

## CNN, TV18 call it quits in India

### *No word on what's next for Turner's news biz*

CNN and TV18 are calling it quits on their 10-year licensing deal for Indian news channel CNN IBN from January 2016.

The joint announcement out of Turner's New Delhi office said the end of the arrangement "will enable each company thereafter to chart its own growth trajectory independently in one of the most dynamic, complex and fast growing markets in the world".

Turner has not disclosed what its new plans for CNN in India are.

Network18 group chief executive, A.P. Parigi, said the group had grown from two news channels in 2005 to 17 news channels this year.

Network18 was taken over by Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries last year. The move was widely said to be part of Ambani's strategy for his 4G business.

## India's news battle

### *Times Now vs India Today*

Two of India's English-language news majors are slugging it out in a battle for the small but influential English-language news market. Their most powerful current weapon is dual frequencies on pay-TV platforms. But the cost is high, and there's some doubt over how long they can keep it up.

**Story on page 12**

## Miller takes Kix over-the-top

### *CTE channel kicks off turbo-charged digital strategy*



Top Gear USA

Hong Kong-based Asian channel operator, Celestial Tiger Entertainment (CTE), is launching its first dedicated over-the-top (OTT) linear channel feed.

The strategy kicks off with action entertainment channel Kix 360, which is scheduled to debut in Singapore in the fourth quarter of this year.

Kix 360 has its own 24-hour schedule and some dedicated content that will not be included in the traditional linear channel.

The OTT service, curated especially for mobile viewing, will roll out across Asia in the first half of 2016.

CTE will offer the authenticated service through existing pay-TV partners, which will have control over how the OTT option is offered to consumers in their markets.

CTE says the new linear service complements Kix's existing linear and on-

demand channels. The focus is extending the brand to create a dedicated service for connected mobile devices.

Kix 360 will offer a mix of combat sports, action series and movies, and both long- and short-form content. Titles mentioned so far include Bellator MMA, Glory World Series, *Top Gear Korea*, *Top Gear USA* and *Top Gear Australia*.

CTE's new initiative follows demand from pay-TV platforms, eager to fend off the challenge from online services.

This is CTE's third linear OTT service after CHK and Celestial Classic Movies (CCM), both of which are mirror services of the traditional channel.

CTE's chief executive officer Todd Miller said the new channel was being curated to ensure the optimal viewing experience across devices.

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## “Proof” leads Warner TV in July



Proof

Warner TV premieres drama series *Proof*, on Friday, 1 July, at 9pm. The series stars Jennifer Beals (*The L Word*) as a doctor charged with finding evidence that death is not the end, and is one of two new first and exclusive series on Warner TV's July schedule. The second is season two of *Two and a Half Men*, which debuts Tuesday, 21 July, at 9.50pm. Two Warner TV series end in July – *The Big Bang Theory* season eight (7 July) and *Person of Interest* season four.

## Nat Geo buys two-part Hitler doc



Hitler's Death Army: Das Reich

National Geographic Channel has picked up worldwide rights to the US\$1.1 million *Hitler's Death Army: Das Reich*, from factual distributor ZED. The two-part special will air later this year in Asia as part of a 170-country screening. The series looks at the last year of the Panzer division, best known for its mass murders on the Eastern front.

## Nippon TV slashes *Death Note* window

*New drama to screen shortly after domestic broadcast*



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Death Note

Nippon TV's new live-action drama series, *Death Note*, sets a new distribution record for the Japanese broadcaster in July, broadcasting/streaming into 120 countries/regions within a week of the domestic airdate.

Nippon TV said this was record distribution for its dramas.

*Death Note*, based on the comic book about a notebook with the power of life and death, premieres in Japan on Sun-

day, 5 July, at 10pm.

In Asia, South Korean cable channel, Channel J, will broadcast the programme about a week after airing in Japan.

Streaming platform Crunchyroll will upload the series within days for the U.S., Europe, Middle East and Africa. The show will also be made available on Mperience.

The comic book has already been versioned as an animated series, two live-action movies and a musical.

## Dance India Dance returns for 5th season

Zee TV's dance format, *Dance India Dance*, has returned for a fifth season after a break of almost two years.

