



BACKGROUNDS

Press Information Bureau

Government of India

Doordarshan at 66

A Legacy of Public Service and Digital Innovation

September 15, 2025

Key Takeaways

- As on **September 2025**, Doordarshan operates **35 channels**, including DD India, which provides international broadcast.
- Doordarshan reaches over 90% of India's population, with DD News airing 17+ hours of daily live programming, while DD India strongly competing with leading English news channels.
- The **₹2,539.61 crore BIND Scheme (2021–26)** aims for overall technical upgradation and modernisation of the network.
- **PB SHABD** currently operates in **15 Indian languages** with **1200 reporters** at work (as on September 2025).

Introduction

Doordarshan, India's premier public service broadcaster, celebrates its **66th foundation day** on **September 15, 2025**, marking its inception in 1959 as an experimental television service under All India Radio. Over the decades, it has grown into a vital platform for information dissemination, cultural preservation, and national integration, reaching nearly 100% of the population through satellite and DTH services. As part of Prasar Bharati since 1997, Doordarshan continues to prioritise public interest broadcasting with a focus on education, news, and entertainment.



Doordarshan will celebrate its **66th foundation day** on **September 15, 2025** with a special cultural event titled "**Shabdanjali: DD@66**" to be held at Rang Bhawan, Akashvani Bhawan, New Delhi.

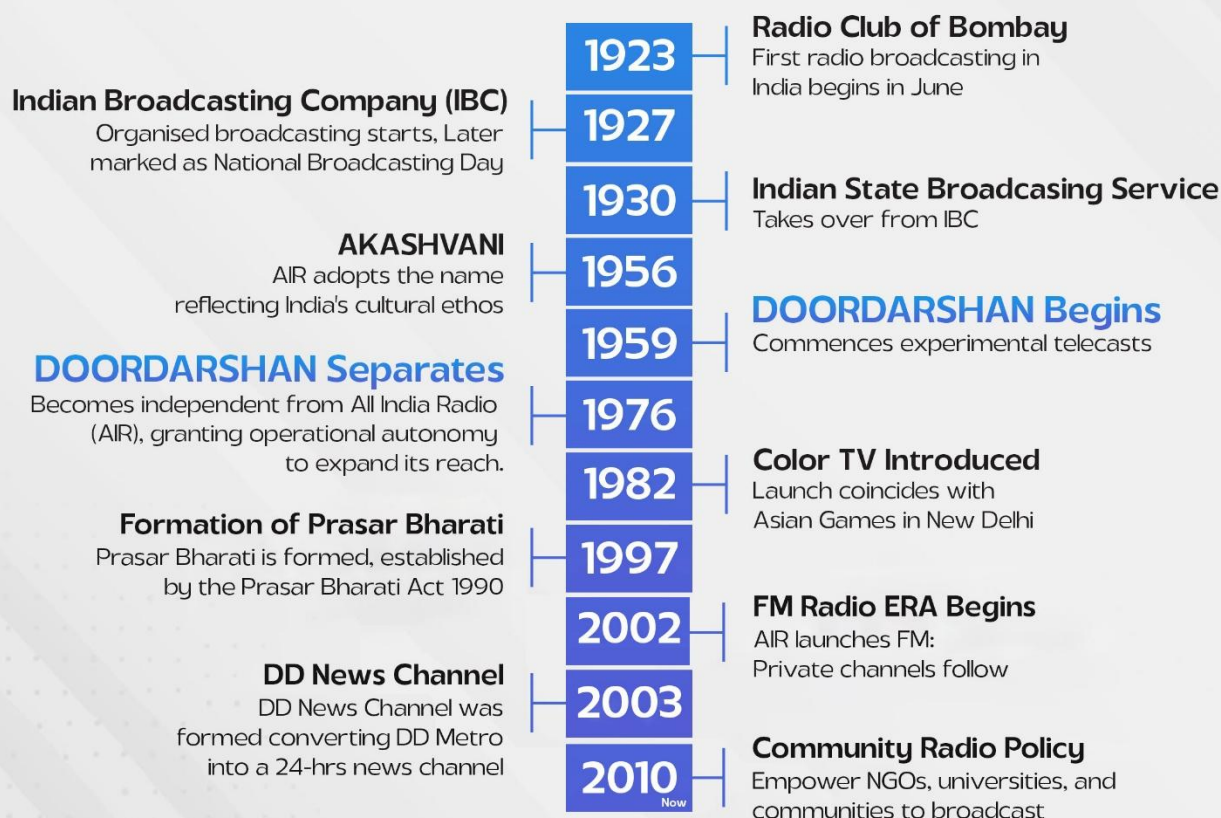
Doordarshan united millions in awe as it aired the first Indian cosmonaut, Rakesh Sharma, orbiting in space - **1984**

