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Sub Editors
Prof. S. S. Gupta
Vijay Bala
Udey Bhan
Special Correspondent
Dheeraj Bharadwaj
Mahipal Singh
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Anurag (9811120650)
Subscription & Distribution
Aman (Director)-9911110410
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Vikas Arora
Subhash Grover
Legal Consultants
Anil Goel
S.D. Sudhi

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

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वो वाला नहीं, ये नया भारत है... मोदी वाला



बच्चों के बिगड़ने में पेरेंट्स की भूमिका को नकारा नहीं जा सकता है, सारा दोष सिर्फ बच्चे के सिर मढ़ आप अपनी जिम्मेदारी से हाथ नहीं झाड़ सकते हैं, अखण्ड भारत के टुकड़े कब और कैसे हुवे उन सब पर बात करेंगे तो कहानी बहुत लम्बी हो जाएगी , यहाँ 1947 में जन्मे पाक की बात करें तो इसके जन्म को समझना होगा कि यह क्यों जन्मा ....?

जिन्ना की जिद थी कि हमारा धर्म रस्मों रिवाज सब कुछ अलग है हम इनके साथ नहीं रह सकते, हमे इनसे अलग रहना है ,इसी बुनियाद पर भारत को काटकर एक और देश (बेटा) पैदा हो गया नाम रखा गया पाकिस्तान...

इधर से उधर या उधर से इधर को बीच में ही रोक दिया गया लेकिन जिन्ना की जिद पूरी की गई ,उसकी शैतानियत ने पीओके लिया लेकिन कश्मीर हमने बचा लिया ,उसकी शैतानियां बढ़ती रहीं,हमारी उदारता धैर्य और सहनशीलता की परीक्षा ली जाती रही और हम निंदा निंदा ही करते रहे, जबकि शैतान बच्चे को शुरू में ही दंड दे दिया गया होता तो ऑपरेशन सिंदूर तक की नौबत नहीं आती !

बीच बीच में लाल बहादुर शास्त्री या इंदिरा जी ने दंडित किया भी तो समझौतों में फिर वहीं जैसे थे पर पहुँच गए परिणाम क्या हुआ वह घमण्डी हो गया उसे वहम हो गया स्वयं को बहादुर लाल अपार शक्तिशाली समझ हमे ही धमकाने लगा आखिर में पहलगाम कर दिया लेकिन अब यहाँ स्वयं निर्णय लेने वाला प्रधानमंत्री मोदी बैठा है मोदी ने जो किया वो पूरी दुनिया देख चुकी है खूब थपड़ा दिया गया है बिगड़े बच्चे को और हाथ पाँव बांध कर बता दिया है कि आइंदा से कोई हरकत की तो फिर बहुत ज्यादा बुरा होगा ध्यान रखना .....!!

बस ये ही हजम नहीं हो पा रहा विपक्ष को कि रुक कैसे गया उसे तो पीट दिया यहाँ खरोंच भी नहीं आई ये तो गलत है, वही रोना धोना भोंकना शुरू है , देश के आम नागरिक जय जयकार कर रहें हैं लेकिन उन्हें निगला नहीं जा रहा ऐसे कैसे चलेगा मोदी ये मोदी वो पूरा विलाप चल रहा है ऐसे तो काँग्रेस आ ही नहीं पायेगी , मोदी और आगे निकल जायेगा .....

क्या सोचते हैं ये लोग कि लोग इनकी बातों में आ जाएँगे ,लोगों को दिखाई नहीं दे रहा क्या ,

हर कोई जय जयकार कर रहा है ,लोग मूर्ख नहीं बहुत समझदार हो गए हैं ,वो सारा सच जानते हैं उन्हें अब बेवकूफ नहीं बनाया जा सकता है ! युद्ध पाकिस्तान से नहीं आतंकवाद से है ,हमारी सेना ने आतंकवादी ठिकानों को ठिकाने लगाया है आतंकवादियों को मारा है,

वो पाकिस्तान में हैं तो ये उनकी गलती है वो क्यों आतंकवादियों की फेक्ट्री बन बैठे हैं ये उन्होंने सोचना है लेकिन मोदी जी ने बता दिया कि यह नया भारत है,गोली के जवाब में गोला आयेगा ...-.पूरे विश्व को बता दिया गया है कि भारत अपनी रक्षा सुरक्षा में पूर्णतया समर्थ है किसी को गलतफहमी हो तो सुधार ले ,

हम शांति चाहते हैं लेकिन शांति को हमारी कमजोरी ना समझा जाए,छेड़ोगे तो छोड़ेंगे नहीं,

समझे ...ये नया भारत है मोदी वाला भारत है !

-डॉ.ए.के.रस्तोगी

Waves of Change

Inside Broadcasting



Unless interventions take place, pay TV decline will continue: AIDCF-EY report

The Indian cable TV industry, once a dominant force in household entertainment, is now facing its most turbulent phase, with declining subscriber numbers, mounting financial pressure on operators, and alarming job losses across the sector. A new employment-focused study released by the All India Digital Cable Federation (AIDCF) in June 2025 brings into sharp focus the challenges confronting the linear television distribution ecosystem as it struggles to stay relevant in the era of digital disruption.

For over three decades, cable television in India has remained the most affordable and accessible source of entertainment and information for millions of families. Thriving on the motto "kam daam, zyada samaan", the sector built a vast and competitive distribution framework. However, as consumers pivot to on-demand and internet-based streaming platforms, and regulatory gaps allow digital-first platforms to flourish unchecked, the traditional cable TV model finds itself grappling with unprecedented headwinds. According to the report by AIDCF, prepared in collaboration with Ernst & Young (E&Y), the pay TV home base in India has witnessed a drastic drop — falling from 151 million in 2018 to 111 million in 2024, a loss of 40 million households.

The E&Y-backed study surveyed 28,181 Local Cable Operators (LCOs) across India in November and December 2024 and uncovered distressing trends. About 93 percent of LCOs reported a reduction in subscriber base since 2018, with nearly half claiming over 40percent decline. As a direct consequence, employment generated by these operators dropped by a staggering 31 percent. The LCOs surveyed said they had collectively cut 37,835 jobs. When extrapolated to the national scale, this translates to an estimated 1.14 to 1.95 lakh jobs lost across the sector.



Among the key factors driving this erosion are the inability of operators to raise subscription rates despite increasing channel costs, the widespread shift of viewers to OTT and Free Dish platforms, and a notable decline in secondary TV connections within households. Additionally, concerns were raised over the perceived decline in the quality of content on linear television compared to OTT offerings.

S.N. Sharma, President of AIDCF, in a statement accompanying the report, termed it "a call to action" for the industry and policymakers. He underlined that while innovation must be encouraged, it is equally important to ensure that traditional cable operators are not left behind. "We urge regulators and government authorities to enable a fair playing field, protect jobs, and restore balance to this vital ecosystem," he said.

The report also stressed that this issue goes beyond the industry's internal challenges. As Ashish Pherwani, Partner and Media & Entertainment Leader at EY India, noted, "This is not merely an industry concern; it is an economic and social issue that needs immediate attention." He highlighted the cascading impact of the pay TV decline, particularly on employment, and called for urgent policy interventions to sustain the cable TV model as a viable and competitive content distribution platform.

To prevent further attrition in the cable space, the report recommends several possible measures — including differential pricing based on region-specific affordability, reactivating over 20 million inactive STBs, curbing the free streaming of premium TV content on digital platforms, and enabling better parity in regulatory oversight across Free TV, FAST channels, pay TV, and OTT platforms.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in its response to the report, has acknowledged the difficult phase the cable industry is experiencing. Sanjiv Shankar, Joint Secretary, reiterated the Government's commitment to ensuring a fair,

inclusive, and competitive broadcasting environment. “A fine balance must be struck between fostering innovation and safeguarding the sustainability of traditional distribution mechanisms,” he said, applauding AIDCF for producing a report that would serve as a key reference point in future policymaking.

With projections suggesting pay TV homes could drop to as low as 71–81 million by 2030 if current trends continue, the need for a collaborative, forward-looking strategy is more urgent than ever. The AIDCF, through this report, has made a compelling case for intervention—before India’s cable backbone buckles under the weight of disruption.



Bridging gaps, collabs, adaptation key to b’casting’s future: Sanjiv Shankar



Speaking at the AIDCF event on June 09, Sanjiv Shankar, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and former Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), delivered a compelling address that transcended the usual discourse on industry challenges.

While acknowledging the current hurdles faced by the broadcasting sector, Shankar’s insights focused heavily on the need for internal collaboration, strategic adaptation, and a renewed understanding of the consumer’s role in shaping the industry’s trajectory.

This report delves into the salient points of his address, highlighting areas of potential growth and the critical shifts required for the sector’s long-term sustainability. Shankar passionately argued against the prevalent “compartmentalized” view within the broadcasting field, where different components often compete under the mistaken belief that one segment’s gain necessitates another’s loss.

“It is not a zero-sum game,” he emphasized, advocating for a collective responsibility towards society where the entire sector “floats together, you swim together.” This call for unity underscores a crucial shift from internal competition to a collaborative approach, particularly in seeking concessions from the government for the industry as a whole.

A significant portion of Shankar’s speech was dedicated to the industry’s often-underestimated strengths. He pointed out the broadcasting sector’s unparalleled reach, a “first mover advantage” that has enabled it to penetrate nearly every corner of the country. This extensive ground presence, coupled with invaluable customer data (KYC), represents a “huge value in today’s world” that should not be underestimated. Furthermore, he highlighted the sector’s cost-effectiveness, particularly in a price-sensitive market like India, where average revenue per user (ARPU) for broadband consumers watching content significantly outstrips that of cable TV. “None of us who is watching the OTT is spending less than 1500 rupees per month,” he stated, contrasting it with cable’s average of around 300 rupees. This cost advantage, he asserted, remains a powerful market determinant.

Shankar also addressed the often-cited challenge of declining subscriber numbers by offering a nuanced perspective. He presented an optimistic outlook based on the growth of connected TV, even if it introduces new consumption patterns. He stressed that viewing content on connected TVs is a “family viewing” experience, unlike the often private consumption on mobile devices. This, he argued, aligns culturally with India’s viewing habits and signals a positive future for television, projecting a significant increase in connected TV households to 7.6 crores by 2030 from the current 3 crores.

He debunked the notion of a “zero-sum game” between digital and linear viewing, explaining that consumers often watch both. “I also have the connected TV. I also have the linear TV on my same set. And I am not an exception. I am just the rule as of now,” he stated, emphasizing that multi-platform viewing is becoming the norm.

The Joint Secretary also touched upon the regulatory environment, acknowledging that while regulatory issues exist, the industry often “overplays the role of regulation.” He advocated for an approach centered on the consumer, asking whether any regulation can deny a subscriber what they want simply for the sake of a specific segment.

While supporting the principle of a level playing field where similar services are regulated by the same rules, he reiterated the importance of industry consensus. He cited the example of the radio sector, where concerted efforts to harmonize aspirations led to a smooth consultation process with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). He also hinted at the ongoing shift towards deregulation within the government, aligning with the economic survey’s

underlying theme, and suggested that simplifying program and advertisement codes could bring traditional TV closer to the less-regulated OTT space.

Looking forward, Shankar urged the industry to proactively embrace the "convergence bandwagon," noting the growing prominence of IPTV and the substantial number of Local Cable Operators (LCOs) willing to transition to broadband services. This adaptation is crucial, he believes, to cater to evolving subscriber preferences.

He also pointed to untapped revenue streams, particularly in local advertisements, where the cable sector's widespread presence offers immense potential. The revelation of two crore inactive Set-Top Boxes (STBs) and over ten crore "TV dark homes" presents a significant opportunity for the sector to expand its reach.

Finally, Shankar challenged broadcasters to invest in quality content for linear TV. While acknowledging the production of two lakh hours of content, with 97 percent dedicated to TV, he questioned the lack of compelling programming. He encouraged broadcasters to consider making popular OTT content available on linear TV, giving viewers more choice.

He also raised a pertinent concern about the quality of content watched on TV, whether linear or digital, stressing that "it's a family platform" in Indian homes, making the quality of content a critical societal concern. He called for an end to the "cat and mouse game" with new issues constantly emerging and emphasized the need for the industry to take collective "group calls" to safeguard its interests and adapt to change.

Cable industry sounds alarm, calls for urgent reforms, investment

In an emotionally charged address at the AIDCF event on June 09, S.N. Sharma, President of the All India Digital Cable Federation (AIDCF), painted a stark picture of the challenges facing the Indian cable television industry, even as he reaffirmed its commitment to collaboration and adaptation.

Speaking at the launch of a significant report developed in partnership with Ernst & Young in New Delhi, the Sharma underscored the industry's historical journey, its current struggles and a clear call for focused reforms from policymakers and regulators.

He began by expressing gratitude to Sanjiv Shankar, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (and former Joint Secretary, MIB), for his consistent support and motivational words.



He acknowledged that while the EY report, eloquently presented by Ashish Pherwani, Partner and Leader, Media & Entertainment EY India, covered much ground, he felt compelled to share additional thoughts from the industry's unique perspective.

"Positive, negative, it's a mix of all," Sharma began, reflecting on a journey spanning 35 years. He recalled the industry's humble beginnings, started by "smaller entrepreneurs in the streets," initially unregulated and unorganized.

From those nascent stages, the industry gradually grew, adapting to technological advancements and evolving consumer demands, even managing complex situations like widespread "curfews" during 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' broadcasts or handling crowds during live cricket matches.

Despite its evolution, the core identity of the cable industry, as a provider of "mass media entertainment" at "low pricing," remains.

Sharma emphasized that at an average ARPU of Rs 150-300, India enjoys entertainment at a cost unparalleled globally. However, this affordability comes with significant challenges, leading to an "imbalance" in the ecosystem.

The report's findings, highlighting a decline in pay TV subscribers, translate directly into severe consequences for livelihoods. "Do lakh logon ki naukri jaa chukki hai, yeh survey report kehte hai," he stated, noting that including the closure of 900 MSOs and 72,000 cable TV operators in the last six years, the actual job losses could be as high as 3.5 lakh.

"These are not just statistics, these are stories of lost livelihood, which are impacting families and entrepreneurs," he asserted, urging all stakeholders, including policymakers and regulators, to acknowledge this human cost.

The AIDCF President echoed Shankar's message of collaboration, agreeing that it's "not a zero-sum game" and that all stakeholders must unite to overcome challenges and adapt to change.

However, he stressed the critical need for "focused and serious reforms" from the ministry and regulator. He clarified that the cable industry is not against innovation or new technologies, stating, "Humein sirf parity chahiye." (We need parity as an industry)

The core demand is a level playing field, where cable operators, who strictly adhere to tariff and programming codes, are not at a disadvantage compared to other platforms that "slip by" the regulations.

A significant point of contention raised was the continuous

increase in channel prices and "force bundling" by broadcasters. He argued that this strategy hurts the price-sensitive Indian consumer and contributes to the decline in subscribers. Sharma President appealed to broadcasters, suggesting they "should play some positive role."

He questioned the current investment in content for linear TV, lamenting, "Kyu nahi Ramayana Mahabharata jaisa content is linear TV pe aaj bann raha hai, hum toh sirf distribute kar rahe hain." He implored broadcasters to reinvest in programming, as they primarily earn subscription revenue through the cable industry.

Concluding on a note of cautious optimism, the AIDCF President reiterated that the report, while documenting decline, is fundamentally "a call for serious reforms" and offers a roadmap for the future. He affirmed that AIDCF, remains positive and committed to finding solutions.

Sharma, urged "all the stakeholders, including broadcaster, regulator and our parent industry to bring practical reforms and support the cable industry to thrive further and further."

He ended by emphasizing that the issue extends beyond the industry itself, impacting "10 lakh people whose livelihood are dependent on this industry," and reaffirmed AIDCF's openness to all collaborative solutions and dialogues for the growth of the industry and the entertainment of consumers.

Disney seals Hulu deal with $439 million payment to Comcast

The Walt Disney Company will now take full ownership of the streaming platform Hulu, after agreeing to pay nearly $439 million to Comcast's NBCUniversal for its remaining stake. The move officially ends a years-long appraisal process and solidifies Disney's control over one of the most significant platforms in the streaming entertainment space.

According to an Associated Press report, Disney disclosed the final figure—$438.7 million—in a regulatory filing on Monday. This payment follows Disney's November 2023 announcement that it was acquiring Comcast's 33 percent stake in Hulu for at least $8.6 billion. That initial estimate was based on Hulu's guaranteed floor value of $27.5 billion, though the final amount reflects the resolution of differing valuations provided by separate appraisers.

Disney has been operating Hulu since 2019, when Comcast effectively stepped back from management and handed over operational control to Disney, becoming a silent partner. Hulu itself dates back to 2007, created as a collaborative streaming service by major entertainment conglomerates looking to offer their TV content online. Disney entered the picture in 2009, bringing titles from ABC, ESPN, and the Disney Channel. A decade later, Disney acquired a majority stake through its purchase of 21st Century Fox, setting the stage for full ownership.

In the appraisal process, Disney's chosen appraiser arrived at a valuation below the minimum floor value, while NBCUniversal's appraiser suggested a figure well above it. The appointment of a third, neutral appraiser ultimately resulted in the final amount of $438.7 million.

"This has been a long time coming, and we're pleased that it's finally resolved," said Disney CEO Bob Iger in a statement. "We have had a productive partnership with NBCUniversal, and we wish them the best of luck. Completing the Hulu acquisition paves the way for a deeper and more seamless integration of Hulu's general entertainment content with Disney+ and, soon, with ESPN's direct-to-consumer product, providing an unrivaled value proposition for consumers."

The transaction is expected to close by July 24. Disney has also confirmed that the acquisition will not affect its fiscal 2025 adjusted earnings forecast. The company's stock saw a slight uptick in trading following the news on Tuesday morning.

With full ownership, Disney now gains greater flexibility in integrating Hulu's offerings with its broader direct-to-consumer strategy, which includes Disney+ and ESPN's upcoming standalone platform. Industry analysts see this as a crucial step toward streamlining content, reducing redundancies, and offering bundled services to better compete in the crowded streaming market.

Netflix to invest over €1bn in Spain by 2028

In a significant move that reaffirms its long-term commitment to the Spanish entertainment industry, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos has announced that the streaming giant will invest more than €1 billion in Spain between 2025 and 2028.

The announcement was made on June 6, 2025, during an event held at Netflix's production hub in Tres Cantos, Madrid — the company's largest filming facility in the European Union. The event, marking Netflix's 10-year milestone in Spain, was attended by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and Minister for Digital Transformation and Public Service Óscar López.

