey India sign b'cast pact for 2024-25 league





16th December

'Pushpa 2: The Rule' nets Rs 1,292 crore at BO in 10 days

18th December

MIB exhorts streamers to avoid content glamourising drug





19th December

Telecom Minister Scindia says MIB regulates OTT

19th December

TDSAT declines stay on FreeDish rules; gives b'casters 14 days to comply





21st December

Kevin Vaz takes charge as IBDF President

24th December

TRAI revamps website to connect with wider audience





26th December

Prasar Bharati's OTT Platform 'WAVES' hits over 1mn downloads in just one month

30th December

Telcos 2025 worries: fleeing customers & satcom players' arrival





30th December

Film industry at OTT platforms' mercy, says filmmaker Sanjay Gupta

30th December

PM Modi compares WAVES to Davos' WEF in year's last 'Mann Ki Baat'



Viacom18 becomes direct subsidiary of Reliance Industries after share conversion

In a significant move reshaping the media landscape, Viacom18 Media, one of India's leading media and entertainment entities, has become a direct subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL). This transition follows the conversion of over 24.61 crore compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS) into an equivalent number of equity shares, PTI reported.

Previously, Viacom18 Media was a material subsidiary of Network18 Media & Investments Ltd., itself a subsidiary of Mukesh Ambani-led RIL. On December 30, 2024, RIL received shareholder approval to convert 24,61,33,682 CCPS into equity shares. This strategic conversion shifted control directly to Reliance Industries.

"Consequently, Viacom18 has become a subsidiary of the company effective December 30, 2024, and has ceased to be a subsidiary of Network18," RIL disclosed in a regulatory filing.

Before the conversion, RIL held a 70.49 percent stake in Viacom18 on a fully diluted basis, consisting of 5,57,27,821 equity shares and 24,61,33,682 CCPS. Following the transaction, RIL now holds 83.88 percent of Viacom18's equity share capital, while maintaining its 70.49 percent stake on a fully diluted basis.This development effectively ends Network18's control over Viacom18, aligning the media company directly under Reliance Industries' vast corporate umbrella. This move follows a series of strategic acquisitions and mergers by Reliance Industries to consolidate its media and entertainment footprint. In March 2024, RIL acquired Paramount Global's 13.01 percent stake in Viacom18 for ?4,286 crore, boosting its stake to 70.49 percent.

Further, on November 14, 2024, Reliance completed a high-profile merger between its media assets and the India business of Walt Disney, forming a joint venture valued at over ?70,000 crore. This venture integrated Viacom18's media and JioCinema businesses with Star India, a move that underscored RIL's ambition to dominate the Indian media landscape.

Viacom18's shift as a direct subsidiary positions Reliance Industries to exercise tighter control over its media and entertainment strategy. With a majority stake and robust assets, RIL is poised to drive innovation, expand its digital footprint, and challenge global competitors in the evolving media industry.

As Reliance strengthens its hold on the entertainment sector, the move signals a pivotal chapter for Viacom18, setting the stage for potential collaborations, content innovation, and market leadership in the years ahead.

Filmmaker Sooraj Barjatya upbeat on OTT debut show 'Bada Naam Karenge'

Filmmaker Sooraj Barjatya, who has forayed into OTT platform with 'Bada Naam Karenge', yesterday said he hopes the upcoming show will strike a chord with the audience. The show, which was officially announced last year, will release on SonyLIV in February.

It is directed by Palash Vasvani, who helmed 'Gullak', and stars Ritik Ghanshani of 'Dil Dosti Dilemma', fame and Ayesha Kaduskar, known for 'Agneepath' and 'Candy', a PTI report from Mumbai.

With a legacy rooted in heartfelt storytelling and family values, Barjatya's banner Rajshri Productions, along with streaming platform Sony LIV, unveiled the teaser of 'Bada Naam Karenge', which is billed as a love story returning back to roots.

Barjatya said the show is filled with love and family values. "This series holds a special place in my heart. With 'Bada Naam Karenge', we delve into the beauty of relationships, the depth of love, and the strength of family values. It's about finding balance amidst life's changing dynamics, and I couldn't be more excited to share this heartfelt story with the audience.

Collaborating with SonyLIV has been a wonderful experience, and I hope viewers will resonate with the love and dedication we've put into this series," the filmmaker, known for movies like 'Uunchai', 'Prem Ratan Dhan Payo' and 'Hum Aapke Hai Koun!', said in a statement.

The show revolves around Rishabh and Surbhi, whose arranged marriage takes a beautiful and unexpected turn. Actors Kanwaljeet Singh, Alka Amin, Rajesh Jais, Chitrali Lokesh, Rajesh Tailang and Anjana Sukhani among others round out the cast of the show.



SPNI, ZEEL announce revised pricing with launch of new channels

Sony Pictures Network India (SPNI) and ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) have unveiled a revised Reference Interconnect Offer (RIO) effective February 1, 2025. This update includes changes in channel and bouquet pricing, the launch of a new SPNI movie channel, and strategic adjustments in ZEEL's a la carte and bouquet offerings to align with market demands and regulatory guidelines, The Economic Times reported.