History



Doordarshan

A Key Aspect of India's Broadcasting Landscape



Source: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

Doordarshan, India's premier public service broadcaster, celebrates its **66th foundation day on September 15, 2025**, marking its inception in 1959 as an experimental television service under All India Radio (now known as Akashvani). Over the decades, it has grown into a vital platform for information dissemination, cultural preservation, and national integration, reaching nearly 100% of the population through satellite and DTH services. As part of Prasar Bharati since 1997, Doordarshan continues to prioritise public interest broadcasting with a focus on education, news, and entertainment.

In 1981, renowned filmmaker Satyajit Ray produced the television adaptation of Sadgati, a poignant short story by acclaimed Hindi novelist, Premchand, as a part of Doordarshan's initiative to showcase important pieces of cultural and social relevance .

A pivotal moment came with the separation from **All India Radio (AIR)** on **April 1, 1976¹**, granting Doordarshan operational autonomy to expand its reach. The introduction of colour television on **August 15, 1982**, coinciding with the Asian Games in Delhi, transformed Doordarshan's visual appeal and viewership. The establishment of Prasar Bharati as an autonomous corporation on September 23, 1997, under the **Prasar Bharati Act, 1990**, further professionalized Doordarshan, integrating it with All India Radio under a unified public broadcasting framework.

Present day

With a network of 35 satellite channels and 66 Studio Centers, Doordarshan serves diverse linguistic and cultural communities, by delivering content in over 24 languages and various dialects. Its DD Free Dish platform, covering 49 million households as of 2024, remains India's largest free-to-air DTH service, ensuring accessibility even in remote areas. Doordarshan commitment to public service is evident in its focus on socially relevant programming, such as health campaigns and educational initiatives, aligning with national development goals.

Today, the vibrant bouquet of Doordarshan Network consists of 35 channels with 06 National Channels, 28 Regional channels and 01 Channel with international presence.



In 1976, the Doordarshan logo was designed by the National Institute of Design and the signature tune was composed by Indian classical maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar.

DD News: A Pillar of Public Broadcasting



DD News, India's only **terrestrial-cum-satellite news channel**, has been delivering balanced, fair, and accurate news since its launch on **November 3, 2003**, by transforming DD-Metro into a 24-hour news channel. DD News delivers over **17 hours of live programming daily**. This includes more than **30 news bulletins** alongside regional content produced by **30 Regional News Units (RNUs)** in **26 languages/dialects²**. The channel produces diverse content in Hindi as well as Sanskrit and sign language. This includes a business show, current affairs programs, and special features on health, youth,

¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxtRxWcKqc8>

²<https://ddnews.gov.in/about-us/>

cinema, art, culture, flagship government schemes, a news magazine show in Sanskrit and more, while also supplying content for sister channels like DD National, DD India, and DD Urdu.

