

## MEDIA/BROADBAND DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY NEWS

### SYNOPSIS

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**RIL subsidiary, Reliance Strategic Investments buys 1.14% stake in  
DEN Networks**

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MUMBAI: Reliance Strategic Investments, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries, has bought a 1.14% stake in DEN Networks, one of the two listed cable distribution companies in India. As RIL has acquired interests in media firms dealing with content, it makes sense for the Mukesh Ambani-controlled group to invest in a distribution network now, several analysts told ET.

RIL recently sold its stake in Ramoji Rao-promoted Eenadu regional channels to TV18 Broadcast, a subsidiary of media conglomerate Network18 Media & Investment. Through the deal RIL would have preferential access to the content of all the media properties of Network18 and its associates and its subsidiaries-these include digital media and the TV18 channels.

"This may be the beginning of strategic investments in cable distribution companies as they will need huge sums to invest in digitalisation, as mandated by the government," said Devendra Parulekar, partner at Ernst & Young India. Another analyst who did not want to be named said RIL could increase this stake to 15% soon and then proceed towards buying out the promoters' stake.

Parulekar said, "The digitalisation law will ensure steady revenues from cable distribution and this revenue remains steady even when there are recessionary trends in the markets."

On Wednesday, DEN's stock went down by 0.78% to 63.75 while Hathway shot up by 7.84% to 136.

## **Star's 2nd GEC strategy clicks, Life OK touches 100 GRPs**

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MUMBAI: Star India's strategy of having a strong second general entertainment channel, supporting its flagship Star Plus, has finally started working.

Life OK, the four-week-old channel from the stable, has swiftly jumped to 100 GRPs (gross rating points), consolidating its position further. For the channel, the 10 pm show Saubhayawati Bhav, produced by UTV Television, is leading the lineup with an average 2.4 TVR.

The 9.40 pm show Mai Laxmi Tere Angan Ki, made by BBC Worldwide Productions, is averaging 1.4 TVR. As per TAM data for week ended 7 January (C&S, 4+, HSM), the top four GECs have, however, seen a dip in the ratings. Interestingly, after a long time, Star Plus has come below 300 GRPs.

Though it is holding on to its leading position, Star Plus lost 24 GRPs and registered 287 GRPs in the week (311 GRPs in the last week).

Sony Entertainment Television (Set) has maintained its second position and closed the week with 226 GRPs (last week 236). Colors saw a 5-GRP loss to end the week with 208 GRPs. The new fiction show, Na Bole Tum Na Maine Kuchh Kaha, opened with 2.2 TVR.

Zee TV, remained at No. 4 with 180 GRPs, compared to 184 GRPs in the previous week.

Sab, meanwhile, added six GRPs to end the week with 130 GRPs.

However, Imagine TV has touched its lowest ratings, ending the week six points lower with 58 GRPs.

Sahara One was at the end of the ladder with 38 GRPs, compared to 42 GRPs in the previous week.

## **Discovery Channel launches 'Wildest India' on 22 Jan**

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MUMBAI: Discovery Channel is launching Wildest India, a five-part series that will premiere on 22 January at 12 noon. The show will air every Thursday at 8 pm, starting 26 January. With this new series Discovery Channel is hailing India's diversity showcasing India's wildlife, secret locations, epic landscapes and colourful beauty.

Discovery Networks Asia-Pacific South Asia Sr. VP and GM Rahul Johri said, "Wildest India will take viewers on a safari around the country without ever having to leave their living rooms. With the unique and distinctive content, Discovery Channel aims to present for its viewers the unseen and enchanting Indian wildlife."

The series explores the wildest and most remote parts of India, from the Himalayan Mountains, down the River Ganges and across to the world of the North East. It will showcase India's wildlife and grand terrains, while bringing to the fore the relationship that exists between land, wildlife and human beings in the subcontinent.

## **2011: Pure music, Regional key trends**

If a picture is worth a thousand words, music is worth millions and the year 2011 helped the industry to generate multi-millions. Year 2011 can be called the year of growth for the music channels. And it is Bollywood that provided some of the most popular numbers to the music television industry in India, which has 49 channels in the genre and is way ahead of other media markets across the world.

The Hindi music category operates at approximately 245 GRPs and Rs 3.92 billion. From year 2010 there were two distinct categories of music channels seen in the country, the ones that focused more on non music content than music and the ones that focused on pure play music content like 9XM. These Pure Music channels contribute 48 per cent of Hindi music GRPs and 36 per cent of revenue for the genre.

One of the main reasons for the growth of this genre was the advent of so many new players in this space. With just 10 music channels in 2010, today we have at least 14 channels concentrating on the music genre. The music genre share in the year 2011 increased from 2.5 per cent to 4.2 per cent. This increase of the absolute channel shares can be attributed to trends which were seen prominently in the year 2011.

The music genre has traditionally been highly fragmented and characterised by low viewership. To hold viewer interest and differentiate themselves, channels keep innovating their programming and content. Continuing from last year, music is no longer the mainstay of music channels. The year 2011 saw these channels experimenting with content and positioning appeal to the audiences. These experimentations included large format reality based shows being launched on channels to expand their viewer base.