As part of its updated RIO, SPNI is set to launch a new movie channel, Sony Max 1, priced at 5Rs. on an a la carte basis. While the channel is expected to debut on or after April 1, 2025, other changes to SPNI's pricing structure include significant hikes across popular channels. For instance:

- Sony Pal: From 0.5 Rs. to 1 Rs.
- Sony Max 2: From 1 Rs. to 2 Rs.
- Sony Sports Ten 4: From 17 Rs. to 19 Rs.

Additionally, SPNI's bouquet prices have seen a surge of 4 percent to 12 percent, with the Happy India Smart – Hindi Pack now priced at 54 Rs. (previously 48 Rs.) and the Happy India Smart – Marathi Pack rising to 56 Rs. (previously 51Rs.).

ZEEL has also revamped its pricing and bouquet offerings in the new RIO. While channels like &TV and &pictures have seen price increases to 10 Rs. and 15 Rs. respectively, others like Zee Café and &flix have experienced reductions, with Zee Café now priced at 3 Rs. (down from 10 Rs.) and &flix at 5 Rs. (down from 15 Rs.).

ZEEL is now offering six Free-to-Air (FTA) channels on an a la carte basis, expanding beyond the previously available Zee Chitramandir. These additions include Big Magic, Zee Anmol Cinema, Action Cinema, Zee Anmol Cinema 2, and Zee Biskope.

The broadcaster has streamlined its bouquet offerings, reducing the total number from 48 to 30. Notable changes include the Zee All in One Pack – Hindi SD, now priced at 53 Rs. (down from 62 Rs.), and the Zee All in One Pack – Marathi, priced at 59 Rs. (up from 54 Rs.).

The updated RIO comes amidst a complex regulatory and competitive landscape. In 2023, a hike in channel pricing led to disputes with cable operators, resulting in broadcasters suspending signals. TRAI intervened in 2024, advising broadcasters to maintain service continuity during election periods.

ZEEL clarified that its updated RIO supersedes prior versions and is filed without prejudice to its ongoing legal dispute under Broadcasting Appeal No. 1 of 2024 with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The appeal is currently under adjudication at the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

The changes reflect a strategic response to evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics. SPNI's launch of Sony Max 1 aims to attract movie enthusiasts, while ZEEL's streamlined bouquets and revised pricing cater to diverse viewership preferences. However, with increased pricing, the challenge of balancing affordability and content quality remains critical for broadcasters in retaining subscribers.

DoT boosts connectivity for Maha Kumbh Mela 2025

As the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 gears up to welcome millions of devotees to Prayagraj, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued directives to telecom operators to ensure robust and seamless connectivity during the grand event.



With the Maha Kumbh being the largest religious gathering globally, this initiative aims to provide uninterrupted communication services amidst the anticipated massive footfall.

According to a PIB release, the extensive demand for connectivity, leading telecom operators—Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea (Vi), and BSNL—have already undertaken extensive upgrades. A total of 575 new Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) have been installed, and 1,462 existing units have been upgraded across Prayagraj city. Additionally, 126 km of optical fiber has been laid, while 328 new towers and masts have been erected, significantly strengthening the city's telecom infrastructure.

MIB gears up to regulate online ads, influencer marketing



The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is working on a comprehensive framework to regulate online advertisements, including influencer marketing, in response to the increasing complexity and scope of digital advertising. This initiative comes as part of the Ministry's allocation of business to ensure responsible and ethical practices in the digital ad space, The Storyboard18 reported.

The Ministry, in its submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, highlighted that it is in the process of formulating rules for regulating online advertisements. This was outlined in the committee's Third Report on Demands for Grants (2024-25) issued on December 16, 2024. The rules aim to bring clarity and accountability to content shared by online publishers and influencers. The move follows the Central Government's amendment to the Allocation of Business Rules in July 2023, which brought online advertisements, as well as audio-visual content by digital publishers, under the jurisdiction of the MIB. The revised mandate now includes films, OTT content, news on digital platforms, and online advertisements.

Arjun Kapoor, Bhumi's 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' set for Feb release

The much-awaited comedy film 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi', starring Arjun Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh, is all set to hit theatres on February 21, 2025.

The film, directed by Mudassar Aziz, promises a hilarious and musical exploration of relationships, chaos, and humour, making it a perfect pick for audiences looking for light-hearted entertainment.

Mudassar Aziz, celebrated for delivering hits like 'Happy Bhag Jayegi', 'Pati Patni Aur Who'and 'Khel Khel Mein', is at the helm of this project. Known for his knack for blending relatable stories with laugh-out-loud moments, Aziz has created a reputation for delivering engaging and entertaining narratives, PTI reported from Mumbai.



The film's ensemble cast adds to the excitement. Kapoor, known for his charming on-screen presence, teams up with Bhumi, who has carved a niche with her versatile performances and Rakul Preet Singh, adding her vibrant energy to the mix. Together, this trio promises to bring the complex dynamics of relationships alive with wit and humor.

