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सम्पादकीय



Roll on

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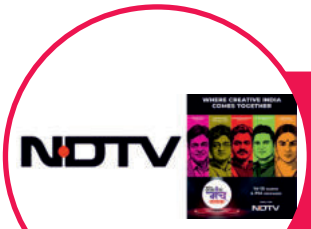


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भविष्य के गर्भ में लगे संभावनाओं के अम्बार AI दीवाना ...देखें हैं ना ....!

वही जो दूसरो से बेख़बर ख़ुद ही से बतियाते दीखते हों, अब ज्यादा ही दीखने लगे हैं इनमें जेंडर कोई महत्व नहीं रखता व ना ही उम्र की कोई सीमा, बस स्वयं में खोये खोए ऐसे प्रतीत होते हैं जैसे बावले हो गए हैं ...-दीवाने !

बारीकी से देख समझ आ जाता है कि वार्तालाप में खोए हैं ,शरीर अवश्य दीख रहा है इनका पर ये हैं नहीं यहाँ....!

एक अलग ही दुनिया है टेलीफोनिक संसार, लोकल सिर्फ शरीर है वो नहीं,वो तो वर्चुअल दुनिया में रमते जा रहे हैं,बस ! उन्हें टोकने छेड़ने की हिमाकत मत कर बैठना झल्ला जाएँगे, गुस्सा आयेगा चिड़चिड़े होते जा रहे हैं, बस आप ख़ामोश देख सकें तो देखते रहें,उन्हें अपनी उसी दुनिया में रहने की अब आदत सी हो गई है !

अपने आस पास से दूर होते जा रहे हैं अब वो ...!

आपसे कर लेंगे ना जब वो करना चाहेंगे संवाद लेकिन फ़ुर्सत ही कहाँ है,देखो ना मोबाइल को चार्ज भी तो करना होता है नहाने धोने फ्रैश होने के अतिरिक्त ,खाने का समय तो मिल ही नहीं पाता है बस बात करते करते कब ख़त्म कर हो गया पता ही कहाँ चलता है !

रात कम पड़ जाती है सोने के लिए समय ही नहीं मिल पाता फिर सुबह के सेड्यूल के लिए मजबूरी .....फटाफट उठ कर भागना होता है , फोन देखने का समय भी सिमटने लगा अब तो, कैसे होगा ना मालूम समय ही बिल्कुल नहीं मिल पा रहा है ,फोन लेकर ही उठना,पकड़े रहना जो होता है ! भला हो ईयरबड्स का कम से कम हाथ तो दोनों फ्री हो गए हैं ,क्या फर्क़ पड़ता है कि आस पास क्या हो रहा है हम तो डिस्टर्ब नहीं हो रहे थैंक्स ईयर बड्स थैंक यू !

इसके परिणामों के लिए लंबी प्रतीक्षा नहीं करनी होगी वो भी शीघ्र सामने आयेंगे जबकि डॉक्टर्स के लिए बड़ी चुनौती साबित होंगी , क्योंकि वर्चुअल संसार में रहने वाली दुनिया के इन दीवानों को शारीरिक समस्या के साथ साथ जो मस्तिष्क की समस्याएं होंगी उनको नियंत्रण में लाने के लिए सबसे पहले तो इन्हें वर्चुअल से बाहर निकाल कर वास्तविक दुनिया में लेकर आना ही बहुत कठिन होगा !

इतने के लिए ही घोड़े खोलना .....-इलाज तो उसके बाद की बात है

-डॉ.ए.के.रस्तोगी



Punjab unveils film promotion policy offering major subsidies

The Punjab Government on March 15 rolled out the Punjab Film Promotion Policy 2026 aimed at making the State a major hub for film production by offering incentives and a streamlined clearance system to attract filmmakers and investors.

The policy was unveiled during a media and entertainment session at the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026, a PTI report from Mohali stated.

Addressing the gathering, AAP leader Baltej Pannu (in the picture) said the Bhagwant Mann-led government was committed to supporting filmmakers and investors.



"We welcome every filmmaker, every investor and every creative mind. Whatever you need, however you need it, the CM Mann-led State government is here for you," he said.

Pannu said the era of middlemen projecting a negative image of the State was over and assured filmmakers and media stakeholders of a single-window clearance system and full government facilitation for shoots in Punjab.

He said the government was streamlining the process for granting shooting permissions. Highlighting Punjab's connectivity, Pannu said the State has two international and four domestic airports, making it easily accessible for the global Punjabi diaspora.

He noted that NRIs are increasingly choosing Punjab for pre-wedding shoots, medical tourism and business.

Addressing the rise of OTT platforms and artificial intelligence, Pannu urged the media to adapt to changing times.

Invest Punjab CEO Amit Dhaka said the State would provide a 25 percent capital subsidy on production costs incurred in Punjab for films, documentaries and web series, up to Rs 3 crore per project.

For Punjabi-language films, the subsidy will be 30 percent of production costs, up to Rs 3.5 crore per film, he said. The policy also provides a 20 per cent capital subsidy for setting up film cities, film studios, VFX studios and training institutes.

Dhaka said Punjab, despite having only 1.5 per cent of India's land area and around 2 percent of its population, has a significant cultural footprint.

With a single-window online permission system and incentives, the government aims to attract filmmakers and boost the state's media and entertainment sector.

The government is also working on developing a film city in Mohali and promoting skill development in film production, he said. Dhaka noted that Punjabi cinema is one of the largest film industries in India and that the Punjabi music industry, with over 400 labels, has a strong global presence.

He added that around 40 per cent of the space on digital and OTT platforms is occupied by Punjabi content.

Prasar Bharati holds copyright over content, govt clarifies in Parliament

India's public broadcaster Prasar Bharati retains copyright over all content produced or commissioned by it, and no recent cases of copyright violation by media production houses have been reported, the government informed the Rajya Sabha or Upper House.

In a written reply to a question by Tiruchi Siva, a government statement detailed, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan said that while copyright infringement by production companies has not been reported, violations by individual users on intermediary platforms are regularly monitored and addressed by Prasar Bharati.

The Minister also said that no instances of sub-contracting of production work have come to the notice of Prasar Bharati. To prevent such practices, agreements with

production companies include provisions that restrict sub-contracting.

Prasar Bharati, an autonomous body, manages India's two public broadcasters — Doordarshan and Akashvani or All India Radio.

Highlighting initiatives to expand content outreach, the government said a new 'Creators Corner' initiative has been launched on Doordarshan to engage digital content creators in promoting socially relevant programming and showcasing India's culture and heritage.

Under the initiative, selected creators must ensure that their content meets quality standards and complies with the Programme and Advertising Codes of Prasar Bharati and other applicable laws. They are also required to have a reasonable digital reach on at least one major social media platform and such persons, according to the government, will be remunerated as per duration-based rates prescribed by the public broadcaster.

The information was provided in the Upper House as part of the government's response regarding copyright safeguards and content production practices in the public broadcasting system.



Dish TV, C21Media to host Content India 2026 in Mumbai

Dish TV India, in partnership with C21Media, is set to host Content India 2026, a three-day industry summit that will bring together leaders from across the entertainment ecosystem to discuss the evolving future of content in India. The event will be held from March 16 to 18 in Mumbai and is expected to attract broadcasters, streaming platforms, studios, production houses and digital-first companies from India and abroad.

According to a press release, the summit aims to serve as a collaborative platform for the entertainment industry to explore emerging trends, partnerships and strategies shaping the future of content creation and distribution. The event will feature high-level discussions on commissioning, production, monetisation, technology adoption, cross-border collaborations and the growing importance of intellectual property in the global entertainment marketplace.



Manoj Dobhal, CEO and Executive Director of Dish TV India, highlighted the growing global momentum around Indian storytelling and emphasised the importance of strategic conversations within the industry. He noted that Indian content has reached a critical point in the international market, where creators, studios and platforms are increasingly focused on building stronger intellectual properties and forging global partnerships. According to him, Content India 2026 will bring together key voices from across the ecosystem to help define the next phase of industry growth.

One of the key sessions at the summit, titled State of the Indian Entertainment Nation, will examine the major trends, opportunities and challenges shaping the country's content landscape. The discussion will feature industry leaders including Shilangi Mukherji, Director and Head of SVOD Business at Prime Video; Anuj Gandhi, Chief Business Officer of Digital Entertainment Service at Reliance Jio; Deepak Dhar, Founder and Group CEO of Banijay Asia and Endemol Shine Asia; and Ashish Sehgal, CEO of Times TV Network.

Another key segment, the Content India Co-Pro Pitch, will provide a platform for early-stage scripted and unscripted projects seeking global co-production partnerships. Two winning projects — one scripted and one unscripted — will receive a £10,000 marketing prize. The panel of judges includes Frank Spotnitz, CEO and Founder of Big Light Productions; Fiona Campbell, Director of Factual at BBC Content; Rashmi Bajpai, EVP Asia at Banijay Rights; Bal Samra, Chairman of Big Deal Films; and Rachel Glaister, EVP International Brands and Press at All3Media International.

The event will also host a session titled Content Strategies: What Indian Commissioners and Buyers Want, featuring industry professionals such as Sahira Nair, Head of Hindi Scripted Series at Prime Video India; Rajaraman Sundaram, Chief Content Officer South at Sony Pictures Networks India; Sai Abishek, Head of Factual Entertainment at Warner Bros. Discovery South Asia; and Vishnu Mohta, Co-founder of Hoichoi.

Another panel discussion titled Current Trends in Indian Production: Getting Your Show on Air will focus on development strategies, financing models and international collaboration opportunities. Speakers for the session include Sunder Aaron, Managing Partner at Locomotive Global; Parveen Dusanj-Bedi, Founder and Managing Director of CreativeNation; Roopak Saluja, Founder of BANG BANG TV; Tarun Sawhney, President APAC at Shorts TV; and filmmaker Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury.

Technology will also play a central role in the discussions, with a session titled Using AI to Supercharge Your Shows in the New Content Economy examining how generative AI is transforming production processes. Speakers include Dipankar Mukherjee, CEO and Co-founder of Studio Blo; Prateek Arora, VP of Development at BANG BANG TV; Anshul Vikram Pandey, Founder and Chairman of PanScience Group; Saiteja Alampally,

Founder and CEO of One Immersive; and Vipul Agrawal, Founder and CEO of Mugafi.

The summit will also feature a fireside chat with Sameer Nair, Managing Director of Applause Entertainment, where he will discuss the evolution of Indian storytelling, intellectual property development and the role of AI in shaping the future of content creation.

Speaking about the upcoming summit, Ashish Sehgal said he is looking forward to engaging with industry leaders, creators and technology partners to discuss the rapid evolution of discovery, distribution and monetisation models in the content business. Similarly, Anuj Gandhi emphasised that industry platforms like Content India 2026 play a crucial role in fostering collaboration and aligning stakeholders to unlock the next phase of growth in India's expanding content economy.

With its focus on actionable insights, industry collaboration and global partnerships, Content India 2026 aims to position itself as a key hub for strategic conversations shaping the future of the Indian entertainment sector.

UP, One OTT Ent launch hi-speed b'band for 20 lakh rural homes



The Uttar Pradesh government has launched Project GANGA (Govt Assisted Network for Growth and Advancement), an ambitious programme aimed at expanding broadband connectivity to nearly 20 lakh households across the state over the next two to three years. The initiative is also expected to generate more than one lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities while strengthening digital infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas.

According to a TOI report, the project will be implemented through a collaboration between the State Transformation Commission and One OTT Entertainment Limited, a subsidiary of the Hinduja Group. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the initiative was signed in Lucknow in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna.

Officials said the initiative seeks to bridge the digital divide by ensuring reliable high-speed internet access in villages and smaller towns across the state. As part of the programme, around 8,000 to 10,000 local entrepreneurs will be developed at the Nyaya Panchayat level as Digital Service Providers (DSPs). These entrepreneurs will deliver broadband connectivity and digital services to households in rural areas, effectively creating a grassroots network for digital infrastructure.

The government has also set a target to ensure that around 50 percent of these digital entrepreneurs are women, promoting women-led entrepreneurship in rural communities. Selected DSPs will receive specialised training, financial assistance, infrastructure support and access to modern technology to help them establish sustainable digital service networks.

Speaking about the initiative, Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said the expansion of broadband connectivity would open new opportunities in areas such as online business, digital services, education and healthcare. He added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government is working to ensure that broadband connectivity reaches every village in Uttar Pradesh.

Khanna also highlighted the state's efforts to support young digital entrepreneurs through financial assistance schemes. He noted that a programme launched in January 2024 provides interest-free and collateral-free loans of up to Rs.5 lakh to youth, with more than one lakh beneficiaries already availing the scheme.

Manoj Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer of the State Transformation Commission, said digital infrastructure is becoming as important as physical expressways for economic growth. He explained that improved connectivity will help expand sectors such as telemedicine, online education, e-commerce, digital skilling and content creation, particularly in remote regions.

Singh added that districts such as Shravasti, Bahraich and Balrampur, which currently face connectivity challenges, are expected to benefit significantly from the project as digital services become more accessible.Industry representatives also emphasised the initiative's broader vision. Vinsley Fernandes, Director of Hinduja Global Solutions, said the concept of the project draws inspiration from the river Ganga as a lifeline connecting millions of people, adding that youth and women empowerment form the core pillars of the programme.

Meanwhile, Satya Prakash Singh, Chief Business Officer of One OTT Entertainment Limited, said the project aims to extend digital connectivity to remote and underserved regions while creating new livelihood opportunities for rural youth.

With improved broadband infrastructure, the Uttar Pradesh government expects Project GANGA to play a significant role in strengthening digital inclusion and accelerating technology-driven development across the state's rural landscape.

Govt admits ad code bars 'miraculous' claims in product ads



The government said advertisements claiming "miraculous" or supernatural properties for products are prohibited under the existing advertising code for television channels, and action is taken against broadcasters found violating the rules.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha (Lower House), according to an official statement put out, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Dr L. Murugan said all advertisements telecast on private satellite TV channels must comply with the Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the rules framed under it.

He said Rule 7(5) of the Advertising Code stipulates that advertisements should not contain references that may lead the public to infer that a product or any of its ingredients has special, miraculous or supernatural properties that are difficult to prove. Appropriate action is taken against private TV channels when violations of the code are detected, the minister said.

Murugan added that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also issues advisories from time to time to broadcasters to ensure compliance with the advertising rules.

The minister said the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, regulates issues relating to unfair trade practices, violation of consumer rights and misleading advertisements.

He further noted that the CCPA has issued the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022, which lay down conditions for valid advertisements.

TRAI issues new audit manual for digital TV distribution systems

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) yesterday issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Digital Addressable Systems Audit Manual, 2026, providing a comprehensive framework for auditing digital television distribution platforms in the country.

The regulator said the manual will serve as a guidance document for the audit process and will come into force from April 1, 2026.

The audit manual has been finalised after a detailed consultation process and aligns with the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 2026. The new framework aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in the operations of distribution platform operators (DPOs) such as multi-system operators and direct-to-home service providers.

According to TRAI, stakeholders had flagged several issues in the existing audit framework, including repetitive audits, operational disruptions and the need for stronger oversight of auditors. The revised manual addresses these concerns by streamlining the audit process and introducing measures to enhance the credibility and technical competence of auditors.

The regulator said the manual lays down detailed procedures and technical guidance for audits under the digital addressable system (DAS) regime but does not supersede the provisions of the existing regulations governing broadcasting and cable services.

Key highlights of the audit manual, which comes into effect from April l1, are the following:

Introduces a structured audit framework for digital addressable systems in broadcasting and cable services.

Seeks to reduce repetitive audits of distribution platform operators to minimise operational disruption.

Incorporates provisions related to infrastructure sharing within the audit framework.

Strengthens auditor accountability and introduces categorisation of auditors based on experience.

Enhances technical proficiency requirements for empanelled auditors.

TRAI, according to its statement, had earlier issued a consultation paper on audit-related provisions in August 2024 and received 64 stakeholder comments and three counter-comments before finalising the manual following an open house discussion in December 2024.

Vaishnaw: Creator economy offers citizens a democratic platform

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has highlighted the growing significance of the creator economy, saying it provides a "democratic platform" for citizens to showcase India's diverse culture and creativity while opening new opportunities for young talent in the digital era.

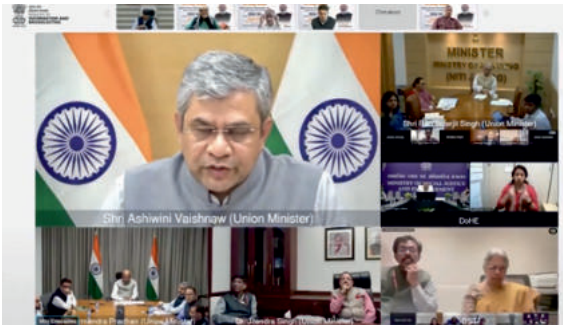
He, according to an official statement put out by the government yesterday, was speaking at a breakout session organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) during the post-Budget webinar on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas – Fulfilling Aspirations of People: Education, Skills and University Townships' on March 9.

The session focused on the implementation roadmap for setting up Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) Content Creator Labs in educational institutions across the country, as announced in the Union Budget 2026–27. The proposed initiative aims to establish such labs in about 15,000 secondary schools and 500 higher educational institutions to nurture creative talent and strengthen India's AVGC ecosystem.

Vaishnaw also highlighted the establishment of the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), envisioned on the lines of premier institutions such as the IITs and IIMs, to provide high-quality training in emerging areas of the creative, media and technology sectors. He said the institute would house advanced laboratories comparable with global standards and help prepare young professionals for new-age creative industries.

The Minister further noted that public broadcaster Doordarshan has launched a 'Creators' Corner', enabling digital creators to showcase their work, earn revenue and reach audiences across India and globally.

According to him, such initiatives would help expand opportunities in the rapidly growing digital media and entertainment ecosystem.



The webinar series was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who underlined the government's focus on promoting the AVGC sector as a key pillar of an innovation-driven economy. He called for stronger industry–academia collaboration and research-oriented learning so that educational institutions can become centres of innovation and industry engagement.

Delivering the keynote address, Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju emphasised the need to build a robust ecosystem to nurture creative talent and position India as a global leader in the AVGC sector.

BARC India, Nielsen unveil unified cross-media ad measurement tool

In a significant development for India's advertising and media measurement ecosystem, Broadcast Audience Research Council India (BARC India) and Nielsen have jointly announced the launch of BARC | Nielsen ONE Ads, a new cross-media advertising measurement solution designed to provide a unified view of campaign performance across both digital and linear platforms.