The contest premiered on 27 June, and will run in a 9pm slot on Saturdays.

Participants were selected from 17 cities across India. Judges include Punit J. Pathak, one of season two's finalists.

The new season premiere co-incided with the release of Zee's latest annual

report, in which Zee Entertainment Enterprises chairman Subhash Chandra predicted that Zee would be ranked among the top global media brands by 2020. The plan for the next five years also involves achieving five times viewership growth and four times growth in content consumption. Zee reported a 10% increase in after-tax profit to Rs9,775 million/US\$153 million.

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***Asian broadcasters pick up 350 hours from Canada's 9 Story***



Wild Kratts

Canada's 9 Story Media Group has sold almost 350 hours of kids and family programming to broadcasters in Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea.

The deal involves 130 half hours to Thailand's TV3, including first seasons of pre-school title *Daniel Tiger's Neighbourhood*, *Peg + Cat* and *Monkey See Monkey Do*. The broadcaster has also acquired all three seasons – 42 episodes – of 22-minute live action science series *Finding Stuff Out*.

Singapore's MediaCorp and Taiwan's PTS also picked up *Peg + Cat*, while Hong Kong's TVB bought the first season of *Wild Kratts*. Korea's Jei TV bought the first season of *Daniel Tiger's Neighbourhood*.

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***Australia, Singapore sign TV, radio, online content swap***

Australia's public broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Singapore's monopoly broadcaster MediaCorp are looking at sharing news resources, programme exchanges and possible co-production.

The agreement signed in Singapore on 26 June involves international news services – the ABC's Australia Plus TV and MediaCorp's Channel News Asia – as well as MediaCorp's other language channels and radio stations. The agreement covers television, radio and online.

The partnership begins with news, lifestyle programming and digital content. The amount of content involved in the agreement as well as co-production opportunities was still being explored, the ABC said.

The two companies said the partnership was driven by "an increasingly interconnected and digital world" where media organisations "have to constantly seek partnerships and evolve to provide the best content for their audiences".

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## Social media's political power on the rise in Asia *But traditional media influence has not waned, DW Global Media Forum told*



Kamran Wajih, Express TV



Handhi Kentjono, MNC Sky Vision



Lofullah Najafzada, Tolo News



Jeremy Kung, TM Net

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Traditional media's influence in four Asian markets—Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan – has not waned as a result of social media, delegates at Deutsche Welle's (DW) Global Media Forum (22-24 June 2015) in Bonn were told.

During a session entitled "The political power of digital media in Asia", speakers from media companies in Afghanistan, Malaysia, Pakistan and Indonesia said while social media environments in their markets were robust, the effect on traditional media was additive and complementary rather than destructive.

The impact of digital media on the political agenda seemed greatest in Afghanistan, where two thirds of the population were under 25 years old and unafraid to take to social media to express their opinions.

"Digital media is critical in transforming a society like ours," said Lofullah Najafzada, director, Tolo News, for Afghanistan's Moby Group. "The empowerment aspect of digital media is phenomenal... People have the guts and the power to express themselves," he said.

One of the most significant impacts of social media in Afghanistan was increased transparency and political accountability in holding politicians to their promises. "The increased transparency benefits the

political environment," Najafzada said.

Social media was also driving the mainstream news agenda. "Social media plays a very powerful role in Afghanistan," Najafzada said. "There have been days that certain engagement on Facebook is being translated into the agenda in Parliament the next day," he added.

In some instances, "digital media is being used to sell foreign policy decisions that might otherwise be very hard to sell," Najafzada added, citing Afghanistan's recently disclosed pact with Pakistan's ISI.

In Malaysia, political parties have piled into social media in a big way. "Both sides have their cyber-troopers," said Jeremy Kung, chief executive officer of Telekom Malaysia's TM Net.

In Pakistan's case, internet penetration was – at 15% – too low to make a difference either way, said Kamran Wajih, the director of strategy and planning for Pakistan's Express TV. Pakistan's mainstream media had not yet harnessed the power of digital, and remained not only unthreatened, but "alive and kicking" with hundreds of channels, Wajih said, adding that the situation was unlikely to change in the next five to eight years.

The main source of information and entertainment in Pakistan was traditional media platforms, which were pretty much

oblivious to social media at the moment, Wajih said.