Described as a "musical ride of relationships, chaos and cackles," 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' is expected to deliver a rollercoaster of emotions wrapped in comedic brilliance. The storyline explores the quirks and hilarities of modern relationships, offering audiences a blend of relatable scenarios and laugh-out-loud moments.

The film's production values also promise to match its star power. Produced under the banner of Pooja Entertainment by Vashu Bhagnani, Jackky Bhagnani and Deepshikha Deshmukh, 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' aims to set a new standard for comedy films in Bollywood.

With a release date perfectly timed to the post-Valentine's season, the film is poised to attract audiences looking for a feel-good, entertaining cinematic experience. From its catchy musical numbers to the sharp comic timing of its cast, 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' has all the ingredients of a Bollywood blockbuster.

Cheers to a fresh start
and endless possibilities.
2025
Happy New Year
SONY PICTURES NETWORKS

DD to air 4K restored version of 'Manthan' in tribute to Shyam Benegal



National broadcaster Doordarshan will honor the late filmmaker Shyam Benegal by screening the 4K restored version of his iconic film Manthan on January 1, 2025, at 8 pm. The move comes shortly after Benegal's passing on December 23 at the age of 90, following a prolonged battle with chronic kidney disease.

Benegal, a stalwart of India's parallel cinema movement in the 1970s and 1980s, was known for creating films with social relevance and depth. Manthan, released in 1976, stands as one of his most celebrated works, portraying the transformative milk cooperative movement spearheaded by Dr. Verghese Kurien.

The Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), which restored the film in 4K resolution for its screening at the Cannes Classic section earlier this year, announced the telecast through its official X (formerly Twitter) handle.

Manthan, known as Churning in English, was a groundbreaking film financed by 500,000 farmers from Gujarat who contributed Rs. 2 each. The opening credits of the film famously read: "500,000 Farmers of Gujarat present."

Starring Girish Karnad, Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah, and Amrish Puri, the film narrates the story of a young veterinary doctor who battles societal oppression to establish a milk cooperative. The story highlights the empowerment of rural farmers and showcases the spirit of collective resilience.

The film not only shed light on India's milk revolution but also symbolized grassroots collaboration, being a rare example of farmer-funded cinema. The restoration of Manthan was supported by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul), further cementing its connection to India's dairy heritage.

Doordarshan's screening of the restored version of Manthan is both a tribute to Benegal's cinematic legacy and an opportunity for audiences to revisit a pivotal moment in Indian history.

Diljit Dosanjh wraps up 'Dil-Luminati India Tour' with a grand finale in Ludhiana

Punjabi music icon Diljit Dosanjh concluded his highly acclaimed Dil-Luminati India Tour with a spectacular finale in Ludhiana, leaving fans in awe as he wished them a happy New Year. The final concert, held on New Year's Eve at the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) grounds, marked the culmination of a two-month musical journey across India, PTI reported. The Dil-Luminati India Tour began on October 26 in New Delhi and has since traversed major cities, enthralling audiences with Diljit's energetic performances and magnetic stage presence. Known for his versatility as a singer, actor, and performer, Diljit brought his unique blend of Punjabi music, pop, and Bollywood hits to life during the tour.

The Ludhiana concert served as the perfect conclusion to this nationwide trek. Fans packed the venue to witness the singer deliver a memorable performance filled with his chart-topping tracks and heartfelt interactions.



Taking to Instagram, Diljit shared snippets from the Ludhiana concert, showcasing the electrifying atmosphere and his deep connection with the audience. In the videos, the crowd can be seen cheering and dancing along to his hits, creating a festive vibe to welcome the New Year.

"Thank you, Ludhiana, for making the final show of the tour unforgettable. Happy New Year to everyone who's been part of this journey," Diljit captioned one of the posts, expressing gratitude to his fans for their unwavering support throughout the tour.

Diljit Dosanjh has not only carved a niche for himself in the Punjabi music industry but has also gained a massive following internationally. His ability to blend traditional Punjabi sounds with contemporary beats has earned him acclaim from fans and critics alike. The Dil-Luminati India Tour is yet another testament to his growing legacy as a global entertainer.

With the tour now concluded, fans are eagerly anticipating what's next for Diljit. Whether it's new music, films, or international concerts, the singer's ever-evolving artistry continues to captivate audiences around the world.

As the New Year unfolds, Diljit's successful tour serves as a reminder of the unifying power of music and the lasting impact of a performer who truly connects with his audience.

Salman Khan's 'Sikandar', Aamir Khan's 'Sitaare Zameen Par' headline a star-studded 2025 Bollywood lineup

As the curtains fall on 2024, Bollywood is gearing up for a blockbuster 2025, promising a stellar mix of star power and franchise fever. Trade experts are hopeful that the coming year's lineup, featuring Salman Khan's 'Sikandar', Aamir Khan's 'Sitaare Zameen Par', and an array of franchise sequels, will rejuvenate the box office and reengage cinema audiences.