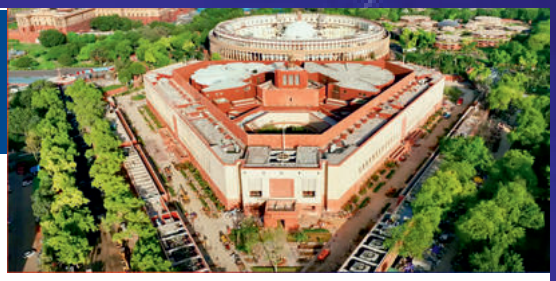
According to a report by The Economic Times, the solution aims to address one of the most persistent challenges in the advertising industry — the lack of a single, reliable system to measure audiences across multiple screens. By integrating television and digital measurement into a unified framework, the new tool is expected to give advertisers a clearer picture of campaign reach and impact.

The initiative marks a first-of-its-kind effort in India to combine television viewership data with digital measurement into a single deduplicated reporting system. The platform merges BARC's linear television viewership data with the capabilities of Nielsen ONE Ads, enabling advertisers to track audiences across multiple screens while avoiding duplication of viewers across devices

Streaming platform JioHotstar will be the first premium content (PGC) platform to deploy the solution. The rollout will begin with coverage of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 hosted by India and Sri Lanka. The companies indicated that the framework could expand further if additional broadcasters choose to participate, potentially enabling broader cross-screen measurement across the industry.

The launch comes at a time when India's media consumption patterns are becoming increasingly fragmented, with audiences spread across television, connected TV, mobile devices and desktop platforms. For advertisers and agencies, this fragmentation has made it difficult to assess the true reach and efficiency of campaigns. The new measurement framework seeks to bridge that gap by offering integrated reporting and deeper insights into campaign performance across delivery endpoints.

Indian Govt explores graded SM curbs for kids instead of ban'



The Indian Government is not in favour of a ban on social media for children, and is instead considering a more nuanced and graded approach in specifying restrictions for children under 18 years, The Indian Express newspaper reported, citing top government sources.

"There will be a certain set of restrictions for those in the 8-12 years age bracket, another set for 12-16 year olds, and different measures for those aged 16-18 years," a senior government functionary told The Indian Express.

"It will be a separate law, and the government is looking at introducing it in the monsoon session of Parliament," said the functionary, who did not wish to be named, according to the Express news story.

While the IT Ministry has over the weeks discussed the possibility of allowing limited usage to children at certain fixed hours during the day in its internal meetings, top government sources told Express there have been informal discussions amongst Cabinet ministers on the need for social media curbs on children.

"We are in favour of restrictions, but not a ban," said the functionary responding to the announcements relating to social media curbs by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, according to The Indian Express.



Meanwhile, Indianbroadcastingworld.com had reported on March 7 that as Karnataka announced a social media ban for children below 16 years, Meta on March 6 cautioned that governments considering such restrictions should be careful not to push teens towards less safe, unregulated sites or logged-out experiences that lack key protection.

Meta, in a statement, had said it will comply with local laws like bans wherever enforced, but added that with teens using nearly 40 apps weekly, "targeting a handful of companies won't keep them safe", a PTI report had stated.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on March 6 announced a ban on use of social media for kids under the age of 16 years, a move aimed at preventing its adverse effects on children.

Govt orders 4-week suspension of news channel TRPs

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has directed the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) to immediately suspend the reporting of Television Rating Points (TRPs) for news television channels for a period of four weeks. The directive, issued on March 6, comes amid concerns over the nature of coverage being aired by some broadcasters.

According to The Economic Times, the ministry said it had observed that certain news channels were displaying "unwarranted sensationalism and speculative content" while reporting on the ongoing tensions between Israel and Iran. The ministry noted that such coverage could potentially create panic among viewers, particularly among those who have friends or family in regions affected by the conflict.

In its order, the ministry stated that BARC functions as a television rating agency registered under the Policy Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies in India dated January 16, 2014. These guidelines outline the regulatory framework within which rating agencies operate, including their obligation to follow directives issued by the government. Referring specifically to Clause 24.2 of the policy, the ministry said rating agencies are required to comply with orders, regulations and directions issued by the government from time to time. Invoking this provision, the ministry instructed BARC to withhold the publication of TRP data for news television channels with immediate effect.

The suspension of ratings will remain in force for four weeks or until further directions are issued by the ministry, whichever comes earlier. The move effectively pauses the weekly viewership measurement system that plays a key role in determining the popularity and advertising value of television news channels.

Industry observers say the temporary halt in TRP reporting is expected to impact the competitive landscape among news broadcasters, as ratings often influence advertising revenue and programming strategies. The ministry, however, has maintained that the step is aimed at ensuring responsible coverage and preventing unnecessary alarm among the public during a sensitive international situation.

FY26 Q3 pay TV viewership dips; telecom subs, revenues up: TRAI

The latest 'Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report' for the quarter ending December 31, 2025 released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) yesterday shows mixed trends in the media and entertainment segments alongside continued expansion in the telecom sector.

Broadcasting indicators highlight a modest contraction in pay TV viewership, with pay DTH service active subscriber numbers declining from 52.78 million to 50.99 million during the quarter, underlining a continuing shift in consumer preferences.

Interestingly, though the number of permitted private satellite TV channels stands at 920, but only 335 of 911 permitted channels reported to TRAI and were active pay TV channels.

In radio broadcasting, 385 private FM radio channels continue operations across 113 cities, though the sector saw two station permissions being surrendered in Mumbai and Chennai during the period under review. Despite this, FM radio advertising revenue increased to Rs. 419.29 crore, up from Rs. 399.96 crore in the prior quarter, indicating resilient ad spends in the segment. In the community radio space, 557 stations were operational as of December 31, 2025. The TRAI release encapsulates broad sectoral trends that underscore media consumption shifts and telecom market resilience, offering a detailed snapshot of industry performance amid evolving consumer dynamics and technology adoption.

On the internet front, India's digital footprint continued to expand, with the total internet subscriber base rising to 1,028.61 million — up 1.06 percent from September. Broadband subscribers formed the bulk at 1,007.35 million, though narrowband users declined 4.18 percent. Wired connections reached 45.32 million, with wireless internet at 983.29 million.

Telecom subscription data, according to the TRAI report, showed robust growth, with total telephone connections increasing from 1,228.94 million to 1,306.14 million quarter-on-quarter. Overall tele-density climbed substantially to 91.74 percent, supported by gains in both urban and rural markets. Wireless (mobile + FWA) subscribers increased to 1,258.77 million, with mobile users standing at 1,244.20 million.

Financial performance indicators reinforced steady revenue growth in the telecom segment.Gross Revenue (GR) rose to Rs.1,02,475 crore, with Applicable Gross Revenue (ApGR) at Rs. 96,456 crore

T20 World Cup 2026 crosses 500 mn viewers in India: Jay Shah

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 has emerged as the most-watched edition in the tournament's history, crossing 500 million viewers in India, according to the International Cricket Council. The milestone was revealed by ICC Chairman Jay Shah in a post on X, highlighting the scale of audience engagement the tournament has generated in its biggest cricket market.

In his message on X, Shah said the tournament had been conceptualised with the ambition of becoming the most "global and accessible" cricket event ever. The viewership milestone in India, he noted, reflects the immense popularity of the format and the strong connection between Indian fans and global cricket events.



"I am humbled that viewership for the event in India has crossed 500 million, the highest ever for any T20 World Cup in history. It was also heartening to see concurrent viewers JioHotstar hit a peak of 60.5 million," Shah wrote in his post, referring to the digital streaming performance on JioHotstar.

Digital engagement around the tournament has also surged, underscoring the growing dominance of streaming platforms for marquee sporting events. The peak concurrent viewership of 60.5 million on JioHotstar highlights the rising role of connected devices and mobile consumption in how audiences watch cricket today.

Shah further expressed optimism that the numbers could continue to grow as the tournament moves into its most crucial phase. "With knock-out matches for the tournament starting tonight, we hope that the immeasurable love our events receive from Indian fans helps break more records," he added.

The record-setting performance comes as the tournament enters its knockout stage, traditionally the most-watched segment of ICC events. India remains the ICC's single largest broadcast market, and the 500-million viewer milestone underscores the sustained commercial strength of T20 cricket across television and digital platforms.

The strong viewership also reinforces the format's central role in driving advertising, sponsorships and media rights value for global cricket. With broadcasters and streaming platforms competing to capture the massive cricket audience in India, events like the ICC Men's T20 World Cup continue to set new benchmarks in sports viewership and digital engagement.

SPNI expands into South Indian markets with 5 new channels

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), has announced plans to launch five new television channels across Kannada, Tamil and Telugu markets as part of its latest reference interconnect offer, signalling the broadcaster's next strategic expansion in India's southern television ecosystem.

The development reflects the network's renewed focus on strengthening its regional footprint in sports and general entertainment.

The expansion will be led by the launch of SONY Sports Ten 4 Kannada, scheduled to go on air from April 1, 2026. The new channel is expected to expand the network's regional sports presence in Karnataka, strengthening its reach among Kannada-speaking audiences and deepening its engagement in the state's competitive sports broadcasting market.

In the Tamil market, the company has proposed two new general entertainment channels — SONY Vizha and SONY Vizha HD — slated for launch on or after June 1, 2026, subject to regulatory approvals. The word 'Vizha', which denotes festivals and celebrations in Tamil, reflects the proposed positioning of the network around culturally rooted entertainment and festive storytelling, highlighting a content strategy focused on regional sensibilities.

The expansion will continue with the proposed launch of two Telugu general entertainment channels — Sony Telugu and Sony Telugu HD — expected on or after August 1, 2026, subject to approvals. While the reference interconnect offer (RIO) describes these as tentative brand names, it confirms their positioning as Telugu-language general entertainment channels, aimed at strengthening the network's presence in one of India's most competitive television markets.

Industry observers noted that the broadcaster's growing investment in Southern television is expected to complement its digital ambitions by strengthening the regional content pipeline for its streaming platform, SonyLIV. A wider slate of Tamil, Telugu and Kannada original programming, along with catch-up content from the new channels, is likely to enhance the platform's regional appeal and support subscriber growth in South India.

The timing of the Kannada sports launch ahead of the general entertainment entries suggests a calibrated market-entry strategy, focused on building distribution and brand presence in Karnataka before expanding content investments in Tamil and Telugu entertainment segments.

JioStar's Piyush Goyal outlines vision for 'Any Screen, Any Pipe' future of TV

Piyush Goyal, Head of Distribution at JioStar, discussed his vision for the future of television on Feb 24, highlighting linear TV's continued relevance while emphasizing the shift toward multiplatform delivery in Mumbai.



Speaking on Distribution Day, Goyal said linear television continues to remain India's most powerful engine of shared viewing, bringing families and communities together in a way no other medium can. He stressed that despite evolving market dynamics, the medium still plays a central role in shaping collective entertainment experiences across the country.

Highlighting the ongoing transformation in the broadcasting ecosystem, he said the industry is moving beyond the traditional "One Screen, One Pipe" model towards an "Any Screen, Any Pipe" approach. According to him, this shift is aimed at extending the strength of linear television across multiple platforms and enabling audiences to access content seamlessly across devices.

Goyal further noted that the changing landscape requires unified, technology-led distribution architecture and stronger partnerships within the ecosystem. He emphasised the need for seamless access across every screen while ensuring that value creation and content reach remain protected.

He added that JioStar looks forward to working with partners to reimagine the distribution of linear television and drive the next phase of growth for the industry, positioning the sector for a more connected and accessible future.

Vaishnaw demands fair revenue share for content creators from digital platforms



Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Feb 25 said that social media platforms must share revenue fairly with content creators, including journalists, conventional media houses, influencers, professors and researchers, stressing the need to ensure equitable distribution of earnings across the digital ecosystem.

According to an IANS report, the minister said individuals and organisations generating content — whether news professionals, creators from remote areas, or academicians sharing research — deserve a fair share of the revenue generated by digital platforms. He emphasised that the principle of fair revenue sharing must be established across the ecosystem to support sustainable growth.

Vaishnaw noted that social media platforms benefit significantly from the content uploaded by individuals and organisations, and therefore creators should receive their rightful share. He added that ensuring fairness in revenue distribution would help strengthen India's digital content economy and encourage wider participation in content creation.

His remarks come at a time when the government is tightening rules around digital platforms to enhance accountability and transparency. In a related development, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) last year proposed amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, aimed at tackling the growing challenge of deepfakes and AI-generated misinformation.

Under the proposed framework, social media platforms will be required to clearly label synthetically generated content and embed permanent metadata or identifiers. Major social media intermediaries with more than five million registered users in India — such as Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat — would need to ensure that AI-generated content is prominently marked.

The draft rules specify that identifiers must cover at least ten percent of the visual display in videos or images, or the first ten percent of the duration in audio content. The metadata must remain unalterable and cannot be suppressed or removed. Platforms that knowingly allow unlabelled or falsely declared AI-generated content could be deemed to have failed to exercise due diligence under the Information Technology Act.

The government believes that such measures, alongside fairer revenue distribution, will strengthen India's digital ecosystem by protecting creators' interests while promoting responsible use of emerging technologies.

JioStar hosts Distribution Day 2026, highlights role of affiliate partners



JioStar hosted its Distribution Day 2026 on Feb 24 in Mumbai, celebrating the affiliate community that powers its linear television network and strengthens its nationwide reach. The event focused on reinforcing partnerships, encouraging industry dialogue, and highlighting the role of distribution partners in expanding television's presence across Indian households.

According to a LinkedIn post by JioStar, the event underscored the company's commitment to collaboration, innovation, and shared progress with its distribution ecosystem. The initiative positioned affiliate partners as central to the company's strategy of delivering entertainment and sports content to millions of viewers across the country.

One of the key highlights of the event was a fireside chat featuring Kevin Vaz, CEO – Entertainment at JioStar, and Ishan Chatterjee, CEO – Sports at JioStar, moderated by Piyush Goyal, Head – Distribution at JioStar. The session focused on fostering open conversations around growth, innovation, and shared priorities within the evolving television landscape.

Speaking at the event, Kevin Vaz emphasised the continuing relevance of television in India's media ecosystem. He

highlighted the company's focus on delivering high-quality, family-oriented entertainment across genres and languages, noting that television remains a powerful medium that brings families together through shared viewing experiences. He also acknowledged the critical role played by distribution partners in enabling the company's content to reach millions of homes daily, adding that their market understanding and resilience drive JioStar's scale and impact.

Vaz further noted that as viewer preferences continue to evolve and content consumption options expand, the partnership between broadcasters and distributors becomes even more significant. Distribution Day, he said, serves as a platform to celebrate this shared journey and reaffirm the company's commitment to growing and reimagining the Pay TV ecosystem. Ishan Chatterjee, meanwhile, highlighted the strong performance of sports content on linear television, stating that live sports continue to deliver record-breaking viewership and unite audiences at an unmatched scale. He said the reach and impact of sports broadcasting would not be possible without the support of distribution partners who help deliver content seamlessly to households across India.

Chatterjee added that JioStar deeply values its distribution ecosystem for enabling the company to bring major sporting moments and experiences to fans nationwide, reinforcing the enduring appeal of the big-screen viewing experience.

Through Distribution Day 2026, JioStar



reiterated its focus on strengthening its affiliate network while advancing innovation in content delivery and audience engagement, positioning partnerships as a cornerstone of its long-term growth strategy in India's evolving television industry.

TRAI backs full auction of IMT spectrum with eased entry norms

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Feb 24 issued its recommendations on the upcoming auction of radio frequency spectrum in bands identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), saying full sale is advisable on easy entry norms and other liberalised stipulations, which also act as guardrails.

TRAI, according to a statement put out by the regulator yesterday, has advised that the entire available spectrum in the 600 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz bands be put to auction in the next round.

It has also recommended that spectrum held by telecom service providers in corporate insolvency proceedings should be taken back and included in the auction. To broaden competition and participation in the auction, TRAI has proposed reducing the net-worth eligibility requirement for new entrants from Rs.100 crore per licensed service area to Rs. 50 crore, and from Rs. 50 crore to Rs. 25 crore for Jammu & Kashmir and North East service areas.

The Authority said that the 20-year validity period for spectrum licences be maintained and that Simultaneous Multiple Round Auction (SMRA) methodology continue to be used.

For existing frequency bands, TRAI has suggested continuation of the currently adopted band plans and specified block sizes and minimum bid quantities for each. The regulator has also recommended a spectrum cap policy to ensure competitive balance, with a 35 per cent cap on total spectrum in several key bands, including the 26 GHz range. The recommendations also clarify that existing rollout obligations remain unchanged for most bands.

TRAI's proposals include specific guidance for the 600 MHz band, suggesting block sizes and an extended validity period of 24 years (20 plus four). It has also recommended a moratorium-based payment option for spectrum charges to incentivise participation.

The regulator has advised that the 6 GHz band not be auctioned at this time, recommending further examination after the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027.

Beyond auction mechanics, TRAI has put forward recommendations intended to strengthen competition and network coverage. This includes reconsideration of differential licensing for network layers, allocation of spectrum for Internet Service Providers and Machine-to-Machine providers, and a scheme for incentivising access service providers to expand coverage in underserved areas through reductions in spectrum cost tied to new base station deployment.

The TRAI recommendations represent a comprehensive set of technical, financial and policy-oriented proposals that the Department of Telecoms may consider as it prepares for the next major spectrum auction aimed at supporting telecom growth and enhanced connectivity across India.

THE CONTENT ENGINE



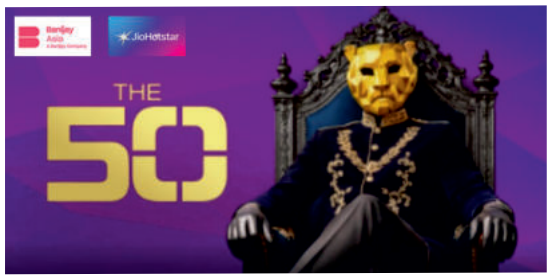
Banijay Asia's 'The 50' breaks OTT records with 8.1mn views on JioHotstar

Banijay Asia's flagship unscripted reality format 'The 50' has become the most-watched show on OTT in its debut week, clocking 8.1 million views on JioHotstar, according to the latest report by Ormax Media. The milestone marks a significant achievement for the show and highlights its strong appeal among digital audiences across India.

According to a Banijay press release, the globally popular French format, 'The 50' reimagines the traditional reality competition model by bringing together 50 prominent personalities from television, digital platforms, music, and the influencer ecosystem. Set inside a grand palace, the show unfolds over an intense 50-day competition, where contestants form alliances, face unpredictable tasks, and navigate strategic eliminations in pursuit of victory.

One of the defining elements of the show is the presence of a mysterious game master known as 'The Lion', whose commanding voice orchestrates the competition. The Lion introduces unexpected twists, directs gameplay, and maintains suspense throughout the series, adding an extra layer of intrigue to the format.

What distinguishes 'The 50' from conventional reality shows is its fan-driven reward structure. Instead of the winner claiming the entire prize money, the ultimate cash reward is granted to one registered follower of the winner, selected through the show's dedicated app. This interactive concept transforms viewers from passive spectators into active participants, encouraging deeper engagement and fan loyalty.