Actively engaging with audiences through social media platforms like Twitter (@DDNewsLive) and YouTube (youtube.com/DDNewsOfficial), DD News streams real-time news updates, as well as relevant information on its ticker band for public awareness. This dynamic presence reinforces its role as a trusted, inclusive source of information that promotes public awareness and national unity

DD India: Catering to the International Audience



DD India, launched in 1995 as DD International and later renamed, is Prasar Bharati's free-to-air satellite English news channel targeting the global audience, including the Indian diaspora. It focuses on news, current affairs, foreign affairs, economy, sports, and entertainment, aiming to project India's perspective internationally. The channel, now in high definition (HD) since October 2020, competes with top private English news channels and has gained recognition

from BARC³. DD India leverages cable and satellite platforms to meet the growing demand for Indian content abroad, emphasising live reporting and in-depth analysis.

PM's Mann Ki Baat on Doordarshan



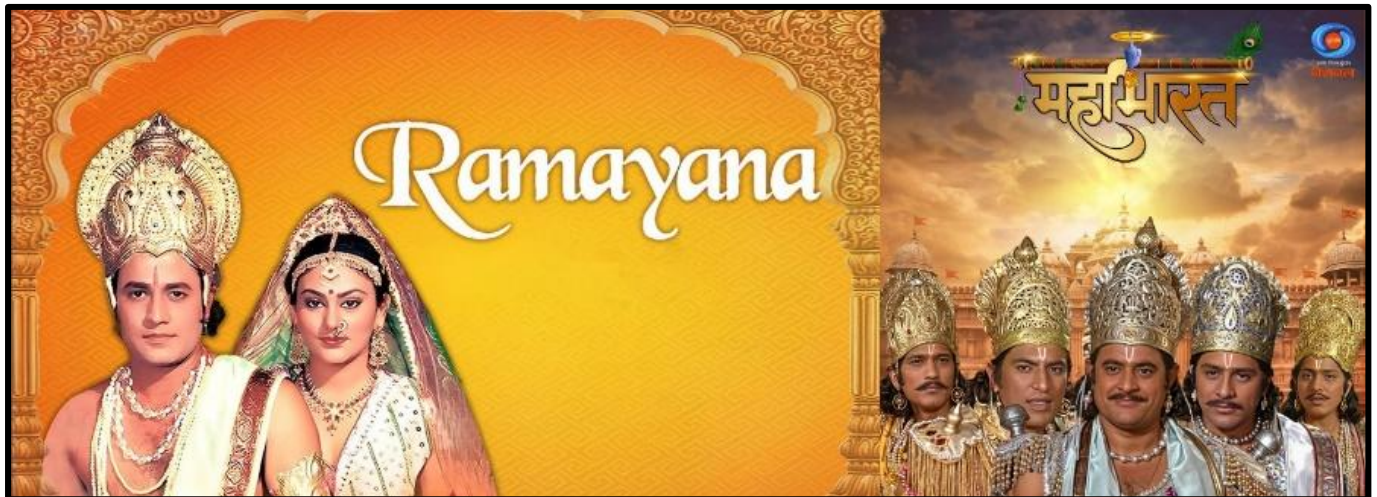
"Mann Ki Baat," Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio and television address, is a flagship program aired on DD National and DD News, as well as other Doordarshan channels, to connect with citizens on national issues, culture, and development. The program, broadcast live, reaches a vast audience through Doordarshan's extensive network and DD Free Dish, ensuring accessibility in rural and urban areas. It also engages international viewers via DD India. The show promotes public participation, highlights grassroots initiatives, and addresses topics like education, health, and sustainability, aligning with national priorities.

Iconic Doordarshan Series

Doordarshan aired some of the most iconic series, such as *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, *Hum Log*, *Buniyaad*, *Chanakya*, *Malgudi Days*, *Shaktimaan*, *Chitrahaar*, *Fauji*, *Circus*, and *Udaan*, which set

³<https://prasarbharati.gov.in/dd-news/>

high standards for exceptional programming and entertainment while sustaining its essential function of raising public awareness.



