

Aparna Purohit exit, speculation runs wild

Prime Video declines to comment on loss of India lead on eve of biggest originals roll out ever

Amazon Prime Video's originals lead in India and Southeast Asia, Aparna Purohit, is said to be exiting the platform. Prime Video has neither confirmed nor commented on reports that Purohit is stepping down after more than eight years with the company. If true, her exit will be seen as a blow to the home of streaming blockbusters such as *Mirzapur* and *The Family Man* as the platform prepares to roll out its biggest original slate ever.

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The Voice Teens Philippines heads to a close

ABS-CBN adaptation keeps Philippines in Asia's singing talent format lead

ABS-CBN has entered the last phase of *The Voice Teens Philippines* S3, kicking off the live performance rounds and cementing its place at the head of Asia's singing/talent adaptations. The latest season highlights the Philippines' steady and ongoing contribution to Asian versions of the world's best-known unscripted singing/talent properties.

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The Voice Teens Philippines heads to a close

ABS-CBN adaptation keeps Philippines in Asia's singing talent format lead

ABS-CBN has entered the last phase of season three of *The Voice Teens Philippines*, kicking off the live performance rounds at the weekend. The semi-finals aired live on Saturday and Sunday on A2Z, TV5, Kapamilya Channel and Kapamilya Online Live.

The Philippines' version is the first adaptation of the ITV Studios' unscripted format in Asia.

The latest season, announced at the end of 2023 and premiered on 17 February this year, highlights the Philippines' steady and ongoing contribution to local versions of the world's best-known unscripted singing/talent properties.

Last year, the Philippines commissioned and/or aired 12 adaptations of international titles.

Seven of these were singing/talent shows, including *I Can See Your Voice Philippines* season eight; *Idol Philippines* season three; *Philippinas Got Talent*; and *The Voice Kids Philippines* season five.

In addition, the first season of *The Voice Generations* was signed; details to be announced.

The others included the sole drama – a local version of 2018 Korean drama, *What's Wrong With Secretary Kim Philippines*, which was greenlit by streaming platform Viu and local programmer ABS-CBN for a 2024 release.

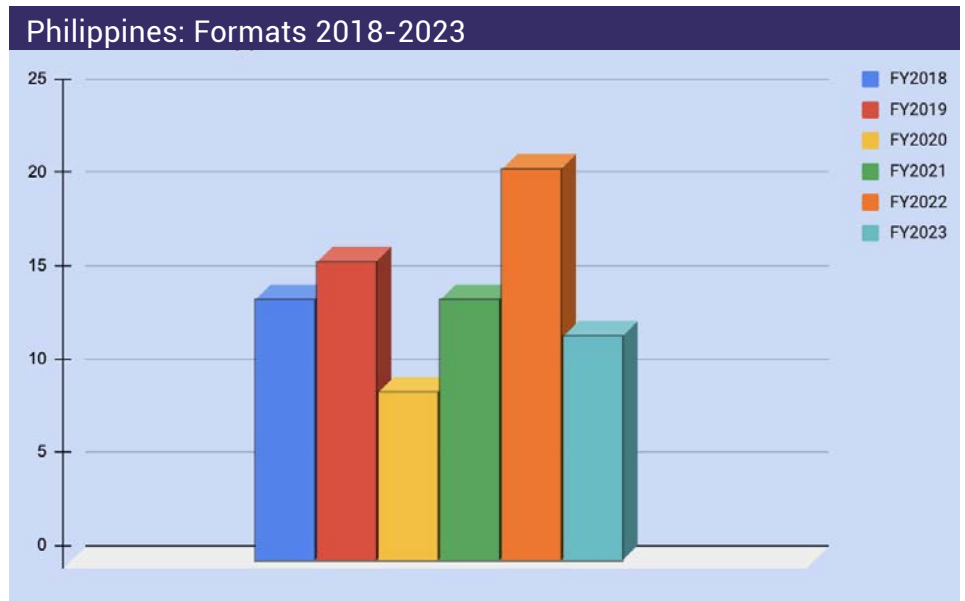
ABS-CBN's other 2023 adaptations were CJ ENM's mystery music game show, *I Can See Your Voice Philippines* S8, and ITV Studios' singing competition format, *The Voice Kids Philippines* season five.

Fremantle is the Philippines' top distributor, with six of the 12 titles reported for last year.

Other distributors active in the market in 2023 were CJ ENM, ITV Studios, Passion Distribution and Toei Japan.