The show's contestant roster combines well-known television stars, reality personalities, and digital influencers. Participants include actors such as Karan Patel and Urvashi Dholakia, reality TV star Divya Agarwal, along with social media creators including Mr Faisu and Dushyant Kukreja. Each contestant brings a dedicated fanbase, amplifying the show's reach across multiple digital platforms.

With its large-scale format, interactive prize concept, and high-intensity gameplay, 'The 50' has rapidly gained traction among viewers. The record-breaking opening week performance reinforces its position as one of the biggest OTT reality phenomena in India, setting a new benchmark for digital-first entertainment formats.

The show's success also reflects the growing appetite for large-scale, interactive reality content in India's expanding streaming ecosystem.

'One Battle…', 'Sinners', Marty…', begin Mar15 Oscars quest

Top names in Hollywood will gather on Sunday (Mar 15) to hand out the annual Academy Awards at a red-carpet ceremony brimming with an unusual amount of drama in the major races. 'One Battle After Another', starring Leonardo DiCaprio as a one-time political radical now parenting a teenager, was seen as the frontrunner for the coveted best picture prize after stacking up trophy after trophy at recent ceremonies.



The vampire story 'Sinners', a celebration of blues music and Black culture in the Segregation-era U.S. South, made a late surge with a win this month at the Actor Awards. The movie leads all films with 16 nominations, a record number in the nearly 100-year history of the Oscars, a Reuters report.

Jessie Buckley is seen as a sure thing for best actress. She is nominated for playing Agnes Hathaway, the wife of William Shakespeare, as the couple navigate the death of their 11-year-old son in 'Hamnet'. The remainder of the top categories have no clear frontrunner, according to Hollywood awards watchers.

Among the top awards, "five of the six seem to be up in the air which is extremely rare," said Scott Feinberg, executive editor of awards at The Hollywood Reporter.

Michael B. Jordan could take home best actor for his dual role as twin brothers in 'Sinners', Feinberg said. His competition, however, includes previous winner DiCaprio, 'Marty Supreme' star Timothee Chalamet and Brazilian actor Wagner Moura of 'The Secret Agent'.

‘Homebound’, ‘Black Warrant’ lead Critics’ Choice Awards noms



Neeraj Ghaywan’s ‘Homebound’ and Vikramaditya Motwane’s crime thriller ‘Black Warrant’ have emerged as the front-runners at the 8th Critics’ Choice Awards, with six and seven nominations respectively, the Film Critics Guild announced on Tuesday.

According to a PTI report from Mumbai yesterday, the annual awards, presented in association with WPP Motion Entertainment, cover feature films, web series, short films, and documentaries, with voting conducted by 56 film critics from across India.Anusha Rizvi’s ‘The Great Shamsuddin Family’, Mari Selvaraj’s ‘Bison Kaalamaadan’, and the BAFTA-winning Manipuri film ‘Boong’ received two nominations apiece.

The Best Film category features ten contenders including ‘Homebound’, ‘Boong’, ‘Sabar Bonda’, ‘Jugnuma’, ‘Sthal’, ‘Ponman’, ‘Su from So’, and ‘The Great Shamsuddin Family’, among others.

On the acting front, Vishal Jethwa (‘Homebound’), Mammootty (‘Kalamkaval’), Basil Joseph (‘Ponman’), Mounesh Nataranga (‘Hebbuli Cut’) and Abhishek Banerjee (‘Stolen’) compete for Best Actor, while Priyanka Bose (‘Agra’), Geetha Kailasam (‘Angammal’), Yami Gautam Dhar (‘Haq’), Amruta Subhash (‘Jarann’), and Sharmila Tagore (‘Puratawn’) are in contention for Best Actress.

The Best Director race features Lakshmipriya Devi (‘Boong’), Ghaywan (‘Homebound’), Aranya Sahay (‘Humans in the Loop’), Reddy (‘Jugnuma’), and Jayant Digambar Somalkar (‘Sthal’).

For Best Supporting Actor, Pasupathy (‘Bison Kaalamaadan’), Akshaye Khanna (‘Dhurandhar’), Dhritiman Chatterjee (‘Putulnacher Itikatha’), Dileesh Pothan (‘Ronth’), and Boman Irani (‘The Mehta Boys’) are in the running.

The Best Supporting Actress category sees Shalini Vatsa (‘Homebound’), Anita Date (‘Jarann’), Lijomol Jose (‘Ponman’), Sandhya Arakere (‘Su From So’), and Shreya Dhanwanthary (‘The Great Shamsuddin Family’) competing for the honour.

In the web series category, ‘Black Warrant’ dominates with seven nominations, followed by ‘Paatal Lok Season 2’ with five and Aryan Khan’s ‘The Ba**ds of Bollywood’* with four. Jaideep Ahlawat (‘Paatal Lok’ S2) and Manoj Bajpayee (‘The Family Man’ S3) headline the Best Actor race alongside Zahan Kapoor (‘Black Warrant’), Roshan Mathew (‘Kankhajura’), and Amit Sial (‘The Hunt – The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case’).

The Best Actress field includes Shabana Azmi (‘Dabba Cartel’), Surveen Chawla (‘Criminal Justice’ S4), Monika Panwar (‘Khauf’), Girija Oak Godbole (‘Perfect Family’), and Priyamani (‘The Family Man’ S3).

The Best Supporting Actor field includes Anurag Thakur, Paramvir Singh Cheema, and Rahul Bhat – all from ‘Black Warrant’ – alongside Manoj Pahwa (‘Perfect Family’) and Raghav Juyal (‘The Bads of Bollywood’).

125,000+ creators monetising content via Amazon India influencer plan

More than 125,000 creators in India are now earning income through the Amazon Influencer Programme and related creator initiatives, as content-led commerce gains traction across the country, according to information released by Amazon India.

The company said its creator ecosystem — which includes the Amazon Influencer Program, Amazon Live and Creator Central — has helped drive product discovery for over 20 million shoppers in 2025, highlighting the growing role of creators in shaping online shopping behaviour.



Amazon said the number of creators participating in its influencer ecosystem increased from around 100,000 before the festive season to more than 125,000, marking a 25 percent growth within a few months. During the 2025 festive season alone, over 4 million customers discovered products through creators, particularly in categories such as lifestyle, electronics, beauty and home.

The company said creators earn commissions by recommending products through personalised storefronts and affiliate links, allowing followers to browse curated product lists, photos, videos and ‘Idea Lists’ directly on Amazon. Earnings depend on factors such as audience engagement, product categories and the volume of purchases generated through creator recommendations.

Regional creators are playing a key role in the growth of the programme, with nearly 70 per cent of creator-led purchases now coming from non-metro cities such as Karnal, Bhubaneswar, Vijayawada and Dehradun, Amazon India said, adding over two-thirds of

participating creators are from over 500 non-metro pin codes, indicating the widening reach of the creator economy beyond major urban centres.

Amazon also highlighted the rapid growth of creator-led shopping formats such as Amazon Live, where influencers showcase products and interact with customers in real time. In a recent 30-day period, customers spent 43 million minutes watching creator-led content on the platform, reflecting increasing consumer interest in interactive shopping experiences.

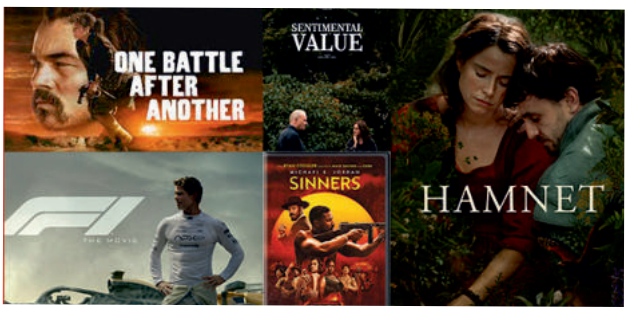
The company said its broader creator ecosystem includes tools and initiatives such as Creator Central for content management and performance tracking, Creator University for training resources, and Creator Connect events aimed at helping influencers build sustainable businesses through content-driven commerce.

5 Oscar-nominated films to stream before 98th Academy Awards

As the countdown to the 98th Academy Awards gathers momentum, film lovers around the world are rushing to catch up on the titles dominating this year's awards conversation. With predictions heating up and favourites beginning to emerge, the 2026 awards season has reached one of its most exciting phases, bringing together a diverse slate of films ranging from powerful dramas to high-octane spectacles and deeply personal stories.

According to a press release from Prime Video, several of this year's Oscar-nominated films are already available on streaming platforms, making it easier for audiences to watch the most talked-about titles before Hollywood's biggest night. From genre-bending thrillers to historical dramas and emotional family stories, the nominated films highlight the wide creative range that defined cinema over the past year.

Among the most talked-about titles is 'Sinners', directed by filmmaker Ryan Coogler. Marking his return to directing after a three-year break, the film is set in 1930s Mississippi and follows twin brothers Smoke and Stack, both played by Michael B. Jordan. The World War I veterans return to their hometown hoping to start a new life by opening a juke joint for the local Black community. However, their plans take a chilling turn when vampires are drawn to the town by the remarkable musical talent of their young cousin. Blending horror, music and historical themes, the film explores how Black art and culture have been celebrated while also being exploited across generations.



Another major nominee generating strong critical attention is 'Sentimental Value', directed by Norwegian filmmaker Joachim Trier. The emotionally layered drama revolves around two sisters, Nora and Agnes, who reunite with their estranged father Gustav, a once-celebrated film director. Following the death of their mother, Gustav attempts to reconnect with his daughters by casting Nora, an actress, in what he hopes will be his comeback film after years away from filmmaking. When she declines the role, long-buried family tensions resurface, forcing the characters to confront unresolved grief and memories tied to their past.

The Oscar race also features the political thriller 'One Battle After Another', directed by acclaimed filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson. The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio as Bob, a former revolutionary living quietly with his daughter while struggling with paranoia and the shadows of his radical past. When unfinished conflicts begin to resurface, Bob is pulled into a relentless pursuit that forces him to confront the consequences of his earlier life while trying to protect his child. The film blends suspense with sharp commentary on activism, identity and the personal cost of living outside mainstream society.

For viewers looking for a cinematic spectacle, 'F1' stands out as one of the most visually thrilling nominees of the year. The racing drama stars Brad Pitt as a veteran Formula One driver who returns to the sport years after a devastating accident ended his career. Joining a struggling racing team alongside a young rookie, he attempts to reclaim his place in the fiercely competitive world of Formula One. Filmed during real race weekends with unprecedented access to the sport, the film combines breathtaking racing sequences with a story of mentorship, rivalry and redemption.

Rounding out the list is the historical drama 'Hamnet', directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Chloé Zhao. Adapted from Maggie O'Farrell's acclaimed novel, the film imagines the emotional circumstances that may have influenced William Shakespeare's writing of Hamlet. Actors Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal portray Agnes and Shakespeare as they cope with the heartbreaking loss of their young son, Hamnet, in 16th-century England. The film delicately explores themes of grief, love and artistic creation.

While the Oscars ceremony lasts only one evening, the films that dominate the awards conversation often continue to resonate long after the trophies are handed out. For audiences looking to catch up on the year's most acclaimed cinema, these five nominees offer a compelling mix of powerful storytelling, emotional depth and cinematic spectacle.

The 98th Academy Awards will be broadcast on March 16, 2026, from 4.30 am to 7.30 am IST, bringing together the biggest stars and filmmakers as the industry celebrates the best achievements in global cinema.

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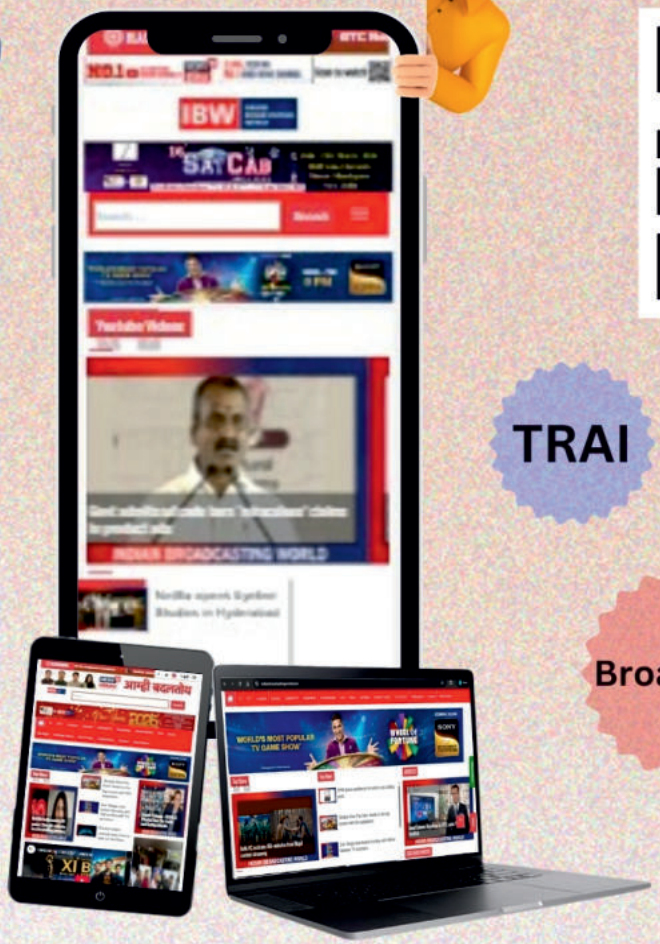
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BCCI awards T20 WC-winning Indian team $14.24mn cash bonus

The Twenty20 World Cup-winning Indian cricket team was awarded a bonus of 1.31 billion rupees ($14.24 million) yesterday by the country's cricket ?board, six times the prize money they claimed for lifting the title in Ahmedabad.

India secured their historic third men's T20 World Cup crown with a dominant 96-run victory over New Zealand in a one-sided ?final on Sunday (march 10), earning $2.34 million for the tournament win.

According to a Reuters report, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the world's richest cricket board, announced the additional prize for the Indian team in recognition of their victory — a sum roughly $3 million higher than the tournament's overall prize pot of $11.25 million.

"The Board congratulates the players, support staff and ?selectors ?once again on this historic achievement and wishes them continued success in the future," the BCCI said in a statement.



The BCCI, last year, had also rewarded the Champions ?Trophy-winning Indian team with a 6.72 million cash bonus, triple that of the $2.24 million they received for the title win.

With India ?now three-times T20 World Cup champions, captain Suryakumar Yadav said the side's next big goal was to ?claim a gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

Meanwhile, a BCCI statement on March 9, accessed by Indianbroadcastingworld.com, quoted the organisation president Mithun Manhas, while congratulating the team, as saying "Winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is a moment of immense pride for the entire nation. To defend the title and achieve this feat on home soil makes it even more special.

"The team played outstanding cricket throughout the tournament under the leadership of Suryakumar Yadav and the guidance of Head Coach Gautam Gambhir. I congratulate every member of the squad, the coaching staff and the selectors for this remarkable accomplishment."

GTC Network gives Punjabi twist to Legends League Cricket

Founder and Managing Director of GTC Network Rabindra Narayan has given a Punjabi tadka(flavour) to cricket by announcing that the Punjabi channel GTC Punjabi will telecast the upcoming season of Legends League Cricket with Punjabi commentary, bringing the tournament to Punjabi-speaking audiences worldwide.

In a Facebook post late last week, Narayan described the development as a "big announcement for Punjabi cricket lovers worldwide", stating that GTC Punjabi has partnered with the league to broadcast Season 4 of the tournament. The telecast will include 19 high-intensity T20 matches along with prime-time coverage and Punjabi-language commentary designed specifically for regional audiences.

According to the FB post, the coverage aims to provide a distinctive viewing experience by offering cricket commentary in Punjabi, allowing fans to follow the matches in their native language. Narayan said the initiative seeks to expand sports entertainment offerings on the channel while strengthening engagement with Punjabi viewers across global markets.



GTC Punjabi is part of the broader GTC Network, a global Punjabi media platform that produces television and digital content spanning entertainment, news, music, films and live events. The network operates multiple channels and platforms aimed at Punjabi audiences in India and across the diaspora.

Headquartered in India with operations and reach extending to markets including the UK, the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe, GTC Network distributes its programming through cable, DTH and streaming platforms. The company says its content strategy focuses on combining cultural storytelling with modern broadcasting technologies while serving Punjabi communities around the world.

With the Legends League Cricket partnership, the network is looking to further diversify its programming portfolio by adding high-profile sporting content to its mix of entertainment and cultural programming, positioning GTC Punjabi as a destination for both regional entertainment and live sports coverage for global Punjabi audiences.

India–England T20 WC semi-final sets global streaming record on JioHotstar

The semi-final clash between India national cricket team and England national cricket team in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 has set a new global benchmark for digital sports viewership, with record-breaking numbers on JioHotstar. The high-stakes match played on March 5 registered an unprecedented 65.2 million peak concurrent viewers on the streaming platform, marking the highest concurrency ever recorded for a live event on any digital platform worldwide.



According to a JioHotstar press release, the semi-final also generated 619 million views on JioHotstar, making it the most streamed T20 International match in history. The massive viewership underscores the scale of fan engagement around the tournament and highlights the growing dominance of digital platforms in sports broadcasting.

The thrilling encounter, which produced a combined total of 499 runs across both innings, kept fans glued to their screens across India and other regions. The peak concurrency figure surpassed the previous global record of 65 million viewers set by an international streaming platform in November 2024. Unlike that record, which was achieved through aggregated audiences across multiple markets, JioHotstar's milestone was driven entirely by viewers within a single market.

Industry observers say the numbers underline the rapid evolution of live sports streaming in India and the increasing ability of platforms to manage massive traffic surges during marquee events. The achievement also reflects the powerful draw of the Indian cricket team, particularly during a high-pressure knockout fixture in a global tournament.

Across both television and digital platforms, the semi-final recorded a combined reach of more than 320 million viewers. Total watch-time across screens crossed an extraordinary 23 billion minutes, making it the most-watched T20 International match ever.

Commenting on the milestone, Jay Shah, Chairman of the International Cricket Council, said it was heartening to see hundreds of millions of cricket fans in India come together for the tournament. He noted that the impressive viewership figures highlight both the passion of cricket followers and the growing accessibility of the sport for audiences around the world.

Uday Shankar, Vice-Chairman of JioStar, said the milestone reflected the company's technological capability as well as the ICC's efforts to expand the reach of cricket globally. He added that when hundreds of millions of viewers tune in simultaneously, delivering a seamless viewing experience requires the best in technology and infrastructure.

MRSI honours top researchers at 7th Golden Key Awards in Mumbai

The Market Research Society of India (MRSI) celebrated excellence in the research and insights industry at the 7th edition of the Golden Key Awards held in Mumbai on March 6.

The event brought together industry leaders, researchers, brand custodians and young professionals to recognise innovation and impactful work across India's market research ecosystem. A total of 14 awards along with the Lifetime Achievement Award were presented during the ceremony, honouring individuals and organisations that have contributed significantly to the growth of the insights industry.