The announcement was part of a keynote address by Sarandos, celebrating Netflix's 10-year milestone in Spain.

In an official press note shared by Netflix, Sarandos highlighted how the company has collaborated with the local creative industry to bring over 1,000 Spanish titles to global audiences since 2017. From Madrid to Andalusia, Sitges to Murcia, Netflix has filmed in more than 200 towns and cities across Spain's autonomous communities.



"Coming to Spain is always exciting, but this trip is particularly special," Sarandos said. "Together, we have brought local series and films to our members here and around the world… and we still haven't run out of beautiful places to film."

He added that these productions including hits like 'Cable Girls', 'The Snow Girl', 'Nowhere', 'Elite', and 'La Casa de Papel' — have not only showcased Spain's diverse stories and talent but also delivered tangible economic benefits, supporting over 20,000 jobs in the audiovisual sector.

Sarandos praised Spain's conducive regulatory environment and the vibrant creative ecosystem that has enabled Netflix to deepen its roots in the country. The 22,000-square-metre production hub in Tres Cantos, with its ten world-class sound stages and cutting-edge post-production facilities, stands as a testament to this commitment.



"President, I am honored today to announce that over the next four years we plan to invest over 1 billion euros in Spain," Sarandos declared. "With this investment, we will be able to contribute even more to the Spanish economy, create more Spanish jobs, tell more great stories made in Spain, and support the next generation of creative talent here."

He also acknowledged the efforts of Spanish creators and professionals who have helped make Netflix's journey in the country a success. Productions like 'Society of the Snow', 'Berlin', and the upcoming Billionaires' Bunker have continued to elevate Spain's storytelling footprint internationally, with Spanish titles generating more than 5 billion hours of viewing on the platform just last year.

The keynote closed with Sarandos expressing his gratitude to Spanish authorities and creative partners: "Thank you for allowing us to bring your stories to fans everywhere… The last 10 years have been nothing short of extraordinary — and we look forward to the next 10 years and beyond."

Netflix's renewed investment arrives at a time when global streaming platforms are increasingly localising content to strengthen audience engagement. With this strategic bet on Spain, Netflix not only celebrates a decade of storytelling but also charts an ambitious path forward in one of Europe's most dynamic creative markets.

Five channels win MPEG-4 slots in DD Free Dish's 88th e-auction

The Prasar Bharati-backed DD Free Dish platform had concluded its 88th e-auction for MPEG-4 slots, bringing five more channels onboard for the upcoming allotment period. The new slots, secured through a competitive bidding process, are valid from June 13, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

According to DD FreeDish, the following channels emerged successful: Dabangg, Sandesh News, Punjabi Hits, Argus, and Tabbar Hits. These additions are expected to expand both the regional and entertainment offerings available to millions of DD Free Dish users across India.

DD Free Dish, India's only free-to-air DTH platform operated by Prasar Bharati, holds frequent e-auctions to allot available MPEG-2 and MPEG-4 slots to broadcasters. The MPEG-4 category, in particular, provides improved video quality and spectrum efficiency, and is accessible on MPEG-4 compatible set-top boxes.

Channels like Dabangg and Tabbar Hits will cater to the Hindi-speaking belt with general entertainment content, while Punjabi Hits continues to strengthen regional music offerings. News channel Sandesh News will bring current affairs and updates, and Argus adds another flavour to the bouquet with its unique programming.

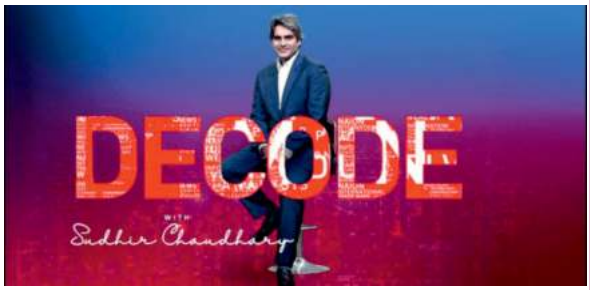
With each auction, DD Free Dish continues to enhance its channel line-up, especially for rural and cost-conscious viewers. The addition of these channels will further broaden the platform's diversity in terms of language, genre, and regional appeal.

‘Decode’ boosts DD News ratings, dominates YouTube engagement

DD News has witnessed a major surge in viewership and digital engagement following the launch of its flagship news program, ‘Decode with Sudhir Chaudhary’. Hosted by veteran journalist Sudhir Chaudhary, the show has swiftly emerged as a key pillar of DD News’ prime-time lineup, capturing the attention of a broad and highly active audience.

According to a press release issued by DD News—also shared by Chaudhary via his official Facebook page—the show’s impact was visible from its very first broadcast. Known for its sharp analysis and in-depth discussions, ‘Decode with Sudhir Chaudhary’ has fundamentally altered news consumption habits on the channel. The program’s powerful storytelling and relevant topics have resulted in substantial spikes in Television Rating Points (TRP), lifting DD News’ 9 pm to 10 pm weekday slot to new levels of popularity.

The press note also details the show’s overwhelming success across digital platforms, particularly YouTube. DD News’ official YouTube channel saw exceptional traction in May 2025, driven largely by the debut of ‘Decode’. The very first episode, launched on May 15, garnered nearly 2.6 million views, a new benchmark for the channel in the news segment. By the end of the month, the show had amassed a total of 23.9 million views, accounting for a staggering 48.58 percent of DD News’ total 49.2 million views on YouTube in May.



The digital footprint extended further. With 148 million video impressions from Decode alone, the program contributed 67.89 percent of the channel’s overall 218 million impressions in the same period. Additionally, DD News recorded a major jump in its subscriber base, with over 453,000 new subscribers added in May—clearly showing the draw of Chaudhary’s presence.

Airing every Monday to Friday at 9 pm, ‘Decode with Sudhir Chaudhary’ has positioned itself as a trusted news program offering sharp insights, robust data-backed analysis, and engaging storytelling on national issues. Its rising numbers and engagement reflect not only a renewed interest in DD News but also Sudhir Chaudhary’s continued relevance and command in India’s television news space.

Deepak Chaurasia returns with ‘Khabar Thok Ke’ on Live Times

Veteran journalist Deepak Chaurasia is back on air, this time with a powerful prime-time show titled ‘Khabar Thok Ke’ on Live Times. In an age of growing misinformation, doctored narratives, and biased coverage, the show promises to bring back journalism that’s rooted in hard facts, zero noise, and unapologetic truth.

According to a press release shared by Live Times, the network announced that ‘Khabar Thok Ke’ will air every weeknight at 8 pm, Monday to Friday. With a crisp 60-minute format, Chaurasia will dive into the most crucial developments of the day — breaking down stories that directly impact the citizen, the nation, and the world. But unlike the typical prime-time chaos, this show won’t be built on panel fights or echo chambers. It will be about verified facts, domain expert insights, and a fearless quest for the complete truth.



“This show isn’t just another slot in the news cycle—it’s a commitment to the people,” said Dilip Kumar Singh, Founder & Editor-in-Chief of Live Times. “‘Khabar Thok Ke’ is about cutting through the noise and asking the hard, relevant questions. In a democracy, truth is not just expected—it’s essential.”

Echoing this vision, Chaurasia, Director–News, Live Times, remarked, “We are surrounded by distractions pretending to be news. I’m here to change that. ‘Khabar Thok Ke’ is built on a simple foundation: truth backed by facts. No spin. No drama. Just honest journalism that exposes what must be exposed and questions what needs to be questioned.”

Live Times is emerging as a people-first, truth-centric media platform dedicated to restoring public trust in journalism. With ‘Khabar Thok Ke’ as its flagship show, it aims to reposition news as a pillar of democracy, not a spectacle for ratings.

SC ruling may up tax load on streamers, gaming apps

A recent Supreme Court judgment allowing dual taxation on television broadcasting services could significantly increase the tax burden on digital entertainment platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and gaming apps, according to tax experts and legal professionals.



The May 22 verdict, passed by a bench comprising Justices BV Nagarathna and NK Singh in the Asianet Satellite Communications and Others case, clarified that the act of broadcasting can be considered as two separate taxable activities — delivery of service and delivery of entertainment. As a result, both the Centre and state governments can impose separate taxes: service tax by the Centre and entertainment tax by the states.

The Economic Times report stated this dual-taxation model, although originating from a pre-GST era case, could have far-reaching implications for the current digital landscape.

"The ruling is mainly premised on the basis that both taxes deal with different aspects of broadcasting activities and hence, there is no overlap in taxing powers of the Centre and state," said Saloni Roy, Partner, Deloitte India.

She added that the decision, despite relating to an earlier tax regime, introduces uncertainty in the industry and may influence current tax structures.

While GST was meant to streamline taxation, some states have already enacted their own laws allowing local bodies to impose entertainment duties.

CCI approves proposed Interpublic acquisition by Omnicom

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed acquisition of The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. by Omnicom Group Inc. Both are US-based advertising and marketing firms.

According to an official statement from CCI yesterday, the proposed combination relates to the acquisition of sole control of The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (IPG) by Omnicom Group Inc. (Omnicom) and under the agreement, EXT Subsidiary Inc. (Omnicom Merger Sub,a wholly owned subsidiary of Omnicom) will be merged with and into IPG. Omnicom Merger Sub will cease to exist and IPG will remain the surviving entity as a wholly owned subsidiary of Omnicom, which is the proposed combination.



Both the companies had approached India's anti-trust body earlier this year seeking a clearance as part of green signals from various such governmental bodies in different countries.

Omnicom is a New York based provider of marketing and sales solutions. Omnicom comprises an inter-connected global network of marketing and communications companies offering a diverse, comprehensive range of marketing solutions spanning brand advertising, customer relationship management, media planning and buying services, public relations and numerous specialty communications services.

The CCI statement said that a detailed set of observations will be issued soon.

On December 9, 2024, Reuters had reported that Omnicom Group had struck a $13.25 billion all-stock deal to buy rival Interpublic Group, creating the world's largest advertising agency as traditional players look to better compete with Big Tech firms amid accelerating use of AI.

Interpublic investors are to receive 0.344 Omnicom shares for each share held, or $35.58 based on Omnicom's last close.

"We are pretty confident this is not going to create any regulatory issues. The world isn't divided into four companies — you have things like Google, Facebook, Amazon… servicing people's marketing needs," Omnicom CEO John Wren had then said on a call with analysts.

Regulatory roadblocks had forced Omnicom and France's Publicis Groupe SA to call off their $35 billion merger in 2013.

Omnicom owns brands such as BBDO and TBWA, while Interpublic owns McCann, Weber Shandwick and Mediabrands. Both companies are based in New York. The combined company would have revenue of more than $25 billion, based on 2023 figures.

Could Tata Play-SPNI face-off harm pay TV ecosystem in general?

Could a face-off between DTH company Tata Play and content and tech company Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) lead to harming India's pay TV ecosystem, which is struggling with subscriber churn owing to the availability of newer techs like streaming?

Indian M&E industry observers would think so. They have pointed out that a fight between two important stakeholders doesn't benefit anybody — certainly not the end-consumer.

Though an exact number of pay TV subscribers in India is difficult to pinpoint, the figure could be anywhere between 110 million to 160 million. A TRAI report of 2024 also indicated that the total number of total active subscribers with pay DTH operators as of September 2024 stood 59.91 million, indicating a decline in numbers due to consumers leaving for Doordarshan's FreeDish and OTT platforms.

So, in a scenario like this Tata Play dropping the Sony channels from its list of pack offerings — a process that was reported last week — can push the already-troubled cable TV segment into more turmoil as such corporate stand-offs generally don't benefit the consumers, though the DTH service provider is trying to have people believe the same.

In response to consumer complaints on social media, Tata Play is reported to have replied that such pulling out of TV channels is part of its continued effort to improve customer experience. "In order to provide better value for our customers, we continually discontinue old packs and introduce new ones," the DTH company explained.

But such an explanation is not cutting much ice with consumers as one consumer pointed out that dropping of services mid-way a subscription plan-year felt like exploitation. Another frustrated customer posted: "Why did you unnecessarily optimised my pack without my knowledge? I neither asked for optimisation not did anyone taken my permission to do so. All of sudden since yesterday all @SonyTV channels are unsubscribed. Same goes with @MTV also."

According to media reports, especially in The Economic Times last week, Tata Play removed SPNI channels from its subscriber packs, leading to a dispute with the broadcaster. Social media is flooded with the consumers concerns and Tataplay is justifying this chaos as a routine pack optimisation. How is this justified?

One cannot call it optimisation if it only involves either the inclusion or exclusion of channels from one broadcaster, without considering the overall viewer experience.

ThoughIndianbroadcastingworld.com could not elicit a response from Tata Play yesterday evening on the ongoing face-off with Sony despite calls and text messages, industry experts pointed out that the rate of Sony channels, however, remain unchanged on regulator TRAI's website or any other platform.

The industry observers also stated that SPNI has been a long supporter of the pay TV and linear broadcasting eco-system. So much so that big shows like 'Srimad Ramayan' was exclusively released on Linear Tv on Sony Entertainment Channel for almost a month before it was released on their OTT platform Sony Liv . Similarly movies like 'Saale Ashiq' and 'Adbhut' was released Directly on TV. In this connection, Sony shows like 'Tarak Mehta', 'CID', 'Crime Patrol', 'SaiBaba' comes to mind which continues to enjoy cult fan following. Not to mention the ongoing French Open tennis tournament.

Sony PAL emerges as No.1 FTA Hindi GEC with 109mn viewers

Sony PAL, the Free-to-Air (FTA) Hindi General Entertainment Channel from Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), had taken the lead in the highly competitive Hindi-speaking markets (HSM), clocking remarkable growth in viewership and weekly reach.

According to BARC data (NCCS 2+, HSM, Week 19, 2025), the channel now commands a staggering 109 million viewers and a 17 percent weekly reach—the highest among all FTA Hindi GECs.

This milestone comes as a result of a well-executed strategic pivot by the network, which has focused on bringing beloved, family-friendly content to a broader audience through its free-to-air format. Sony



PAL's rise underlines a larger shift in content consumption, where accessibility and cultural resonance are proving to be major drivers of growth across Indian households.

Sony PAL's popularity isn't confined to rural belts alone. In urban Hindi-speaking markets, the channel has posted 41 GRPs (NCCS 15+ Pay, HSM Urban, Weeks 16–19, 2025), showing strong urban traction. Notably, its grip on urban male audiences is even more impressive, recording 63 GRPs (NCCS Male 15+, HSM Urban, Week 19, 2025), which marks Sony PAL as a key entertainment choice for male viewers in city areas.

Much of this momentum is driven by a compelling programming slate featuring iconic favourites like 'Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah' and 'The Kapil Sharma Show'. These legacy shows, now available for the first time in the Free-to-Air space, have proven to be powerful audience magnets, cutting across age groups and regions. Their availability on Sony PAL makes quality entertainment more accessible, especially to viewers without paid TV subscriptions.

Sony PAL's content curation strategy—balancing mass appeal with clean, family-oriented narratives—has helped the channel carve a space of trust and reliability among Indian viewers. With its free-to-air model, Sony PAL continues to build deeper connections with audiences, bridging the gap between urban and rural India and reinforcing its position as a culturally rooted entertainment leader.

As the FTA GEC space becomes increasingly competitive, Sony PAL's data-backed leadership underscores a successful playbook for audience engagement—accessibility, nostalgia, and entertainment that brings the whole family together.

BSNL posts Rs.280cr profit in Q4

State-run telecom operator Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) had reported a net profit of Rs.280 crore for the January–March quarter of FY 2024–25, marking a significant milestone—its first consecutive quarterly profits in 17 years. The Q4 results follow a profit of ?262 crore in Q3 of the same fiscal, highlighting a sharp turnaround in the company's financial performance.

According to a press release issued by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), BSNL's audited results for the year ended March 31, 2025, were approved at the 243rd meeting of its Board. The turnaround was driven by improved operational efficiency, strict cost discipline, and higher revenue from its core business segments such as mobility, fibre-to-the-home (FTTH), and enterprise services.

Celebrating the achievement, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia hailed the development as a "landmark moment" in BSNL's journey. "For the first time in 18 years, BSNL has posted consecutive net profits — not just EBITDA, but actual net profits," he stated. "This momentum has not only sustained but strengthened."

The annual financials reflect a notable recovery. had narrowed its annual loss by 58 percent—from Rs.5,370 crore in FY24 to Rs.2,247 crore in FY25. Operating revenue also showed a healthy 7.8 percent year-on-year growth, reaching Rs.20,841 crore in FY25, up from Rs.19,330 crore the previous year.

On the operational front, BSNL registered an EBITDA of Rs.5,396 crore in FY25 compared to Rs.2,164 crore in FY24, pushing the EBITDA margin to over 23 percent. The number of telecom circles that turned EBITDA-positive rose from 17 in FY24 to 27 this fiscal, with 10 of them also posting profit after tax.

A major highlight of FY25 was record-breaking capital investment, with asset additions of Rs.26,022 crore—Rs.15,324 crore towards equipment and towers and ?10,698 crore for spectrum, mainly to fuel its 4G rollout and fibre upgrades. While this has increased depreciation and amortisation expenses (now at Rs.6,283 crore), BSNL sees it as a long-term growth enabler.

BSNL's cost rationalisation strategy is also bearing fruit. The total expenditure dropped 3 percent to Rs.25,841 crore, and finance costs fell 14 percent to Rs.1,527 crore. Meanwhile, asset monetisation efforts nearly doubled, bringing in Rs.1,120 crore, a 77 percent increase over the previous year.

CMD of BSNL, A. Robert J. Ravi, I.T.S., credited the turnaround to professional



management, supportive government policy, and disciplined operations. "We are not chasing profits, but redefining telecom excellence in public service," he said. "With disciplined cost control and accelerated 4G/5G deployment, we are confident of sustaining this growth trajectory and delivering high-quality, affordable connectivity to every Indian."

Union Minister Scindia also took to X to celebrate the milestone, writing: "BSNL delivers first back-to-back quarter profits in 17 years!"

While the near-term may see modest profit figures due to high depreciation from spectrum investment and network expansion, the company expects to maintain strong top-line growth and lower operational costs going forward. With nationwide 4G and upcoming 5G deployments using Atmanirbhar equipment, BSNL is poised for a steady and sustainable comeback in India's competitive telecom space.

DD Free Dish opens 88th e-auction for MPEG-4 slots

Prasar Bharati on May 28 announced the launch of its 88th e-auction process to allocate vacant MPEG-4 slots on India's largest free-to-air DTH platform, DD Free Dish. The move is expected to further expand the platform's reach and content offerings, particularly for audiences using MPEG-4 compatible set-top boxes.