In Indonesia, "the strength of social media has been in the eradication of corruption," said PT MNC Sky Vision's vice president director, Handhi Kentjono. He also highlighted the power of social media on Indonesia's political environment, saying current president Jokowi was elected by enforcement through social media. "New media has become a very powerful tool in political processes," Kentjono said.

At the same time, traditional media still commanded an overwhelming share of viewer attention with 72% of ad revenue. "We cannot ignore new media. We have to prepare for the upcoming medium that will develop and inform viewing habits," Kentjono said. MNC's involvement in hosting WeChat in Indonesia, for instance, is part of a broad strategy for the connected environment.

"In many places, and we span a whole continent here, the key question is to allow countries to open up to empower their citizens. If it doesn't happen, if people don't have access to freedom, the price is very high," Najafzada said.

"You can have internet access, access to 3G or 4G, but if you can't use it, it's not power. That is the number one challenge to focus on," he added.

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ContentAsia's regular interview talks to people doing big and bigger things to move the industry forward. Vanita Kohli-Khandekar talks to Jawhar Sircar, chief executive of India's Prasar Bharati Corporation

Jawhar Sircar has been a bureaucrat all his life. But the 63-year-old chief executive officer of Prasar Bharati Corporation, India's state-controlled TV and radio broadcaster, believes "the bureaucracy is obsessed with increasing their numbers like rabbits and scrawling illegible notes".

One part of this observation comes from almost 40 years in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), which populates the bureaucracy.

The other comes from trying to change things at Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR), the two arms of the US\$246-million Prasar Bharati. Some of the big changes that would improve quality and efficiency at the 414 radio stations and 33 TV channels have been tough to push through.

About half of Sircar's time in the bureaucracy has been spent in finance/commerce or education, culture and media. He has won awards and recognition for reviving museums or getting the Kolkata Book fair off the ground, among other things.

What stands out in his mind is his time as culture secretary from 2008 to 2012. "Culture is more complex than just song and dance or IHC (India Habitat Centre, a sort of hub for the arts in Delhi), especially in a nation where the tectonic plates are not settled. India's diversity is playing itself out through culture," he says.

His understanding of and empathy for culture, media and the arts is what probably led to his being handpicked for the job of running Prasar Bharati in 2012.

India's public service broadcaster is

one of the most asset-rich media firms in the US\$7.5-billion television industry. It is, however, a bundle of problems. Technically it is autonomous. But Prasar Bharati cannot hire or fire people or leverage its assets to raise money without the approval of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. That is because it doesn't own its assets – 1,400 transmission towers, spectrum and real estate. These were never transferred to the corporation after legislation creating the body was passed in 1997. The result is that Prasar Bharati lives on a government dole – either as budgetary support (US\$382 million in 2013-14) or as advertising.

When there was no competition, much of this did not matter. But as private television took off in India from the mid-1990s, Doordarshan has lost heavily. It now employs a staggering 31,621 people churning out television that not too many of India's 800 million+ TV viewers watch.

Over the last decade or so, four committees that studied the broadcaster have said roughly the same thing – delink it administratively and financially from the government. Irrespective of ideology, most political parties in power have ignored this advice.

This leaves the CEO of the corporation with very little elbow room. There has been some progress, though, under Sircar. Last year, it signed an agreement with Deutsche Welle (DW), Germany's public service broadcaster, for the distri-



Jawhar Sircar

bution of Doordarshan channels in about 120 million homes across Europe, Central Asia and the Arab world of West Asia and North Africa.

Doordarshan is now on social media, its officers use e-mail and the whole discourse around technology within the corporation is changing.

"There were massive vested interests in investing more in terrestrial without checking how many terrestrial antennae are left," Sircar says.

There are currently only 10 million Doordarshan-only homes that have a terrestrial antennae. Nevertheless, DD services are available in all of India's 161 million TV homes because of must-carry rules that force all cable and DTH operators to carry Doordarshan channels.

What Prasar Bharati needs to seriously explore is the prospect of better reach and revenues with its free DTH service, Freedish.