According to a MRSI press release, the awards ceremony featured Anne-Sophie Damelincourt, consultant and president of ESOMAR, who delivered the inaugural address and offered a global perspective on the evolving research landscape. She highlighted the growing influence of technology and artificial intelligence in transforming how insights are generated and applied across industries.

Speaking about the future of the sector, Damelincourt said ESOMAR and MRSI are planning a joint global event on artificial intelligence and technology in 2027. She noted that the initiative aims to create a platform for dialogue among researchers, technologists and business leaders, with a focus on responsible and ethical application of AI in research and insights.

The evening also featured an engaging fireside chat titled 'The Craft of Quiet Brilliance', where National Award-winning actor Vikrant Massey spoke with Shafali Arora about his journey in cinema. Massey reflected on the setbacks that shaped his career and emphasised the importance of authenticity and resilience, drawing parallels between

storytelling in films and the process of building insights in research.

During the event, MRSI also unveiled its refreshed logo, signalling a new phase in the organisation's evolution. The updated visual identity reflects the organisation's expanding role in driving advancements in India's insights community while maintaining its commitment to ethical standards and professional excellence.

Among the winners, Rohit Bansal of Hindustan Unilever Limited received the Best Researcher Under 30 award. Kantar was recognised as Best Operations Team of the Year, while Third Eye Integrated Services Pvt. Ltd. won the Best Client Servicing Team award and also shared the Best Use of AI honour with The Qlue. The Best Client Insight Team award went to Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited.

Other notable recognitions included the Most Effective Story-Teller Award jointly awarded to Hindustan Unilever Limited and SprintStudio.ai, and the Best Data Collection Innovation Award jointly presented to Ipsos and Hindustan Unilever Limited. Quantum Consumer Solutions and Hindustan Unilever Limited were honoured for Best Research Methodology Innovation and also jointly received the award for Best Business Impact Through Research.

Additional winners included PVALUE Analytics for Best Research in the Social and Developmental Sector, Jigsaw Brand Consultants along with Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Limited for Best Communication Crafting Research, and Flipkart Internet Pvt. Ltd. for Best Business Impact Through Analytics.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred on B.V. Pradeep in recognition of his lasting contributions to the research and insights community.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nitin Kamat, Chief Growth and Partnerships Officer at TAM Media Research and President of MRSI, said the industry in India is witnessing rapid growth driven by digital transformation, changing consumer behaviour and the increasing integration of AI and advanced analytics. He noted that the Golden Key Awards continue to recognise research that delivers strategic, communication and business impact while setting new standards of excellence across the sector.

The 7th Golden Key Awards were supported by several industry partners including Advent International, Haleon, Hindustan Unilever Limited, Nestlé India, ITC Limited, Kantar, Amazon, Toluna, VTION, Tata Consumer Products Pvt. Ltd., Diageo, TheLightbulb, NielsenIQ, Third Eye Integrated Services, Knowledge Excel, Ipsos and Global Matrix Survey, reflecting strong industry participation in celebrating excellence in market research and insights.

'Subedaar' shines at Times Square as Anil Kapoor's drama goes global

The recently released Prime original film 'Subedaar' has taken Indian storytelling to a global stage with a striking showcase at Times Square.

The action-drama, headlined by Anil Kapoor, lit up the iconic digital billboards at the world-famous commercial intersection, marking a proud moment for the film as well as for Indian cinema.

According to a Prime Video press release, the larger-than-life display at Times Square celebrates the film's global reach following its recent premiere. Known for hosting some of the biggest international entertainment campaigns and blockbuster promotions, Times Square has long been considered one of the most coveted platforms for global launches, making 'Subedaar's presence there a significant milestone for Indian storytelling.

The film has been drawing attention for its powerful performances and intense narrative. Positioned as a gritty and emotionally charged action drama, 'Subedaar' follows the journey of Subedaar Arjun Maurya, a retired soldier whose quiet civilian life is abruptly disrupted by a reckless act. As circumstances spiral into chaos, he is forced to confront crime, corruption and moral dilemmas while trying to protect his family and reclaim his honour.



Directed by Suresh Triveni, the film is produced by Vikram Malhotra, Anil Kapoor and Suresh Triveni. The cast also features Radhikka Madan alongside Saurabh Shukla, Aditya Rawal, Faisal Malik, Mona Singh and Khushboo Sundar in pivotal roles.'Subedaar' premiered exclusively on Prime Video on March 5 and is available in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. The film has been released across India as well as in more than 240 countries and territories worldwide, expanding its reach to international audiences.

With the film lighting up Times Square, the global showcase highlights the growing presence of Indian content on international platforms. The makers say more moments around the movie are expected to unfold in the coming weeks as the film continues its worldwide run.

Banijay eyes live events as key growth driver beyond TV



Banijay is looking beyond traditional television to unlock new growth opportunities, with live events and franchise extensions emerging as a major focus area for the global entertainment group. The company believes that some of its most valuable intellectual properties can generate stronger engagement and revenue by expanding into immersive experiences and off-screen formats.

According to a Reuters report, Banijay CEO François Riahi told reporters that the company's strongest content IP is increasingly creating value beyond the screen. He pointed to immersive live experiences based on the popular series Black Mirror, scheduled for 2026, as a key example of how the company intends to translate successful storytelling into large-scale audience events.

Riahi said the company possesses a vast library of intellectual property that still has significant untapped potential. "We have a gold mine that we're not fully exploiting," he said, emphasising that the growing importance of content ownership is reshaping the entertainment industry. He also referenced the intense bidding competition between Paramount Global and Netflix for Warner Bros. Discovery's portfolio as an example of how valuable strong IP has become in the current market environment.

The strategic push comes as Banijay prepares for its planned merger with All3Media, a move that could further strengthen its content and production capabilities across international markets. The company sees franchise-led expansion, including live experiences and interactive formats, as a way to deepen audience engagement while opening new commercial avenues beyond broadcasting and streaming.

On the financial front, Banijay's production segment reported consolidated revenue of €3.29 billion in 2025, marking a modest increase of 0.4 percent after adjusting for currency effects. Meanwhile, its online betting division—led by Betclic and supported by the recent acquisition of Tipico—recorded a stronger growth of 10.2 percent, reaching €1.59 billion in revenue.

The gaming business now accounts for roughly one-third of Banijay's overall revenue but contributes nearly half of its profitability, underlining its growing strategic importance within the group. Overall, the company reported a combined EBITDA of €961 million, representing an 8.6 percent increase year-on-year.

Riahi also indicated that the gaming division could receive a boost in 2026 from major global sporting events, particularly the upcoming football World Cup, which is expected to drive customer acquisition across both Betclic and Tipico platforms.

Netflix boosts Ads Suite with new tech tools to up experiences

Netflix has unveiled significant expansions to its Netflix Ads Suite, introducing advanced capabilities designed to enhance advertiser experiences. The company announced these updates to provide more control, better measurement, and innovative creative options for brands targeting its massive audience.

The suite now features in-house ad tech that allows seamless management of buys, creatives, and measurement in one platform. Advertisers gain enhanced data capabilities, including the ability to incorporate first-party data via LiveRamp or directly with Netflix for precise targeting and behavioral insights, a media statement from the streamer said earlier this week.

New measurement tools include Nielsen DAR for deduplicated reach metrics in the US starting Q4, alongside integrations with partners like EDO and TVision. These offer advertisers detailed views into unique audience reach by age and gender, plus attention and response metrics.

Creative innovations enable brands to connect during peak cultural moments with sponsorships tied to top Netflix content. Frequency caps and low ad loads—four to five minutes per hour—ensure smooth integration without disrupting viewer engagement.

Netflix emphasized its ad-supported plan's rapid growth, now exceeding 94 million global monthly active users. Over 40 percent of signups in available markets choose the ads plan, with strong engagement matching non-ad tiers and high attention levels.



Amy Reinhard, Netflix's President of Advertising, highlighted the suite's foundation for faster innovation ahead. With tools like programmatic buying via The Trade Desk, Google DV360 and Magnite, Netflix aims to deliver superior results for members and brands alike.

Shemaroo unveils 'The Glass Ceiling' campaign for Women's Day



Shemaroo Entertainment has launched a new social impact campaign titled 'The Glass Ceiling' this Women's Day, aiming to draw attention to the invisible structural barriers that continue to limit women's progress into leadership roles across industries.

Through the campaign, the company highlights the persistent gap between representation and leadership, emphasising that equal talent and ambition do not always translate into equal access to decision-making positions.

According to a company press release, the campaign focuses on the disconnect that still exists in many organisations where diversity conversations have gained visibility but leadership tables remain unevenly represented. With a strong visual narrative, the initiative seeks to spark conversations around growth pathways, support systems and the need for structural change to ensure women have equal opportunities to move into senior roles.

The campaign also builds on Shemaroo's ongoing focus on purpose-driven storytelling. Over the past few years, the company has undertaken initiatives that question social and cultural assumptions. Among them was the 'Har Role Is Her Role' campaign, which challenged gender stereotypes associated with professions and responsibilities. With the latest initiative titled 'The Glass Ceiling – Her Role Her Rise', the focus now shifts from representation to leadership equity.

Commenting on the initiative, Arghya Chakravarty, Chief Operating Officer at Shemaroo Entertainment, said that while progress has been made in terms of representation, achieving leadership equity requires deeper reflection within organisations. "Inclusion cannot remain a surface-level commitment. The barriers that limit women's advancement are often structural and invisible. With this campaign, we want to bring those constraints into view and encourage conversations that lead to measurable change, within organisations and beyond," he said.

Chakravarty added that meaningful change begins with acknowledging deeply rooted structures and consciously working to dismantle them. According to him, the campaign is intended to encourage organisations and leaders to evaluate how leadership opportunities are distributed and how systemic barriers can be addressed.

Goafest 2026 scheduled from May 20–22 in Goa

The 19th edition of Goafest will take place in Goa from May 20 to May 22, 2026, bringing together leading voices from the advertising, media and marketing industries for three days of discussions, networking and celebration of creative excellence.

According to a press release issued on Wednesday, the event will once again serve as a key platform for industry professionals to exchange ideas and explore the future of advertising and marketing. Organised annually since 2006, Goafest has grown into one of South Asia's most prominent industry gatherings.

The festival will also host the prestigious **ABBY Awards Powered by The One Club for Creativity 2026, regarded as one of the region's most coveted honours in advertising and media. The awards recognise outstanding creative achievements and continue to set industry benchmarks for innovation and storytelling.

Announcing the dates of the upcoming edition, Srinivasan K Swamy, President of the Advertising Agencies Association of India, said Goafest has always served as a platform that brings together creativity, collaboration and new ideas. He noted that the festival aims to spark fresh conversations, offer new perspectives and encourage meaningful dialogue about the future of the advertising and marketing ecosystem.

Echoing similar sentiments, Dheeraj Sinha, President of The Advertising Club, said Goafest continues to represent the spirit of creativity and collaboration within the industry. He highlighted that the ABBY Awards, now in their 57th year, have consistently pushed creative boundaries and raised the bar for excellence, adding that this year's edition is expected to bring together some of the brightest minds in advertising and media.

Jaideep Gandhi, Vice President of AAAI and Chairman of the Goafest 2026 Organising Committee, described the festival as more than just an industry event. According to him, Goafest has evolved into a legacy platform that unites multiple industry associations and stakeholders under one roof. He also acknowledged the pioneers who envisioned the festival and continue to contribute to its growth.

India's football body invites commercial rights bids for 15 years

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) yesterday invited bids for the commercial rights of both men's and women's club competitions for a period of 15 years minimum starting with the 2026-2027 season, offering two packages for bidding pertaining to men's and women's club competitions. According to a PTI report yesterday from New Delhi, package A consists of Indian Super League (or senior-most men's league) and Federation Cup (or senior-most cup competition). Package B comprises Indian Women's League (IWL) and IWL 2, and, at the bidder's option, Women's Federation Cup, which is likely to be introduced later on.

The bids for the commercial rights of the recently rechristened Indian Football League (earlier I-League) were not included in the latest request for proposal (RFP).

"We want the commercial rights for a minimum duration of 15 years. If the bidder agrees it can be done for 20 years also, it is an option," a top AIFF official told PTI.

However, unlike in the past, the RFP will not be made publicly available. Instead, interested parties will have to purchase the document for Rs 2.5 lakh from the AIFF.

"It is clarified that the RFP shall be shared by way of email only upon receiving the payment … the RFP must be purchased by the entity that is desiring to bid. Such right to bid may not be transferred to any affiliates of the entity making payment," the AIFF said.

"Further, any bid submitted in response to the RFP by an entity that has not made the payment described hereinabove, shall be summarily rejected and not considered for any evaluation under the RFP."

A pre-bid conference has been scheduled for March 11, while the last date of bid submission is March 19. The bids will be opened on March 20. The latest tender process came against the backdrop of prolonged uncertainty surrounding the start of the ongoing ISL season which began on February 14 in a truncated format.

The start of 2025-2026 ISL was delayed by around five months after crisis hit the country's football after the national federation and its previous commercial partner FSDL failed to renew the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) beyond December 8 last year.

A tender was floated by the AIFF for the selection of a new commercial partner under the supervision of a Supreme Court-appointed committee, but it found no takers.

But, after the intervention of the Sports Minister and following some tough negotiations, all the 14 clubs confirmed participation in the truncated ISL with 91 matches set to be played on home and away basis.

The ISL clubs would share 60 per cent of the financial cost (around Rs 1 crore per club) for the 2025-26 season of the league, while the AIFF's contribution would be around Rs 9 crore. The total cost for the 2025-25 season has been pegged at around Rs 24 crore.

On January 18, the AIFF issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) document for broadcast rights relating to the truncated ISL. The AIFF, on February 2, awarded the exclusive global broadcast rights of the truncated ISL 2025-26 to FanCode for Rs 8.62 crore.

WBD agrees to be bought by Paramount for $110bn

Warner Bros Discovery had agreed to be acquired by Paramount Skydance in a $110 billion deal signed Friday morning (Feb. 27 as per US time), according to an audio clip of a global townhall by the company, which was reviewed by Reuters.

"Netflix had the legal right to match the PSKY offer. As you all know, they ultimately decided not to do that. That then resulted in a signed agreement with PSKY as of this morning. So that's where everything stands," Bruce Campbell, Warner Bros' chief revenue and strategy officer, said in the townhall, a Reuters report stated.

Paramount and Warner Bros did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The agreement caps a bidding war after Netflix declined to match Paramount's latest $31-per-share offer, which was deemed superior by Warner Bros to the streaming pioneer's $27.75-per-share agreement for its studio and streaming assets.

Paramount is expected to easily win European Union antitrust approval, with any required divestments likely to be minor, Reuters had reported yesterday, citing sources.

However, the merger has drawn scrutiny from California State Attorney General Rob Bonta, who said that the state is investigating the Paramount deal and will be "vigorous" in its review.The deal, which includes some $29 billion in debt, is among Hollywood's biggest media shake-ups and will create

one of the largest film studios in the world, allowing Paramount to tap Warner's trove of intellectual property, including franchises such as 'Fantastic Beasts' and 'The Matrix'.
The company, led by billionaire Larry Ellison's son David Ellison, enticed Warner's board back to the bargaining table by raising the possibility of an improved cash offer.
In its revised bid, Paramount raised the termination fee it would pay should the deal fail to gain regulatory approval to $7 billion from $5.8 billion. Paramount paid the $2.8 billion termination fee that Warner Bros owed Netflix, the streaming giant said in a regulatory filing yesterday.
Meanwhile, British cinemas cautiously welcomed Paramount Skydance beating Netflix in the race to buy Warner Bros Discovery, but remained concerned that combining the Hollywood studios could cost jobs and reduce the number of movies released in theatres, a Reuters report yesterday from London added.
Phil Clapp, chief executive of the UK Cinema Association, said Netflix's withdrawal simplified matters but did not ease concerns around the loss of a major U.S. studio and the implications for the theatrical slate.
"We take the public statements from Paramount Skydance about its plans for any merged company in good faith – as we did those from Netflix," he said.
"But we saw with the Disney acquisition of Fox in 2019 similar public undertakings and now find ourselves in a position where the combined company releases around 40 percent fewer films than was the case when they were separate."

Paramount Skydance readies to dance with WBD; Netflix walks away

Paramount Skydance has emerged as the frontrunner in the race to acquire Warner Bros Discovery, marking a major development in the global media and entertainment industry after Netflix decided not to raise its bid for the Hollywood studio.
According to a report by Reuters on Feb 26, the months-long battle to acquire Warner Bros Discovery reached a turning point when Netflix refused to match Paramount Skydance's latest offer, effectively clearing the path for the company to move ahead in the deal.
Confirming its decision, Netflix said it had chosen to remain financially disciplined and would not increase its offer. "We've always been disciplined, and at the price required to match Paramount Skydance's latest offer, the deal is no longer financially attractive, so we are declining to match the Paramount Skydance bid," the company said in a statement.
The development signals a significant shift in the global streaming and media landscape, as the proposed acquisition could reshape competition across film, television, and digital platforms. Warner Bros Discovery, known for its extensive entertainment portfolio and global presence, has been at the centre of intense interest from major industry players seeking to strengthen their content and distribution capabilities.
Paramount Skydance's potential acquisition is expected to enhance its position in the global media ecosystem by expanding its content library, production scale, and market reach. The move also reflects the growing trend of consolidation across the entertainment industry, as companies pursue strategic partnerships and acquisitions to drive growth and remain competitive in an evolving digital environment.
While further details of the deal and regulatory considerations are yet to emerge, the development underscores intensifying competition among global media giants seeking to secure scale, content strength, and long-term profitability in the streaming era.

Reliance Jio posts strong Q3FY26 growth

Reliance Jio strengthened its leadership in India's telecom sector in the third quarter of FY26, reporting robust revenue growth and expanding its market share amid steady industry momentum. The company recorded strong performance across key markets, further widening its lead over competitors.



According to an ANI report, citing findings by ICICI Securities, Jio's Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), including National Long Distance services, rose 3.9 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 11.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 321 billion in Q3FY26. The company's AGR market share increased to 43 per cent, marking a sequential rise of 41 basis points and a year-on-year increase of 114 basis points.
In comparison, Bharti Airtel reported AGR of Rs 299 billion with a 39.9 per cent market share, while Vodafone Idea posted Rs 99 billion and a 13.3 per cent share. The report noted that Vodafone Idea's AGR market share declined by 28 basis points quarter-on-quarter, primarily due to reduced performance across metro circles.
Jio's incremental year-on-year AGR growth of Rs 32.4 billion outpaced Bharti Airtel's increase of Rs 24.8 billion, underlining its stronger revenue momentum.
The combined AGR of the top three private telecom operators rose 2.9 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 8.9 per cent year-on-year to Rs 720 billion in Q3FY26, supported by subscriber additions and premiumization trends. On an annualised basis, the industry's AGR reached nearly Rs 3 trillion.

ROLL ON

NDTV names Siddharth Narula Revenue Head for 24×7, Profit Studio

NDTV has announced the appointment of Siddharth Narula as Revenue Head for NDTV 24×7 and NDTV Profit Brand Studio, strengthening the network's focus on building integrated brand partnerships and scalable revenue frameworks across its news and business platforms.