As per an official note from Prasar Bharati dated May 28, 2025, the auction is being conducted to fill vacant MPEG-4 slots and invites participation from eligible broadcasters whose channels are licensed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). Only non-news channels in Standard Definition (SD) format are eligible, with genres ranging from general entertainment and music to devotional content and more. These channels must also be uplinked from India.

The auction process will be carried out online, under Prasar Bharati's direct supervision, and is based on the policy guidelines issued on January 15, 2019. The reserve price for each MPEG-4 slot has been set at Rs.5 lakh per month, with the slot tenure valid up to March 31, 2026, unless policy changes are introduced earlier.

Broadcasters looking to participate must submit an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of Rs.1.50 lakh through a Demand Draft, along with a non-refundable processing fee of Rs. 25,000. All applications, along with the requisite documents, need to be addressed to the Deputy Director General (Policy), Prasar Bharati Secretariat, New Delhi.

These MPEG-4 slots are specifically accessible to users of MPEG-4 set-top boxes, a growing subset of DD Free Dish's estimated user base of over 50 million viewers. The inclusion of new channels through these slots will not only diversify the platform's content portfolio but also enhance the viewing experience for millions of households, particularly in rural and remote regions where DD Free Dish remains a primary source of television access.

Through this transparent, tech-driven auction model, Prasar Bharati continues to strengthen its commitment to providing free and inclusive content to the public, enabling wider broadcasting opportunities while supporting India's media and entertainment ecosystem.

Interested broadcasters are advised to check the official Prasar Bharati website for the detailed cut-off date and additional procedural guidelines.

Intelsat secures Indian govt. nod to offer direct b'cast services

In a significant regulatory breakthrough, global satellite communications giant Intelsat has received approval from the Indian government to provide direct broadcast services in the country. The landmark clearance makes Intelsat one of the first foreign satellite operators authorized to deliver extensive satellite coverage directly to Indian broadcast media companies—opening up fresh opportunities for content distribution and international expansion.

According to an official press release from Intelsat, the company has secured authorization for four of its geostationary (GEO) satellites—IS-17, IS-20, IS-36, and IS-39—to offer C-band coverage across India. This fleet will cater specifically to India's booming broadcast media sector, enabling robust content delivery services both within the subcontinent and from India to global regions.



"This approval represents a significant step forward in Intelsat's contribution to India's space commerce sector, a source of great national pride," said Gaurav Kharod, Regional Vice President for Asia Pacific at Intelsat. "Our extensive satellite network with four satellites covering the region will provide Indian broadcasters with reliable, high-quality connectivity solutions that meet their evolving needs. This authorization enables us to better serve our customers and contribute to India's growing media landscape."

The approval was granted by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), which governs commercial space activity in India. Following the regulatory clearance, Intelsat has already secured new business deals with three of India's largest media companies, further solidifying its footprint in one of the world's most vibrant broadcast markets.

This development is not just a boost for Intelsat's growth in South Asia, but also a key move in strengthening India's satellite infrastructure, offering more reliable transmission paths and wider media outreach across diverse geographies.

Intelsat, based in McLean, Virginia, operates one of the world's largest integrated satellite and terrestrial networks. Known for its innovation and leadership in global connectivity solutions for over six decades, the company continues to enable seamless satellite-based communication for government bodies, NGOs, and commercial enterprises.

Vodafone Idea's subscriber woes deepen in April; Jio tops gains



Vodafone Idea (Vi) continued to reel under mounting subscriber losses in April, shedding 600,000 users overall and over 1.1 million active users, in what signals a sustained churn despite the recent launch of its 5G services.

The losses are significant, especially at a time when the telco was expected to stabilise its base through aggressive network expansion and fresh investments. Vi's subscriber erosion has now been widening month-on-month, with 500,000 users lost in March and 200,000 in February, highlighting the deepening challenge of customer retention in a highly competitive market.

According to The Economic Times, this trend comes even as the company continues to roll out 4G and 5G services across key Indian markets. However, the prolonged delay in commercial monetisation of 5G and the lack of widespread handset support have limited Vi's ability to capitalise on the new technology — something its larger rivals, Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, have been quicker to exploit.

In stark contrast, Reliance Jio topped the subscriber addition chart in April, adding 2.1 million users, reinforcing its position as the market leader. Airtel followed with a net gain of 1.3 million users, further consolidating its strength across urban and rural markets. Jio's gains are largely attributed to its aggressive 5G rollout, competitive prepaid offerings, and wider rural penetration.

Vi's continuing losses come at a critical juncture for the company, which is looking to raise funds to strengthen its operations and reduce debt. Analysts say the telco needs to improve not just coverage but also consumer perception around network quality, affordability, and digital services.

Market experts suggest that Vi's inability to convert its 5G rollout into a substantial customer pull, coupled with the lack of competitive postpaid and bundled offerings, is accelerating the migration of users to more agile rivals. Unless it manages to arrest the churn and boost user stickiness through innovation and value-driven packs, the road to recovery will remain uphill.

Dish TV reports Q4 consolidated net loss of Rs. 402 cr.

Direct-to-home firm Dish TV India Ltd May 28 reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 402.19 crore for the March quarter due to impairment on intangible assets.

The company had reported a net loss of Rs 1,989.69 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Dish TV.

According to a PTI report from New Delhi, which quoted a company statement, Dish TV has impairment charge for the quarter and year ended March 31 2025 of Intangible Assets Under Development, Capital and other advances amounting to Rs 335.38 crore.

It has a loss of Rs 66.81 crore before exceptional items and tax for the March quarter.

Its revenue from the operation was down 15.55 per cent to Rs 343.66 crore in the March quarter. It was at Rs 406.95 crore in the corresponding quarter.

Dish TV's total expenses in the March quarter declined 2.16 per cent to Rs 417.16 crore. In the March quarter Dish TV's subscription revenues stood at Rs 295.9 crore, down 16.82 per cent.

Advertising revenue was down 40 per cent to Rs 4.1 crore in the March quarter. However, Dish TV's income from marketing and promotional fees rose by 2.6 per cent to Rs 35.8 crore in the March quarter.

Total income of Dish TV was Rs 350.35 crore in the March quarter, down 15 per cent year-on-year. For the financial year ended March 31, 2025, Dish TV net loss was at Rs 487.66 crore.

In FY25 its consolidated total revenue was down 15 per cent to Rs 1,593.95 crore.

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ROLL ON

NDTV formally announces Rahul Kanwal as CEO & Chief Editor

It has been in the air from the time Rahul Kanwal's departure from the India Today Group was made public in April, but the news was formally cemented yesterday by New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV) when it said that Kanwal had formally taken charge as its new Chief Executive Officer and Editor-in-Chief.

In this dual role, he will manage the entire business and editorial operations of NDTV, a leading news network that is now controlled by the Adani Group.



A veteran journalist with over 25 years of experience, Kanwal has built a formidable reputation as a prime-time anchor, election analyst and investigative reporter. He has previously held leadership roles, including News Director at India Today and Aaj Tak, and Executive Director at Business Today. His past stints also include senior editorial roles at Headlines Today and Zee News, a NDTV statement stated.

An alumnus of the General Management Program (GMP) at Harvard Business School (HBS) and a Chevening Scholar, Kanwal studied journalism at Delhi University and completed a programme in International Broadcast Journalism at Cardiff University. He is also a recipient of the Rory Peck Trust Grant for Hostile Environment Journalism and has received numerous awards for journalistic excellence.

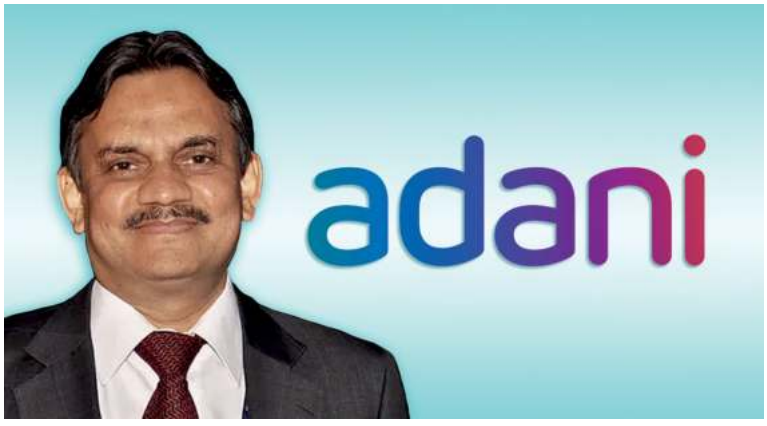
Welcoming the appointment, Sanjay Pugalia, CEO of AMG Media Networks, the media entity of the Adani group, said: "NDTV is a news super-brand that has stood for credibility and trust for nearly four decades through path-breaking journalism across television and digital platforms.

"With five new product launches over the past two years, NDTV continues to expand its footprint while remaining steadfast in its founding ethos. Rahul brings deep editorial insight, a passion for journalism, and proven leadership — qualities that will be instrumental as we scale our presence across products and platforms."

Kanwal in a statement said: "Like many in my generation, I grew up watching NDTV. I am supercharged about the prospect of infusing new life and energy into this marquee news brand. For years, NDTV has been the go-to brand for election coverage and big breaking news. I consider it a great honour to lead this storied media brand, and I am confident that NDTV will continue to rise to great heights of journalistic and business excellence."

Adani Group appoints Sanjay Pugalia as Head of Corporate Brand Custodian

The Adani Group has appointed senior media veteran Sanjay Pugalia as the new Head of Corporate Brand Custodian, with effect from May 26, 2025.



Pugalia, who already leads AMG Media Networks as its CEO, will now additionally oversee the group's overall brand narrative and communication strategy. He will report directly to Pranav Adani, as confirmed by the company on May 26.

According to a report by Storyboard18, this move marks a key shift in the group's top-level brand and communication leadership. Pugalia succeeds Aman Singh, who had been holding dual responsibilities as Brand Custodian and Head of the Chairman's Office since May 2024. Going forward, Singh will continue as President and Head of Strategy and Chairman's Office, and will also remain Convenor of Adani's APEX Council, allowing him to focus on strategic initiatives.

Manoj Dobhal appointed Chairman of Dish TV India Board

Dish TV India has appointed Manoj Dobhal as the new Chairman of its Board, marking a key leadership move as the company looks to strengthen its position in the DTH and media distribution space.

The update was announced through a LinkedIn post by CXO Lanes, which also highlighted Dobhal's deep industry experience and leadership journey. Dobhal currently serves as the Executive Director and CEO of Dish TV India, and his elevation to Chairman reflects the company's continued trust in his vision and leadership.

With over 24 years of experience across sectors like FMCG, telecom, broadband, consumer durables, and media, Dobhal brings a wide range of expertise to the role. He has worked with several major companies including Tata Sky Ltd, Reliance Communications, IndiaCast Media Distribution, Dabur India Limited, DIAGEO India, and Vadilal Industries Limited.



In his previous roles, Dobhal held leadership positions such as Chief Operating Officer at Akash DTH (Beximco Communications) in Bangladesh and Senior Vice President & Head of Sales at Tata Sky Broadband. He is known for his strategic thinking, and for driving growth in customer experience, sales, and digital transformation.

Dobhal holds a B.Sc. in Electronics from Delhi University and an MBA in Marketing from the Apeejay Institute of Management. As he steps into the role of Chairman, he is expected to focus on taking Dish TV forward with innovation, improved customer engagement, and new-age digital solutions.

His appointment comes at a time when the media and broadcasting landscape is evolving rapidly, and Dish TV aims to remain competitive by adapting to the changing demands of the market and its viewers.

Nicole Clemens named for leadership position at Prime Video, MGM Studios

Prime Video has named Nicole Clemens as VP and head of International Originals for Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios, effective July 7.

The appointment was announced by Kelly Day, VP of Prime Video International, following a comprehensive search for the new leadership role, entertainment news outlet Variety reported yesterday.

Clemens joins Prime Video from Paramount Television Studios, where she most recently served as president. In that capacity, she oversaw the development and production of several high-profile series that have found homes on Prime Video, including 'Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan', 'Reacher', and 'Cross'," the Variety report added.



Her tenure at Paramount also included a dual role as President of Original Scripted series for Paramount+, where she helped formulate the programming strategy for the streamer's launch, the report explained.

Meanwhile, according to her LinkedIn profile, she led a team across business affairs, legal, production, development, current programming, labour and marketing, ensuring seamless alignment across all operational and creative functions.

At Paramount, she also strengthened relationships with third-party buyers and oversaw end-to-end content development and production of hits '13 Reasons Why' and 'The Haunting' anthology series, George Clooney's 'CATCH-22' on Hulu and 'The Spiderwick Chronicles' onRoku to name a few. These resulted in diverse partnerships, critical acclaim and strong financial performance for both the studio and platforms.

"Nicole is a highly respected and experienced media executive," the Variety report quoted Day as saying in an internal announcement to Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios teams, adding, "I'm delighted to share that she will be joining us to lead our international original teams, which will continue building on the incredible success we've seen with global audiences."

Clemens has also done successful stints at Anonymous Content, FX, ICM Partners and Motion Picture Literary, apart from being a literary agent from 1996 to 2007.

BrandPulse onboards Preetha Dandapani to up S. India ops

In a significant move to bolster its regional footprint, BrandPulse Global has appointed former ABP News Regional Director Preetha Dandapani to lead its business growth strategy in South India. The appointment marks another milestone in the company's rapid expansion across key Indian and international markets.



According to a press release issued by the company, this strategic hire is in line with BrandPulse Global's aggressive growth trajectory and its mission to offer smarter, faster, and more actionable consumer insights. The firm continues to integrate cutting-edge technology, analytics, and infrastructure to create a powerful ecosystem for data-led decision-making.

Welcoming Preetha on board, Mona Jain, Chief Growth Officer at BrandPulse Global, shared her enthusiasm, saying, "So excited to be part of this journey! I only wish I had joined earlier. The energy, pace, and people here are truly exceptional — and with someone as seasoned and dynamic as Preetha joining us, our momentum in the South market is bound to accelerate."

Preetha brings with her years of leadership experience in media and strategic growth, particularly in high-potential southern markets. Her addition is expected to deepen BrandPulse Global's engagement in the region and enhance its ability to deliver data-backed value across industries.

Commenting on the appointment, Pankaj Krishna, Founder and CEO of Chrome DM, the parent company of BrandPulse Global, said, "We must have done some good karma in the past to be attracting such wonderful colleagues, clients, and partners. Preetha's joining only strengthens our momentum further."With Preetha Dandapani's leadership, BrandPulse Global aims to tap into newer opportunities in South India while staying true to its core value proposition — turning real-time insights into meaningful business action.

Kalpan Desai joins Atrangii, Ullu OTT as CHRO

Atrangii and Ullu OTT have roped in seasoned HR leader Kalpan Desai as their new Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). With close to 20 years of experience across top media and finance companies, Desai brings a rich blend of strategic leadership, digital transformation, and people-first culture to the twin entertainment platforms.



The announcement was made via a LinkedIn post, highlighting Desai's impressive career journey and the responsibilities he will shoulder in this new role. Prior to this, he served as Vice President – Human Resources at Sony Pictures Networks, where he played a pivotal role in leading talent strategies across business verticals. His prior stints also include impactful tenures at Viacom18, GroupM, and Jana Small Finance Bank, where he drove digital HR initiatives, crafted globally-aligned people strategies, and cultivated high-performance cultures across teams.

In his new role, Kalpan Desai will be focusing on shaping a strong leadership pipeline, driving performance-oriented HR transformations, and aligning HR practices closely with the strategic goals of both Atrangii and Ullu OTT. His leadership will centre around enhancing employee experience, nurturing future talent, and building a resilient and agile workforce.

Anushrav Gulati joins ABP Network as Chief Digital Officer

ABP Network has roped in seasoned media and ad-tech leader Anushrav Gulati as its new Chief Digital Officer (CDO), marking a strategic move in its ongoing digital evolution, Gulati updated his LinkedIn account.



With over two decades of experience spanning product development, programmatic advertising, and digital revenue strategy, Gulati steps into this role with a track record that mirrors India's digital media transformation itself.

In his latest innings at ABP Network, Gulati is tasked with spearheading the broadcaster's digital acceleration—strengthening ad-tech infrastructure, sharpening monetisation strategies, and ensuring ABP's digital footprint matches up to global benchmarks.

THE CONTENT ENGINE



WBD splits studio & streaming biz from fading cable TV ops

WBD splits studio & streaming biz from fading cable TV ops

Even as in New Delhi yesterday, the All India Digital Cable Federation, a trade body of MSOs in India, released a report stating that unless urgent interventions are done, including regulatory, the future of cable TV looks bleak (subscriber base projected to shrink to about 80 million by 2030), few hours down the line several thousands of kms away in the US, Warner Bros Discovery announced the divorce of its loss-making cable TV business from the profitable film and streaming operations.

Warner Bros Discovery said it would split into two publicly traded companies, separating its studios and streaming business from its fading cable television networks as the parent of HBO and CNN looks to compete better in the streaming era.

The breakup announced yesterday is the latest sign of the great unraveling of decades of media consolidation that have created global conglomerates spanning content creation, distribution and,telecommunications.

It unwinds WarnerMedia and Discovery's 2022 merger, giving the streaming and studios business more room to scale without being weighed down by the declining networks unit.

The new streaming-and-studios company will include Warner Bros, DC Studios and HBO Max — the crown jewels of WBD's entertainment library. The networks unit, which will hold up to a 20 percent stake in its counterpart, will house CNN, TNT Sports and Bleacher Report, the Reuters dispatch added.

CEO David Zaslav will lead the streaming and studios unit after the breakup, while CFO Gunnar Wiedenfels will head the networks unit. The separation will be structured as a tax-free transaction and is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

"By operating as two distinct and optimized companies in the future, we are empowering these iconic brands with the sharper focus and strategic flexibility they need to compete most effectively in today's evolving media landscape," Zaslav said, according to the Reuters report.

Majority of the company's debt would be held by the global networks company. Last week, about 59 percent of WBD



shareholders voted against executive pay packages, including Zaslav's $51.9 million 2024 compensation, at the annual shareholder meeting.

WBD had laid the groundwork for a sale or spin-off of its declining cable TV assets in December by announcing a separation from its streaming and studio operations.

The split comes as WBD tries to position its streaming service as a premium destination with titles such as 'The Last of Us' after initially betting that a blend of HBO dramas and Discovery's lifestyle content would broaden its appeal.