Freedish has an estimated 20 million homes, which makes it India's largest DTH operator. Yet, for more than two years now, Sircar has been unable to increase the channel offering from 59 to 100. Neither has he been able to encrypt the service. Then there have been hirings, in which the Ministry did not involve him.

Sircar is philosophical about much of this. "I have reached a state of equilibrium. I have realised that I cannot be the only autonomist around while 30,000 people (Prasar Bharati employees) are screaming 'we don't want autonomy'."

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ContentAsia's regular section, ContentAsia Formats, looks at formats and format development in Asia, including new seasons, series and trends and what these mean to channels, producers and the overall formats industry in the region.

*Sing Your Face Off Thailand*

The Thai version of talent show *Sing Your Face Off* breaks the ceiling on the number of celebrity participants, with a line-up of six famous Thai faces – Es Kantapong, Mac Verakhanit, Eaky Ekachai, Tubtim Anyarin, Grace Glanklaw and Bifern Pudsakorn.

The 13-episode Thai version of Endemol Shine's *Your Face Sounds Familiar* took six months of planning. The show premiered on 13 June and airs on terrestrial network Channel 7 at 3.45pm on Saturdays.

Costing about US\$1.7 million to produce, the show involves four commentators and a host. This is less than half the budget of 2012's US\$4 million charity reality show *Game Ne Ra Mit*.

*Sing Your Face Off* has no elimination and the weekly winners are judged by home viewers' SMS votes. The weekly prize is THB100,000/US\$2,960 and the grand prize is THB1 million/US\$29,604. Cash prizes won are donated to charity organisations, pre-selected by the celebrities.

Varavuth Jentanakul, chief executive officer of production house Zense Entertainment, says the secret sauce is chemistry between celebrities, hosts, commentators, plus the ability to compromise. And lots of rehearsals.

"Many things had to be changed to suit Thai tastes," he says.



Varavuth Jentanakul



*Sing Your Face Off Thailand*

Other than changing the name, customisation for Thailand included reducing the number of contestants from eight to six (to fit into the 75-minute slot).

In addition, the title "weekly winner" was changed to "most popular" performance of the week (to avoid labeling the celebrities as winners/losers) and renaming the season's "winner" as "Sing Your Face Off of the Year".

The transformations were perfected by, among other magic, sending mold's back to the U.S. for a team of Hollywood prosthetic professionals, before shipping them back to Thailand. Jentanakul says feature-film-quality special effects were

deployed to deliver a sense of realism.

Half way through production on the 13 episodes, Zense is considering a 'live' broadcast for the final episode "so that the last minute SMS scores from audience at home can be real time".

Rating wise, the first episode garnered 2.2 TVR and the second episode on 22 June scored 2.4 TVR. The highest TVR recorded for an international format remake by Zense is 10.8 TVR for an episode of *The Money Drop Thailand* aired on 20 December last year.

Is a second season on the cards? "We have not yet decided," Jentanakul says, adding: "It all depends on audience response and overall ratings of this season".

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In *ContentAsia's* regular section on up-and-coming online platforms in Asia, this week's over-the-top (OTT) focus is on four-year-old tving, an online TV/video service of Korea's CJ HelloVision.



**What is tving?** An OTT, online TV/video service geo-blocked for Korea, offering real-time TV channels from T-DMB/cable TV operators, and VOD movies/TV shows via PCs, smartphones, tablets and more.

**Why did you call it 'tving'?** "In a mobile-dominated TV world, 'tving' symbolises a sense of freshness, modernity, a revolution of the old-fashion TV. The 'ing' in 'tving' also means an active and evolving optimum service for watching videos."

**Launch** tving started off as a sub-menu for a video service under Korean player app, Gom TV, in May 2010. In March 2011, after six months of development, the service was re-launched as tving, a separate, independent video service targeting mobile/smartphone users in Korea.

**Who's who...** Jung Ji Hyun, general manager business team; Park Hun Ju, general manager, tech team

**Head count** 70+ people in the tving team

**Offering** 140+ real-time channels and 110,000+ local/international VOD content, including movies and the latest TV titles with TV replay. Offers 80+ channels for free, including professional baseball games, YTN and JTBC. Promises the best N-screen service in HD-quality video on all internet-connected devices in Korea.