The announcement was made through a press release, highlighting Narula's extensive experience of over 25 years in media and digital revenue leadership. Over the course of his career, he has developed strong expertise in cross-platform monetisation, brand solutions, OTT ecosystems, and data-led growth strategies, working across television, web, social media and streaming platforms.

Narula has previously held several senior leadership roles in the industry. He served as Chief Revenue Officer at Zee Digital, where he oversaw revenue operations across OTT, web, social and publishing platforms. He also worked as Chief Revenue Officer at Culture Machine, managing digital businesses across India, North America and the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier in his career, he held key positions at companies including The Walt Disney Company, Bloomberg UTV, CNBC, ESPN, Sony and NDTV, gaining deep exposure to broadcast strategy, digital transformation and integrated brand solutions.



In his new role, Narula will lead the revenue strategy for NDTV 24×7 and NDTV Profit Brand Studio. His mandate includes strengthening premium partnerships, developing integrated storytelling solutions for brands, and building scalable monetisation frameworks that align with the network's journalism-first approach.

Commenting on the appointment, Rahul Kanwal, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of NDTV, said that as the organisation continues to scale its English news and business platforms, revenue strategies must evolve alongside editorial growth. He noted that Narula's experience will help drive long-term, innovation-led brand conversations that create meaningful value for viewers.

Narula said that NDTV's credibility offers a strong foundation for building trust-based partnerships with brands. He added that his focus will be on developing revenue frameworks that are future-ready and data-informed, while remaining aligned with the integrity of the newsroom.

The appointment comes at a time when NDTV is sharpening its focus on integrated brand collaborations and platform-native growth, as the network continues to expand its English news and business offerings while exploring new opportunities in the content marketing space.

TV channel News India Chairman Shailendra Sharma steps down

News India Chairman Shailendra Sharma had resigned from his post owning responsibility for irregularities perpetuated by his colleagues, the channel said in an official statement.

According to the statement, dated February 26, Sharma decided to step down from his position as Chairman of News India 24×7, explaining the reasons behind his resignation. He said that certain individuals who had been entrusted with various responsibilities in the TV channel's operations were found to have committed irregularities and lapses.

Sharma, according to the statement issued by the TV channel's parent company, acknowledged that placing excessive trust in those individuals was a key factor behind the situation.

Nikita Kandhari role at Prime Video, MGM Studios expanded

Nikita Kandhari has taken on an expanded role at Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios, where she will now lead content marketing for the Hindi slate across the platforms.

In a LinkedIn post yesterday, Kandhari announced that her new mandate will cover marketing strategies for original series, films and licensed titles. Reflecting on her journey over the past year, she described it as a phase of significant learning that involved building new intellectual properties, shaping

campaigns and working closely with cross-functional teams to strengthen audience engagement.



She also expressed gratitude for the trust, mentorship and collaboration that contributed to her professional growth, adding that she looks forward to creating thoughtful, audience-first campaigns for stories she strongly believes in. Kandhari presently serves as Principal, Content Marketing at Prime Video and brings with her extensive experience in the streaming industry. Prior to this role, she has worked with major platforms including Netflix and Disney+Hotstar, building expertise in content strategy and marketing across diverse entertainment formats.

Her expanded leadership role is expected to further strengthen Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios' Hindi content portfolio, as the platforms continue to invest in original storytelling and targeted audience outreach in India's rapidly growing digital entertainment space.

SPNI rejiggs linear ad sales leadership roles to drive growth

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) has unveiled another round of leadership restructuring across its linear ad sales organisation, realigning responsibilities across clusters, regions and genres as it gears up for its next phase of growth.

The move, according to industry sources, is aimed at strengthening market presence, enhancing execution capabilities and building long-term leadership depth amid evolving industry dynamics.

The restructuring expands mandates for senior leaders and reorganises key portfolios to improve operational efficiency and regional reach, aligning with changing advertising landscapes and audience consumption patterns.

At the cluster level, Rohit Sinha will expand his mandate to include oversight of the Pay Movies & Infotainment cluster in addition to his existing responsibilities across the Sports Cluster, Channel YAY! and agency relationships. He will continue to report to Akshay Agrawal, Head – Linear Ad Sales.

In a significant shift, Vijay Chabria has been appointed National Head – Pay Movies & Infotainment, assuming national responsibility for the portfolio and reporting to Sinha. Supporting regional execution, Shashank Krishnan will lead the West market, while Sanchit Kapur will head the North as Regional Heads.

Amit Kumar Prasad will continue to lead the Pay Movies & Infotainment genre while also taking on additional responsibility for Channel YAY!, with all three reporting to Chabria.

The company has also broadened Anubhav Gogia's role and he will now oversee the North, South and East branches along with Channel Aath as Cluster Head – SET & SAB (North, South & East), Aath and Government Business, reporting to Agrawal.

Within the Hindi GEC cluster, Ruchi Vidani, along with Pooja Khare and Ankur Shrivastava, will continue leading growth in the South, while Swati Gosain and Anant Nigam will drive North region operations, reporting to Gogia.

Mritunjay Singh has been appointed Cluster Head – SET & SAB (West) and Marathi, Upcountry and Travel & Tourism, expanding his earlier remit in the West. Under his leadership, Siddharth Jodha and Shraddha Mishra will head the West region for the Hindi GEC Cluster, while Prajyot Bhale and Saloni Mahajan will lead Channel Marathi in the West and North markets, respectively.

In the free-to-air segment, Vivek Mathur will continue as National Head – FTA, supported by Karishma Chabria (West), Nakul Anand (North) and Sanjeeva Kulkarni (South). Arpit Shah will continue leading Strategic Planning & Insights and Brand Solutions, while Geeta Prakash Rao will head Operations & Receivables Management.

Broadband firm Excitel names Varun Pasricha as CEO

Excitel Broadband has announced a key leadership transition, appointing Varun Pasricha as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective March 2026, while co-founder Vivek Raina steps down from the role after leading the company for nearly a decade.



The company said Pasricha, who has served as Chief Operating Officer since 2018, will spearhead Excitel's next phase of growth as it strengthens its fibre footprint and expands its partnership-driven model across India.

The transition marks a significant milestone in the company's journey from a disruptive startup founded in 2015 to becoming one of India's top four FTTH internet service providers, serving close to one million households across more than 50 cities and towns.

As CEO, Pasricha will focus on scaling

fibre infrastructure, improving service quality, strengthening cable operator partnerships and accelerating customer acquisition across both existing and new markets. The company aims to deepen its presence in India's fast-growing broadband sector by prioritising network expansion, operational efficiency and customer experience.

Pasricha has been instrumental in developing Excitel's operational backbone over the past eight years, leading large-scale execution across network rollout, partner management, city expansion and service delivery. His work has helped the company scale rapidly while maintaining cost leadership and high customer retention.

Before joining Excitel, he held leadership and strategy roles at companies including Zomato, G4S, Max Healthcare and Indus Towers.

Speaking on his appointment, Pasricha said his focus will be on strengthening systems, enhancing customer experience, empowering the company's partner ecosystem and driving disciplined expansion as the company moves towards its next growth milestone.

Raina, who has led Excitel since its inception, described his tenure as an "incredible journey".

Sagar Kadam joins JioStar as Senior Partnerships Director

JioStar has appointed Sagar Kadam as Senior Director – Ecosystem & Subscription Partnerships for its Digital Venture (JioHotstar), strengthening the company's focus on expanding strategic alliances and driving subscription growth across its digital platforms. Kadam announced his new role through a LinkedIn post yesterday, where he expressed enthusiasm about joining the organisation. Sharing the update, he said he was pleased to take on the position and described the opportunity as a chance to learn, build and contribute at an extraordinary scale. He also thanked the leadership and stakeholders involved in the process, adding that he looks forward to the journey ahead.

In his new role, Kadam will focus on building and scaling ecosystem alliances and subscription partnerships aimed at accelerating growth and monetisation for JioStar's digital business. He brings more than 15 years of experience in digital media, OTT partnerships and business development, with a strong track record of driving subscription-led growth strategies.

Before joining JioStar, Kadam served as Associate Vice President – Partnerships, Growth and Monetization, Digital Business at Sony Pictures Networks India, where he led subscription revenue growth for SonyLIV. In that role, he worked on strategic partnerships and distribution alliances across telecom operators, banks, internet service providers, connected devices, e-commerce platforms, fintech companies and loyalty ecosystems. Earlier in his career, Kadam held the position of Associate Director – Partnerships, Growth and Monetization (Digital) at Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited, where he contributed to the expansion and growth



of ZEE5.

He also spent nearly nine years at Shemaroo Entertainment, handling multiple leadership roles in business development. Prior to that, he worked with i-Free and Enable Mobile Technologies Private Limited, gaining experience in digital services and mobile technology solutions.

Kadam's appointment comes as JioStar continues to strengthen its digital ecosystem and subscription offerings, with a sharper focus on strategic partnerships and expanding its footprint in India's fast-growing streaming and digital media landscape.

NDTV appoints Naveen Kapoor as Editor of NDTV World

NDTV has announced the appointment of Naveen Kapoor as Editor of NDTV World, strengthening the network's global editorial leadership as it expands its international news footprint. The move is aimed at enhancing the channel's global outlook and reinforcing its commitment to credible and independent journalism.



According to a press release, Kapoor brings more than 25 years of newsroom experience and has been part of the core leadership teams behind some of India's most influential news organisations, including Times Now, WION and Press Trust of India. Over the course of his career, he has played a key role in building, scaling and leading news platforms that have emerged as leaders in their respective segments.

Commenting on the appointment, Rahul Kanwal, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of NDTV, said Kapoor's experience in building global newsrooms and managing complex editorial operations

makes him a strong addition to NDTV World as the network deepens its international focus. He added that Kapoor's leadership and editorial depth align closely with the organisation's journalism-first approach.

Before joining NDTV, Kapoor served as the founding editor of PTI's Video Services, where he helped build a modern television and digital news agency from the ground up. His responsibilities included setting up editorial frameworks, domestic and international bureaus, newsroom systems and content delivery mechanisms aligned with international standards.

Earlier, as Head of Newsroom at WION, India's first global news channel, he played a significant role in strengthening the channel's credibility as an international news brand, expanding its global reach and enhancing coverage of major geopolitical and world events. He also served as Senior Vice President and Chief of News Operations at Times Now, where he was part of the core team that shaped the channel's editorial and operational foundations and supported its rise as a leading news network.

Across his roles, Kapoor has led coverage of several defining national and international developments, built high-performing newsroom teams and driven journalism that balances credibility with speed and a strong global perspective.

Menka Asrani joins Amazon as Lead – Studio

Menka Asrani has joined Amazon as Lead – Studio, where she will spearhead branded content initiatives for the OTT platform within the company's Amazon Ads ecosystem, marking a strategic move to strengthen brand-led storytelling and content partnerships.

The announcement was shared by Asrani in a LinkedIn post yesterday, where she expressed excitement about the new role and highlighted her focus on building branded content offerings that bring together storytelling, brand partnerships and audience-first solutions at scale.

In her new position, Asrani will work at the intersection of content and commerce, focusing on developing audience-led branded content strategies and creating meaningful connections between brands and viewers. Her mandate includes shaping innovative content solutions that align with evolving trends in premium digital entertainment and expanding branded storytelling opportunities within Amazon's OTT ecosystem.

Before joining Amazon, Asrani was associated with Collective Artists Network, where she served as Head – Brand Solutions for BigBang.Social. During her tenure, she led brand engagement initiatives and strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing digital content collaborations.

She previously worked as Head – Branded Content (Creative) for Digital Ventures at Viacom18 Media Private Limited, contributing to branded content strategies for JioCinema's entertainment portfolio. Over the years, she has held leadership roles across prominent media and content organisations, including ZEE5, Culture Machine Media, The Walt Disney Company, Bloomberg TV India, and DB Corp Ltd., where she drove brand



solutions, content strategy and intellectual property development.

Sharing her thoughts on the transition, Asrani said the role aligns with her long-standing passion for storytelling and brand partnerships, adding that she looks forward to building impactful content solutions and contributing to the evolving landscape of digital entertainment. She also expressed gratitude for the trust placed in her and enthusiasm about collaborating with the team to scale brand storytelling initiatives.

JioStar appoints Amit Malhotra as Head of International Business

JioStar has appointed Amit Malhotra as Head of International Business, marking a key leadership move as the company sharpens its focus on expanding its global footprint. Malhotra joined the company this week and will be based in Singapore, where he will lead the organisation's international growth strategy and support its ambition to emerge as a globally relevant entertainment company.

According to a report by The Economic Times, Malhotra will be responsible for shaping JioStar's long-term vision for international markets, positioning them as strategic contributors to overall enterprise growth, and driving market-specific expansion initiatives. His role will focus on strengthening overseas presence through strategic partnerships, market launches and innovation across global territories.



In his new position, Malhotra will operate at the intersection of product development, market expansion and external partnerships, acting as both a strategic planner and operational leader. He will also oversee white-labelling opportunities and lead efforts to build high-impact ecosystem alliances aimed at delivering differentiated value to consumers across diverse international markets.

SATCAB SYMPOSIUM

Previous Glimpses



















Presents

16th SATCAB

SYMPOSIUM 2026

DAY 1 - AGENDA

24th March, 2026

10:30 am to 2:00 pm

At Transformation Stage, Hall 2, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

11:15 am– 12:10 pm	SESSION 1 - "THE EVOLVING EDGE: MAXIMIZING BROADCASTERS, DPOS AND LCO POTENTIAL IN THE CURRENT MEDIA LANDSCAPE."
12:15 pm – 1:10 pm	SESSION 2 - " REINVENTING NEWS: SUSTAINABLE MODELS FOR BROADCAST AND DIGITAL."
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	SESSION 3 - " MEASURING THE VARIOUS SCREENS : HOW ROBUST & RELIABLE?"



Dr. A.K. Rastogi
(President, AIADAS)



Shri. Prathul Kumar*
(Joint Secretary - MIB)



Dr. Deepali Sharma
(Advisor (B&CS) - TRAI)



Avinash Pandey
(Secretary General - IBDF)



Anil Malhotra
(Head- Public and Regulatory Affairs, ZEEL)



Upendrra Rai
(Chairman, MD & Editor-in-Chief Bharat Express)



Rabindra Narayan
(Founder, MD & President - GTC Network)



Ashish Sehgal
(CEO - Times Network & CGO - Times Media & Entertainment)



Rajiv Dubey
(Vice President Marketing Dabur India Limited)



Vikram Sakuja*
(Group CEO, Madison Media & OOH)



Hemlata Sharma
(Executive VP & CBO - NXT Media Group)



L.V. Krishnan
(CEO - TAM Media)



Dilip Singh
(Founder - Live Times)



Ajay Singh
(Head Legal, Company Secretary and Chief Compliance officer Hathway Cable and Datacom Ltd)



Sushant S Mohan
(CBO & Group Editor, News24)



Yatin Gupta
(Sr. VP - GTPL)



Akshat Singhal
(Head - Dangal Play)



Pankaj Krishna
(Founder & CEO - Chrome DM)



Aamir Mulani
(Founder & CEO - PlayboxTV)



Padma Kumar
(COO - KCCL)



Kaushik Moitra
(Partner - Bharucha & Partners)

Presents

16th SATCAB

SYMPOSIUM 2026

DAY 2 - AGENDA

25th March, 2026

2:30pm to 5:30pm

At Convergence Stage, Hall 4, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	SESSION 1 - "DIRECT TO MOBILE BROADCASTING (D2M) : A WIN-WIN FOR BROADCASTERS, TELCOS AND CONSUMERS"
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	FIRESIDE CHAT - "THEN, NOW, NEXT: A JOURNALIST'S JOURNEY THROUGH CREDIBILITY, CHANGE, AND THE FUTURE OF NEWS"
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	SESSION 2 - "EVOLVING ECONOMY OF LIVE EVENTS & SPORTS"



Dr. A.K. Rastogi
(President, AIADAS)



Shri. Gaurav Dwivedi
(CEO - Prasar Bharati)



Sudhir Chaudhary
(Veteran Journalist)



Sunil
(President, Broadcast Engineering Society & Former Addl DG (Technology) Prasar Bharati)



Hemlata Sharma
(Executive VP & CBO - NXT Media Group)



Vivek Malhotra*
(CMO - India Today Group)



CK Jain
(Former DDG - Prasar Bharati)



Pankaj Krishna
(Founder & CEO - Chrome DM)



Hocine Belhous
(Product Manager - Synamedia)



Shakunt Malhotra
(GM & VP APAC - appear)



Prashant M Maru
(AVP - Tejas Networks)



Amitabh Srivastava
(Director - iMedia International)



Siddharth Nayyar*
(Co-Founder, AFK Gaming & Co-Founder & CEO - Max Level)

Title Partner

Associate Partner

Supported By

Digital Media Partner

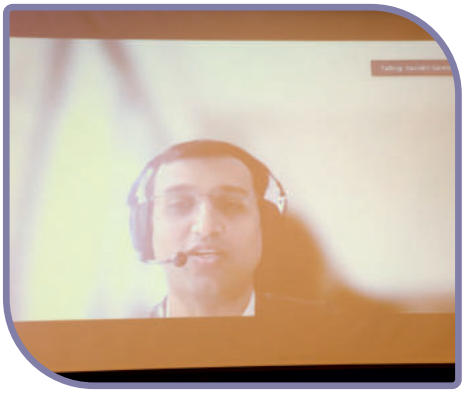
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NDTV's Creators Manch S2 to be held in Delhi on March 14–15

NDTV is set to bring back its cultural platform Creators Manch for its second season this March, bringing together some of India's most prominent poets, writers, lyricists, performers and storytellers for two evenings of poetry, conversation, music and live performance.

Scheduled for March 14 and 15 at Sunder Nursery, the event promises a vibrant cultural gathering where language, imagination and artistic expression come together in a celebration of contemporary Indian creativity.

According to an NDTV press release, Creators Manch Season 2 aims to create a shared space for artists and audiences to engage with literature, poetry and storytelling through live conversations and performances. The two-day programme will feature a diverse line-up of celebrated literary and cultural voices reflecting the evolving landscape of India's creative expression.

The festival will open on March 14 with a series of poetry sessions, performances and conversations. One of the key highlights of the evening will be a special fireside conversation titled 'Khulti Girahen – Between the Lines' with acclaimed actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who will reflect on storytelling, performance and the emotional craft that shapes powerful narratives in cinema and literature. The evening will also feature 'Kehna-Sunna' with noted poet and lyricist Alok Srivastav, who will share poetry that bridges literary expression with contemporary lyricism.

The programme will begin with the session 'Kavita Aaj Ki – Voice of Today' featuring poet Manmeet Soni, setting the tone for a wider exploration of contemporary Hindi poetry. This will be followed by 'Kavita Ki Dhun – Where Poetry Meets Music', a musical-poetic



performance by singer and performer Neeru Soni, popularly known as the Boxing Nightingale, blending poetry with live music.