It revived the HBO Max branding last month to aid the global expansion of its streamer that had about 122 million subscribers as of March and expects its subscriber base to exceed 150 million by the end of 2026. That would still trail Netflix's more than 300 million subscribers and the combined 181 million subscribers of Disney+ and Hulu.

Zee invests in content, tech startup Bullet; to leverage it on Zee5



Leading broadcaster ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) said it has entered into a strategic equity partnership with Bullet, a new-age content and tech start-up.

The Punit Goenka-led ZEEL did not share much details on the transactions, but said "it will invest/acquire stake in Bullet", a PTI report from New Delhi stated.

Co-founded by entrepreneurs Azim Lalani and Saurabh Kushwah, Bullet has developed India's first micro-drama application focused on fast-paced, creator-driven content through short duration vertical format episodes targeted towards the younger audiences.

"Bullet will be launched within the ZEE5 ecosystem, leveraging its strong user base by enabling access to high-quality, bite-sized entertainment directly through the platform," according to a joint statement.

Moreover, to have a pan-India appeal, the application will be available across languages and will harness the company's rich content engine and repertoire of language content, it said.

PVL S4 to stream live on Sony, YouTube from Oct 2

The Prime Volleyball League (PVL) is gearing up for a blockbuster return this October with its much-anticipated fourth edition. The league has officially renewed its partnership with Sony Sports Network as its Official Broadcast Partner for the fourth consecutive season. For global fans and the digital-first generation, all matches will also be live-streamed via PVL's official YouTube channel, offering unmatched access and interactivity.

According to a press release from PVL, the 2025 season will feature a dual-distribution strategy: televised live action across the Indian subcontinent through Sony Sports Network channels, and a simultaneous global digital stream through YouTube. This hybrid broadcast model is expected to significantly widen the league's reach, tapping into both traditional sports viewers and a growing digital-savvy audience worldwide.

Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer – Distribution & International Business and Head – Sports Business at Sony Pictures Networks India, emphasized the network's continued commitment to nurturing Indian sporting leagues. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Prime Volleyball League. We are committed to the growth of homegrown leagues and our association with PVL is a testament to that. We are looking forward to a dynamic season this year with some of the brightest Volleyball stars taking the centre stage," he said.

Meanwhile, Baseline Ventures' Co-Founder & MD, Tuhin Mishra, expressed enthusiasm for the league's expanding digital strategy. "This is a big moment for Indian volleyball. Sony Sports Network returning for a fourth straight season validates the league's growing impact. And we're excited to use our presence on YouTube as a game-changing step toward taking PVL to a truly global and younger audience. These partnerships will significantly expand the reach of PVL and bring our exciting brand of volleyball to a wider audience," he noted.

Adding to the excitement, the PVL Season 4 Player Auction is slated to take place in Calicut on June 8 at 9.30 am, and will be streamed live on the league's YouTube channel. Volleyball fans can tune in to witness the strategic bidding as teams assemble their star-studded lineups ahead of the season.

Season 4 is officially set to kick off on October 2, 2025, and promises a thrilling mix of high-energy matches, behind-the-scenes access, player stories, and innovative content formats. From match highlights to in-depth recaps and exclusive footage, PVL's YouTube-first content strategy is designed to fuel fan engagement and extend the league's reach across borders and devices — from living rooms to mobile screens.

With Sony's continued support and YouTube's global accessibility, PVL Season 4 is poised to set a new benchmark in Indian sports broadcasting and viewer experience.

India TV launches family-focused OTT app with multi-genre content

In a strategic leap into the booming digital space, India TV has launched its own OTT platform, aiming to become a one-stop destination for a wide range of content — from news and current affairs to lifestyle, infotainment, devotional content, podcasts, and even original AI-generated stories.



The newly unveiled India TV OTT app reflects the network's ambition to cater to India's fast-evolving digital audience, offering content that is both accessible and family-friendly. Unlike many OTT platforms that often target niche or individual viewers, this app is tailored for collective viewing, presenting a carefully curated space that upholds credibility, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity.

As per a report, the launch is designed to tap into the growing consumer demand for convenient, on-demand content that extends beyond traditional TV viewing and offers flexibility without compromising values. The platform aims to differentiate itself with its emphasis on a managed and safe digital experience, particularly suitable for households looking for trustworthy and enriching content under one digital roof.

Commenting on the development, Ritu Dhawan, Managing Director of India TV, said, "Our vision for the India TV OTT App is to be the single, trusted digital destination for every Indian family. We have carefully designed it to offer credible information and enrichment, fostering collective viewing experiences that strengthen family bonds." She also highlighted the brand's commitment to maintaining a thoughtfully curated platform that resonates with viewers across generations.

Netflix, Balaji team up to take Indian stories global

In a significant boost for Indian content creation, Netflix and Ekta Kapoor-led Balaji Telefilms Ltd. have announced a long-term creative partnership aimed at bringing rooted, powerful, and innovative Indian stories to audiences across the world. The announcement was made official on Saturday, with both companies highlighting the collaboration as a major step toward creating high-quality, culturally resonant entertainment across genres and storytelling formats. The news was also shared via an Instagram post on Netflix India's official handle, reflecting the growing anticipation around the alliance.



Balaji Telefilms, helmed by Padma Shri awardee and International Emmy winner Ekta Kapoor, has been at the forefront of Indian storytelling for over two decades, spanning film, television, and streaming. Known for her deep understanding of audience sentiment and the ability to create iconic characters and relatable narratives, Kapoor now brings that legacy to a global streaming partnership poised to explore new creative frontiers.

Monika Shergill, Vice-President, Content, Netflix India, said, "Ekta has been a force in shaping Indian entertainment with unforgettable stories and characters that made it to pop culture, even before hashtags existed. Her creative instinct and deep understanding of the audience's pulse have consistently set her apart. At Netflix, our focus is to serve audiences with very diverse tastes, and this collaboration will bring unique stories in rooted ways, marking an exciting new chapter in our creative journey."

Echoing the sentiment, Ekta Kapoor, Joint Managing Director, Balaji Telefilms, shared, "At Balaji Telefilms, storytelling has always been at the heart of everything we do — whether through cinema, television, or digital platforms. Partnering with Netflix, the world's leading storytelling platform known for its premium content and constant innovation, is a big moment for us. It allows us to bring powerful, culturally rooted, and emotionally resonant stories to a global audience."

Netflix and Balaji have previously collaborated on several well-received projects including 'Kathal', 'Pagglait', 'Jaane Jaan', and 'Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare'. With this new partnership, the stakes are higher and the ambitions larger, as both companies gear up to deliver an expanded slate of fresh narratives.

The new content lineup includes an untitled series currently in advanced stages of development. The collaboration will span various divisions of Balaji — from Balaji Motion Pictures to Balaji Telefilms Digital — reinforcing the commitment to tailor-make stories specifically for today's streaming-first audiences.

As the OTT space becomes increasingly competitive, this collaboration is expected to usher in a new wave of storytelling that blends scale, emotion, and local flavor with global appeal.

ZEE5 rebrands with a new identity: 'Apni Bhasha, Apni Kahaniyan'

ZEE5 has unveiled its fresh brand identity centered around the theme 'Apni Bhasha, Apni Kahaniyan' — a phrase that celebrates the power and emotion of stories told in one's own language. This rebranding marks a renewed focus on delivering compelling narratives across Indian languages, strengthening the platform's connection with audiences who seek culturally rooted content.

As reported by The Hindu, ZEE5's new visual identity comes with a vibrant, fluid logo design that reflects the diversity and energy of India's linguistic and cultural landscape. The tagline is more than just a marketing hook — it is positioned as a cultural commitment by ZEE5 to bring forth stories that resonate with the native experiences of its audiences.

Manish Kalra, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 India, shared that the new identity aims to connect with the "emotional power of stories experienced in one's own language." Kalra added that the platform will continue to invest heavily in regional programming, with a strong pipeline of originals, films, and shows across languages like Telugu, Tamil, Bangla, Marathi, and Punjabi, among others.

The platform also introduced a new sonic identity — a custom brand sound — to deepen its emotional resonance. Crafted to complement the visual rebranding, the sound has been designed to evoke a feeling of familiarity, rootedness, and cultural pride.

Speaking about the brand evolution, Kalra noted that ZEE5 has already established itself as a leading OTT player in India's regional space, and this brand refresh is meant to further cement its position by aligning its identity with its core audience's sentiments.

Hectik crowned winner of Amazon MX Player's 'Hip Hop India' S2

Shubhankar Singh, popularly known by his stage name Hectik, has emerged as the winner of 'Hip Hop India' S2, the high-energy dance reality show streaming on Amazon Mx Player. The finale aired this week and saw an electrifying showdown between India's top street dancers, with Hectik taking home the coveted title after weeks of jaw-dropping



performances and fierce competition.

This season of 'Hip Hop India', hosted by acclaimed judges Remo D'Souza and Nora Fatehi, was packed with raw talent, intense battles, and emotional journeys that showcased the growing popularity of hip-hop culture across India. Hectik, known for his innovative choreography and razor-sharp technique, consistently wowed the judges and audiences alike with his unique flair and storytelling through movement.

In a press statement by Amazon MX Player, the platform celebrated Hectik's win and the growing reach of the show. "Hip Hop India' Season 2 was more than a competition—it was a celebration of India's underground dance scene and youth expression. Hectik's journey truly inspired a generation," the release noted.

The finale episode was shot on a grand scale, with special performances by former contestants, celebrity acts, and a roaring audience. Hectik's final routine, a tribute to resilience and self-belief, earned a standing ovation from the judges and viewers, clinching him the top spot.

S2 of 'Hip Hop India' has played a significant role in mainstreaming the country's vibrant street dance culture, and Hectik's win marks a new milestone for dancers from across India's grassroots communities.

6th South India Media summit to be held in Coimbatore Sept.29

Fourth Dimension Media Solutions, one of India's leading media outsourcing firms, has officially announced the sixth edition of its flagship event — the South India Media Summit (SIMS). The 2025 edition of SIMS is scheduled to take place on September 29 at Le Meridien, Coimbatore, and is expected to bring together an eclectic mix of brand leaders, marketers, media professionals, and storytellers from across the country.

According to a press release issued by the organisers, SIMS 2025 will carry forward the legacy of its previous high-impact editions held in Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kochi. Known for its strong regional focus and thought-provoking discussions, the summit will once again host a powerful speaker line-up, featuring some of the country's most influential business minds and change-makers.

Among the confirmed speakers are Venkatesh Vijayaraghavan (MD & CEO, TTK Prestige), Jai Krishnan (CEO, Samsonite South Asia), VKC Razack (MD, VKC Group), Geeta Ramakrishnan (Author and Coach), Venkatram Mamillapalle (Country CEO & MD, Renault India), Angelo George (CEO, Bisleri International), Kurian Thomas (Director, Veegaland Homes), and Ganesh Ram (MD & CEO, Mutual Fund Utilities India), among several others. More names will be revealed in the weeks to come.

This year's edition is set to explore some of the most dynamic shifts in the industry — ranging from the rise of AI, VR, and XR in storytelling, to the growing influence of regional creators in Tier-II and Tier-III markets. Other key themes include the retail transformation sweeping through South India, media planning in a mobile-first ecosystem, the OTT-cinema balance, the growing footprint of connected TV, and how national brands are increasingly leveraging regional brand ambassadors to strengthen hyperlocal bonds.

Fourth Dimension
ENSURING REACH

Speaking on the upcoming summit, Shankar B, CEO of Fourth Dimension Media Solutions, said, "Every edition of SIMS is shaped by the city that hosts it. Coimbatore has always had a unique blend of entrepreneurial clarity and media maturity. This summit reflects that combination. We're proud to bring voices together here that are not only shaping the narrative but also setting the pace."

Fourth Dimension Media Solutions has long been regarded as a key voice in South India's media ecosystem. The company has successfully organised and curated a series of widely respected industry gatherings — including the South India Content Summit (Bangalore, 2024), South India Television Summit (Madurai, 2023), and South India Digital Summit (Coimbatore, 2022). Each of these has played a defining role in regional knowledge sharing and thought leadership.

Could these three be major 'Traitors'?

The stakes are sky-high, the palace walls echo with secrets, and suspicion is in the air as Prime Video readies to drop 'The Traitors', its newest reality thriller, on June 12.



Featuring a powerhouse ensemble of 20 familiar faces from film, TV, fashion and digital platforms, this Indian adaptation of the award-winning format is already causing a social media stir and it hasn't even begun streaming yet.

As per an official press release, 'The Traitors' is a game of trust, treachery, and cold-blooded strategy. The twist? Among the 20 contestants, three are secretly designated as traitors tasked with manipulating and eliminating the rest without blowing their cover.

From the moment the trailer hit the internet, speculation erupted. X feeds, fan forums, and Reddit threads are ablaze with theories about who these secret saboteurs could be.

And three names, in particular, have already become the subject of much online speculation: Apoorva, Maheep Kapoor, and Sufi Motiwala.

Apoorva, also known as the 'Rebel Kid', makes an assertive entrance. Bold, expressive, and unfiltered, she seems to thrive in the heat of confrontation. Be it her quick-trigger temper in the trailer or her pointed run-ins with co-contestants like Uorfi, Jasmine, and Maheep, many viewers believe her unpredictability masks something deeper — perhaps even a motive?

Maheep Kapoor, in contrast, plays it cool. Too cool. Calm, composed, and calculating, she maintains a quiet poise that viewers are finding equally intriguing and alarming. The kind of presence that might just be lulling others into a false sense of security while plotting her next move behind the scenes.

Then there's Sufi Motiwala outspoken and always on the offensive. From calling people out to throwing blunt accusations, he commands attention. But is his brash honesty genuine, or is it a clever tactic to keep suspicion off himself?

Produced by BBC Studios India Productions in association with All3Media International, 'The Traitors' brings the BAFTA and Emmy-winning global format from IDTV to Indian screens for the first time. The setting is lavish, the rules brutal, and the deception deliciously layered.

With new episodes premiering every Thursday at 8 pm starting June 12, 'The Traitors' on Prime Video promises to bring drama, deception, and jaw-dropping twists.

Sony Music India, The Hello Group launch THG India

In a landmark move set to redefine the Indian music landscape, Sony Music India has joined hands with global entertainment powerhouse The Hello Group (THG) to announce the launch of THG India, a joint venture focused on artist development, global touring, and management.

According to an official press release issued by the companies, this collaboration marks one of the most significant international partnerships in the Indian music industry to date. THG India will combine Sony Music India's strong local presence and deep-rooted industry knowledge with THG's international clout in live touring, publishing, and artist development, creating a robust framework for Indian talent to shine on the global stage.



"This is a great moment for the Indian music industry and its vibrant creative community," said Vinit Thakkar, Managing Director, Sony Music India. "THG India marks our first international collaboration of this scale right here in India, and it serves as a critical bridge. By combining THG's strength in global live touring and their international network with our deep local expertise, we are strategically empowering Indian artists with the resources, seasoned management, and global network essential to truly accelerate their careers and resonate on the international stage."

Taylor Jones, CEO of The Hello Group, echoed this vision, stating, "The Indian music scene boasts an incredible wealth of talent, and its global influence is undeniable. THG India reinforces our deep commitment to building a robust platform for these artists, underpinned by our extensive experience in live touring, artist development and publishing. With our dedicated team in Mumbai and our proven track record of orchestrating worldwide tours for top-tier artists, we are uniquely poised to amplify India's voices like never before."

The venture aims to fill the crucial gap in India's music ecosystem, particularly in high-quality artist management and global live touring support. THG India will serve as an integrated platform providing end-to-end services — from bookings and management to publishing — giving Indian artists access to a proven international infrastructure previously unavailable in the region.



'Criminal Justice: A Family Matter' becomes 2025's biggest OTT opener yet

A newest installment of the 'Criminal Justice' franchise, titled 'Criminal Justice: A Family Matter', has set a new benchmark on India's streaming landscape. With an estimated 8.4 million views in its debut week, the series has emerged as the most-watched OTT original across pay and freemium platforms for the week of May 26 to June 1, 2025.

The data was released by Ormax Media through a LinkedIn post, highlighting the Top 5 most-watched original series in India for the week. 'Criminal Justice: A Family Matter' has not only topped the list but also recorded the strongest opening for any streaming original in 2025 so far.

The show's success is particularly significant as it marks the best debut for a JioHotstar (the merged entity of the former Disney+ Hotstar and JioCinema) original since January 2023.

The legal drama series, now in its fourth season, continues to build on its legacy of combining gripping courtroom drama with emotional depth and real-life dilemmas. The latest season explores a new legal battle wrapped around family conflict, anchored by stellar performances that have clearly struck a chord with the Indian OTT audience.

While detailed rankings of the remaining four shows on the Ormax list were not disclosed in the post, the buzz generated by 'Criminal Justice: A Family Matter' has underscored JioHotstar's growing dominance in India's OTT space following the platform's restructuring and rebranding.

With the audience turning in impressive numbers, the show's creators and platform partners are likely to see this as validation for investing in legacy franchises that continue to evolve with changing viewer sensibilities.

As RCB clinches maiden IPL title, JioHotstar hits record 62cr views



After nearly two decades of heartbreaks and near-misses, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) finally etched their name in IPL history by winning their first-ever Indian Premier League title.

The emotional, high-octane final against Punjab Kings (PBKS) saw not just an intense battle on the field but also a staggering digital milestone—JioHotstar recorded 61.8 crore views by the time the match concluded.

As per a detailed report by The Mint, the number reflects cumulative views during the match, not unique viewers. In digital metrics, "views" account for total plays, including repeat streaming by the same user, whereas "viewers" track individual users. The massive 61.8 crore figure is a testament to how the final gripped the country, with fans logging in and staying hooked to their screens for every twist and turn.

RCB, batting first, began steadily. At 10.2 overs, with the score at 90 for 2 and Virat Kohli and Rajat Patidar at the crease, JioHotstar had already logged an impressive 20.3 crore views. Even after Patidar's dismissal at 10.5 overs, momentum didn't slow. By the halfway mark, views had surged to 32.3 crore. RCB wrapped their innings at 190 for 9, with total views climbing to 34.9 crore.

What followed was an equally thrilling chase. Punjab Kings, in pursuit of 191, drew growing attention. At 9.2 overs into their innings, with 80 for 2 on the scoreboard, the platform had recorded 49.8 crore views. As the match approached its climax with PBKS at 149 for 7, JioHotstar touched 60 crore views. With just seven balls remaining and PBKS still behind, viewership was at 60.5 crore. Despite a valiant final-over effort—including two sixes and two fours—Punjab Kings fell short. The view counter stood at a record 61.8 crore when the final ball was bowled.