The year kicks off with Salman Khan's 'Sikandar', slated for an Eid release in March. Billed as one of the biggest films of 2025, 'Sikandar' is expected to set the tone for the year with its mass appeal and action-packed narrative. Known for his dominance during the Eid season, Salman is poised to deliver yet another box-office juggernaut, PTI reported from Mumbai.

On the other hand, Aamir Khan returns to the big screen with 'Sitaare Zameen Par'. With his knack for emotionally charged storytelling, Aamir's latest project is anticipated to tug at heartstrings while delivering a strong social message.

Adding to the excitement, the year will see the release of highly anticipated sequels, including 'War 2', 'Raid 2', and 'Housefull 5'. Hrithik Roshan's return as Kabir in 'War 2', alongside Jr. NTR, is expected to be a high-octane spectacle, cementing Yash Raj Films' Spy Universe as a major cinematic franchise. Similarly, Ajay Devgn will reprise his role in 'Raid 2', promising a gripping narrative with intense drama and action. Meanwhile, the comedy franchise 'Housefull' makes a comeback with its fifth installment, bringing a dose of laughter and chaos to the big screen.



The slate for 2025 is equally diverse, with offerings spanning multiple genres. Kangana Ranaut's 'Emergency' explores the political turmoil of India's past, while Vicky Kaushal's 'Chhaava' delves into the life of Maratha king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, offering a grand historical narrative. Akshay Kumar's 'Sky Force' adds to the patriotic fervor with its wartime story.

Bollywood's creative ventures don't end here. Kajol will headline a horror-thriller, and Shahid Kapoor will star in 'Deva', an action-packed thriller expected to be a game-changer for the actor. Meanwhile, Varun Dhawan's romantic comedy with his father, David Dhawan, aims to bring a light-hearted touch to the year's cinematic offerings.

The Spy Universe by Yash Raj Films will expand further with 'Alpha', starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari. Building on the massive success of previous installments, this addition is expected to further solidify the franchise's grip on audiences.

With this star-studded lineup, Bollywood hopes to overcome the lull of 2024 and reestablish its dominance. The amalgamation of big-budget films, marquee names, and engaging stories promises a landmark year for Indian cinema.

'Squid Game' S2 debuts with 68mn views; #1 in 92 countries

Squid Game' S2 enthralled fans all over the world as it skyrocketed to the top of the Netflix Global Top 10, amassing an astounding 68 million views on its debut, ranking #1 in 92 countries and breaking the record for most views for a show in its premiere week while breaking into the Most Popular List in record time, the streamer said.



The impressive viewership numbers come after a months-long promotional campaign, with fan activations in more than 25 countries across six continents. Marquee events in 10 countries drew 6 million online and 52,000 in-person fans with nearly 37,000 participants and 1,700 pink guards in one-of-a-kind races, mazes and other games inspired by the series in anticipation of its December 26 return.

These fan activations and experiences helped drive 3 billion impressions across Netflix global social channels in the months leading up to the Season 2 premiere and even surpassed Season 1's lifetime impressions, Netflix said in a statement.

The #1 show is also the #1 game. The fandom extended to 'Squid Game Game: Unleashed', Netflix's multiplayer video game, which accompanied Season 2 at the top of the charts, becoming the #1 Action Game on the App Store in 57 countries and the #1 Top Free Game in 24 countries.

DTH subscriber base shrinks to 59.91mn in Q3 2024: TRAI Report

The Indian Direct-to-Home (DTH) industry witnessed a significant decline in its active subscriber base during the third quarter of 2024. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), in its latest Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report, revealed a drop of 2.26 million active subscribers, reducing the base from 62.17 million in June 2024 to 59.91 million by the end of September 2024, The Economic Times reported.

Over a year, the active subscriber base experienced an even steeper decline. From September 30, 2023, to September 30, 2024, the total base reduced by 4.27 million, plummeting from 64.18 million to 59.91 million. This reflects a growing shift in consumer preferences, likely influenced by increased adoption of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms and digital streaming services.

Among DTH operators, Tata Play continued to dominate the market with a 31.99 percent share as of September 2024. It was followed by Bharti Telemedia (Airtel Digital TV) at 29.38 percent, Dish TV at 19.53 percent, and Sun Direct TV at 19.10 percent.

However, these figures represent a slight reshuffling of market shares compared to the previous quarter (June 2024).

'BLINK' to premiere on National Geographic Channel on Jan 5

National Geographic Channel is set to air 'BLINK', a deeply moving documentary that captures the extraordinary journey of a family racing against time to create unforgettable memories before three of their four children lose their sight. Directed by Edmund Stenson and Oscar® and BAFTA-winning filmmaker Daniel Roher, the film premieres on January 5, 2025, at 10 pm.



The 84-minute documentary follows the French Canadian couple Edith Lemay and Sébastien Pelletier, whose lives took a heartbreaking turn when their daughter Mia was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a rare genetic disorder leading to progressive blindness. The diagnosis was compounded when two of Mia's younger siblings, Colin and Laurent, were found to have the same incurable condition.