**Rates** Won2,900/US\$3 a month for all real-time channels. Won4,900/US\$4 a month for unlimited VOD. PPV TV drama costs Won1,000/US\$1 per title. Latest movie costs Won10,000+/US\$10+ per title and old movies range from Won1,000/US\$1 to Won4,000/US\$3 per title.

**Subscribers** 7 million registered users

**Target** 20s-30s, web/mobile VOD users

**Social media** "We use social network services (especially Facebook) to promote events and introduce newly updated content... we also focus on discussions about content-related issues and celebrities, which makes viewers share and recommend them easily."

**New titles/month** On average 40-50 new movie titles and two to three new TV series

**Content partners** Broadcasters (KBS, MBC, SBS), cable channel E&M for TV shows/movies and JTBC for overall content

**Looking for...** "We launched a TV connected tving stick last year and are sourcing the right content, such as concert/music videos, meant to be watched on a bigger screen."

**Original content** "We produced and aired

*Drop Out*, a spin-off of Korean singing competition show *Superstar K*, featuring rejects from the off-air preliminary rounds. However, due to lack of response and high marketing costs, we discontinued... [We] hope to make original production a part of our programming strategy in the future."

**Tech** Uses in-house CJ HelloVision's IDC and N/W infrastructure

**Challenges** "Piracy has been an ongoing issue. We will continue to highlight the benefits of legal online content and work closely with the government. To tackle this issue permanently, all related parties need to work together."

**Priorities** "Preparing expansion to TV screen in earnest. As the OTT industry becomes more competitive and less profitable, TV screen will be a foothold to seek new opportunities."

**The best thing that has happened to Korea's OTT industry**

"There is less competition in OTT now, especially the subscription business model, since we learned that the strategy is pricing. To compete with traditional pay TV, where the entry price is about US\$3-US\$7/month, tving charges US\$3. This pushes advertisers and emerging home shopping channels to choose OTT platforms. Online/mobile ads and

transaction margins from TV shopping channels are critical in profit earnings for OTT service providers."

**The biggest impact on the OTT industry in Asia...**

"Netflix's aggressive expansion into Asian market, armed with original content. It is expected that Netflix's original content will be

injected with Asian casts and/or Asian backgrounds/settings to attract the Asian viewers. Just like how YouTube became an influential online video player with nearly 70% share, it is a concern how local video platforms would struggle harder as Netflix enters the Asian pay-TV market."



Kim Jin-seok

# News bout: Times Now vs India Today

## India's news majors battle for power in the small but influential English segment

It flattered only to deceive. India Today TV became the number one English-language news channel in India for a week in June this year. Market leader, Times Now, however, took back its position the very next week.

The advertising battle between the two – with insults being traded across hoardings, video ads and e-mailers – has occupied India's trade press for weeks. Perhaps more interesting is the way the brands used distribution to increase reach across India's 161 million TV homes.

Times Now has remained the most watched English-language news channel for seven years. It brings in more than 40% of the top line for the estimated US\$72-million Times Global Broadcasting, which is part of the US\$1.2 billion Times Group, one of India's largest media firms

India Today TV is part of the US\$76-million (March 2015) TV Today Network that, in turn, is housed within the US\$143 million (March 2013) India Today Group. Besides the eponymous magazine, it also publishes the Indian titles of *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*, among others. Its TV arm, however, has had only one big success so far – Aaj Tak, a Hindi news channel that has long been the market leader. Headlines Today, its English news channel, has struggled for relevance in a market bursting with competition.

On May 23 this year, Headlines Today was rebranded as India Today TV and within a couple of weeks hit the top spot. The secret sauce was a dual frequency strategy that meant the channel was in two places instead of one on a single cable network. This increased reach and therefore sampling.

According to Chrome Data Analytics and Media data in the week it became number one, India Today TV was on a dual frequency on 70 cable networks – the highest by any of India's 800-odd channels. This gave it additional reach of 22% across India's 161 million TV homes.

Times Now reacted with the same moves. Last week, when it jumped back, it was dual on 53 networks or about 20.1% of TV homes (against 29 networks when it slipped).

Both firms deny that distribution is the big tactic. "Our distribution increase has been going on for the last 15 months as we work to bring our product to more viewers," says M.K. Anand, Times Global Broadcasting's chief executive.