As the stadium erupted in celebration, RCB's talisman, Virat Kohli, dropped to his knees, touched his forehead to the ground, and embraced teammates in an emotional outpouring nearly 18 seasons in the making. The moment marked not just a win but a release for RCB fans, who had waited patiently for this day.Streaming numbers have surged over the years, and last season alone, the official digital broadcaster JioCinema reported a 38 per cent growth in audience reach—620 million compared to 449 million the previous year. This year's shift to JioHotstar for the final proved no less impactful, with the title match setting a new benchmark in online sports viewership.

Indian origin rapper Raja Kumari wins at American Music Award



Indian origin singer-songwriter and rapper Raja Kumari won an American Music Award (AMA). She was nominated for 'Arcane League of Legends: Season 2' at the 51st AMA held in Los Angeles on Monday night.

According to a PTI report from Bengaluru yesterday, in an interview, Kumari had said she was the first Indian origin musician to be nominated for an AMA.

'Renegade (We Never Run)' from 'Arcane League of Legends', a collaboration between Kumari, UK hip-hop artist Stefflon Don and Dominican-Brazilian artist Jarina de Marco, was nominated under the Favourite Soundtrack category.

Kumari said that the song was really special for her. "Stefflon (Don) and I kind of share the Sidhu (Moose Wala) connection. She has a song with Sidhu, too. And when I was meeting Sidhu during the time that we were collaborating, he had played me the song. So, I've always had this soft spot in my heart for her because we both kind of share this gentle giant," Kumari said.

She said she was approached for the song because the character in the film is Indian. "They (Arcane team) had heard about me as being representative of our culture and being able to make aggressive music as a woman," added Kumari.

She said she never really expected the song to become such a big hit. "The song actually went Top 10 in the world on the 'Viral 50' charts on Spotify. It was something that kind of came out of nowhere. I just did a song for a film. I didn't have many expectations for it. It ended up really impacting people," said Kumari.

The AMA nomination, added the rapper, came at a time when she was beginning to believe that perhaps one has to focus on one genre to make it big.

"And I've always been a global artist, so an AMA award is a great reminder that there's still much more work for me to do, and still much more for me to impact and grow," she added.

Prime Video, Disney+, Netflix now host 92% of sports content: Gracenote

The streaming wars are intensifying, and sports programming is emerging as a key battleground.

According to a recent report from Gracenote, the content data division of Nielsen, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, and Netflix now collectively offer 92 percent of all sports-related content available on the world's leading subscription video on-demand (SVOD) platforms.

This includes live games, sports news, highlight shows, and documentaries, underscoring these services' dominant position in the sports entertainment space.

Gracenote's latest Data Hub release reveals a quarter-over-quarter growth in available programming across major SVOD services, including Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+, Disney+, Netflix, and Paramount+. Between February and May, the total number of unique TV shows, movies, and sports titles on these platforms grew by roughly 4,500 titles — an increase of about 5 percent. Netflix led this expansion, with an impressive 18.2 percent growth in total content during the second quarter, far surpassing its peers. Apple TV+ grew by 3.7 percent, Amazon Prime Video by 3.2 percent, Disney+ by 1.6 percent, and Paramount+ by 1 percent.

In terms of overall content share, Netflix now accounts for 20.1 percent of the available TV shows, movies, and sports programs on the top streaming services, up from 17.9 percent just a quarter earlier. Sports content itself grew by 7.8 percent across these platforms in the same period, outpacing movie growth (4 percent) and television programming growth (6.9 percent). This reflects the increasing demand and investment in sports as a vital category for streaming platforms aiming to attract and retain viewers.

Bill Michels, Chief Product Officer at Gracenote, highlighted the shifting landscape: "In the big picture for SVOD, overall content volume continues to rise but the CTV apps making this content available continually shift. Regardless of program type or any other attribute, effective content discovery helps streamers connect viewers to the entertainment they'll enjoy most and get the most value out of each of the assets in their catalogs."

Gracenote's Data Hub, which tracks content trends in over 80 countries and 35 languages, offers interactive tools to analyze genre trends, exclusivity, and country of origin. This rich data resource aids video services, content owners, and advertisers in developing smarter strategies for content distribution, licensing, and media buying, while providing the media and analysts with critical insights into the fast-evolving streaming industry.

SPNI, JioStar in pioneering b'cast pact for India tour of England

Leading broadcasters JioStar and Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) yesterday announced a collaboration for the Indian cricket team's tour of England in 2025 and 2026.

Under the agreement, JioStar will hold the streaming rights, while SPNI will retain the television broadcast rights, a PTI report from New Delhi stated.

As part of the sharing arrangement, JioStar will exclusively stream all the matches of India's tours of England on its OTT platform JioHotstar, including Tests, ODIs and T20 Internationals, while SPNI will retain the television rights.

"The combination of JioHostar's deep digital footprint with SPNI's broadcast network will universalise access to India's tours of England," said Sanjog Gupta, CEO – Sports and Live experiences, JioStar.

The series kicks off with the first Test at Headingley, Leeds on June 20, followed by matches in Birmingham (July 2), Lord's (July 10), Manchester (July 23) and concluding at The Oval (July 31).

"The arrangement also includes the 2026 white-ball series, comprising three ODIs and five T20Is, to be played during India's return tour of England," a statement said.

SPNI had secured exclusive India rights to England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) properties in 2023 under an eight-year deal running through 2031.

"We are thrilled to bring this fantastic partnership to cricket fans for India's tour to England! Backed by the power of the Sony TV network and the digital prowess of JioStar – This first of its kind partnership will hope to redefine cricket coverage," said Gaurav Banerjee, MD and CEO, Sony Pictures Networks India.

Airtel launches OTT bundles for prepaid users



Bharti Airtel, one of India's leading telecom operators, has rolled out a trailblazing set of entertainment-focused plans for its prepaid subscribers, offering access to over 25 top OTT platforms under a single affordable pack. With the launch of these new offerings, Airtel becomes the first and only telecom operator in India to deliver such a comprehensive digital entertainment experience to its prepaid users.

According to an official Airtel press release issued yesterday, the packs start at a compelling introductory price of Rs.279 with a one-month validity and include direct subscriptions to Netflix Basic, Disney+ Hotstar (JioHotstar), Zee5, SonyLiv, and Airtel Xstream Play Premium. This bundled entertainment is valued at approximately Rs.750, providing a massive value advantage to customers looking to access multiple streaming services without the hassle of managing separate subscriptions.

Designed to suit the evolving entertainment habits of Indian consumers, Airtel's initiative brings together a wide range of content across international, Bollywood, and regional genres. With support for over 16 languages, subscribers can enjoy popular TV shows, blockbuster films, documentaries, and originals from platforms like Lionsgate Play, AHA, SunNxt, Hoichoi, ErosNow, ShemarooMe, and more—all seamlessly accessed through Airtel's platform.

The telecom giant has also introduced comprehensive prepaid bundles that combine entertainment with connectivity. Priced at Rs.598 for 28 days and Rs.1,729 for 84 days, these plans offer Netflix Basic, Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, and Airtel Xstream Play Premium alongside unlimited 5G data and unlimited voice calls, providing subscribers with a complete digital lifestyle experience.

What sets these packs apart is not only their content richness but the convenience and flexibility they offer. Customers can now subscribe directly via the Airtel Xstream Play app, simplifying their entertainment journey. Whether one seeks weekend binge sessions, regional content in vernacular languages, or international series, Airtel's new OTT bundles cater to all viewing preferences.

With this move, Airtel has firmly positioned itself as a frontrunner in bundling telecom and entertainment, a strategy that reaffirms the company's commitment to innovation and customer-centric services in a highly competitive market.

WBD turns malls into cartoon wonderlands for summer

This summer, if you spot 'Chhota Bheem' high-fiving 'Mr. Bean' while 'Ben 10' breaks into a dance-off with 'Tom & Jerry' at your local mall—don't rub your eyes. It's not a fever dream. It's Warner Bros. Discovery's full-blown, high-energy, toon-fuelled summer extravaganza making malls across India the ultimate cartoon playgrounds.

Warner Bros. Discovery announced its ambitious 10-city mall activation tour uniting 'Pogo', 'Cartoon Network', and 'Discovery Kids' under one giant animated umbrella. Launched in May and continuing through June, the event is a dream come true for Indian kids—turning shopping malls in metros like Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru and non-metro cities like Aurangabad, Kottayam, and Ahmednagar into hot zones of cartoon chaos.

At the heart of the madness are themed experience zones. POGO's 'India Ke Superheroes' brings desi icons like Little Singham, 'Chhota Bheem', and Chhutki to life. Cartoon Network's 'Jhatpat Action Khatpat Comedy' zone hosts power-packed global stars like Ben 10, Teen Titans Go, Powerpuff Girls, and of course, the timeless duo Tom & Jerry. Discovery Kids' 'Katti Batti Dosti Pakki' highlights the hilarious friendship between Titoo and Mr. Bean, promising moments of sheer mayhem and giggles.

But this isn't just a photo-op. Each activation offers interactive games, art zones, dance battles, character meet-and-greets, and Instagram-worthy installations—immersing kids in the worlds they usually only see on screen. And for those who can't make it to the malls? There's plenty happening online too: digital challenges, UGC contests, and real-time updates keep the cartoon party going virtually, feeding kids' imaginations and major FOMO alike.

Janhavi Vyas, Marketing Head – South Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery, said, "At Warner Bros. Discovery, we're passionate about crafting joyful, immersive experiences that unite families and ignite young imaginations. Through these summer activations, we're transforming malls into vibrant hubs of creativity and entertainment, bringing fans close to their beloved characters while delivering blockbuster fun that complements our exciting summer slate and creating lasting memories for our audiences."

Adding more fuel to the animated fire, WBD has lined up nearly 200 half-hours



of brand-new content across its channels. Expect 22 fresh 'Chhota Bheem' episodes, the action-packed premiere of 'Chhota Bheem' in Samay Chakra, and superhero specials like Leo! Rise of Super Singham and Singhamverse Kaalverse 2. There's no screen guilt here—just nonstop adventure, across both on-ground and on-air platforms.

And in a special birthday shoutout, 'Chhota Bheem' turns 17 this May. Warner Bros. Discovery is celebrating with crossover events, Maha Blockbuster films, and weekly stunts—a tribute to the icon that's been entertaining generations of Indian kids.

So, if your child vanishes at some point during these two months, don't worry. Just follow the laughter, the cartoon theme music, and the squeals of joy—chances are they're living their best animated life at the mall, dancing with their heroes and tooning out in style.

JioHotstar tops March mobile OTT viewership charts: Nielsen

JioHotstar, the merged streaming platform of Disney+ Hotstar and JioCinema, has emerged as the dominant force in India's OTT landscape for mobile viewership in March 2025, according to data released by Nielsen.

According to a report in the Business Standard yesterday, the platform saw several of its titles feature across the top 10 most-watched lists for movies, original series, and non-original series categories.

These insights are from Nielsen's Mobile Audience Measurement report for March, which analysed user engagement on six major platforms—Amazon Prime Video, JioHotstar, MX Player, Netflix, Sony LIV, and Zee5.

Leading the movies chart was 'Salaar: Part 1 – Ceasefire', the high-octane pan-India action film streaming exclusively on JioHotstar. Following closely was 'Dragon', a Tamil-language comedy-drama on Netflix.

JioHotstar, according to the report, continued to dominate the list with six films making it to the top 10, including 'Mufasa: The Lion King' from Walt Disney Pictures and a strong showing of regional cinema such as Malayalam titles 'Premalu', 'Ponman', and 'Aavesham'. The romantic comedy 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke', featuring Vicky Kaushal and Sara Ali Khan, also made its mark on the list.

In the original series category, 'Aashram' on MX Player and 'Thukra Ke Mera Pyaar' on JioHotstar led viewership numbers.

The report also highlighted evolving viewer preferences, pointing to a signifcant rise in demand for international content.

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THE NEWSROOM PULSE

JUNE, 2025

News9 Global Summit 2nd edition to be held in Stuttgart in Oct

TV9 Network has officially announced the second edition of the News9 Global Summit Germany, set to take place in Stuttgart from October 8 to 10.

The announcement was made at a joint press conference by Barun Das, Managing Director and CEO of TV9 Network, Florian Hassler, State Secretary of the State of Baden-Württemberg, and Rouven Kasper, Board Member and Chief Marketing & Sales Officer of VfB Stuttgart 1893 AG.

According to a press release from TV9 Network, the summit returns after a highly successful debut and will this time celebrate a milestone — 25 years of Indo-German partnership. The three-day summit will host high-level dialogues on key themes including democracy, trade, development, sustainability, and innovation, with a shared commitment to bolstering bilateral ties amid an evolving global order.

Speaking at the conference, Das remarked, "The second edition of the News9 Global Summit is a bridge between two innovation-driven democracies. As we celebrate 25 years of Indo-German partnership, this summit will spark transformative dialogue on shared challenges and opportunities, shaping a future anchored in collaboration, sustainability, and inclusive growth."

Das emphasized the spirit of cooperation in global diplomacy, stating "we don't have to win at the loss of somebody else, as a country", and went on to highlight how India and Germany complement each other — India with its large market, IT expertise and youthful workforce, and Germany with its technological prowess and innovation. "India and Germany fit each other like a jigsaw puzzle," he added.

In addition to the larger national partnership, the Summit will also commemorate a decade of strategic ties between the Indian state of Maharashtra and the German state of Baden-Württemberg, a powerful example of how sub-national collaborations can shape international diplomacy.

Das also drew attention to India's thriving regional media landscape, calling it a reflection of the country's cultural diversity and democratic spirit.

news nine GLOBAL SUMMIT
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Hassler, representing Baden-Württemberg, expressed enthusiasm for hosting the summit. "As we celebrate 25 years of Indo-German partnership, Baden-Württemberg is proud to host the News9 Global Summit. This platform strengthens our ties with India, fosters innovation, and promotes democratic dialogue," he said, adding that the collaboration is aimed at shaping a sustainable and inclusive future.

Kasper of VfB Stuttgart, reflecting on last year's success, said, "Last year, the summit was a tremendous success, not just for those participating but also for those watching. We warmly welcome all of you to Stuttgart, Germany, not just because it's a wonderful occasion, but because we will have inspiring speakers and compelling content from both India and Germany."

Aaj Tak tops Hindi news rankings again in BARC week 21 ratings

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Aaj Tak has once again clinched the top spot in the Hindi news genre, continuing its winning streak in the latest BARC ratings for Week 21, 2025. According to the data for HSM | 15+ | 24 Hrs | Gross AMA'000, the channel recorded an impressive Gross AMA of 1,06,202, securing a 13.3 percent market share and edging out close rival News18 India, which stood at 1,05,147 AMA with a 13.1 percent share. The rankings are based on a competitive analysis of 14 Hindi news channels.

As per a press note issued by the channel, this reaffirmation of Aaj Tak's dominance comes on the heels of its lauded coverage of "Operation Sindoor" last month. The channel's comprehensive, uninterrupted reporting during the crucial coverage days of the high-stakes operation drew record-breaking viewership, solidifying its standing in both rolled and unrolled BARC metrics during Weeks 18 and 19.

Much of the credit for this consistent leadership, the channel notes, goes to its revamped prime time strategy. With an all-new team of dynamic anchors and a fresh programming

lineup, Aaj Tak has carved out a distinct advantage in the prime time slot — a space traditionally considered make-or-break in TV news viewership. This approach not only improved content depth but also helped the channel connect better with audiences across regions.

During the 'Operation Sindoor' coverage on May 8, Aaj Tak also achieved a digital milestone, hitting a peak of 2 million concurrent viewers on YouTube — reaffirming its dominance beyond traditional television, especially in the growing digital news space.

With its continued investment in fast-paced journalism and tech-forward storytelling, Aaj Tak remains a formidable force in India's highly competitive Hindi news landscape.

Zee J&K Ladakh: Journalism Rooted in Truth, Culture, and Community

In the heart of India's northern frontier—where every mountain echoes heritage and every valley holds a story—Zee J&K Ladakh stands as a vibrant and formidable voice for the people. True to its tagline, 'Awaaz Kashmir Ki, Mehak Hindustan Ki', the channel is deeply committed to amplifying the voice of Kashmir and celebrating the essence of Hindustan. By bringing the stories, culture, aspirations, and perspectives of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh into the national mainstream, Zee J&K Ladakh has emerged as more than just a news platform—it is a bridge between citizens and governance.

As a 24x7 news channel with a deeply rooted hyper-local lens, Zee J&K Ladakh has redefined regional reportage by placing the community at the core of every story. With a continuous commitment to truth, inclusivity, and impact, the channel delivers credible, compassionate, and courageous journalism that not only informs—but engages, empowers, and elevates.



From the snow-draped valleys of Ladakh to the vibrant pulse of Srinagar and the evolving urban narrative of Jammu, this news channel captures the full spectrum of life in the region. What sets Zee J&K Ladakh apart is its ability to blend hard-hitting current affairs with inspiring grassroots narratives, making it both a mirror and a catalyst for change. Its editorial mission is clear: To ensure that every voice—especially the unheard—is amplified, every issue—especially the overlooked—is addressed, and every achievement—no matter how small—is celebrated.

Its impactful programming reflects its commitment to both substance and service. 'Valley Point', a signature one-hour talk show, brings clarity and depth to the political discourse of the region through sharp analysis and exclusive interviews with cabinet ministers and senior party leaders. It serves as a crucial platform for accountability and insight. On the other hand, 'Firdous-e-Barin' shifts the spotlight to stories of hope and human spirit—focusing on healthcare, education, electricity, roads, and other core issues, while also showcasing achievers who are scripting change at the grassroots. These are stories that inspire not only admiration but action. Supporting this spectrum of storytelling are 'Khabren', the real-time news bulletin delivering verified updates, and 'Subah-e-Kashmir', the morning capsule that prepares viewers with essential news, weather, and key developments for the day.

Zee J&K Ladakh's impact is further amplified through its robust digital-first approach, enabling stories from the remotest corners of the region to reach global audiences. With an upgraded website and a vibrant YouTube presence, the channel transcends geographical boundaries, bringing the voices of the region to a broader community, including the global diaspora. In doing so, it transforms local realities into national conversations and global reflections.