Film fraternity lauds PM Modi vision for WAVES 2025



Prominent figures from India's film and entertainment industry have applauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025. Scheduled to take place from February 5 to February 9 in New Delhi, the summit aims to position India as a global hub for creative excellence.

The initiative, announced during PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' radio address, received widespread appreciation across the entertainment sector, with numerous celebrities and producers taking to social media to express their support, PTI reported from Mumbai yesterday.

Actor Akshay Kumar described the summit as a "wonderful idea" and expressed hope for it to be a "fabulous global forum" that unites the entertainment industry. Veteran actor Anil Kapoor called the initiative "groundbreaking," adding that it reflects Modi's inspiring leadership in making India the center stage for creativity and collaboration.

Producer Ektaa Kapoor expressed excitement about contributing to the landmark initiative, while CBFC Chairman and lyricist-writer Prasoon Joshi highlighted how WAVES 2025 will shine a spotlight on India's content industry and its immense potential.

Sanjay Dutt added to the chorus of support, calling WAVES 2025 a "fantastic platform for global collaboration," while actor-politician Khushbu Sundar hailed it as a milestone for the Indian entertainment industry.

Leading producers like Ritesh Sidhwani of Excel Entertainment and Apoorva Mehta of Dharma Productions also extended their gratitude to PM Modi. Sidhwani stated that WAVES 2025 would showcase India's creative brilliance on a global scale, while Mehta described the summit as a game-changing platform for collaboration and growth.

Maddock Films echoed this sentiment on their official X account, expressing enthusiasm for the convergence of global creative minds in India.

In his address, PM Modi likened WAVES to global events such as the World Economic Forum in Davos, emphasizing its significance as a platform for leaders, creators, and innovators in the entertainment industry.

PM Modi compares WAVES to Davos' WEF in year's last 'Mann Ki Baat'

India will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time in February next year, which will be a global platform for its creative talents, fostering collaborations and showcasing the country's potential as a hub for world-class content creation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke extensively about the WAVES in his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' radio address on Dec 29, according to a PTI report from New Delhi.



Comparing the WAVES to global events like the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Modi said the leaders from the media and entertainment industry as well as creative minds from across the globe will gather in Delhi for the Summit being held from February 5-9.

"This Summit is an important step towards making India a hub of global content creation," he said.

The prime minister emphasized the pivotal role of young creators in the preparations for WAVES, reflecting the dynamic spirit of India's creative community.

He expressed pride in the enthusiasm of the country's youth and their contribution to the burgeoning creator economy, a key driver as India advances toward becoming a five trillion dollar economy.

"Whether you are a young creator or an established artist, associated with Bollywood or regional cinema, a professional from the TV industry, an expert in animation, gaming, or an innovator in entertainment technology, I encourage you to be a part of the WAVES Summit," Modi said.

He urged all stakeholders in the entertainment and creative industries to actively participate in the WAVES.

"The WAVES Summit is poised to serve as a global platform for India's creative talents, fostering collaborations and showcasing the country's potential as a hub for world-class content creation," Modi said.

The Summit will also highlight India's advancements in animation, gaming, entertainment technology, and regional and mainstream cinema, he added.

Modi also paid heartfelt tributes to ace director Raj Kapoor and singer Mohammed Rafi on their 100th birth anniversaries, apart from recalling Akkineni Nageswara Rao's contributions in elevating Telugu cinema while reflecting the Indian traditions. He also honoured Tapan Sinha's socially conscious films that inspired unity and awareness.

Modi said these legends not only shaped the golden era of Indian cinema, but also strengthened India's cultural heritage, leaving behind an everlasting legacy for generations to admire and draw inspiration from.

TRAI announce key satellite spectrum allocation guidelines soon

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is set to unveil its recommendations on satellite spectrum allocation shortly, as confirmed by TRAI Chairman A.K. Lahoti during a National Consumer Day event on Monday. These recommendations are expected to play a pivotal role in determining the future framework for satellite communication services in India, particularly in the realm of broadband connectivity.

TRAI Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

The recommendations will outline terms and conditions for the allocation of satellite spectrum, a crucial resource for enabling satellite-based broadband services across the country. The government will review TRAI's suggestions before finalizing its policy, signaling an essential step toward expanding India's digital infrastructure, PTI reported from New Delhi.

During the event, Lahoti stated that the recommendations would be issued "very soon," in response to questions about the rules governing satellite spectrum allocation. This follows TRAI's extensive consultation process, which included an open-house discussion in early November.

The upcoming guidelines are expected to address a contentious debate between telecom operators and satellite communication firms regarding the allocation process.

Telecom Operators' Stance: Companies like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel have advocated for spectrum auctions, asserting that this approach ensures transparency and facilitates nationwide mobility services.

TRAI revamps website to connect with wider audience

TRAI has unveiled an upgraded and revamped website to broaden its reach to connect with a wider audience. In recognition of the growing importance of social media, new sharing features facilitate the dissemination of regulatory information to all stakeholders. The website offers comprehensive information on telecom and broadcasting regulations, policies, laws, statistics and trends in India, according to a TRAI statement on Dec 23.