"This (dual frequency) is a strategy used in partial fulfilment of the launch campaign," says Ashish Bagga, India Today Group's chief executive.

Whatever it is, being dual on such a scale can't last for more than another two or three weeks, analysts reckon. The strategy carries a 50% premium on the annual US\$2.8-US\$3.3 million that news channels

pay cable operators as carriage fees.

On the face of it, blowing up so much money on English-language news, which is less than half a per cent of the total time spent on the genre, makes no sense.

However, in India, English-language news attracts a premium from advertisers across media – print, TV, radio or online. English-language news broadcasters get a disproportionately high US\$112 million of the US\$476 million that advertisers spent on Indian news channels. "The correlation between revenues and rating is the highest in English news," says Chrome founder, Pankaj Krishna.

Against this backdrop, it's little wonder that two of India's most powerful media firms are fighting so fiercely. – Vanita Kohli-Khandekar

### The English news picture in India

#### Time spent - average time per viewer per day

	Week 21	Week 22	Week 23
India Today Television	00:02:36	00:04:31	00:02:37
Times Now	00:08:03	00:04:27	00:04:52
CNN IBN	00:04:43	00:04:37	00:04:00
NDTV 24x7	00:02:23	00:04:31	00:03:02
News X	00:07:40	00:15:53	00:03:44

#### Rating (in '000, across 30 minutes average)

	Week 21	Week 22	Week 23
India Today Television	175	354	151
Times Now	497	264	490
CNN IBN	155	112	122
NDTV 24x7	96	107	129
News X	96	231	45

#### Reach - (% coverage)

	Week 21	Week 22	Week 23
India Today Television	2.80	3.16	2.64
Times Now	2.38	2.14	3.49
CNN IBN	1.28	0.96	1.22
NDTV 24x7	1.66	1.11	1.83
News X	0.66	0.40	0.45

Source: Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) data sourced from broadcasters. Viewer is defined as individual. Rating: If India Today TV's rating is 151, it means 151,000 men of the age 22 plus in the defined geography watched India Today TV, averaged across 30 minutes. All India (1Lac+) Male 22+ NCCS AB

## Habsburg fast-tracks India roll-out

*JV with Raghav Bahl/Ritu Kapur The Quint*

Ferdinand Habsburg's Da Vinci Media has tied up with Indian TV veterans Raghav Bahl and Ritu Kapur's digital platform, The Quint, to launch a joint venture edutainment television channel for India.

The deal gives the Da Vinci Learning Channel, which targets six- to 12-year olds and their parents, its first full-channel TV presence in India, with added reach via digital/multimedia.

The channel's launch date has not yet been announced.

Da Vinci's presence in India so far has been limited to programming blocks and on-demand offerings.

Habsburg said the venture would enable Da Vinci Learning to "effectively amplify the channel's presence across



Ferdinand Habsburg

the country along with developing widespread and integrated relationships with leading media platforms and advertisers".

The new India joint venture comes less than two months after Da Vinci Media joined forces with David Haslingden's ZooMoo in a global alliance aimed to grow

the educational video space.

The deal, which combines sales, distribution, programming and marketing resources, covers Europe, Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The two companies said they would also be pooling resources to develop and publish new educational apps "to facilitate fun learning within families".

## Vietnam switches off analogue signals

Vietnam plans to switch off analogue signals for select stations in some parts of the country on 1 July.

The stations involved in this first phase of the migration to digital in the country's central region are VTV Da Nang, VTV6 and the local Da Nang Radio and Television (DRT).

Seven analogue channels – VTV3, VTV9,

VTV4, VTV2, DRT2, VTC1 and VTC9 – will migrate to digital on 30 September and the analogue services turned off.

The migration is part of the government's national digital programme approved last year.

The full migration to digital TV is expected to be complete by 2020.

## Pakistan balks at SAARC satellite project

Pakistan has agreed to participate in the SAARC satellite project – although Indian observers note the country's deep suspicion of anything that might compromise its security. The project, the brainchild of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi,

will be operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation. When complete, the project will support communications, telemedicine and weather forecasting. The satellite is scheduled to launch in 2016.

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