Speaking about the channel's growing influence, Mr. Karan Abhishek Singh, CEO of Zee Media Corporation Limited, highlighted, "In an age of information overload, what sets Zee Media apart is our purpose — to be a voice that cuts through the noise with integrity and insight. Our growing influence is rooted in a simple philosophy: journalism must inform, involve, and inspire. From every studio to every field report, we carry the responsibility of being not just witnesses to history, but contributors to progress."

Adding further perspective, Mr. Tarique Faridy, Editor of Salaam TV & Zee J&K Ladakh, further added, "Through our news shows and digital platforms, we are making sure that every community, every challenge, and every dream gets the attention it deserves. Zee J&K Ladakh is committed to nurturing a culture of truth, dignity, and representation in the region's media space."

The long-term impact of Zee J&K Ladakh is both visible and visionary. By consistently focusing on regional development, civic issues, citizen voices, and inclusive storytelling, the channel is not only shaping public perception but strengthening democratic participation, restoring cultural pride, and accelerating grassroots transformation. Its role in facilitating dialogue, addressing grievances, and influencing policy at the local level is setting a new benchmark for regional journalism in India.

Zee J&K Ladakh stands tall as a symbol of integrity, empathy, and purpose. It is not merely reporting the region's journey—it is actively shaping it, one meaningful story at a time.

News18 India's new print ad says '3 saal se gire, Aaj Tak nahi uthe'

Hindi news channel News18 India took a sharp dig at its arch-rival Aaj Tak with a bold front-page advertisement in The Economic Times today, flaunting its clear dominance in the Hindi news genre. The campaign, headlined with a cheeky and confident punchline — '3 saal se gire, Aaj Tak nahi uthe' — proudly asserts News18 India's consistent leadership over the past three years.

In a press note issued by News18 India, the channel underlined its audience supremacy with data that speaks volumes. According to BARC figures, News18 India has consistently outpaced Aaj Tak with a reach of 7.88 crore AMA, compared to Aaj Tak's 7.35 crore AMA. (Source: BARC | Metric: Avg. Weekly AMA | TG: NCCS All 15+ | Period: Wk 22'22–21'25, 24 Hrs, All Days | Market: HSM)

The statement further points out News18 India's emphatic lead in the digital space as well. On YouTube, the channel has racked up an impressive 3.4 billion views, nearly three times Aaj Tak's 1.04 billion views as per Playboard statistics for May 2025. The note calls it a testament to the channel's widespread viewer trust and unmatched digital engagement.

News18 India credits its stellar performance to its dynamic programming and strong editorial leadership. Anchors like Kishore Ajwani, Amish Devgan, Rubika Liyaquat, Prateek Trivedi, and Aman Chopra have become household names, offering viewers compelling and comprehensive news coverage that spans the length and breadth of the country.



IndiaDotcom sees 400,000+ sign-ups in 20 days with Google One Tap rollout

IndiaDotcom Digital Private Limited (IDPL), the digital arm of Zee Media Corporation Ltd, has achieved a significant milestone by recording over 400,000 user sign-ups within just 20 days of integrating Google's One Tap Sign-In across its expansive network of 35 websites in 10 languages. The development marks a bold step forward in IDPL's strategy to drive user engagement, trust, and personalization at scale.

In a press release issued by the company, this rollout has now been showcased as a joint case study by Google and IDPL, positioning the integration as a transformative solution for digital publishing. It underlines how simplifying the login experience can help publishers transition anonymous visitors into logged-in users, thereby unlocking deeper insights and more meaningful user relationships.

The collaboration saw Google's product team work closely with IDPL's digital strategy team to ensure a seamless implementation that respected both privacy and user experience. According to the statement, this is one of the most extensive rollouts of Google One Tap Sign-In in the Indian media ecosystem, enabling IDPL to reimagine the way audiences interact with its editorial content across platforms. The user journey has now become frictionless, secure, and efficient—key factors in a market that increasingly demands convenience and credibility.

The rollout covered 27 Hindi and English websites and 8 regional language platforms, demonstrating IDPL's strong presence in multilingual news and infotainment segments. From breaking national news to astrology, lifestyle and entertainment, the One Tap integration has streamlined access and allowed IDPL to build a connected audience base with stronger data foundations. With this, the company aims to move beyond mere traffic metrics and focus on quality engagement.

What stands out in the internal analytics is that 71 percent of new registrations came from IDPL's news verticals, a clear indication of user trust in credible journalism when offered a smooth and secure entry point. The remaining 29 percent sign-ups were attributed to infotainment platforms, reflecting a healthy mix of interest-based and lifestyle-driven consumption patterns.

Speaking on the impact of the initiative, Karan Abhishek Singh, CEO of ZMCL, said, "Adopting Google One Tap has revolutionized the way we connect with our audience by combining scale with simplicity and security. This innovation not only fuels our rapid growth but also lays a strong foundation for delivering deeply personalized content and enriching user experiences across our diverse digital portfolio."

This integration has done more than just simplify logins. It has positioned IDPL to leverage a unified layer of first-party user data, enabling smarter content recommendations, refined audience targeting for advertisers, and better editorial decisions.

NDTV MPCG's Raipur meet ignites fresh momentum for biz

The NDTV MPCG Emerging Business Conclave – Raipur Chapter brought together an influential gathering of entrepreneurs, policymakers, and thought leaders, marking a vibrant moment for Chhattisgarh's economic and industrial journey.

Held in the heart of Raipur, the conclave showcased how the region is evolving into a central pillar of India's transformative growth narrative, driven by vision, investment, and inclusive policies.

According to the official press release by NDTV, the Raipur edition is part of a larger series of regional business conclaves that aim to foster direct engagement between the private sector and government leadership across Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The event further strengthens NDTV MPCG's role as a catalyst for collaborative development and a credible forum where forward-thinking ideas are shared, refined, and acted upon.



Delivering the keynote address, Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Shri Arun Sao laid out a strong vision for balanced industrial growth. "We have reached a stage where we must envision what the future of Chhattisgarh should look like... We're working to ensure that industries do not flourish in isolated pockets, but thrive across the entire state," he remarked, underlining the state's intent to democratize growth and opportunities.

He also offered a detailed overview of the new industrial policy being rolled out. "We undertook extensive groundwork to design Chhattisgarh's new industrial policy, developing zones based on their specific capacities. We see immense potential in sectors like food processing and tourism, which we are actively converting into high-impact industries," he stated, pointing to a well-thought-out plan that matches local strengths with national priorities.

In a strong message on law and order, the Deputy CM also reflected on the recent successes in internal security. "Operation Sindoor stands as one of independent India's most precise and significant anti-terror operations—carried out deep inside hostile territory. Its impact has echoed across the world, marking a major success in our fight against terrorism," he noted. He went on to highlight that the state has seen a sharp drop in security personnel casualties since 2023, crediting it to the focused efforts in dismantling Naxalism and restoring peace to regions like Bastar.

The conclave was enriched with insights from prominent voices including Dr. Arvind Tiwari of Dr. C.V. Raman University, Prakash Lohana of Astavinayak Realties, Dr. Ankit Thakral of Unity Hospital, Dr. Diwakar Pandey of Balco Medical Centre, and industrialist Sunil Ramdas Agrawal. Their experiences and perspectives added depth to the discussions, emphasizing grassroots challenges and scalable solutions.

As the conclave concluded, it reaffirmed NDTV MPCG's growing stature as more than just a media initiative—it is fast becoming a vital bridge that connects industries with governance, business with policy, and ambition with action. With each regional chapter, the platform continues to spark dialogue, shape policy, and fuel a new wave of progress for India's heartland.

News18 India dominates YouTube in May with 3.39 bn views

News18 India has emerged as the clear frontrunner in the Hindi news genre, clocking an unprecedented 3.39 billion views on YouTube in May 2025, according to Playboard.

With numbers nearly three times higher than its closest competitor Aaj Tak, which registered 1.04 billion views, News18 India has firmly established its dominance in the digital news space.

According to a press release by News18 India, the channel's consistent growth and overwhelming viewer trust have made it the nation's most preferred source for news, both on television and across digital platforms. With a clear lead during major national events, News18 India has remained ahead of the curve, not only in terms of reach but also in delivering factual, credible, and responsible journalism that resonates with audiences across the country.

The data released by BARC for Week 20 of 2025 further validates this trend. News18 India maintained its No. 1 position in Hindi news viewership, comfortably beating Aaj Tak once again. Whether on TV or digital, News18 India continues to prove its mettle with unparalleled credibility and mass connect.

May 2025 proved to be a critical month for news broadcasting, with heightened public interest around India-Pakistan border tensions, extensive mock drills, and Operation Sindoor. While other news networks leaned into gimmicks and unverified stories to drive views, News18 India stood out for its impactful and accurate reporting. The massive YouTube viewership surge stands as a testament to the trust and loyalty of its audience, who turned to the brand for real news in real time.

Adnan Sami slams Pak generals as "traitors to humanity" : Aap Ki Adalat



In one of the most explosive interviews on 'Aap Ki Adalat', aired on India TV and hosted by veteran journalist Rajat Sharma, singer-composer Adnan Sami came down heavily on the Pakistan Army, accusing its top brass of betraying their own people and humanity at large. The singer, who has made India his home, didn't hold back in expressing his anguish at the double standards of the Pakistani military establishment, while also opening up emotionally about his journey to becoming an Indian citizen.

In the powerful conversation, part of a press release shared by India TV, Adnan Sami called the Pakistani generals "traitors to humanity", alleging that they have long misled the world by showcasing themselves as victims of terrorism, while secretly harbouring and nurturing terrorists for their own benefit. "They take foreign donations in the name of Kashmir, but line their own pockets. These generals live in luxury while ordinary people struggle for food," said Sami, whose father served as a fighter pilot and later a diplomat for Pakistan.

Sami shared deep personal insights from his own life in the elite power corridors of Islamabad. Recalling an incident, he said, "When we heard my father's friend was going to become the caretaker Prime Minister, a new sherwani was sent from our house for his swearing-in." Despite these connections, Sami said he was hounded by the same establishment: "They didn't spare Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, or Imran Khan. Who am I?"

One of the most heartbreaking moments came when he narrated a story of a chef working at his home in Pakistan whose son was radicalised and died as a jihadi. The grief-stricken father later passed away, unable to cope with the loss. "And you call me a gaddar? You are the real gaddar to your nation, and to humanity," he said in an emotionally charged voice.

On being asked about his Indian citizenship, Sami recalled how the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi refused to renew his passport, effectively stranding him. "I contacted uncles in Pakistan who were close to my late father. They told me: 'They won't renew your passport because they want your Indian visa to lapse. Once you return, no one knows what they'll do to you.'" Frightened and cornered, Sami approached the Indian Home Ministry. Despite his fame, his application for citizenship was rejected twice. "But under special powers, the Government of India finally approved it for my contributions to music and the arts," he said.

He also made it clear he never feared deportation during the Pahalgam incident, when the Indian government ordered the tracing of foreign nationals. "Once I became a citizen, that's it," said Sami, who later received the Padma Shri from the Indian government — an honour he never got from Pakistan. In response to Pakistan's former minister Fawad Chaudhary's jibe on social media, Sami dismissed him bluntly: "He is a bhaand."

Speaking about personal loss, Sami said with moist eyes that the Pakistan High Commission did not even let him attend his mother's funeral. "I had to watch it over WhatsApp video," he revealed.

Sharing his struggles in the music industry, Sami recalled how Asha Bhosle mentored him when he arrived in Mumbai. "She told me, 'Come to Mumbai, it's the capital of Hindi music.' I stayed at R.D. Burman's house. It was like staying in a temple of music. The songs that were rejected in Pakistan became hits here," he said, naming tracks like 'Kabhi Toh Nazar Milao', 'Bheegi Bheegi Raaton Mein', and 'Lift Karade'.

Sami also lamented the fate of legendary Pakistani singers like Mehdi Hasan and Reshma, who died in penury. "They became famous in India, but Pakistan's authorities showed no concern. Only the public gave them love," he said.

When asked how he lost over 120 kg without surgery, Sami recounted how a dire warning from a London doctor and an emotional promise to his father motivated him to change. "A good nutritionist in Houston designed a diet. There was no liposuction, no shortcuts. Just discipline."

The episode concluded with light-hearted moments, where Rajat Sharma reminded him of Salman Khan's comment that "Adnan attracts six heroines at a time". Sami laughed, saying, "That's the magic of music." He also shared that he had advised Salman to marry, but Salman quipped, "You married three times — what did you get? Why should I marry once?"

The interview was a rare blend of fearless honesty, emotional depth, and personal revelations — a testament to Adnan Sami's journey from Lahore to Mumbai, and from ridicule to reverence.

PRAG News rebrands as NESA Urban



In a landmark move that marks the beginning of a bold new chapter, PRAG News has officially rebranded itself as NESA Urban, a step aimed at reflecting the evolving aspirations of Northeast India's growing urban audience. With this change, the channel is not just changing its name, but embracing a renewed identity that speaks directly to the heartbeat of the region's dynamic urban landscape.

According to an official BARC data, the rebranding underscores PRAG News' continued commitment to delivering fearless, people-first journalism while evolving with the times. The name NESA stands for North East South Asia, and with the addition of "Urban", the channel aims to align more closely with modern sensibilities, audience preferences, and regional pride.

Backed by fresh branding and updated programming strategies, NESA Urban has already made a powerful impact in the ratings game. As per BARC's GRP data for Week 20 of 2025 (CS 15+, all days, 24 hours, NESA Urban market), the channel has surged ahead of its competitors with an impressive 32.46 GRP, making it the undisputed No. 1 news channel in the Northeast urban market.

It's closely followed by News Live at 31.46 GRP, while other popular channels like Time8 and News18 Assam North East trail behind with 15.13 and 12.96 GRP respectively. NKTv, ND24, and DY365 recorded single-digit GRPs in the 6–7 range, while the rest—including NB News, Pratham Khabar, and North East Live—remained in the lower tier with less than 5 GRP.

This overwhelming response from viewers reaffirms the trust that audiences place in the channel, even amid a rapidly evolving digital and broadcast landscape. The management of NESA Urban believes that this transformation will allow them to stay ahead of the curve by offering deeper insights, sharper storytelling, and a stronger regional connection.

The channel's leadership has emphasized that while the name may have changed, the mission remains the same—to be the voice of the people, reporting with accuracy, urgency, and integrity. The overwhelming viewer support seen in the ratings is a clear indication that NESA Urban has struck the right chord.

"Am very happy and congratulate Team PRAG for their efforts," said Sanjive Narain, Chairman of Prag News. His words reflect the pride and optimism within the organization as it steps into this exciting new phase.

Bharat Express now available on DD Free Dish channel no. 69

Bharat Express, one of India's fastest-growing national Hindi news channels, has marked a major milestone in its expansion journey by securing a spot on DD Free Dish, India's largest free-to-air DTH platform. Viewers can now tune in to Bharat Express on Channel No. 69 of DD Free Dish, further strengthening the channel's promise of delivering credible, fast, and fearless journalism to every corner of the country.



According to an official press release, this strategic move significantly enhances the channel's reach, especially in rural and remote regions where DD Free Dish enjoys deep penetration and massive viewership. With this addition, Bharat Express is now available across all major DTH and cable platforms, including Tata Play (535), Dish TV (671), D2H (753), Airtel DTH (327), Jio TV (495), Den Network (315), Fastway (308), Hathway (214/212), and NXT Digital (InCable – 314/317).

Commenting on the development, Upendrra Rai, CMD and Editor-in-Chief of Bharat Express News Network, said, "Our presence on DD Free Dish is a testament to our commitment to making quality journalism accessible to every Indian household. This expansion aligns with our vision of being a truly national voice, reaching audiences across geographies and demographics. With DD Free Dish, Bharat Express is set to gain significant reach among the Hindi news viewers which will also be beneficial for our advertisers."

Since its launch, Bharat Express has built a reputation for delivering sharp, unbiased, and relevant news, rooted in public interest and national concern. Its rapidly growing distribution network has become a reflection of the trust the channel enjoys among its viewers. This latest move positions Bharat Express in line with the country's most prominent national Hindi news channels, reinforcing its growing influence in the Indian media landscape.

As the channel continues to evolve with a robust mix of editorial credibility and dynamic expansion, its foray into DD Free Dish is expected to further elevate its presence and engagement across India's diverse viewer base.

Global news channel CNBC-TV18 Prime launched

CNBC-TV18 has unveiled its latest offering — CNBC-TV18 Prime, a global business news channel aimed at the globally connected Indian business community. Tailored for CXOs, decision makers, and business leaders, the channel promises to offer sharp, data-backed coverage of international developments, anchored with a clear, India-centric perspective.

In a press release issued by CNBC-TV18, the network highlighted that CNBC-TV18 Prime is built to address the growing demand for intelligent, relevant, and actionable global business journalism. With international dynamics increasingly influencing domestic strategies, the channel aims to bridge the gap by connecting global market shifts to India's evolving economic story.



The programming is designed around a unique 'follow-the-sun' model — beginning with early coverage of Asian markets, moving through India and Europe, and wrapping up with the U.S. markets ensuring 24/7 global updates that keep pace with the world economy. Flagship shows include 'The Global Reset' hosted by Prashant Nair at 12pm, offering deep dives into global economic forces and their implications for India, and The Global Lens with Parikshit Luthra at 8:30 PM, which will focus on foreign affairs, geopolitics, and their intersection with India's global positioning.

Available across major DTH and cable platforms including Tata Play, Dish TV, d2h, DEN, Hathway, GTPL, SITI, and more, CNBC-TV18 Prime ensures a wide footprint across India's urban and business hubs. The channel brings together top Indian anchors and prominent global voices, combining CNBC-TV18's editorial strength with rich international perspectives, digital integration, and a clutter-free viewing experience.

Speaking on the launch, Smriti Mehra, CEO of English and Business News at Network18, said, "With CNBC-TV18 Prime, we are building a platform that reflects the global ambitions of India's business leaders. As Indian enterprises expand on the global stage, there's a growing need for global coverage that makes sense for Indian decision-makers. We're committed to delivering crisp, meaningful, and forward-looking segments that underline India's growing influence across global trade, technology, and geopolitics."

In addition to expert commentary and round-the-clock market analysis, the channel will feature exclusive interviews with global business leaders, special reports on India's role in international trade, and coverage of alternative asset classes and commodities.With the launch of CNBC-TV18 Prime, Network18 takes a decisive step toward redefining how Indian audiences consume global business news curated, intelligent, and truly world-class.

Zee Business hosts Wealth Creation Summit 2025

At a time when financial landscapes are transforming and investment avenues continue to expand, Zee Business reaffirmed its role as a frontrunner in India's financial literacy movement with the successful hosting of the Wealth Creation Summit 2025 on May 29 in Mumbai.