These resources are easily accessible to the public, stakeholders, researchers, and international audiences, the regulator said. The new website includes the following additional features, apart from others.

Introduction of a new dashboard for Telecom & Broadcasting sector.
Provision of data download for research.
A Grid View feature, allowing users to view data in a new and interactive format.
In addition to sharing via email, users can now also share documents directly through major social media platforms, links for visualisation on Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, X, etc.
Online registration for subscription to TRAI latest releases and updates.
New website is compatible with iOS, Android and various platforms.
A blog with a facility for registered users to comment
Provision to publish information about upcoming events.
Online registration for participation in Open House Discussions.
Concise and compiled regulations at a single place with amendments mentioned in foot notes.

The old website will run concurrently for three months after go-live of the new website. A Chatbot 'TARA' (Telecom Authority Responsive Advisor) has been introduced to facilitate interactive search.

TRAI said that these new features aim to enhance transparency, accessibility, and public engagement of the regulator's initiatives in the telecom and broadcasting sector.

Prasar Bharati's OTT Platform 'WAVES' hits over 1mn downloads in just one month



Prasar Bharati's recently launched OTT platform, 'WAVES - Family Entertainment Ki Nayi Lehar,' has achieved a major milestone by crossing over one million downloads within a month of its debut. The app, unveiled on November 20 at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), has garnered widespread attention for its unique and diverse content offerings.

Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Ashwini Vaishnaw, announced the achievement on X (formerly Twitter), stating, "WAVES OTT App by Prasar Bharati crosses a significant milestone of 1 million downloads." The platform is accessible via Android, iOS, and as a web application. Designed to cater to a family-friendly audience, WAVES features an extensive library of movies, TV shows, live events, and games. Notable titles include films like Aarakshan, One Day, The Impossible, and Alice Darling. Additionally, the platform is making strides in offering both archival material and live TV channels, combining entertainment and information on a single platform.

Sanjay Jaju, Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, had earlier highlighted the platform's vision during a media roundtable. He described WAVES as a "game-changer," emphasizing its hybrid model with a small subscription-based section while keeping most of its content free for users.

WAVES is built to handle up to 10 million concurrent users, with future scalability to 100 million users. It offers streaming in SD, HD, and 4K resolutions, ensuring a premium viewing experience. Furthermore, the app is set to introduce innovative features like integrated gaming for children and online shopping through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

The platform's launch, initially slated for September 15, was delayed to October 3 due to industry concerns but finally went live in November with overwhelming success.

Prasar Bharati's ambitious venture underscores its commitment to redefining digital entertainment in India by blending traditional broadcasting with cutting-edge technology. As WAVES continues to expand its reach, it is poised to strengthen its position in the competitive OTT landscape while offering unparalleled value to Indian audiences.

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'The Pickle Factory' to premiere on WAVES OTT on Dec. 31



Actress Tanya Maniktala, best known for her roles in 'Kill' and 'A Suitable Boy', is set to charm audiences with her latest project, 'The Pickle Factory'. This lighthearted workplace-family dramedy, consisting of 10 episodes, will premiere on December 31, 2024, on Prasar Bharati's WAVES OTT platform, offering viewers a perfect binge-watch for the New Year's weekend.

Set against the picturesque backdrop of Dehradun, 'The Pickle Factory' weaves the story of Mahika, a young intern in a family-run pickle business. Played by Maniktala, Mahika's journey captures the highs and lows of workplace dynamics, her bonds with quirky colleagues, and the challenges that help her discover the essence of friendship and family.

Joining Maniktala is an ensemble cast featuring Ritwik Bhowmik (Bandish Bandits), Sohaila Kapur, Gagandev Riar, Naveen Kaushik, and Akashdeep Arora. The series promises plenty of laughs and heartfelt moments, making it a delightful blend of humor and emotional depth.

Produced by Aarrav Jindal under Euphoria Productions, 'The Pickle Factory' is a Dice Media creation, directed by Vishwajoy Mukherjee. The show is a testament to Dice Media's ability to deliver meaningful storytelling wrapped in a lighthearted narrative.Maniktala's star has been on the rise since her acting debut in 2018. She gained recognition in the OTT space with Flames and solidified her presence with 'A Suitable Boy'.

NCLAT dismisses appeal against NCLT's approval of Reliance broadcast network sale

The NCLAT on Dec 23 set aside a batch of appeals filed against the NCLT order approving bids of Sapphire Media for Reliance Broadcast Network Ltd. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) upheld the order of the Mumbai Bench of the NCLT, which had on May 6, 2024 approved the resolution plan of Sapphire Media for Reliance Broadcast that operated FM radio business under the brand name of Big 92.7 FM, PTI reported.

The order passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) was challenged by the unsuccessful resolution applicants -- Abhijit Realtors & Infraventure and Creative Channel Advertising & Marketing -- by filing a batch of five appeals before NCLAT.

The petitioners had alleged irregularity in the process adopted by the resolution professional of Reliance Broadcast Network Ltd (RBNL), which was rejected by the appellate tribunal."