DD Free Dish: India's Largest Free-to-Air Service



DD FreeDish DTH service was launched in December, 2004. It is the only Free-to-Air (FTA) Direct-To-Home (DTH) Service where there is no monthly subscription fee. Today, this unparalleled service has made its way into 49 million households across India. DD FreeDish platform hosts a wide spectrum of Channels which includes 9 HD Channels, 35 SD Channels of Doordarshan Network, 48 Radio channels of Akashvani, 2 HD & 2 SD Channels of Sansad TV, 92 private TV channels & 266 co-branded educational channels.

The service broadcast offers diverse content including entertainment, news, and educational programs like **PM e-Vidya**, without requiring an internet connection.

The Digital Dawn

Digital Transformation with the Waves OTT Platform

Doordarshan, under the aegis of Prasar Bharati, has undergone a remarkable digital transformation with the launch of its **Waves** OTT platform in November 2024, marking a pivotal shift from traditional broadcasting to modern streaming. This comprehensive digital hub, offering content in

12 languages has plans to include all major Indian languages. This platform caters to diverse audiences and has achieved significant global engagement this year, reaching viewers in the USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand. Waves' partnership with the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) makes it stand out by adding e-commerce to the app, combining entertainment, education, and shopping to showcase India's culture while embracing modern digital trends.

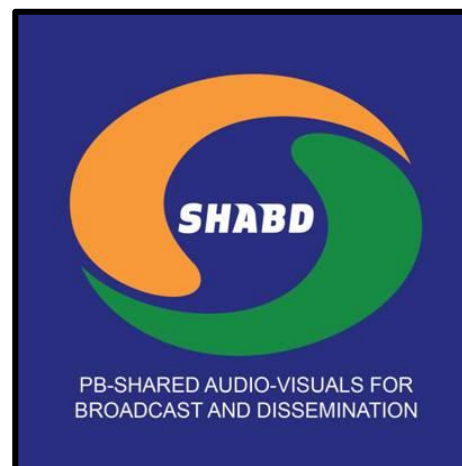


The success of Waves underscores Doordarshan's ability to adapt to the cord-cutting era while retaining its public service ethos, delivering clean, inclusive, and family-friendly content. With over 70 live TV channels, including Doordarshan's own as well as private networks like B4U, SAB Group, and 9X Media, alongside interactive features such as play-to-play games and curated youth content, Waves has expanded its global engagement.

The launch of WAVES has positioned Doordarshan as a forward-thinking broadcaster, leveraging its vast infrastructure to deliver high-quality digital content, reinforcing its role as a cultural and educational cornerstone in India and beyond.

PB SHABD – New Way of News Dissemination

Prasar Bharati-Shared Audio-Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination (PB-SHABD), launched on March 13, 2024, as a news sharing service, provides media organisations with daily news feeds in video, audio, text, and photo formats. It leverages a network of over 1200 reporters, correspondents, and stringers supported by 60 round-the-clock edit desks. With over 2500 media clients in a year, it pioneers in delivering more than 1000 stories daily, across over 50 categories including agriculture, technology, foreign affairs, and political developments in major Indian languages from Regional News Units and headquarters⁴. Key features include logo-free content requiring no credit for usage, a Live Feed for exclusive coverage of events like National award ceremonies, election rallies, press briefings, and political events, as well as a developing a Media Repository for rare archival footage from **Doordarshan** and **Akashvani** libraries, along with curated packages to help subscribers reach wider audience. An editorial module has also been created which includes expert articles to help people understand complex issues in simpler terms.



⁴<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2067861>

PRASAR BHARATI

Shared Audio-Visuals For Broadcast & Dissemination
(PB Shabd)



1200

Reporters at work

15

Indian Languages

50

New Categories

2500

Media clients
in a year

Source: PB Shabd Dashboard

DD Sports

SPORTS
DOORDARSHAN SPORTS

Prasar Bharati Sports in the recent years has taken a series of steps to reinvigorate the content path of DD Sports and Waves- the OTT channel. The idea is to enhance the viewership of the channel through holistic and substantive sports content, proactively contribute the role as the public broadcaster to make India a sporting power and make niche sports content available for all the sports lovers across the country.