The summit brought together India's top financial minds to help viewers decode market trends, understand strategic investing, and pave the way for long-term wealth creation.

The event, as per a press release, was not just a summit—it was the continuation of a story that began on March 24, 2020, when Indian markets faced one of their steepest crashes in recent history. While panic gripped investors, Zee Business, under the guidance of Managing Editor Anil Singhvi, took a contrarian view—transforming the moment of crisis into an opportunity for millions. That day has since evolved into Wealth Creation Day, commemorated every year on March 24, followed by a two-week Wealth Creation Week, further cementing the channel's commitment to financial awareness.Carrying forward that legacy, the 2025 summit emerged as a high-impact platform where market leaders, fund managers, financial planners, and investment experts shared their perspectives on how individuals and families can make informed financial choices in today's volatile economy. Themed around "shaping the future of smart investing," the event gave lakhs of viewers across



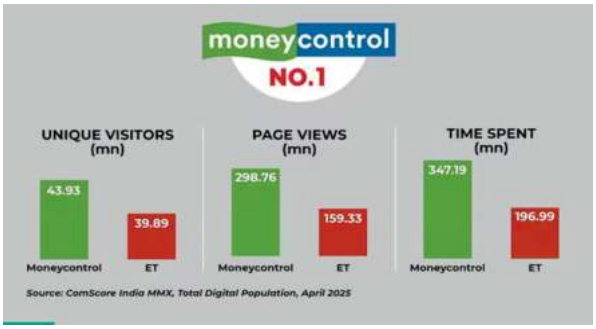
the country critical insights into market cycles, retail investor growth, and the discipline of goal-based planning.

The summit opened with a powerful fireside chat between Anil Singhvi and Navneet Munot, MD & CEO of HDFC Asset Management. Munot highlighted how India's investment landscape is evolving and why mutual funds remain critical for long-term wealth building.

Moneycontrol beats Economic Times again in April: Comscore

Moneycontrol has once again emerged as the top business news destination in India, extending its lead over The Economic Times for the eighth consecutive month, according to the latest digital rankings released by Comscore for April 2025.

The platform, known for its comprehensive coverage of business, finance, and markets, has consistently outperformed its closest rival across all major digital metrics—unique visitors, page views, and time spent—cementing its leadership in India's financial news space.



As per a press release was issued by Network18, Moneycontrol recorded 43.93 million unique visitors in April 2025, ahead of The Economic Times, which clocked 39.89 million unique visitors, based on Comscore India's MMX data. The ranking includes data across desktop, mobile, app, and social media platforms.

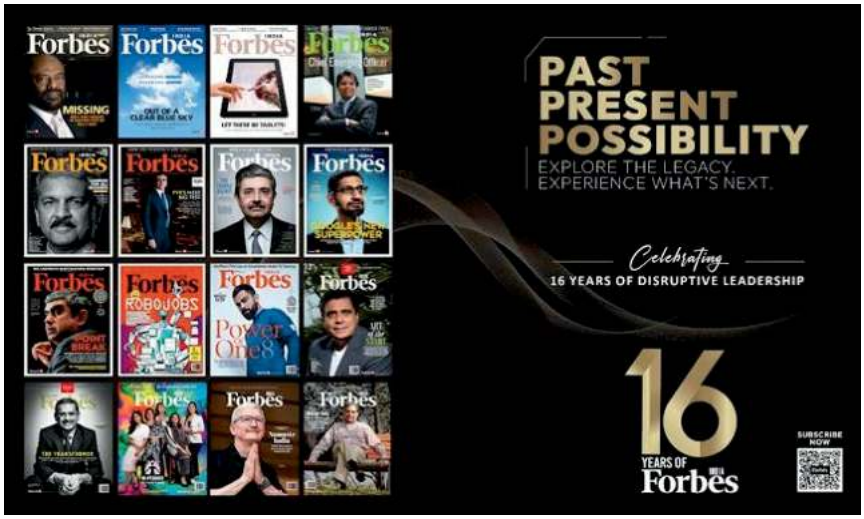
Moneycontrol also maintained a commanding lead in terms of page views, clocking 298.76 million views during the month, nearly twice that of ET's 159.33 million. The platform further dominated on time spent, with users engaging for a total of 347.19 million minutes, compared to 197 million minutes on The Economic Times.

The April 2025 performance reinforces Moneycontrol's growing digital dominance and its ability to consistently engage India's business readership through a multi-platform content strategy, timely news updates, expert opinions, and deep-dive financial analysis.

Comscore, a globally recognized digital audience measurement agency, serves as the industry standard for media consumption insights. Its data provides a credible snapshot of user engagement across major digital platforms, helping advertisers and publishers track audience preferences and reach.

Forbes India turns 16

As India navigates a future fuelled by innovation and upheaval, Forbes India celebrates its 16th anniversary with a commemorative edition that captures the spirit of transformation. Themed 'Disruption', the special issue titled 'Giant Strides' explores how change, even when abrupt or unexpected, can pave the way for resilience, progress, and reinvention.



According to a press release, the publication describes the issue as a landmark collectible that delves into the sweeping shifts across India's economic, social, and cultural landscape. Since its inception, Forbes India has been at the forefront of chronicling the nation's entrepreneurial and innovation-driven journey. This anniversary edition deepens that commitment by inviting thought leaders to reflect on the disruption defining India's growth story today.

The special issue features powerful essays and reflections by an eclectic mix of industry veterans, changemakers, and visionaries from across sectors. Among the contributors are:

Santosh Iyer, MD & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India

Praveer Sinha, CEO & MD, Tata Power

Abhinav Bindra, Olympic gold medallist & mental health advocate

Nandan Nilekani, Chairman & Co-founder, Infosys

Sanjeev Bikhchandani, Founder & Vice Chairman, Info Edge

Rajesh Jejurikar, Executive Director & CEO, Auto and Farm Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra

Sharvil Patel, MD, Zydus Group

From clean energy and AI to healthcare, sports, and digital transformation, each essay examines how disruption once feared is now seen as an opportunity to rethink systems, leadership, and impact.

"This issue is not just a celebration of our journey—it's a call to look ahead," notes the Forbes India editorial team. "Disruption is no longer an exception, it's the new normal. And within that disruption lies India's greatest potential."

A striking new cover design sets this edition apart bold, minimal, and future-focused. It mirrors the essence of the stories inside: ambition, adaptability, and a vision for tomorrow.

Zee News, Greenply honour India's craftsmanship champs

In a celebration of India's grassroots talent, Zee News and Greenply came together to host the third season of 'Hindustan Ki Shaan' — a national awards platform dedicated to honouring the country's unsung heroes of craftsmanship.

Held in Mumbai recently, the ceremony paid a glowing tribute to carpenters, contractors, and artisans whose silent dedication forms the backbone of India's physical and cultural landscape.

According to a press release from Zee News, 'Hindustan Ki Shaan – Season 3' was not just an awards event, but a powerful national salute to skill, dignity, and purpose.

The evening saw the presence of Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Maharashtra's Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, as the Special Guest, alongside noted actor, poet and author Shailesh Lodha, who served as Chief Guest. Rajesh Mittal, CMD of Greenply Industries Ltd., was also in attendance, underscoring the company's commitment to honouring craftsmanship as a pillar of national growth.



This year's edition shifted focus beyond mere accolades to the life journeys of those who have spent decades honing their craft. Region-wise winners included Mahesh Kumar Rana (East Zone), Ghulam Nabi (North Zone), Radhe Shyam (South Zone), and Kailash Suthar (West Zone), while the coveted National Award was presented to Ravindra Suthar for his exemplary skills and dedication. Sendil Kumar received the Wood Carving Award for his outstanding artistry, while the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred upon Laxmanan A, whose decades of excellence continue to inspire the carpentry community across India.

Yatnesh Pandey, Greenply CMO, commented, "At Greenply, we believe marketing should not only promote products, but also uplift the communities we serve. The purpose-driven marketing program 'Hindustan Ki Shaan' is our tribute to the skilled hands who turn blueprints into reality."

Echoing this sentiment, Anindya Khare, Marketing Head, ZMCL, said, "'Hindustan Ki Shaan' is a reflection of Zee Media's deep-rooted belief in purpose-driven storytelling. This initiative is not just about honouring excellence in craftsmanship, but about restoring the dignity of work and shining a spotlight on the individuals who shape our world quietly, skillfully, and with unwavering commitment."

The initiative was anchored around the theme 'Celebrating the hands that shape dreams and wood alike' — a message that resonated deeply with both the audience and participants.

News18 India tops Hindi news charts in BARC Wk20

News18 India has emerged as the leading Hindi news channel in the country, securing the number one spot in the latest viewership data released by the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) for Week 20 of 2025.

As per a press note shared by News18, the channel clocked 119124 AMA'000s, inching ahead of its closest competitor Aaj Tak, which stood at 117819 AMA'000s. Other prominent channels followed, with TV9 Bharatvarsh at 103286 AMA'000s, Republic Bharat at 93207 AMA'000s, and Zee News with 87641 AMA'000s. The data reflects viewership across all days and 24-hour time bands for NCCS All 15+ audience in the HSM (Hindi Speaking Markets).

News18 India attributes its continued leadership to its factual, credible and sharp news coverage, combined with a line-up of trusted news anchors including Kishore Ajwani, Amish Devgan, Rubika Liyaquat, Prateek Trivedi and Aman Chopra. The channel's editorial approach—marked by strong reportage, clarity of opinion, and insightful debates—has helped it strike a deeper chord with viewers across the Hindi belt.

Known for its extensive network of reporters and wide-reaching ground coverage, News18 India continues to bring in-depth analysis and multiple perspectives on key national issues. This performance not only highlights the channel's editorial strength but also its growing influence among Hindi-speaking audiences.



Netflix announces new seasons of 'Black Warrant', 'The Royals', 'Mismatched' and more



Streaming giant Netflix has confirmed the return of several fan-favourite Indian originals, including 'Black Warrant', 'The Royals', 'Mismatched', and 'Maamla Legal Hai', all of which are set to drop brand-new seasons soon.

According to an IANS report, among the most anticipated announcements is 'Mismatched', which will come back with its fourth and final season. The hit coming-of-age romance starring Prajakta Koli and Rohit Saraf has built a strong fan base since its debut.

Producer Ronnie Screwvala of RSVP Movies shared his excitement, saying, "We're thrilled to bring Mismatched back for one last season. This show has become a true fan favorite, and the love for Dimple and Rishi has grown with every season."

Screwvala also noted how the show has sparked meaningful conversations, inspired theories, and built a passionate fan community around the evolving relationship between the two leads.

'Black Warrant', starring Zahan Kapoor, is also slated to return. Adapted from the book 'Black Warrant: Confessions' of a Tihar Jailer by Sunil Gupta and Sunetra Choudhury, the gritty prison drama dives deep into the brutal realities of India's prison system, offering a raw and intense viewing experience that earned critical praise in its debut season.

Meanwhile, 'The Royals', headlined by Ishaan Khatter and Bhumi Pednekar, is gearing up for its second season, which promises more high-stakes drama, political intrigue, and unexpected twists.

Also returning is 'Maamla Legal Hai', a courtroom comedy that blends wit, satire, and relatable storytelling from within the Indian judicial system, promising fresh laughs and legal chaos in its next chapter.

With this diverse lineup of returning favourites, Netflix continues to double down on its investment in original Indian storytelling, ensuring a steady stream of drama, romance, crime, and comedy for audiences worldwide.

'Super Dancer Chapter 5' returns to SET



Sony Entertainment Television (SET) is set to bring back its popular kids' dance reality show, Super Dancer Chapter 5. The show is returning with 12 talented young contestants, each paired with a choreographer to showcase their dance skills.

The contestants will perform on Saturdays, with their choreographers joining them on Sundays. The performances will be evaluated based on audience votes, and one contestant will be eliminated each week.

The show aims to find a child with the potential to be the future of dance, showcasing their talent and passion for dance. The contestants will be judged on predefined evaluation parameters such as skill, talent, personality, and life story.

The registration process for the show has already begun, with participants required to register through the Sony LIV app. The registration process includes filling out a digital form and submitting a dance video for evaluation. The top 25 participants will be selected for the ground auditions, and from there, the top 12 contestants will be chosen to appear on the show.

Fans of the show can look forward to the return of Super Dancer Chapter 5 on Sony Entertainment Television, where they can witness the incredible talent of young dancers and their inspiring journeys.



Gujarati film 'Hellaro' gets a Hindi release

The critically acclaimed and National Award-winning Gujarati film 'Hellaro' has been made available in Hindi for viewers across the country, expanding the reach of this poignant regional story.

The Hindi dubbed version is now streaming on ShemarooMe, enabling audiences unfamiliar with Gujarati cinema to experience the powerful narrative that captivated critics and viewers alike.

In a statement shared with IANS, lead actress Shraddha Dangar expressed her heartfelt sentiments about the film's wider release. She said, "'Hellaro' has always been more than just a film—it's a reflection of unheard voices and untold stories that exist in the quiet corners of our society. Bringing it to life meant building a world from the ground up, both emotionally and physically, in the heart of the desert.

"Now, with its Hindi release on ShemarooMe, I'm deeply moved that this story can reach a broader audience globally. I hope it stirs something in every viewer—questions, courage, and above all, a deeper understanding of what it means to be free."

The film is notable for being the first Gujarati movie to win the National Award for Best Feature Film. Additionally, 13 lead actresses from the film were jointly honoured with a Special Jury Award, a rare and remarkable recognition of their collective performance.Set against the backdrop of 1970s Kutch, the film explores the emotional and social lives of women confined by the rigid patriarchy of their village. Their monotonous existence is disrupted by the arrival of a stranger wielding a dhol (traditional drum), which awakens courage and a yearning for freedom within them.

Directed by Abhishek Shah, the film features an ensemble cast including Shraddha Dangar, Kaushambi Bhatt, Niilam Paanchal, Brinda Trivedi, and others.

Hrithik Roshan to star in pan-India film with 'KGF' Makers Hombale Films

Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan is set to headline a major pan-India project with renowned production house Hombale Films, marking a much-anticipated collaboration that promises scale, style, and cinematic spectacle.



The announcement was made by Hombale Films—producers of hit films like 'KGF', 'Salaar' and 'Kantara'—on Wednesday via their official X handle, confirming the association with the actor known as Bollywood's 'Greek God'.

According to a PTI report, the collaboration has been described as "years in the making", and is expected to feature a story packed with grit and grandeur. "They call him the Greek God. He's ruled hearts, shattered limits and we see the phenomenon he truly is! We are proud to welcome @iHrithik to the @hombalefilms family for a collaboration, years in the making. A tale of grit, grandeur and glory is set to unfold, where intensity meets imagination, the Big Bang begins," read the official post from the banner.

Though further details about the project—such as the title, director or release date—have not yet been revealed, the collaboration is already generating massive buzz across film circles and fan communities.

IPL '25 to honour Operation Sindoor heroes; Services chiefs invited to final

The BCCI, Indian cricket's governing body, yesterday said it has invited all three service chiefs of the Indian armed forces to attend the IPL final on June 3 in Ahmedabad, where the event's closing ceremony will also feature a tribute to their "heroic efforts" during the recent Operation Sindoor.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia made the announcement in a media statement, according to a PTI report. "We have extended an invitation to all Indian Armed Forces chiefs, top-ranked officers and soldiers for the IPL final in Ahmedabad to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor," Saikia told PTI.



Saikia said that the BCCI salutes the "bravery, courage, and selfless service" of the country's armed forces. He lauded the "heroic efforts under Operation Sindoor" which protected and inspired the nation.

"As a tribute, we have decided to dedicate the closing ceremony to the armed forces and honour our heroes. While cricket remains a national passion, there is nothing greater than the nation and its sovereignty, integrity, and security of our country," Saikia said.

While General Upendra Dwivedi is the Chief of Army Staff, Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi is the Naval Chief and Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh is the Chief of Air Staff.

Operation Sindoor was triggered by the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

The retaliatory action led to a brief military showdown between the two arch foes before India agreed to halt its operations on Pakistan's request for a ceasefire.

SonyLIV to premiere 'Chakravarti Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan' June 4

SonyLIV is set to bring one of India's most revered historical sagas to the screen with the launch of 'Chakravarti Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan', premiering June 4 at 7.30 pm on both Sony Entertainment Television and SonyLIV.

Produced by Contiloe Pictures, the series promises a grand retelling of the 12th-century warrior king's life — going beyond legend to focus on leadership, strategy, and the indomitable spirit of a young ruler.

The official announcement marks a shift from traditional portrayals of Prithviraj Chauhan, which often romanticised his bond with Princess Sanyogita. This new historical drama turns the spotlight on the realpolitik of the era and the young king's fierce patriotism as he defended his land against the formidable Muhammad Ghori.

"This is not just a love story it's a tale of a boy king who took on the mantle of empire at the age of 12," said Abhimanyu Singh, Founder & CEO of Contiloe Pictures, in the official release. "His courage and patriotism at such a young age were nothing short of legendary. The show captures how Prithviraj Chauhan grew from a child monarch to a warrior who would face one of history's most feared invaders."

Blending meticulous historical research with cinematic storytelling, the series seeks to resurrect an era marked by relentless conflict, dynastic challenges, and political intrigue. The narrative will follow Prithviraj's rise as a military strategist and statesman, leading up to his defining battles against Ghori — a moment that remains deeply etched in India's cultural memory.

'Chakravarti Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan' is backed by opulent sets, elaborate costumes, choreographed battle sequences, and an ensemble cast aimed at bringing historical authenticity and emotional depth to the screen.



This marks another historical venture for Contiloe Pictures, known for their legacy of high-quality period dramas. With this series, SonyLIV strengthens its original content lineup by spotlighting stories rooted in Indian heritage, courage, and cultural pride.

As Indian viewers continue to embrace period storytelling through web and television platforms, this series stands out as a rare attempt to explore the making of a king, rather than merely celebrating his legend.

PTC Punjabi launches game show 'Pakki Punjaban'

PTC Punjabi has launched an exciting new game show titled 'Pakki Punjaban', a first-of-its-kind family entertainment series that brings together vibrant Punjabi households and places Punjabi women right at the heart of the action. With a refreshing concept that celebrates strength, intellect, and unity, the show aired its debut episode today and promises 50 episodes of unstoppable energy, fun, and fierce competition.

Set in PTC's bustling Mohali studios, 'Pakki Punjaban' features two Punjabi families in each episode, with three powerful women per team. From brainy quizzes to high-energy physical tasks, each round is designed to highlight the unique blend of courage, charisma, and collaboration that defines every true 'Pakki Punjaban'.