The evening will also host a lively Jugalbandi session featuring poets Ismail Raaz, Zubair Ali Tabish, Sharya Kirti, Varun Anand and Rohit Sharma, offering an engaging exchange of poetic voices and styles. The first day will conclude with 'Rhythmic Kamil', a special performance by celebrated lyricist and poet Irshad Kamil along with his band, presenting a powerful blend of poetry, music and live performance.

India Today Conclave returns to Delhi for 23rd edition on Mar 13-14

The 23rd edition of the India Today Conclave will take place on March 13–14, 2026 in New Delhi under the theme 'Year of Breakthroughs and Breakdowns.' Widely regarded as one of the country's most influential geopolitical and thought-leadership summits, the conclave has, for more than two decades, positioned itself as 'The Intelligence Exchange', bringing together global leaders, policymakers, innovators and cultural voices to discuss the ideas shaping the world.

According to a press release, the conclave returns at a time when the global order is undergoing significant recalibration across geopolitics, technology and economics. The event will bring together an extensive gathering of decision-makers, entrepreneurs and thinkers to deliberate on the forces redefining nations, markets and societies.

The theme for the 2026 edition reflects the paradox of the present global moment. While the world is witnessing rapid breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, technological innovation and economic transformation, it is also grappling with multiple disruptions including geopolitical rivalries, supply-chain challenges, climate pressures and institutional stress. The conclave aims to explore how leadership and institutions can transform such disruptions into sustainable progress while navigating an increasingly complex global environment.



Against this backdrop, discussions at the event will bring together perspectives from diplomacy, governance, enterprise and culture. The sessions are expected to reflect the dynamics of a multipolar world where economic corridors are evolving, strategic partnerships are shifting and nations are recalibrating the balance between cooperation, competition and sovereignty.

Among the prominent speakers expected at the conclave are Piyush Goyal, India's Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and

Electronics & Information Technology. Diplomats participating include Philipp Ackermann, Ambassador of Germany to India; Antonio Bartoli, Ambassador of Italy to India; Juan Antonio March Pujol, Ambassador of Spain to India; and Hadi Jaber, Ambassador of Lebanon to India, among others.

The conclave will also feature voices from politics and governance including K. C. Venugopal, Manickam Tagore and Tamilisai Soundararajan, alongside defence and security experts such as Raj Shukla. Conversations across these sessions are expected to address evolving geopolitical dynamics and India's role in the changing world order.

The event will further host leading personalities from the entertainment and cultural space, including actors Akshay Kumar, Anil Kapoor and Suniel Shetty. Business leaders and entrepreneurs such as Anil Agarwal of the Vedanta Group and Karan Adani of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone will also participate in discussions around industry, innovation and economic transformation.

In addition to geopolitical and economic themes, the conclave will feature conversations around technology, entrepreneurship, defence, wellness and cultural transformation, bringing together figures such as Maye Musk, Pico Iyer and Melati Wijsen.

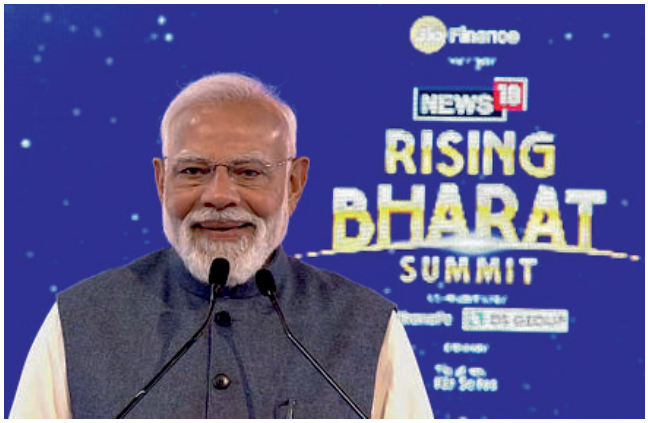
Rising Bharat '26: PM outlined vision of self-reliance, AI leadership

The News18 Rising Bharat Summit 2026 concluded as a high-impact platform for ideas and strategic dialogue, bringing together national leaders, global policymakers, industry captains, defence experts and thought leaders for two days of deliberations in the capital. Anchored on the theme 'Strength Within', the summit, held on February 27 and 28 in New Delhi, focused on India's expanding global stature, domestic transformation and its roadmap towards inclusive growth and strategic autonomy.

Addressing the gathering, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised that India is returning to the pillars that once made it an economic powerhouse — manufacturing strength, quality production and sound economic policy.

The Prime Minister underlined that India's rise is not the result of overnight change but of sustained resolve across generations. He noted that national potential is built gradually and that over the last 11 years a renewed energy has flowed into India's consciousness as the country works to reclaim its lost strengths.

On Artificial Intelligence, Modi asserted that India is no longer a passive participant in global industrial shifts. "In previous industrial revolutions, India and the Global South were merely followers. But in the era of Artificial Intelligence, India is a partner in decisions and shaping them," he said, highlighting the growth of India's AI startup ecosystem and ongoing efforts to meet the energy demands of AI-driven data processing. He also described the recently held AI Impact Summit, attended by over 100 countries, as a proud milestone.



Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal highlighted India's readiness to expand exports, strengthen manufacturing and deepen its role in global supply chains. Referring to trade discussions with the United States, he said India remains engaged in dialogue with the US administration and is committed to safeguarding national interests while seeking competitive advantage in any prospective agreement.

Former Singapore foreign minister George Yeo described India's development as "self-sustaining" and strategically vital for Asia's balance of power. He observed that India's global standing had strengthened when it resisted external pressure at critical junctures, asserting that such firmness enhanced its international credibility.

Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & IT Ashwini Vaishnaw stressed that technology and infrastructure are twin engines of growth. He highlighted the importance of trust in AI deployment and pointed to India's IT sector adaptability, recalling how Indian firms built global credibility during the Y2K transition.

Meanwhile, Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia outlined India's ambition to lead in 6G technology. He said the Bharat 6G Alliance, envisioned in 2023, has mobilised the entire value chain towards research and development, with India collaborating with over 30 countries and contributing to global standard-setting efforts.

The summit also featured global voices. The UK's former Chief of Defence Staff Nick Carter remarked that India possesses the political clout, leverage and economic weight to chart its own course and deserves a seat at the table of great powers, including at forums such as the UN Security Council. Other distinguished participants included former US Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, ambassadors May-Elin Stener of Norway, Philipp Ackermann of Germany and Jan Thesleff of Sweden, technology expert Patrick McGee, military aviation historian Tom Cooper and defence strategist Adrian Fontanellaz. Their presence underscored India's expanding diplomatic and economic footprint.

TV9 Gujarati hosts 'What Gujarat Thinks Today' fest

TV9 Gujarati marked a significant milestone in its journey with the hosting of its flagship Think Fest, 'What Gujarat Thinks Today', in Ahmedabad, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, spiritual thinkers, and cultural voices to deliberate on ideas shaping India's future.

The platform, positioned as a forum for dialogue and direction, reflects the channel's long-standing effort to foster public discourse and engage with issues influencing Gujarat's development and national progress.

According to a TV9 Gujarati press release, the event held yesterday highlighted the network's 18-year journey of building public trust and facilitating meaningful conversations around governance, society, and growth. The conclave aimed to capture the pulse of Gujarat at a time when India is asserting itself on the global stage, with discussions focused on innovation, economic transformation, cultural identity, and policy direction for the coming decade.

The event was attended by prominent leaders, including Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, Union Minister of Jal Shakti C. R. Paatil, and Minister of State for Women and Child Welfare Manisha Vakil. Their participation underscored the forum's focus on governance, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth.

Addressing the gathering, Harsh Sanghavi praised the initiative, stating that such platforms strengthen democratic participation by encouraging youth and various sectors of society to engage actively in the state's development journey. He also highlighted transformative infrastructure projects such as the Mumbai–Ahmedabad bullet train, noting that enhanced connectivity would boost economic activity and attract greater investments, further strengthening Gujarat's position as a growth hub.



Sharing his perspective on Gujarat's evolving role, Barun Das, Managing Director and CEO of TV9 Network, said the State has moved beyond being an industrial powerhouse to become a centre of innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth.

Kalpak Kekre, Channel Head of TV9 Gujarati, emphasised that while policies may be designed at institutional levels, real development is realised through public trust and participation, and the platform aims to amplify that collective voice.

The conclave also featured political and ideological discussions, with Rajya Sabha MP and BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi reflecting on the relevance of Sanatan philosophy in the age of artificial intelligence, describing it as a system rooted in logic and scientific reasoning. Spiritual leaders Brahmavihari Swami and Rameshbhai Oza spoke about the importance of moral and cultural values in a rapidly advancing technological era, encouraging younger generations to maintain a balance between innovation and ethical grounding. Adding further perspective, Sunil Ambekar, Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, highlighted the need for intellectual and cultural reform alongside revisiting historical narratives.

Discussions on economic growth and market trends were led by industry experts including Ajay Kedia, Gautam Trivedi, and Faruk Patel, who shared insights on economic resilience, strategic investments, and sustainable development. From the sporting arena, Arvinder Singh, Chief Operating Officer of Gujarat Titans, highlighted how leadership, discipline, and teamwork are shaping India's global sporting ambitions.

The event also celebrated Gujarat's cultural and creative achievements, with personalities such as Hitu Kanodia, Kinjal Dave, Reeva Rachchh, and Rushabh Ahir discussing the growing global reach of Gujarati cinema, which has crossed the Rs.100 crore milestone while preserving its cultural roots.

NDTV India, NDTV 24×7 lead YouTube viewership amid major news cycle

NDTV's digital platforms have recorded strong audience engagement on YouTube, with both NDTV India and NDTV 24×7 emerging as leaders in viewership during a period marked by intense national and global developments. The network's performance reflects growing digital consumption as audiences tracked key events ranging from the Union Budget to international trade developments and India's sporting milestones.

According to a press release, data released by DataBeings showed that NDTV India recorded 2,455 million views on YouTube, while NDTV 24×7 garnered 119 million views. The figures mark a significant phase of digital engagement for the network during one of the year's most consequential news cycles, as audiences increasingly turned to online platforms for

real-time updates and analysis.

The Union Budget coverage on NDTV played a key role in driving viewership, sparking nationwide discussions through detailed digital explainers, sector-focused insights, and expert-led conversations. The network's coverage explored taxation changes, infrastructure spending, fiscal strategies, and the broader economic roadmap, offering audiences comprehensive perspectives on policy developments.



Global developments also contributed to audience traction, particularly evolving US–India tariff tensions and trade negotiations. NDTV closely tracked the economic and diplomatic implications of these developments, analysing their potential impact on trade flows, domestic industries, and India's global positioning.

India's growing prominence in the technology sector featured prominently in the network's programming, with extensive coverage of the AI Impact Summit and the country's ambitions in the global artificial intelligence landscape. NDTV also hosted the Ind.Ai Summit in New Delhi, bringing together industry leaders and experts to discuss innovation, regulatory frameworks, investment trends, and strategic partnerships shaping the future of AI. The event was streamed live on YouTube, further strengthening digital engagement.

Sporting developments added to the network's viewership momentum, with comprehensive coverage of India's T-20 Cricket World Cup preparations and campaign. Real-time updates, expert commentary, and digital-first formats attracted significant traction among online audiences.Commenting on the performance, Rahul Kanwal, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of NDTV, said February witnessed an unusually fast-moving news cycle, spanning the Union Budget, global trade shifts,

Republic Media takes minority stake in new-age platform ImagiNxt

Republic Media Network has announced the acquisition of a minority equity stake in the parent company of ImagiNxt signalling its strategic push to support emerging institutions driving innovation and policy dialogue across India's technology and economic ecosystem.

The move forms part of a broader media partnership between the two organisations linked to ImagiNxt 2026, a major three-day Indian technology and innovation festival to be held in Mumbai in May bringing together startups, investors, and policymakers. It acts as a hub for AI, Web3, and green tech.

According to a press release from Republic Media yesterday, the investment reflects Republic's commitment to supporting platforms focused on innovation, digital transformation, and India's global competitiveness. The partnership also includes strategic amplification and institutional outreach, with the network set to use its television, digital, Brand Studio and on-ground platforms to enhance ImagiNxt's visibility and expand its national footprint.

ImagiNxt serves as a platform that brings together founders, enterprise leaders, investors, academia and public institutions to foster dialogue around scalable innovation and technological advancement. With Republic's support, the platform is expected to expand its reach and deepen engagement across sectors, while driving conversations around India's economic and technological trajectory.

As part of the collaboration, Republic Media Network will leverage its broadcast and digital verticals to amplify ImagiNxt's initiatives while facilitating engagement with key stakeholders across industry, policy and enterprise sectors. The network said the initiative aligns with its broader vision of acting as a media-tech catalyst, enabling emerging ecosystems to scale with credibility through media amplification and institutional support.

Commenting on the development, Arnab Goswami, Founder, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Republic Media Network, said India's technology ecosystem is entering a decisive phase where innovation, policy and enterprise strategy must move in alignment. He noted that platforms such as ImagiNxt provide an important space for such discussions and that the network aims to amplify these conversations to help build a credible national technology forum.

Deepak Lamba, Founder and CEO of ImagiNxt, said the platform was established to create a long-term institution that brings together leaders shaping India's technological and economic future. He added that Republic's partnership enhances ImagiNxt's ability to scale conversations nationally, citing the network's reach and institutional relationships as key drivers for the platform's expansion.

Both organisations indicated that the investment marks the beginning of a long-term strategic relationship, with discussions underway to explore expanded programming formats and future collaborative initiatives.

BT to host Banking Summit & Best Banks Awards '26 today

The Business Today is set to host the BT Banking and Economy Summit & BT Best Banks Awards 2026 on February 28 at the National Stock Exchange Atrium, Exchange Plaza, BKC, Mumbai. The summit will bring together leading voices from banking, financial services, policy and academia to deliberate on key trends shaping India's financial ecosystem and economic future.

According to a press release, the event will feature high-level discussions on infrastructure financing, capital markets, digital transformation and financial inclusion, alongside the presentation of the BT Best Banks Awards, which recognise excellence and innovation in India's banking sector.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will attend as the Chief Guest and participate in a session titled 'Banking on Infrastructure Growth', where he will share perspectives on financing India's next phase of infrastructure expansion. Shaktikanta Das, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, will join as Guest of Honour and deliver the keynote address, outlining policy directions shaping India's financial architecture amid global uncertainty and domestic growth ambitions.

A session on 'The Future of Indian Capital Markets' will feature Ashish Chauhan, Managing Director and CEO of the National Stock Exchange, who will discuss the changing landscape of market participation, regulatory transformation and digital advancements in trading and settlement systems.



The summit coincides with 30 years of Business Today's coverage of India's economic journey and is anchored around the theme 'The Great Reset at 30 – Marrying Legacy with Leadership for a Stronger Future'. The theme reflects a moment of reflection and reinvention, bringing together decades of institutional experience with emerging shifts in global economics, technology and governance.

'Duologue with Barun Das' S4 returns with star-studded lineup

The fourth season of 'Duologue with Barun Das' is set to return with a new lineup of prominent global personalities, promising engaging conversations that reflect contemporary ideas and perspectives.

Presented by Radico, the much-awaited season will premiere on February 28, 2026, bringing together legends from diverse fields for thought-provoking discussions.

According to a press release, the new season builds on the success of its previous editions, which established the show as a platform for meaningful dialogue rather than a conventional talk show. The upcoming episodes aim to raise questions relevant to current times, exploring the ideas and experiences of influential personalities who continue to shape the global narrative.

Hosted by Barun Das, Managing Director and CEO of TV9 Network, the series has positioned itself as a space for intellectual exchange through conversations that span sports, spirituality, culture and public life. The host described the experience of interacting with distinguished guests over the seasons as enriching, noting that the show has helped bring global leaders closer to audiences in India and beyond.



Season four promises to carry forward the legacy of in-depth and engaging conversations, featuring personalities who have achieved global recognition in their respective fields. The lineup for the new season reflects an eclectic mix of icons whose journeys and perspectives are expected to offer both insight and inspiration.

The season opens with cricket legend Sourav Ganguly on February 28, followed by tennis great Vijay Amritraj on March 1. The third episode will feature German football legend Lothar Matthäus, while global fashion icon Bianca Balti will appear in an episode scheduled for March 8. The season will also include a conversation with acclaimed actor Aamir Khan, whose episode is slated to release on March 4.

The upcoming season continues the show's focus on curiosity-driven conversations and aims to offer viewers a deeper understanding of influential voices across disciplines. With its diverse lineup and emphasis on reflective dialogue, the new edition seeks to further strengthen its position as a platform for insightful discussions on ideas shaping the present and future.

News18 Marathi hosts Navi Mumbai Conclave on urban growth, smart city vision

The News18 Marathi 'Navi Mumbai Conclave' brought together policymakers, urban planners, industry leaders and real estate experts to discuss the evolving urban landscape and future-ready development agenda of Navi Mumbai and Raigad. Held on February 19 in Navi Mumbai, the conclave focused on key issues such as infrastructure expansion, redevelopment and the roadmap for building smart and sustainable cities in the region.



According to a press release, the conclave served as a platform for meaningful dialogue on urban development and regional growth, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and collaboration in shaping future-ready cities. The event underscored the growing significance of Navi Mumbai and Raigad as emerging hubs of infrastructure, connectivity and urban transformation.

The session featured insights from Ravindrakumar Mankar, Chief Planner at City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO), Prakash Baviskar, CMD of Baviskar Group of Companies, and Rasik Chauhan, Managing Director of Bhoomi Homes. The panel discussed key urban planning priorities and challenges, outlining the direction for sustainable development and the need for efficient infrastructure planning to support rapid urbanisation.

Further discussions focused on redevelopment and self-development opportunities, including issues related to MIDC, with participation from Dr. Kailas Baburao Shinde, Commissioner of Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, Manish Bathija, Managing Director of Paradise Group, and Prashant Patel, Director of Delta Group. The speakers highlighted opportunities in redevelopment projects and emphasised the role of policy frameworks and private participation in accelerating urban growth.

An infrastructure-focused session brought together Ganesh Shete, Additional Commissioner of Panvel Municipal Corporation, Devang Trivedi, Managing Director of Progressive Group, and Karan Sabhlok, Partner at Kamdhenu Realities. The discussion highlighted ongoing and upcoming projects aimed at strengthening regional connectivity and supporting long-term development across Navi Mumbai and surrounding areas.

NDTV.com tops English news websites in January with 35.6 million visitors

NDTV.com emerged as India's most visited English news website in January 2026, recording 35.6 million total unique visitors during a month marked by high-impact global and domestic developments.

January was a news cycle defined by consequence and complexity. From discussions at the World Economic Forum in Davos to closely watched political contests and major sporting events, audiences turned to trusted platforms for real-time updates and deeper analysis. According to a press release, NDTV.com led the digital news landscape during this period, drawing the highest number of unique visitors among English news websites in the country.