As in every market in Asia, the number of formats in the Philippines has dropped dramatically from the highs of 2018.

2023's 12 titles were the second



Source: ContentAsia Formats Outlook



The Voice Teens Philippines final 12

Picture: ABS-CBN

lowest in six years, according to *ContentAsia's* rolling *Formats Outlook*. The lowest was in 2020, when the Philippines reported just nine titles.

By volume, this puts the Philippines behind India (30), Vietnam (27), Mongolia (21), Thailand (18), Indonesia

(14) and Malaysia (13) in 2023.

Production budgets have not been disclosed, and no announcements have been made on a renewal.

Other markets for *The Voice* in Asia are Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Netflix countdown to anime battle

Netflix marks the one-month countdown to the worldwide premiere of anime film, *Baki Hanma VS Kengan Ashura*, today (6 May), dropping a trailer of just under two and a half minutes that highlights three high-stakes battles that will determine the strongest fighter in this combined universe.

The clash between two of the biggest fight-manga titles premieres on Netflix worldwide on 6 June.

Directed by Toshiki Hirano, the film features Baki Hanma of the *Baki* series and Ohma Tokita of *Kengan Ashura* coming face-to-face for the first time.

The animation production is by TMS Entertainment.

The film is based on the mangas – *Baki the Grappler* by Keisuke Itagaki and *Kengan Ashura* by Yabako Sandrovich.

Nobunaga Shimazaki voices Baki opposite Tatsuhisa Suzuki as Ōma Tokita.

Baki Hanma vs Kengan Ashura was the highlight of Netflix's anime showcase at AnimeJapan 2024 at the end of March.

Netflix called the new film a "ground-breaking collaboration".

Netflix streams both *Baki Hanma* and *Kengan Ashura*.

The *Baki* martial arts manga series, published in Akita Shoten's *Weekly Shonen Champion*, has sold over 85 million copies.

The series tells the stories of various fighters, centered on the life-and-death clash between protagonist Baki Hanma, the youngest underground fighting champion, and his father Yujiro Hanma, the "strongest creature in the world".

Kengan Ashura, from comics website Ura Sunday and the comics app MangaOne, is about humble office worker Kazuo Yamashita who encounters mysterious martial artist Ohma Tokita and gets wrapped up in the "Kengan" matches, where corporations settle business disputes by betting large sums on seasoned fighters.

Thailand's True Corp cleans house

Database clean-up drives down reported subs numbers

| Pay-TV | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1Q23 | 2Q23 | 3Q23 | 4Q23 | 1Q24 |
| Subscribers | 1,447,000 | 1,415,000 | 1,401,000 | 1,371,000 | 1,339,000 |
| ARPU | 279 | 280 | 278 | 279 | 283 |
| Online | | | | | |
| | 1Q23 | 2Q23 | 3Q23 | 4Q23 | 1Q24 |
| Subscribers | 3835000 | 3827000 | 3788000 | 3778000 | 3702000 |
| ARPU | 463 | 475 | 477 | 494 | 506 |

Chart: ContentAsia
Source: True Corporation Thailand

Thailand's True dropped another 108,000 pay-TV subscribers in the first quarter of 2024, reporting its fifth straight quarter of pay-TV subs losses.

Pay-TV subs numbers were down 7.4% year on year to 1.34 million from 1.45 million at the end of March last year.

Pay-TV arpu increased 1.3% year on year to THB283/US\$7.70.

Reporting its Q1 earnings just before the weekend, the company showed dips in online and mobile subscribers as well, but said the across the board subs losses were the result of one-time data base clean-ups to get rid of non-revenue-generating customers.

True had just over 3.7 million online subscribers at the end of March, down from 3.84 million subs at the end of March in 2023.

Online subscribers dropped 133,000

(-3.5%) year on year at the end of Q1 2024.

Online arpu was up 9.2% year on year, reaching THB506 at the end of the first quarter.

The company had a total of 51.1 million mobile subs at the end of the first quarter 2024 – a growth of 0.6 million or 1.2% year on year. Post-paid subscribers declined by 0.5 million (-3%) year on year.

Pay-TV service revenue for 1Q2024 was THB1,757 million/US\$48 million – an increase of 5.5%. True attributed this to higher music and entertainment revenue.

The company's consolidated first quarter net loss after tax was THB769 million from THB492 million – a drop of 56.2% – in the same quarter in 2023.

Microsoft's US\$3.9b AI investments

Four-year plan to boost cloud/AI in Malaysia, Indonesia

Microsoft is investing a combined US\$3.9 billion over the next four years to boost cloud and AI infrastructure in Indonesia and Malaysia.