As per a press release, the show is structured across three exciting segments: the 'Jhat Phat Cash Round', a rapid Q&A sprint for instant rewards; 'One Two Ka Vaar', where teammates can tag in for strategic support; and the 'Pari-War Round', a test of team coordination, agility, and mental prowess. The top-performing families from across the season will go head-to-head in a grand finale to win the prestigious 'Pakki Punjaban' crown along with attractive cash prizes.

Describing the show's unique appeal, Rabindra Narayan, MD and President of PTC Network, shared, "Pakki Punjaban is a unique concept celebrating every Punjabi and Indian household. This is the first show of its kind featuring only female participants who display immense presence of mind, willpower, and both physical and mental strength."

More than just a game show, "Pakki Punjaban" is a heartfelt tribute to the everyday heroes of Punjabi homes. It captures the warmth, humour, and hustle of women who seamlessly switch between their roles—from running households to leading with brilliance on the studio floor.

Set to air from Monday to Saturday at 7pm on PTC Punjabi, this series aims to blend entertainment with empowerment. With daily winners, surprises, and laughter-packed moments, it invites viewers of all ages to cheer for their favourite families as they play for glory, pride, and a chance to be crowned the ultimate 'Pakki Punjaban'.

So mark your calendars and join the celebration of womanhood and family spirit, only on PTC Punjabi.

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Navjot Sidhu returning to 'The Great Indian Kapil Show'



Former cricketer, politician, and popular television personality Navjot Singh Sidhu is all set to return to the comedy stage, confirming his comeback on 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' with an emotional statement: "I'm coming home again."

This marks a significant moment for both Sidhu and the show's fans, who remember him as one of the original pillars of Kapil Sharma's earlier comedy formats. The show, which streams on Netflix and features Kapil Sharma, Sunil Grover, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, Archana Puran Singh, and others, has been one of the most beloved formats in Indian comedy entertainment.

According to a report by IANS, Sidhu expressed heartfelt joy on rejoining the team. "Life comes full circle. I'm coming back to a space that I've always considered home. The laughter, the madness, and the connection with the audience — it's something I've deeply missed," Sidhu shared. His words hint at the nostalgia and bond he shares with the show and its team, especially Kapil Sharma, with whom he's shared a long-standing rapport on and off screen.

Sidhu's return is expected to bring a fresh spark to the show, as he steps back into the space once occupied by Archana Puran Singh — who had replaced him following his exit years ago. The audience is already buzzing with curiosity over how the transition will be handled onscreen, and whether both personalities will be featured in some capacity.

Known for his punchlines, poetic commentary, and larger-than-life laughter, Sidhu was a defining face in Kapil's early comedy shows. His re-entry is likely to blend nostalgia with fresh banter, appealing to long-time fans and new viewers alike.

With this move, 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' continues to evolve while keeping its core rooted in camaraderie, laughter, and spontaneous wit. For Sidhu, it's a homecoming. For the audience, it's the return of an old friend.

'Bhool Chuk Maaf' set for digital premiere

Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi are all set to entertain audiences in their upcoming comedy-drama 'Bhool Chuk Maaf', which is premiering digitally on Prime Video from June 6. The film brings together a quirky, heartwarming narrative backed by strong performances and an ensemble cast that includes Sanjay Mishra, Raghubir Yadav, and Dhanashree Verma.

According to an IANS report, the story revolves around Ranjan, a wide-eyed romantic from Banaras who finally secures a government job and is set to marry his childhood sweetheart, Titli. But just as he's about to claim his happily-ever-after, an old forgotten promise comes back to haunt him—unleashing a string of chaos, comedy, and emotional turmoil.

"What drew me to 'Bhool Chuk Maaf' was the delightfully unpredictable nature of Ranjan's journey," said Rajkummar Rao. "He is a simple man with big dreams, whose life turns completely upside down because of one forgotten promise—leading to the most entertaining chaos. My character is uniquely layered, making it both challenging and rewarding to portray."

Sharing her experience, Wamiqa Gabbi said, "Working on Bhool Chuk Maaf has been an absolute joy. The film's narrative has a touch of innocence to it and it grabbed my attention from the get go. It captures the timeless charm of Indian romance but presents it through a completely fresh lens."

Director Karan Sharma, who has also written the film, called it a celebration of love, faith, and second chances. "The film's unique charm lies in its ability to be both quirky and deeply rooted, exploring something universally relatable—the weight of promises and the unexpected consequences of forgetting them," he said. "Thanks to our phenomenal cast led by Rajkummar and Wamiqa, we've crafted a story that's both entertaining and meaningful."



Producer Dinesh Vijan echoed the sentiment, saying, "'Bhool Chuk Maaf' tackles this deeply relatable conflict with humour and heart, striking a real chord with the 'aam aadmi'. Karan has brought this world to life in a way that's wildly entertaining yet emotionally grounded."

Manish Menghani, director and head – content licensing at Prime Video India, added: "Bhool Chuk Maaf masterfully blends heartland humour, soulful storytelling, and relatable characters, delivering a refreshing narrative."

Presented by Dinesh Vijan in association with Amazon MGM Studios, the film is a Maddock Films production and will stream exclusively on Prime Video starting June 6.

Prime Video rolls out exciting new titles in June

Amazon Prime Video has officially unveiled its streaming lineup for June, and it's shaping up to be a thrilling month for subscribers. From anticipated sequels and fresh originals to gripping sports documentaries and international dramas, Prime members have a lot to look forward to.

According to a recent press release from Amazon Prime Video, the month's standout is 'Deep Cover', premiering on June 12. This fast-paced action comedy stars Bryce Dallas Howard as Kat, an improv instructor who gets a bizarre shot at fame when an undercover cop (played by Sean Bean) offers her a life-altering role. With help from her students—played by Orlando Bloom and Nick Mohammed—she's tasked with infiltrating London's gangland by pretending to be a criminal mastermind.

Amazon also highlights several highly awaited Amazon Originals this month. Ben Affleck and Jon Bernthal reunite in T'he Accountant 2', releasing June 5. The action thriller sees the brothers dive into a high-stakes mission after a close friend's murder. On the documentary front, 'American Thunder: NASCAR to Le Mans', releasing June 12, chronicles NASCAR's groundbreaking entry into Le Mans for the iconic race's 100th anniversary.

One of the biggest global hits, 'The Chosen', returns with its fifth season titled 'The Chosen: Last Supper'. Dropping June 15, this new installment follows Jesus (Jonathan Roumie) as he shares a final meal with his disciples amid increasing tensions with religious authorities. The season will be released in three parts over three weeks, building on the show's growing international fanbase.

Adding a darker twist to the catalogue is 'ROMCON: Who the F**k Is Jason Porter?', a chilling two-part documentary premiering June 13. The story unravels the true-life deception faced by Toronto-based Heather Rovet, who uncovers the shocking truth about her seemingly perfect relationship with a man hiding a criminal past.

Young adult fiction fans can look forward to 'We Were Liars', streaming from June 18. Based on E. Lockhart's best-selling novel, it's a haunting story set on a private island where summer romance and a mysterious accident upend the life of teenager Cadence Sinclair Eastman, played by Emily Alyn Lind.

Meanwhile, international offerings like the Korean fantasy-romance 'Head Over Heels' (June 23), Spanish docu-thriller 'Infiltrada en el búnker' (June 27), and Japanese time-travel revenge drama 'Marry My Husband' (June 27) offer a vibrant mix of genres and global storytelling.

Prime Video also continues to push its live sports slate with NASCAR, WNBA, NWSL, ONE Championship, and Major League Baseball fixtures throughout June. The 2025 NFL Thursday Night Football season schedule has also been released, promising high-stakes games and two festive matchups in December.

Music lovers won't be left out either—Prime Video and Amazon Music will live-stream the Primavera Sound music festival from June 5 to 8, featuring performances by Charli XCX, Sabrina Carpenter, and Chappell Roan from Barcelona's Parc del Fòrum.

The platform rounds out the month with a rich mix of classic films like '12 Angry Men', 'The Greatest Showman', 'Brokeback Mountain', and 'Moneyball', alongside June premieres such as 'Sonic the Hedgehog 3' (June 20), 'Nosferatu' (June 27), and fan-favorite Korean dramas landing on June 29.

Colors Kannada celebrates 10 glorious years with 'Dashakada Mahotsava'

Colors Kannada, one of Karnataka's most loved entertainment channels, is gearing up to mark a landmark moment its 10-year journey with a grand televised celebration, 'Dashakada Mahotsava'. The channel's decade-long bond with Kannadiga audiences will be honoured through a spectacular star-studded event airing on June 7th and 8th at 7 pm.



The celebration is presented in association with Special Partner Sunpure and Beauty Partner Dazzler Cosmetics, and is set to bring together the crème de la crème of the Kannada film and television industry. The two-day event promises nostalgia, performances, and emotional moments, celebrating Colors Kannada's evolution and impact over the past decade.

With the theme 'Ade Beru, Hosa Chiguru' (Same Roots, New Shoots), 'Dashakada Mahotsava' blends the legacy of Colors Kannada with its dynamic, forward-looking spirit. Audiences can expect heartfelt retrospectives and sneak peeks of new content, including brand-new shows slated for launch during the broadcast.

The guest list features stalwarts such as Geetha Shivarajkumar, Vijay Kumar, Sri Murali, Vijaya Raghavendra, Anu Prabhakar, Shruthi, Dr. Tara Anuradha, Shrujan Lokesh, N. Seetharam, Mukhya Mantri Chandru, and Sihi Kahi Chandru. Joining them will be popular television stars like Shwetha Prasad, Ranjini Raghavan, Dhanush, and Sushma Nanaiah, who will perform and relive the magic of the channel's journey.



GIZMOS Gadget 2025

01. Pokémon TCG Pocket Kicks Off Mass Outbreak Event for June 2025

The mobile card battler Pokémon TCG Pocket has launched a new Mass Outbreak Event for June 2025, giving players the chance to collect an exciting wave of limited-time cards. This month's event features a surge in appearances of rare Pokémon cards across booster packs, encouraging trainers to log in daily for exclusive drops and higher pull rates.Special spotlight cards for this outbreak include fan favorites like Charizard, Gengar, and Lucario, along with themed artwork variants. The event will also introduce time-limited challenges and in-game rewards tied to card collection milestones.Running throughout the month, the June Mass Outbreak is designed to boost engagement and offer longtime collectors fresh incentives to expand their digital decks. Players can access the event via the Pokémon TCG Pocket app on iOS and Android.

02. Huawei Mate XT2 Leaked for September Launch with Satellite Connectivity

Huawei is reportedly gearing up to unveil the successor to its tri-foldable Mate XT—the Mate XT 2—in September 2025, marking its entry into a new era of ultra-premium foldable smartphones.

According to reliable leaks from Chinese tipster Smart Pikachu on Weibo, the Mate XT 2 is currently undergoing internal testing and will boast low-orbit satellite connectivity, enabling users to place calls or send messages even in remote locations.



Design-wise, the Mate XT 2 is expected to retain the triple-screen tri-fold layout of its predecessor, offering flexible configurations with 6.4-inch, 7.9-inch, and 10.2-inch displays.

Under the hood, Huawei is likely to upgrade to the Kirin 9020 chipset, an improvement over the Kirin 9010 from the original Mate XT, promising enhanced processing power and AI capabilities.

Additional reported improvements include refreshed camera hardware, enhanced durability with ultra-flexible glass (UFG), and possibly better battery and charging performance, continuing the legacy of a robust 5,600 mAh battery with 66W wired and 50W wireless charging seen in the original.

The Mate XT Ultimate Design—Huawei's maiden tri-fold—launched in China in September 2024 and internationally in early 2025. It features a striking 3.6 mm thin UFG glass panel when fully unfolded, a premium 50 MP+12 MP+12 MP triple-camera system, 16GB RAM, and 1TB storage.

03. Honda Launches New City Sport with Sportier Design

Honda has officially launched the New City Sport, a refreshed and more dynamic version of its popular mid-size sedan. Designed to appeal to younger, performance-focused buyers, the City Sport features sporty exterior accents, a sleek blacked-out grille, stylish alloy wheels, and subtle aerodynamic enhancements.



Under the hood, the New City Sport retains Honda's trusted 1.5L i-VTEC petrol engine, offering smooth performance and responsive handling, now paired with retuned suspension for a sportier drive. Inside, the sedan gets a black-themed cabin with red stitching, premium upholstery, and updated infotainment features.

04. Meta and Oakley Launch AI-Powered Oakley Meta HSTN Glasses

Meta has announced a new partnership with iconic sportswear brand Oakley to unveil a groundbreaking line of AI-powered performance glasses, beginning with the debut of the Oakley Meta HSTN (pronounced "HOW-stuhn"). This latest innovation blends Oakley's cutting-edge eyewear design with Meta's AI and smart tech capabilities, targeting athletes and active users with a high-performance, stylish wearable.

The Oakley Meta HSTN features a built-in camera for hands-free photo and video capture, ideal for documenting workouts, adventures, and daily activities without reaching for a phone. In addition, it includes open-ear speakers for spatial audio, allowing wearers to listen to music or take calls while staying aware of their surroundings. The glasses also boast an IPX4 water resistance rating, making them suitable for active, outdoor use and minor splashes or sweat exposure.



According to Meta, this new category of wearables reflects its broader push into AI-enhanced personal tech, expanding on the success of its Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses.

05. Riders of Tomorrow: ABS Becomes Standard on Every Two-Wheeler

Next year, every two-wheeler on our roads will come equipped with Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)—a change set to revolutionize rider safety. Imagine Sameer, a delivery rider weaving through morning traffic: at an unexpected red light, he slams the brakes—ABS engages, preventing a skid and allowing him to steer clear of danger. Just a few minutes later, Priya, riding to college under sudden rain, benefits as ABS keeps her bike stable despite the slick road.



These everyday moments will soon be safer for millions of commuters and dream chasers alike. With this mandate, the government isn't just upgrading technology—it's elevating every journey. Riders can now trust their brakes, face surprises on the road with confidence, and ride forward, knowing safety is no longer optional—it's built in.

06. Apple Expands Journal App to iPad and Mac with iPadOS 26 and macOS 26 Tahoe

Apple is enhancing its popular Journal app by bringing it to iPad and Mac with the upcoming iPadOS 26 and macOS 26 Tahoe updates, expected to roll out later this year. Previously exclusive to iPhones, Journal is Apple's personal writing app that encourages users to capture daily memories, reflections, and moments with privacy and ease. The iPad version will offer full support for Apple Pencil, allowing users to draw, sketch, or handwrite entries. It also features intuitive touch gestures and multimedia tools, making it ideal for more visual and creative journaling. On the Mac, the Journal app will offer a refined desktop experience—supporting long-form writing, drag-and-drop of media, and a new sidebar for streamlined navigation. Users will also be able to explore entries via a map view, visually organizing memories based on location.



Apple is introducing powerful features across all platforms, including multiple journal creation, smart filters, search, bookmarks, and a recently deleted folder for restoring lost entries. As with its iPhone counterpart, all Journal entries will remain end-to-end encrypted, ensuring privacy and security across synced Apple devices.

07. Samsung to Unveil New Galaxy Devices at July 9 Unpacked Event

Samsung has officially confirmed that its next Galaxy Unpacked event will take place on July 9, 2025, in New York City, where the tech giant is expected to reveal its latest lineup of Galaxy AI-powered devices. Fans can look forward to the debut of the Galaxy Z Fold 7, Z Flip 7, and possibly a new Fold Ultra, promising slimmer, smarter, and more durable foldables.



The event will also showcase the Galaxy Watch 8 series with advanced health tracking features, and may tease Samsung's upcoming mixed-reality headset, codenamed Project Moohan. The livestream will be available on Samsung.com and YouTube at 10 am.

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Smt. Droupadi Murmu
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New Delhi, India-110004
Tel: +91-11-23015321
Fax: +91-11 23017290/+91-11-23017824



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
New Delhi-110001
Tel: 011-23015544, 23015545
Email: minoffice@nic.in, minister.rd@gov.in



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



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

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

www.mib.nic.in

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A-Wing, 5th Floor, Shastri Bhawan,
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Tel.: +91-11-23384340 Fax : +91-11-23384286



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



Shri. L.Murugan
(Minister of State)
Tel: +91-11-23382639, Fax: +91-11-23383513

Sanjay Jaju (Secretary)
Tel: +91-11-23382639, Fax: +91-11-23383513
email: secy.inb@nic.in

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

C. Senthil Rajan
(Joint Secretary (IP)
Email: jspna-moib@gov.in Phone No: 011- 23382597

Prithul Kumar
(Joint Secretary(Broadcasting-II)
Email: jsb[2]-moib@gov.inin Phone No: 011- 223384996

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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(Chairman)
2-Tuglak Lane, New Delhi
Tel: +91-11-26882176
Email: chairperson.tdsat@nic.in

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

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

Admin Section
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2nd Floor, PTI Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001
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Yogesh Sharma, CEO
Siti - Corporate Officefc 19, Sector 16a, Film
Citygautam Budh Nagar, Noida-201301
E-mail:- yogesh.sharma@siti.esselgroup.com

ICNCL

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J- 1 / 15, Block EP, Sec.- V, Salt Lake Electronics Complex,
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HARIT NAGPAL (CEO)
Unit 301 to 305, 3rd Floor, Windsor, Off C.S.T. Road,
Kalina, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 098, Maharashtra, India
Telephone: 022 6613 3000
Email: help@tataplay.com

BHARTI TELETECH

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

DISH TV

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

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Sixth floor, Lotus Tower, Block A, Friends Colony East,
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AMAZON MX PLAYER

Karan Bedi (CEO)
2nd Floor, Wing A, Kanakia Wallstreet,
Village Chakala, Andheri Kurla Road, Mumbai

ZEE5

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

NETFLIX

Monika Shergill, Content Head

Floor 11 & 12, G Block BKC,
Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400051

SHEEMAROO

Hiren Uday Gada, CEO

221, Okhla Industrial Estate Phase 3 Rd,
Okhla Phase III, Okhla Industrial Estate,
New Delhi, Delhi 110019

ALT BALAJI

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

JIO HOTSTAR

Kiran Mani (CEO)
Star House, Urmi Estate, 95 Ganpatrao Kadam Marg,
Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013
Phone Number: 1833-212-2120; **Email:** hello@hotstar.com

SONY LIV

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

DANGAL PLAY

Akshat Singhal, Head
141, Saket Nagar, Indore, Madhya Pradesh - 452001
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