At the global level, the annual meet at World Economic Forum in Davos commanded international attention between January 19 and 23, shaping conversations around economic strategy and geopolitical shifts. NDTV.com tracked these developments with live reporting and analytical coverage, offering insights into global policy and market directions. On the domestic front, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation elections in Mumbai emerged as one of the most closely followed political events of the month. The website delivered comprehensive coverage, including campaign tracking, result analysis and assessments of the implications for India's financial capital. The India–New Zealand cricket series further sustained sports readership, adding momentum to an already intense news environment.



The 35.6 million unique visitors milestone underscores the platform's continued relevance in a competitive digital news ecosystem. The performance reflects sustained reader engagement and trust at a time when audiences sought clarity and depth amid a fast-moving news cycle.

In a month when global diplomacy, civic politics and sporting rivalries converged to drive record interest, NDTV.com positioned itself as a primary destination for English news readers across India.

News18 Gujarati hosts ‘Pride of Saurashtra’ event in Ahmedabad

News18 Gujarati hosts ‘Pride of Saurashtra’ event in Ahmedabad

News18 Gujarati recently organised the ‘Pride of Saurashtra’ event in Ahmedabad, bringing together industry leaders, educationists, legal experts and entrepreneurs to discuss the region’s growing contribution to the development of Gujarat. According to a press release from News18 Gujarati, the event, held on February 23, focused on highlighting Saurashtra’s expanding role in economic growth, infrastructure development and innovation, while also providing a platform for meaningful dialogue on the region’s future.



The programme was attended by Gujarat’s Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghvi as the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, he underlined the importance of Saurashtra in the state’s overall growth story and spoke about the region’s increasing contribution to economic and developmental initiatives.

The event featured a series of panel discussions centred on key sectors shaping Saurashtra’s future, including infrastructure, education, information technology and the legal ecosystem. One of the sessions focused on infrastructure development as a major driver of economic progress in the region, with industry representatives discussing the role of strategic investments, urban expansion and industrial growth in accelerating Saurashtra’s development trajectory.

PM Modi to headline News18 Rising Bharat Summit 2026 in New Delhi

News18 Network will host the Rising Bharat Summit 2026 in New Delhi on February 27–28, bringing together policymakers, diplomats, industry leaders and cultural figures to discuss India’s growing global influence and strategic direction.

The two-day forum, themed ‘Spotlighting Bharat’s Rise: Driven by Strength Within’, will focus on India’s economic progress, policy vision and expanding role on the world stage.

According to a press release, the flagship summit will be headlined by a keynote address from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is expected to set the tone for discussions around India’s economic momentum, geopolitical positioning and long-term aspirations. The event aims to highlight how domestic strength, innovation and governance are shaping a confident and self-assured India.

Scheduled to begin at 10 am each day, the summit will serve as a platform for high-level dialogue on the country’s evolving global stature. It seeks to position India as a major centre for policy discourse and strategic thought, while showcasing its expanding influence across economic, diplomatic and cultural spheres.

The forum will feature a distinguished lineup of leaders from government, diplomacy, strategic affairs and industry. Key ministerial voices include Piyush Goyal, Minister for Commerce and Industry; Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and IT; Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region; and Rekha Gupta, Chief Minister of Delhi.

The Global Diplomacy and Strategic Affairs segment will include international figures such as George Yeo, former Foreign Minister of Singapore; Nick Carter, former Chief of Defence Staff of the United Kingdom; and Carlos M. Gutierrez, former US Secretary of Commerce, along with ambassadors from Norway, Germany and Sweden.

Prominent voices from industry and innovation will also participate, including investor Ramesh Damani, David Tait of the World Gold Council, and Vishal Sikka, Founder and CEO of Vianai Systems, among others.

The summit will also host discussions on defence, technology and global challenges, alongside sessions featuring



cultural and sporting personalities. Actor and Lok Sabha MP Kangana Ranaut, badminton champion Saina Nehwal, cricketer Mohammed Shami, former Indian hockey captain PR Sreejesh, and film personalities Anil Kapoor and Yami Gautam are among those expected to share their perspectives.

The Rising Bharat Summit 2026 aims to encourage deeper conversations on leadership, policy and innovation at a time when India is undergoing significant transformation and global engagement. The event will be broadcast and live-streamed across News18 Network platforms, as well as CNBC-TV18 and CNBC Awaaz, offering viewers access to discussions shaping the country’s future trajectory.

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SPNI ties up with EU for 'MasterChef India' finale

Sony Pictures Networks India has announced an association with the European Union for the finale week of 'MasterChef India', marking what the broadcaster describes as a first-of-its-kind collaboration in Indian television. The partnership is positioned as a major milestone for the culinary reality show, further strengthening its reputation as a premium platform capable of engaging globally recognised institutions.

According to an SPNI press release, the collaboration aims to go beyond conventional brand placement by integrating authentic storytelling into the competition. By bringing the European Union into the 'MasterChef India' ecosystem, the network seeks to create a distinctive engagement that blends global culinary traditions with the show's competitive format.

The association will be showcased through the 'European Union Mystery Box Challenge', which will serve as the opening task of the highly anticipated finale week. The challenge will be introduced by chef ambassadors Ajay Chopra and Guntas Sethi, who will present the top six contestant pairs with curated mystery boxes containing ingredients carrying geographical indications (GIs) sourced from different regions across the European Union.



Contestants will be required to use a limited number of ingredients from each category and create a dish that blends European elements with Indian flavour sensibilities, testing their creativity, precision, and culinary innovation. Commenting on the partnership, Akshay Agrawal, Head of Linear Ad Sales at Sony Pictures Networks India, described the association as a significant moment for the show's global positioning. He said the collaboration reflects the network's focus on building high-value integrations that deliver cultural relevance while attracting world-renowned institutions to India's leading culinary platform.

Chef Ajay Chopra also noted that the partnership offers an opportunity to engage with India's large food-loving audience and highlight the heritage, authenticity, and quality of European products. He described the collaboration as a celebration of shared food cultures that strengthens connections through gastronomy.

The 'MasterChef India' finale week episodes aired on Sony Entertainment Television and the streaming platform SonyLIV starting March 2.

Network18 platforms among top-viewed Budget Day news streams

The blockbuster film Thamma, which crossed Rs.200 crore at the worldwide box office, is set for its World Television Premiere on March 21 at 8pm on Sony MAX. The premiere will be supported by a large-scale marketing campaign designed to drive viewer engagement and maximise tune-ins across platforms.

The campaign introduces an innovative audience engagement concept titled 'Thammameter.' The tech-driven initiative aims to transform viewers from passive audiences into active participants by tracking real-time reactions to jump-scare clips and assigning personalised 'Ni-Darr' or 'Braver Scores.' These scores are presented through shareable digital scorecards, encouraging audiences to participate and amplify the campaign across social platforms.



The initiative also features a dedicated microsite equipped with an interactive feature called 'Khoon Ki Maang.' This dynamic tool uses a community-powered countdown mechanic designed to create urgency and anticipation ahead of the television premiere. By integrating real-time audience participation with social sharing, the campaign seeks to generate large-scale buzz and drive discovery among viewers.

The marketing push is anchored around the messaging 'Dekho Dil Thaam Kar,' combining technology-led innovation with targeted outreach and platform partnerships. The campaign strategy focuses on a full-funnel promotional approach, blending digital engagement, social amplification and targeted audience communication to position the film's broadcast as a major television event.

'Thamma' is the fifth instalment in the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe, expanding the popular franchise known for blending horror with comedy. The film is directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, who earlier helmed Munjya.

Netflix comedy 'Maamla Legal Hai' to stream from April 3

The legal comedy drama streaming show 'Maamla Legal Hai' is set to return with its 2nd season. The show stars Naila Grrewal, Ravi Kishan and Nidhi Bisht.

Actor and politician Ravi Kishan, according to a PTI report yesterday, said, "I can't believe I am saying this, but I am looking forward to going to court! I can't thank the audience enough for the love and adulation that poured in for the first season of 'Maamla Legal Hai'".

He further mentioned, "This season, Tyagi is eager to prove himself as a judge, but it's a task easier said than done. Yahaan har maamla serious hota hai, par tareeka bilkul hatke (Here, every case is serious, but the approach is completely unconventional).

"I can't wait to welcome audiences back to the madness of Patpatganj District Court. Like we said in the first season: yeh vakeel sirf coat ke kaale hain, dil ke nahi (these lawyers only wear black coats, but their hearts aren't black)".

Adding fresh sparkle to this courtroom are Kusha Kapila and Dinesh Lal Yadav, who blend seamlessly with returning favourites Nidhi Bisht, Naila Grewal, Anant Joshi and Anjum Batra.

The show premiered on Netflix on March 1, 2024. The show is produced by Posham Pa Pictures. It is helmed by showrunner Sameer Saxena, with Rahul Pandey as the director. While the show is based on the world and characters created by Saurabh Khanna and Kunal Anejal, this new season is written by Syed Shadan, Mohak Aneja and Tatsat Pandey with Kunal leading the team.



With its signature blend of satire, heart, and full-on courtroom comedy, 'Maamla Legal Hai'Season 2 promises another bang for the buck ride where every objection sparks laughter and every verdict comes with a twist.

The second season of 'Maamla Legal Hai' will stream on Netflix from April 3.

'Aspirants' S3 to premiere on March 13 on Prime Video

Streaming platform Prime Video on Monday announced that the third season of its acclaimed Hindi drama series 'Aspirants' will premiere on March 13. Produced by The Viral Fever (TVF), the upcoming season brings back the popular ensemble cast while continuing the story of civil services aspirants navigating ambition, friendship and personal struggles.

According to a PTI report, actors Naveen Kasturia, Shivankit Singh Parihar, Abhilash Thapliyal, Sunny Hinduja, Namita Dubey and Tengam Celine will reprise their roles from the previous seasons, with Jatin Goswami joining the cast as a new addition. The series, directed by Deepesh Sumitra Jagdish, will stream exclusively on Prime Video in India and across more than 240 countries and territories worldwide.



The show revolves around three friends — Abhilash, Guri and SK — as they prepare for the UPSC civil services examination in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar. Moving between their student years and present-day lives, the series explores themes of aspiration, failure, friendship and the emotional toll of tying one's identity to a high-stakes examination.

Season three follows IAS officer Abhilash, played by Kasturia, across two timelines. In the present, an inquiry is initiated against him after allegations are made by ALC Sandeep Ohlan, putting strain on his personal relationships with Deepa, Guri, Dhairya and SK, while also disrupting his professional ambitions amid emerging challenges. In the past timeline, a younger Abhilash, after qualifying for the IRS, decides to prepare for the IAS examination one final time from Mukherjee Nagar, where he navigates new friendships and rivalries.

Manish Menghani, Director and Head of Content Licensing at Prime Video India, said the series has built a lasting connection with audiences through its portrayal of aspiration, ambition and responsibility. He noted that the platform's longstanding collaboration with TVF has helped nurture the story across multiple seasons and bring its next chapter to viewers in India and beyond.

Vijay Koshy, President and Business Head at TVF, said the new season explores a crucial phase in Abhilash's life as personal and professional challenges test him in new ways. He added that the series continues to focus on the choices that shape an individual's journey, revisiting Abhilash's final attempt at the IAS examination while also depicting the consequences of his decisions in the present.

The first season of 'Aspirants' premiered on YouTube in 2021, while its second season moved to Prime Video in 2023. The series has since received widespread appreciation for its realistic portrayal of civil services aspirants and the intense pressures associated with competitive examinations in India.

‘The Society’ S2 returns with Munawar Faruqui at the helm

The second instalment of the survival-based streaming show ‘The Society’ is set to return following the strong response to its debut season, with comedian and reality television personality Munawar Faruqui once again leading the show. The upcoming season promises a more intense and psychologically charged experience for participants and viewers alike. According to a UNI report, the new season will also feature digital content creator Shreya Kalra as co-host, adding a fresh dynamic to the format. The teaser introduces a world that appears refined on the surface but reveals a fragile structure beneath, where civility conceals survival instincts and ambition drives conflict among contestants.

The preview highlights a series of intense physical and psychological challenges, including combat-style tasks, head-shaving sequences, emotional breakdowns and heated confrontations among participants. Munawar is positioned as the central authority figure, acting as the judge, jury and executioner who governs the system and determines the fate of contestants.

The show’s visual treatment further heightens its dramatic tone, featuring stark white industrial corridors illuminated by red and blue neon lighting, while mysterious figures wearing crimson animal masks add to the atmosphere of tension and intrigue.



Symbols such as the lion, deer and rat are used to represent different hierarchies within the game’s social order.

The teaser underscores that survival in this “Society” is challenging, but maintaining dominance is even more difficult, ending with the central question — “Who will be the next Baazigar?” The upcoming season will stream exclusively on JioHotstar.

Prime Video spotlights top crime thrillers with global, Indian originals

Prime thrillers continue to dominate streaming platforms with their gripping narratives, complex characters, and suspense-driven storytelling, and Prime Video is bringing together a curated line-up of some of the most compelling titles for audiences seeking edge-of-the-seat entertainment. From intense investigations and psychological mysteries to dark secrets and high-stakes action, the platform is highlighting a diverse range of global and Indian crime series under its ‘Crime on Prime’ offering.

The announcement comes as part of a Prime Video press release that showcases a selection of standout crime dramas designed to engage viewers with compelling storytelling, layered characters, and unpredictable plotlines. The curated list reflects the growing popularity of the genre, offering audiences access to stories that explore the complexities of crime, justice, and human behaviour across different settings.



Among the key titles is ‘Cross’, which sees Aldis Hodge return as detective Alex Cross, a brilliant investigator drawn into a dangerous chase involving a vigilante targeting powerful billionaires. The series explores moral ambiguity and psychological tension as the detective confronts challenges that blur the line between hunter and hunted.

Following closely is ‘56 Days’, featuring Dove Cameron and Avan Jogia as a couple whose whirlwind romance takes a dark turn when a mysterious death shatters their seemingly perfect relationship. As the story unfolds through shifting timelines and hidden truths, the series raises questions about love, deception, and motive.

The collection also includes ‘Young Sherlock’, which presents a fresh take on the iconic detective’s early years, tracing the origins of his investigative brilliance as he navigates a far-reaching conspiracy. Meanwhile, Scarpetta’features Nicole Kidman as medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta, whose forensic expertise uncovers hidden truths while a deeply personal case threatens to blur professional boundaries.

Closer to home, ‘Cheekatilo’ follows a determined true crime podcaster, played by Sobhita Dhulipala, who is drawn into a dangerous investigation after her intern’s mysterious death exposes darker realities beneath the surface. The series explores themes of truth, obsession, and the risks of pursuing justice.

Adding further intensity is ‘Daldal’, set in Mumbai, with Bhumi Pednekar portraying DCP Rita Ferreira, a Crime Branch officer tracking a ruthless killer while grappling with the emotional and psychological toll of the investigation.

Together, these titles underline the enduring appeal of crime storytelling, where each investigation reveals more than just the identity of a culprit and explores deeper human conflicts and motivations. With a mix of international and Indian narratives, Prime Video’s curated crime slate aims to offer viewers a wide spectrum of suspense-driven stories shaped by mystery, tension, and the relentless pursuit of truth.

Mithoon, Palak Muchhal honor Dharmendra at Zee Cine Awards 2026



Maruti Suzuki presents 24th Zee Cine Awards 2026, which takes place on Feb 28 in Mumbai, will feature Indian cinema at its best. A special musical tribute to legendary actor Dharmendra will be performed by singer-composer Mithoon and playback singer Palak Muchhal at the event.

According to a press release, the tribute performance will honour Dharmendra's remarkable journey spanning over six decades, reflecting the emotional depth and cinematic legacy he created through his iconic roles. The ceremony aims to celebrate the bond between stars and their audiences, with music playing a central role in remembering one of Indian cinema's most admired personalities.

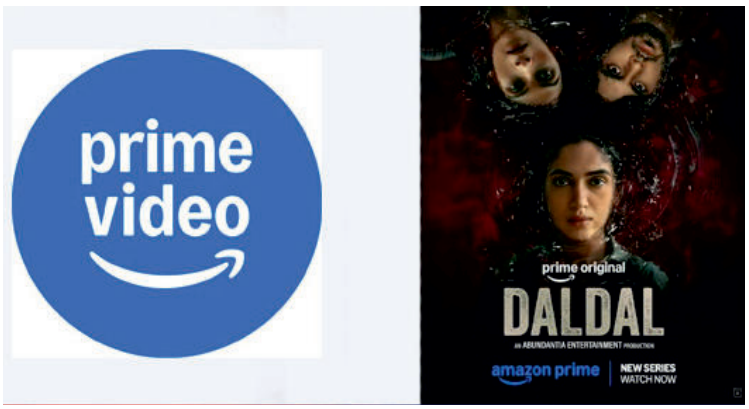
The performance is expected to revisit timeless songs and moments associated with Dharmendra's illustrious career, capturing the spirit of an actor widely remembered for his warmth, compassion and powerful screen presence. He had earlier received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Zee Cine Awards in 2005, dedicating the honour to his fans and acknowledging their continued support.

Speaking ahead of the performance at a press conference hosted by Zee Entertainment Enterprises in Mumbai, Mithoon shared his vision for the tribute, noting that the act would highlight some of the greatest songs associated with Dharmendra's legacy. He said the presentation would revisit timeless compositions by renowned music directors such as Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Madan Mohan and R.D. Burman, aiming to showcase the history of Indian film music through the actor's cinematic journey.

Dharmendra's career has been marked by a wide range of performances, from emotionally resonant roles to memorable characters that defined different eras of Hindi cinema. Known for his authenticity and grounded personality, he continues to be remembered as a figure whose work reflected courage, humility and emotional depth. The tribute seeks to celebrate not only his artistic achievements but also his lasting influence on generations of filmmakers and audiences.

The star-studded awards ceremony will take place at the NSCI Dome in Mumbai on February 28 and March 1. The event will be presented by Maruti Suzuki, with additional partners including Hell Energy Drink, Rajdhani Dal, L'Oréal Paris Glycolic Gloss, Cadbury Dairy Milk and Balaji Wafers.

'Daldal' tops Prime Video India charts for four weeks



Prime Video's latest original series 'Daldal' has emerged as a major streaming success, securing the No. 1 position on Amazon Prime Video India for four consecutive weeks since its launch. The thriller-drama has maintained its dominance as the most-watched title on the platform, drawing strong audience engagement and sustained viewership.

According to a Prime Video press note, the show's consistent chart-topping performance reflects strong audience response and word-of-mouth appreciation for its gripping storyline and emotionally layered narrative. The series has attracted viewers with its intense storytelling and compelling character arcs, helping it retain its top position since release.

Beyond its success in India, 'Daldal' has also delivered an impressive global performance, consistently ranking among the Top 10 titles on Amazon Prime Video across more than 20 countries. The strong international reception highlights the series' broad appeal and its ability to resonate with audiences across markets.