US\$1.7 billion has been earmarked for Indonesia and another US\$2.2 billion is going into Malaysia.

The Indonesia investment is Microsoft's largest ever in its 29-year history in the country, the company said.

The initiative will create "AI skilling opportunities" for an additional 200,000 people in Malaysia and 840,000 people in Indonesia, plus another 100,000

people in Thailand.

No value has yet been disclosed for Microsoft's cloud and AI investment in Thailand.

The announcements follow Microsoft's broader commitment to providing AI training and support opportunities for 2.5 million people in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam by 2025.

The new investment was unveiled by chairman and CEO, Satya Nadella, on his whistlestop tour to Southeast Asia in April/May.

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What's on where...

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|---------------------------|
| May 2024 | 15-17 | LA Screenings 2024 | Los Angeles U.S. |
| | 22-24 | 18th Busan Content Market 2024 | Busan, Korea |
| | 28 | AVIA: Satellite Industry Forum 2024 | Singapore |
| June 2024 | 6-8 | Telefilm Vietnam 2024 | Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam |
| | 17-18 | DW Global Media Forum 2024 | Bonn, Germany |
| | 24-27 | Sunny Side of the Doc 2024 | France |
| | 24-28 | 29th Shanghai TV Festival 2024 | Shanghai, China |
| July 2024 | 3-5 | 15th Content Tokyo 2024 | Tokyo, Japan |
| August 2024 | 20-24 | Beijing International Radio, TV & Film Exhibition 2024 | Beijing, China |
| | 27 | AVIA: Korea in View 2024 | Seoul, Korea |
| | 29 | AVIA: Japan in View 2024 | Tokyo, Japan |
| September 2024 | 3-4 | ContentAsia Summit 2024 | Taipei, Taiwan |
| | 5 | ContentAsia Awards 2024 | Taipei, Taiwan |
| | 24-26 | APOS 2024 | Bali, Indonesia |
| | 26-29 | Gwangju Ace Fair 2024 | Gwangju, Korea |
| October 2024 | 5-8 | Asian Contents & Film Market 2024 | Busan, Korea |
| | 10 | AVIA: Vietnam in View 2024 | Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam |
| | 18-20 | MipJunior 2024 | Cannes, France |
| | 21-24 | Mipcom 2024 | Cannes, France |
| | 30 Oct-1 Nov | TIFFCOM 2024 | Tokyo, Japan |
| November 2024 | 12-13 | Dubai International Content Market (DICM) | Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai |
| | 20-22 | 16th Content Tokyo 2024 | Chiba, Japan |
| December 2024 | 3 | AVIA: OTT Summit 2024 | Singapore |
| | 3 | The ATF Leaders Dialogue 2024 | Singapore |
| | 4-6 | Asia TV Forum & Market /ATF 2024 | Singapore |
| February 2025 | 23-27 | Mip London 2025 | London, U.K. |
| | 24-28 | The London TV Screenings 2025 | London, U.K. |
| March 2025 | 25-27 | Series Mania Forum 2025 | Lille, Hauts-de-France |

Aparna Purohit exit speculation

Prime Video declines to comment on loss of India lead



Picture: Prime Video

Aparna Purohit

Amazon Prime Video's originals lead in India and Southeast Asia, Aparna Purohit, is said to be exiting the Mumbai-based platform.

Prime Video has neither confirmed nor commented on reports that Purohit is stepping down, and there's no confirmation on where she is headed.

If true, her exit is likely to be seen as a significant blow to the home of streaming blockbusters such as *Mirzapur* and *The Family Man*.

World of Purohit's exit comes as Prime Video embarks on its most ambitious originals' roll out in India.

In March, Prime Video unveiled its biggest India slate to date, adding 69 series and movies to its streaming platform over the next two years, including the return of blockbuster series *Mirzapur* for a third season.

The new slate features 40 new and

returning original productions and 29 licensed theatrical movie titles in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu across multiple genres, including comedy, action, horror and unscripted.

The weekend news comes exactly a year after Purohit's India originals role was expanded to include Southeast Asia, and about four months after the Southeast Asia content team was decimated as the platform changed course.

Purohit is widely credited with enabling many of India's best streaming originals – including *Mirzapur*, *The Family Man*, *Mind the Malhotras* and *Four More Shots Please* – and with being at the forefront of a new era in the country's premium video production.

Purohit joined the India team in January 2016 as head of creative development.

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