"We have already found that the challenge mechanism as well as negotiation conducted by the resolution professional is in accordance with the CIRP Regulations and Process Note," NCLAT said.

Moreover, evaluation of the eligibility of the successful bidder Sapphire Media also suggested there is no irregularity committed by the RP and that it "does not find any tenable ground" raised by them to interfere with the order approving the resolution plan.

....we do not find any ground to interfere in the order dated May 6, 2024 impugned in the above Appeals. In result, all the appeals are dismissed," it said.

The Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) was initiated against Reliance Broadcast Network by NCLT on February 24, 2023 on an application filed by IDBI Trusteeship Services, a financial creditor of the company.

The RP received six resolution plans, where Abhijit Realtors & Infraventure submitted a bid of Rs 80.20 crore, Creative Channel Advertising & Marketing gave a bid of Rs 100 crore, Entertainment Network (India) of Rs.37.17 crore and Sapphire Media Ltd of Rs 104.28 crore.

The Committee of Creditors (CoC) decided to hold the challenge process as per the RFRP (Request-For-Resolution-Plan) and a base price of Rs 240 crore was set. At the end of each round, the bid with the highest value was the "Threshold Bid Amount" for the next round. The resolution applicant was required to either match or exceed the threshold bid amount for the respective round in order to continue participating in the challenge process.

Each incremental bid of the resolution applicants was to be in multiples of Rs 10 crore. In the third round, Sapphire Media submitted a bid of Rs 251 crore, which was the highest. After this, the CoC decided to undertake further negotiations with all resolution applicants as per the RFRP and to put their best offers and submit revised financial proposal.

On November 4, 2023, revised financial proposals were received from Consortium of Abhijit Realtors & Infraventure and ENIL (formed during the challenge round) of Rs 248 crore, Rs 240 crore from Creative Channel Advertising & Marketing, and Rs 261 crore from Sapphire Media.

The bid of Sapphire Media was approved by CoC with 88.97 per cent vote and was forwarded to NCLT, which approved it.

However, it was alleged that Sapphire Media was ineligible to submit its resolution plan and questioned the challenge process before NCLAT and it was rejected.



GIZMOS & Gadget 2025

01. NVIDIA Pushes AI Boundaries with Major CES 2025 Announcements

At CES 2025, NVIDIA unveiled groundbreaking advancements in artificial intelligence, showcasing innovations that promise to redefine industries. Key highlights included the launch of the Hopper Next GPU architecture, optimized for generative AI workloads, and the debut of Omniverse AI, an upgraded platform for creating and managing 3D virtual worlds.NVIDIA also introduced AI-powered solutions for automotive, gaming, and healthcare sectors, emphasizing real-time processing and enhanced user experiences. CEO Jensen Huang highlighted the company's vision for democratizing AI, bringing cutting-edge technology closer to developers and enterprises.



These announcements solidify NVIDIA's position at the forefront of AI innovation, setting the tone for a transformative year ahead.

02. Kia Unveils Syros SUV in India: A New Contender in the Mid-Size Segment



Kia has officially unveiled its latest offering, the Syros SUV, in India, marking its entry into the competitive mid-size SUV market. Designed to cater to modern lifestyles, the Syros combines cutting-edge technology, striking design, and robust performance.

The SUV features a bold exterior with signature LED lighting, a spacious cabin with premium materials, and advanced tech, including a 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system, wireless charging, and Kia's signature UVO Connect features. Under the hood, the Syros is expected to come with both petrol and diesel engine options, paired with manual and automatic transmissions to suit diverse driving needs.

With a focus on safety, the Syros includes multiple airbags, ABS with EBD, and advanced driver-assistance systems. Kia aims to position the Syros as a versatile vehicle, perfect for city commutes and off-road adventures alike. Pricing and launch details are anticipated soon, with the Syros expected to rival popular models like the Hyundai Creta and MG Astor.

03. ISRO Provides Update on SpaDex Mission



The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced a crucial milestone in its SpaDex (Space Docking Experiment) mission, with the spacecrafts currently placed in a slow drift phase to prepare for docking maneuvers. This step is part of ISRO's ambitious mission to demonstrate and refine autonomous docking technology in space, a critical capability for future interplanetary missions and on-orbit servicing.

The SpaDex mission involves two spacecraft equipped with advanced sensors and docking systems, designed to autonomously align, approach, and dock with precision. The slow drift phase allows the crafts to stabilize and synchronize their orbits, ensuring optimal conditions for the upcoming docking attempt.

04. Apple MacBook Air M3 (13-inch) in Starlight Now Available at a Discounted Price on Flipkart

Tech enthusiasts, rejoice! The Apple MacBook Air M3, equipped with 8GB RAM and 256GB storage, is now available at a significantly reduced price on Flipkart. Featuring a sleek 13-inch Retina display and the elegant Starlight finish, this laptop combines cutting-edge performance with premium aesthetics.

Launched in March 2024 with a retail price of ₹1,14,900, the MacBook Air M3 has been celebrated for its powerful M3 chip, energy efficiency, and lightweight design. Thanks to Flipkart's current offer, this premium device is now more accessible, presenting an incredible value for those looking to own a high-performance Apple laptop.