A key factor behind the show's popularity has been the performances of Bhumi Pednekar, Samara Tijori, and Aditya Rawal, who have received widespread appreciation from viewers and critics. Their portrayals have been praised for adding emotional depth and intensity to the narrative, further strengthening the show's connection with audiences.

The series is created by Suresh Triveni, directed by Amrit Raj Gupta, and produced by Abundantia Entertainment, led by producer Vikram Malhotra. Together, the creative team has delivered a tightly woven thriller that blends suspense with strong character-driven storytelling. With its sustained leadership on streaming charts and growing global presence, 'Daldal' continues to strengthen its position as one of the year's most talked-about digital releases, driven by its engaging narrative, standout performances, and strong audience response.

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SOCIAL MEDIA



Oscars 2026 edition delivers mix of emotional wins, historic firsts

The 2026 edition of the Academy Awards delivered a memorable mix of emotional victories, historic firsts and light-hearted moments as filmmakers and performers from across the world were honoured for their work. From long-awaited acting recognition to groundbreaking awards in new categories, the ceremony reflected the evolving landscape of global cinema.

According to a Reuters report from Los Angeles, one of the biggest highlights of the evening came when veteran actor Amy Madigan won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her performance in 'Weapons'. The win marked a remarkable milestone in her career, arriving nearly 40 years after her last Oscar nomination. The emotional moment drew loud applause inside the theatre, with many in the industry praising the Academy for recognising Madigan's decades-long contribution to film.

Host Conan O'Brien kept the audience entertained throughout the evening with his signature wit and playful sketches. In one of the ceremony's most talked-about moments, O'Brien appeared dressed as 'Aunt Gladys,' delivering a comedic monologue that poked fun at artificial intelligence and Hollywood trends. The segment also included humorous remarks about actor Timothée Chalamet, drawing laughter from the audience and viewers watching the broadcast.

In the animation category, the high-energy fantasy film 'KPop Demon Hunters' emerged as the winner of the Best Animated Feature award. The film stood out during the awards season for its unique blend of music, action and visually striking animation. Its victory further highlighted the growing global influence of animation storytelling and the popularity of K-pop inspired themes in entertainment.



Another landmark moment at the ceremony came when casting director Cassandra Kulukundis received the first-ever Oscar for Casting Achievement for her work on 'One Battle After Another'. The category was introduced by the Academy to recognise the crucial role casting directors play in shaping films and performances. Kulukundis' win marked the beginning of what many in the industry believe will become an important recognition for behind-the-scenes creative talent.

The Best Documentary Feature award went to 'Mr. Nobody Against Putin', a powerful documentary that tells the story of a teacher who openly opposed the Russia–Ukraine War. The film captured global attention for its portrayal of individual courage in the face of political pressure, resonating strongly with Academy voters and audiences alike.

The ceremony also featured an extended and deeply moving 'In Memoriam' segment led by legendary performers Billy Crystal and Barbra Streisand. The tribute honoured film personalities who passed away during the past year and was accompanied by archival clips and musical performances. The expanded segment left many in the audience visibly emotional and became one of the evening's most poignant moments.

In the international category, the Norwegian family drama 'Sentimental Value' won the Best International Feature Film Oscar. The film's intimate storytelling and powerful performances helped it stand out among strong global contenders. Critics widely praised the film for its nuanced portrayal of family relationships and emotional depth.

Overall, the 2026 Oscars celebrated cinema's diversity, creativity and global reach. With historic wins, emotional tributes and moments of humour, the ceremony once again highlighted the enduring influence of filmmaking across cultures and audiences.

Krafton India announces Rs. 4cr prize pool for BGIS '26 finals

Krafton India has unveiled a massive Rs. 4 crore prize pool for the BATTLEGROUNDS MOBILE INDIA SERIES (BGIS) 2026 Grand Finals, scheduled for March 27-29 in Chennai. This huge bounty highlights the escalating stakes in India's premier BGMI esports event, drawing top talent nationwide.

Fans themselves unlocked half the pool — Rs. 2 crore — via in-game challenges, marking a milestone in community-driven competition.

According to a press release from the Korean video game publisher, the prize distribution splits into Rs. 2 crore from Krafton India and an equal fan-contributed amount earned through the Discovery Island initiative, launched January 15, 2026.



Players accumulated Exploration Points in Classic Mode and themed events, hitting server milestones to release the funds progressively. This model fosters deeper engagement, turning everyday gameplay into a direct stake in the tournament's glory.

Building excitement, the Krafton India Esports YouTube channel recently crossed 2 million subscribers, amplifying anticipation for the finals. With semi-finals underway, 16 elite teams are set to clash in Chennai for the championship. The event promises record viewership, solidifying BGIS as BGMI's flagship competition.

Karan Pathak, Associate Director of Esports at Krafton India, emphasized the significance of fan participation. "Unlocking Rs. 2 crore through in-game efforts showcases our ecosystem's maturity," he said. Pathak noted how BGIS blends massive prize money, viewer interaction, and top-tier rivalries to propel Indian esports forward.

This Chennai showdown continues Krafton India's commitment to elevating BGMI as a professional sport , the game publisher added. coverage will stream on official channels, with fans encouraged to follow updates on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook for schedules and highlights.

NDTV's Yo Yo Honey Singh Delhi concert an electric affair

There are concerts. And then there is a Yo Yo Honey Singh concert. Electric. Powerful. Magical. Delhi experienced the difference as the India chapter of the NDTV Good Times 'My Story World Tour' opened to a packed arena, charged with an energy that only Singh can command.

As the lights rose and the music thundered across the arena, it was instantly clear that this was not just another concert — it was a night where an artist chose to tell his story in the most powerful language he knows: music. And thus began a movie in motion.

According to a NDTV media release, structured as a powerful narrative of Honey Singh's life and career, the show, held in delhi on March 14, unfolded in four chapters: The Rise, The Fame, The Darkness and The Comeback. Each section brought out a different emotional dimension to the stage. Cinematic AV sequences played across giant screens, guiding audiences through the defining moments of Singh's journey while the music exploded live on stage.



The opening act, The Rise, took fans back to the moment Singh first broke into the music scene. Songs like 'Dope Shop' brought the arena alive with the raw energy of an artist who would soon reshape the sound of Indian pop music and introduce a new generation to a bold, unapologetic musical voice.

The show then surged into The Fame, the era that transformed 'Singh into a cultural phenomenon, a pop icon. As Brown Rang' and 'Blue Eyes' echoed through the arena, nostalgia and celebration swept across the crowd. The Bollywood era followed with unstoppable party anthems like 'Blue Hai Pani Pani' and '4 Bottle Vodka' — all songs that turned Singh into a household name and defined nightlife across the country.

In the most emotional segment of the night — The Darkness — Singh turned inward. In a rare and deeply personal moment, he spoke openly about a phase of life that few artists are comfortable sharing on stage. As the lights dimmed, the spectacle softened, and for a few moments, the arena witnessed Singh not as a superstar but as a storyteller of his own struggles. Unfiltered. Unapologetic. Honest.

The chapter became one of the most powerful moments of the evening, reminding fans that behind the fame and the hits lies a journey of struggle, reflection and resilience.

And then came The Comeback. If the earlier chapters told the story of an icon, the final act told the story of an artist who had fought his way back. Performing recent hits like 'Millionaire', Singh brought the night to an emotional high. 'This time it is personal,' he told the audience — a line that resonated deeply with fans who have followed his journey through every phase.

Around this deeply personal narrative unfolded a spectacle rarely attempted in Indian concert production. The show blended cinematic storytelling, live music video shoots, immersive stagecraft and aerial dance performances to create a fully immersive audio-visual experience.

The concert also delivered unforgettable moments of fan engagement. Winners of the Love Dose contest were invited on stage with Singh, sharing the spotlight with the artist they admire, while one lucky fan rode home on a brand-new bike

And in one of the most heartfelt moments of the night, Singh celebrated his birthday in his hometown with his fans, cutting a

specially designed cake on the Delhi stage as the arena erupted into cheers. In a concert first, he also recorded a live music video on stage, which will be released soon.

Rahul Kanwal, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of NDTV, said, 'With 'My Story', NDTV Good Times has reimagined what a live concert can be. This is not just about music – it is storytelling on a grand scale, where an artist invites audiences into the most personal chapters of his journey. We will bring more such extraordinary experiences to fans across the country.'

Rahul Shaw, Chief Experiences Officer at NDTV, added that 'My Story' was designed as a fully immersive experience where music, cinema and emotion come together in one powerful narrative.

And, as the NDTV Good Times 'My Story World Tour' travels across India, one thing is certain: while every city will have something special waiting for its fans, the energy, unpredictability, and spectacle of this tour promise some of the craziest live music moments the year will see.

Instagram tests clickable caption links for Meta Verified users

Meta Platforms is testing a new feature on Instagram that allows clickable links to be added directly within post captions for users subscribed to Meta Verified. The development signals a possible shift in the platform's long-standing restrictions on how external links can be shared.

For years, Instagram has restricted the use of external links on posts, allowing them mainly through user bios, Stories and Reels. As a result, creators, influencers and brands have typically relied on "link in bio" tools to direct followers to external websites, online stores or newsletters, The Business Standard reported.

The new experiment could simplify that process by allowing users to embed links directly within caption text, making it easier for audiences to access external content without leaving the post. If rolled out widely, the feature could significantly change how creators share content and drive traffic outside the platform.

The update first came to light after blogger Andrea Valeria shared screenshots showing a clickable Substack link placed within an Instagram caption. According to Valeria, the platform displayed an in-app notification informing eligible users that they could add up to 10 links per month within captions.

Meta later confirmed that the feature is currently being tested with a limited group of Meta Verified subscribers. However, the company has not disclosed how many users currently have access to the experiment or whether it plans to roll out the feature to a wider audience.

Initial observations indicate that the feature may still be limited in functionality. While the clickable links appear to work within Instagram's mobile application, they do not currently show up when the same post is viewed through the platform's web version.



Instagram's strict approach toward outbound links has long shaped the platform's creator ecosystem. Because users could not place multiple links directly within posts, many turned to third-party services such as Linktree, which allow creators to host multiple external links and direct followers to them through a single profile link.

If the new capability is eventually rolled out widely, it could reduce the dependence on such tools and give creators a more direct way to connect their audiences with external content, online stores, newsletters and other digital platforms.

FIFA, YouTube sign preferred platform pact for World Cup '26

World football's governing body FIFA has announced that YouTube will be a Preferred Platform for the FIFA World Cup 2026. In collaboration with the competition's Media Partners and creators, this game-changing partnership between the two organisations will provide audiences with more ways to enjoy the tournament.

The innovative agreement, according to a FIFA statement issued yesterday, offers Media Partners a powerful platform on their respective YouTube channels where fans will be able to experience the upcoming global showpiece.

This includes the opportunity to publish extended highlights, behind-the-scenes footage, Shorts and video-on-demand content that resonates with audiences on YouTube to extend their overall reach and engagement.

For the first time in the competition's history, Media Partners will have the option of live streaming the first 10 minutes of every match on their YouTube channel, enabling fans to experience the energy from the very first whistle.

Additionally, Media Partners will be able to stream a select number of matches in full on their YouTube channel, engaging global audiences and promoting where to watch more of the competition. Media Partners will also have more opportunities to monetise their YouTube content, FIFA said.

This multifaceted partnership will provide fans with fresh ways

to consume the competition, making premium content accessible on FIFA's official YouTube channel.

To get audiences warmed up for the tournament, this partnership will also see content from FIFA's Digital Archive unlocked on its YouTube channel, including full length past matches and many more iconic moments in the sport's history.

"FIFA is delighted to welcome YouTube as a Preferred Platform for the FIFA World Cup 2026. By spotlighting FIFA's premium content and unlocking new opportunities for Media Partners and creators, this agreement will engage global fans in ways never seen before," said FIFA Secretary General Mattias Grafström.

FIFA and YouTube will collaborate to grant a global cohort of YouTube creators unprecedented access to the FIFA World Cup. This unique creator lens, featuring human stories, tactical breakdowns and behind-the-scenes action, will elevate fresh perspectives that bring the legendary tournament further to life as it unfolds.

Even before the tournament begins, creators will play a role in promoting the competition and engaging diverse audiences thanks to extraordinary access to FIFA's Digital Archive.

"YouTube is focused on delivering a global, fan-centric, interactive approach to sports entertainment, and we are proud to be a preferred platform for the FIFA World Cup 2026.

"By providing official media partners and creators with premium content and unparalleled access, we're delivering a comprehensive experience for fans and partners alike," said Justin Connolly, VP and Global Head of Media & Sports.

This collaboration with YouTube, FIFA stressed, consolidates its strategy on preferred platforms and reinforces a commitment to protecting intellectual property.

Krafton India announces Rs. 4cr prize pool for BGIS '26 finals



Krafton India has unveiled a massive Rs. 4 crore prize pool for the BATTLEGROUNDS MOBILE INDIA SERIES (BGIS) 2026 Grand Finals, scheduled for March 27-29 in Chennai. This huge bounty highlights the escalating stakes in India's premier BGMI esports event, drawing top talent nationwide.

Fans themselves unlocked half the pool — Rs. 2 crore — via in-game challenges, marking a milestone in community-driven competition.

According to a press release from the Korean video game publisher, the prize distribution splits into Rs. 2 crore from Krafton India and an equal fan-contributed amount earned through the Discovery Island initiative, launched January 15, 2026.

Players accumulated Exploration Points in Classic Mode and themed events, hitting server milestones to release the funds progressively. This model fosters deeper engagement, turning everyday gameplay into a direct stake in the tournament's glory.

Meta signs AI content licensing deal with News Corp

Meta Platforms has entered into a multiyear artificial intelligence content licensing agreement with News Corp that could be worth up to $50 million (£39 million) annually, marking one of the latest partnerships between technology companies and major news publishers in the rapidly evolving AI ecosystem.

According to a report by The Wall Street Journal earlier this week, it is expected to run for at least three years. The agreement will grant Meta access to News Corp's US and UK publications, including The Wall Street Journal and New York Post, enabling the tech giant to use the content to train its AI models and support real-time information retrieval features across its products.

However, the arrangement does not include several Australian publications owned by News Corp, such as The Daily Telegraph and Herald Sun. News Corp CEO Robert Thomson disclosed the details of the partnership during a Morgan Stanley technology conference in San Francisco, where he described news organisations as an essential "input company" within the AI ecosystem.

Thomson highlighted the importance of credible journalism in the development of AI systems, noting that reliable information forms the backbone of many generative AI tools.

He also revealed that he remains in regular contact with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg through WhatsApp and is in discussions with Sam Altman of OpenAI regarding potential future collaborations.

GIZMOS & GADGETS



01. Apple May Launch Budget MacBook at $599 in 2026

Apple is reportedly preparing to introduce a new affordable MacBook in 2026, with rumours pointing to a starting price of around $599. The device is expected to target students and entry-level users, offering basic performance for everyday tasks. Reports suggest the laptop could feature a processor based on Apple's iPhone chips to lower costs and strengthen competition with budget Windows laptops and Chromebooks, although the company has yet to confirm the launch.



02. Google Releases First Android 17 Beta for Pixel Devices



Google has rolled out the first beta version of Android 17 for supported Google Pixel devices, offering an early look at the next-generation mobile operating system. The update introduces system-level improvements, subtle user interface tweaks, and enhanced tools for developers, as the company accelerates its Android development cycle.

The Android 17 beta brings performance optimisations, stronger privacy and security features, and improvements aimed at better support for large-screen devices such as tablets and foldables. Users can also expect UI refinements, updated system controls, and enhanced app behaviour management, while developers gain access to new APIs and debugging tools.

03. Final Fantasy Remake Series Going Multiplatform Won't Impact Part 3 Quality, Says Director

The director of the Final Fantasy VII Remake series, Naoki Hamaguchi, has assured fans that expanding the franchise to multiple platforms will not compromise the quality of its upcoming third installment. Addressing concerns about performance and development focus, Hamaguchi emphasised that the team remains committed to maintaining the series' high production standards. The move toward a multiplatform strategy is aimed at reaching a wider global audience beyond its traditional exclusivity. Despite the shift, the developers confirmed that Part 3 will deliver the same level of storytelling, graphics, and gameplay experience that fans expect from the remake trilogy.



04. Acer, ASUS suspend PC sales in Germany after Nokia patent win



A German court has ordered Acer and ASUS to halt direct sales of laptops and desktop PCs in Germany after ruling in favour of Nokia in a patent infringement case involving video technology. The Munich I Regional Court found that the companies violated Nokia's standard-essential patents related to H.265 (HEVC) video coding and had not complied with fair licensing terms.

Following the ruling, both companies removed affected products from their official German online stores, though customers can still purchase devices through third-party retailers and resellers. The decision specifically targets direct sales rather than existing retail stock already in the market.

The dispute centres on licensing rules under FRAND (Fair, Reasonable and Non-Discriminatory) conditions for essential technology standards.

05. NASA, SpaceX Launch Crew-12 Mission to International Space Station



NASA, in partnership with SpaceX, has launched the Crew-12 mission to the International Space Station, carrying astronauts on a long-duration science expedition. The mission will support ongoing research in microgravity, conduct technology demonstrations, and carry out maintenance operations aboard the orbiting laboratory. The launch marks another key step in NASA's commercial crew programme, reinforcing international collaboration and sustaining human presence in low Earth orbit.

The Crew-12 mission will focus on a wide range of experiments in microgravity, including research related to human health, space technology, and Earth observation. Scientists hope the findings will contribute to future deep space exploration missions, including potential human missions to the Moon and Mars, while also providing benefits for life on Earth through advancements in medicine, materials science, and environmental monitoring.

06. Maruti launches e Vitara at Rs 10.99 lakh, battery rental extra

Maruti Suzuki India Limited has officially launched its electric SUV, the e Vitara, in India at an introductory price of Rs 10.99 lakh (ex-showroom), with the cost of the battery to be charged separately through a rental or subscription model. The launch marks a significant step for the country's largest carmaker as it strengthens its presence in the rapidly growing electric vehicle (EV) segment.

The e Vitara introduces a flexible ownership approach, allowing customers to pay for the vehicle upfront while opting for a battery subscription plan. This model is expected to reduce the initial purchase cost of the electric SUV and make EV adoption more accessible for a wider range of consumers. The company said the strategy aims to address concerns around battery life, replacement costs, and long-term maintenance.



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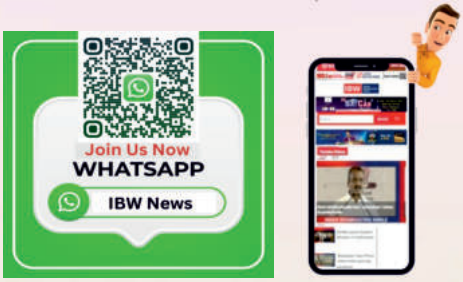


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