However, the format that has stood the test of time and gets the viewers hooked on was sticking to simple and pure music content. Hence 2011 saw channels returning back to the roots and concentrating on playing pure music as they realised that viewers tune in to music channels for music and not for reality shows which they can watch on GECs.

Another major trend seen in the year 2011 was the growing importance of the regional markets - Regionalisation of media. Regional channel revenues across all genres are growing at 26 per cent (YOY across Year 2006 - 2010). The revenues recorded for year 2010 was Rs 42 billion across all genres.

Taking cognizance of the potential of these regional markets, 2011 saw launches specifically made for these regions. We at 9X Media Group forayed into this space with the launch of our very first regional music channel 9X Tashan - a Punjabi music channel that rules the charts and has been the No.1 channel in the space since the very first week of its launch. We also launched 9X Jhakaas - India's very first Marathi music channel in 2011.

The advent of social media and digitalisation has also extended the reach of the channels. Digital platforms and social media have changed the way media is consumed and 2011 saw channels increasingly experimenting with various online strategies and use of social media tools to connect and interact with their target audiences. The content provided on the channel is developed keeping the online viewers in mind and this has been tremendously appreciated by viewers and online users. Today Bollywood music premieres simultaneously on YouTube and On air - that's how important this platform is today.

2011 saw the advent of Mobile TV - the on the move television and with the technological developments like 3G, these platforms have created the larger reach for the music channels and helped the viewers consume content on the move. 9XM is the first music television channel to have a live streaming facility of its on-air content on the official website - [www.9xm.in](http://www.9xm.in). In fact, we have also extended the live streaming facility across our regional channels - 9X Tashan and 9X Jhakaas.

Given the interactive ability of the medium to provide direct access to consumers going forward, we see media companies and advertisers leverage this platform to understand consumer behaviour and influence their choices. Content consumption will no longer be restricted to television sets and 2012 will witness a substantial increase in the consumption of music via You Tube and other online sites and via Mobile TV.

Content development for the regional audiences and focus on innovation of content is another trend that will be seen gaining importance in the upcoming year.

## **Viacom18 To Launch English Comedy Channel In India From Jan 23**

Publication: Asia Pulse

Provider: Asia Pulse Pty Ltd

NEW DELHI, Jan 19 Asia Pulse - Viacom18 Media, a joint venture between Viacom and Network18, will launch a comedy channel in English named 'Comedy Central' in India next week.

Comedy Central will be the sixth channel in Viacom18's stable and the media firm is looking at launching it on January 23, across seven cities to start with.

"English comedy as a genre does not exist as other channels have slots for such shows, while ours is a 24-hour comedy channel.

"Given our rich library of world-class shows, we are confident that the channel will establish itself as a leading player in the English entertainment space on Indian television," Viacom18 Media Senior VP and GM (English Entertainment) Ferzad Palia told PTI.

He, however, declined to comment on investment details.

The channel will be launched in seven cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Pune and Ahmedabad, across 20 million households across analogue, digital cable and DTH platforms.

On DTH, it will be available on Dish TV and Airtel Digital TV initially, but the company aims to add other players in the coming months.

Viacom18's current portfolio includes Hindi general entertainment channel Colors, youth channel MTV, kids channel Nick, English entertainment channel Vh1 and the recently launched action channel for young audience -- Sonic.

Initially launched in the US, Comedy Central started global expansion in late 2006. At present, Comedy Central has localised channels in Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Israel and Spain.

"Comedy Central is one of Viacom's most distinct and successful franchises globally. We feel that the time is now right for Viacom18 to introduce Comedy Central in India, given the growth curve in the Indian television entertainment market," Palia said.

The programming will be a mix of sitcoms, sketch comedy, British comedy, stand ups and gags. Some of the shows the channel will air include Daily Show with John Stewart, South Park, Saturday Night Live, 30 Rock, The Office and Seinfeld.

Asked about local programming, he said, "We will develop our own talent and give them a platform as well."

The business model for the channel will be a mix of advertising, subscription and merchandising revenues. Also, it plans to take the brand beyond the television screens by holding live events and merchandising.

After the initial launch next week, the company will undertake an extensive marketing campaign. "Besides television, print and outdoor, other touchpoints will be created including gyms, salons, cafes, cinema halls," Palia said, adding that social media will also be used extensively.

## **Court notice to police, TV channel**

Publication: Hindu

Provider: Kasturi & Sons Ltd.

Hyderabad, ANDHRA PRADESH

Justice C. V. Nagarjuna Reddy of the High Court on Wednesday ordered notices to the police authorities and a private Telugu television channel to answer charges of hurting the religious sentiments of disciples of China Jeeyar Swamiji.

The writ petition was filed by Krishna who claimed that Studio N channel had telecast a programme 'Ayyare and Jiyare' and conveyed untruths. He said that false statements were twisted out of context and showed the swamiji in poor light.