This deal is a limited-time opportunity for those seeking Apple's hallmark innovation at a competitive price.



Whether for work, study, or creative pursuits, the MacBook Air M3 promises a seamless and efficient experience.

05. GTA 6 Still Set for Fall 2025 Launch Amid Rumors of Delays



The highly anticipated Grand Theft Auto (GTA) 6 remains on track for its fall 2025 release, dispelling recent rumors of potential delays. Rockstar Games' HR department has been actively recruiting talent on LinkedIn, with job postings suggesting steady progress in the game's development.

These listings, shared by Rockstar's talent acquisition specialists, indicate the studio's commitment to meeting its timeline for the next chapter in the iconic open-world franchise. Despite speculation, the hiring activity signals that the game's production is advancing as planned, and a delay appears unlikely at this stage.

For fans eagerly awaiting GTA 6, this development offers a glimmer of hope that the long-awaited title will arrive as scheduled, marking a new era in open-world gaming.

06. Samsung Rumored to Launch Smart Glasses Without Displays Alongside Galaxy S25 Series

Samsung is reportedly gearing up to introduce its first pair of smart glasses, expected to debut in the coming months, possibly alongside the Galaxy S25 series. Unlike traditional augmented reality devices, these smart glasses are rumored to come without displays, focusing instead on audio and connectivity features, similar to Ray-Ban Meta's glasses.



The South Korean tech giant is also likely to unveil the software platform for the device soon, hinting at a seamless integration with its ecosystem. This move aligns with Samsung's 2023 teaser about new extended reality (XR) products in collaboration with Google and Qualcomm, signaling a major push into the wearable tech space.

If the rumors hold true, this launch could redefine the smart glasses segment by emphasizing audio-first functionality, making the device accessible and lightweight while catering to users seeking minimalist wearable technology.

07. Intel Unveils Core Ultra Series 2 Processors at CES 2025



Intel has introduced its latest Intel Core Ultra (Series 2) processors at CES 2025, designed to cater to businesses, creators, and gamers. The new processors come equipped with advanced AI-powered enhancements, promising improved performance, energy efficiency, and smoother multitasking capabilities.

Intel emphasized that the Core Ultra Series 2 is engineered to meet the growing demands of modern workloads, offering seamless performance for tasks ranging from professional content creation to immersive gaming experiences. The processors are also optimized for advanced AI applications, ensuring compatibility with the next wave of software innovations.

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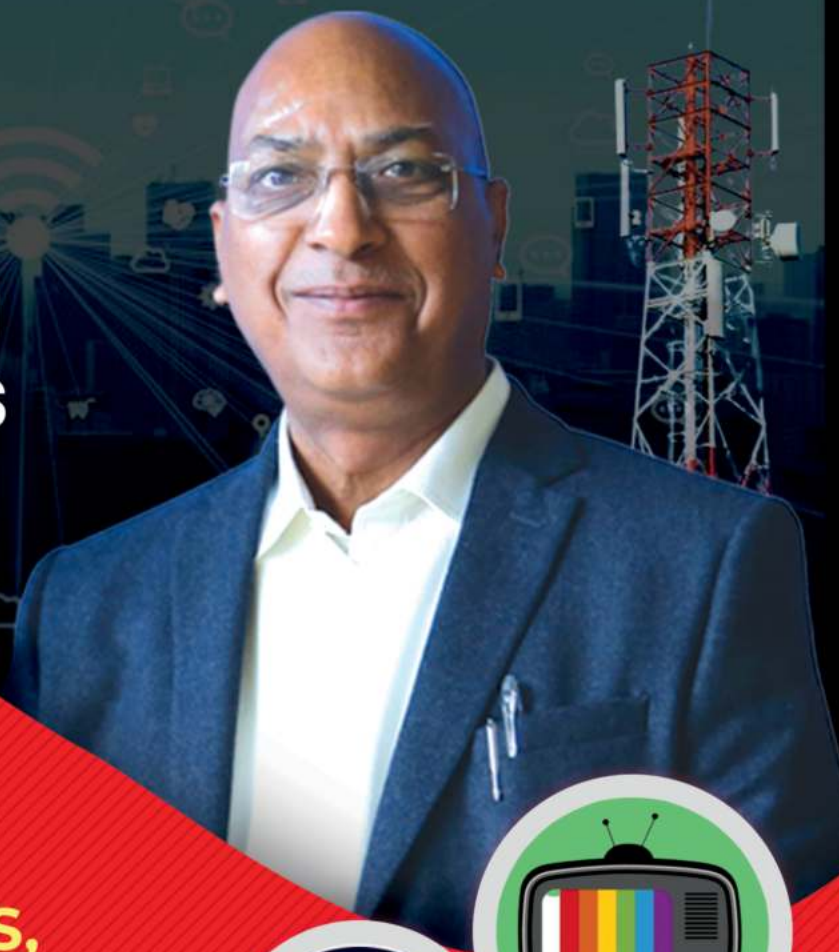
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