Firstly, a series of steps has been taken to enhance the production quality of the shows around the Live events i.e pre show, mid show and post shows around the important international matches of the events telecast under the **Sports Act, 2008**. This has been done through real time statistics, state of art graphics, and global standard look and feel of the sets.

Secondly, enhanced production quality of the flagship sports shows of the Government of India spearheaded **Khelo India Games**. In the recent years, DD Sports has successfully produced and telecast the major events like **National Games** in Gujarat, Goa and Uttarakhand, **Khelo India Youth Games** in Tamil Nadu and Bihar, **Khelo India University Games** in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and North East, **Khelo India Para Games** in New Delhi, **Khelo India Beach Games** in Diu, **Khelo India Winter Games** in Gulmarg and Leh to name a few.

The channel last year signed an agreement with the Hockey India to produce and telecast the **Men's and Women's Hockey India League** and the major other events spearheaded by the Hockey India. Similarly, Prasar Bharati has signed an agreement with Handball Federation of India to produce and telecast its major events. Similar agreements are likely to be signed with the **Archery Association of India**, the **Badminton Association of India** and **Professional Golf Tour of India** in the months ahead. Last week, Prasar Bharati signed an agreement with the **Paralmpics Committee of India** to produce and telecast the upcoming **World Para Athletics Championship 2025** in Delhi.

Prasar Bharati Sports has tied up with the leading international and national agencies to bring fresh and innovative content on the channel to enhance its viewership. This includes, two-year agreement with **Ellipse CricViz Private Limited** to produce **104 episodes** of the **Great Indian Cricket Show** to be telecast across the Doordarshan Network, Waves- the OTT platform of Prasar

Bharati and Akashvani. In this series, the major former Indian cricketers share the first-hand account of their memories of victories, defeats and events. Similarly, Prasar Bharati has entered an agreement with the Aadi Group to produce the **Global League of Wrestling**-which will be the Indian version of the world class global sports property.

Lastly, Prasar Bharati has entered into an understanding with the **DFB Pokal- the German Cup**, wherein major football matches of DFB Pokal and Women's Bundesliga are being telecast on DD Sports and Waves. The idea is to bring the best of the global football to maximum Indian homes.

Partnerships with IIT Kanpur and Next-Generation Technologies

Doordarshan's commitment to technological innovation is exemplified by Prasar Bharati's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur⁵, signed to develop a next-generation broadcast roadmap, including Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting and Direct to Mobile (D2M solutions). This collaboration aims to modernise Doordarshan's infrastructure by integrating cutting-edge standards like D2M Broadcast, which enables efficient content delivery to mobile devices, enhancing accessibility in remote and urban areas alike.

Under the BIND Scheme (2021–26), the enhancement of technical infrastructure at 24x7 regional channels is planned to enable high-definition (HD) production and broadcasting⁶.

This strategic alliance with IIT Kanpur positions Doordarshan at the forefront of broadcast innovation, aligning with the government's ₹2,539.61 crore Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) scheme (2021–26)⁷ to upgrade 28 regional channels to HD production and expand All India Radio's FM coverage to over 80% of India's population⁸. By adopting technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, and file-based workflows, Doordarshan enhances programming quality and viewer experience, particularly for educational and cultural content. These advancements not only improve operational efficiency but also strengthen Doordarshan's global competitiveness, enabling it to deliver high-quality content to diverse audiences while maintaining its public service ethos in an increasingly digital media landscape.

Yupp TV Partnership and AI Integration in DD Kisan



In March 2022, Prasar Bharati signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Yupp TV, a leading over-the-top (OTT) platform, to expand the global reach of DD India, to countries like the USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand⁹. Yupp TV, a gateway for television viewers worldwide, hosts DD India alongside other Indian content, capitalising on the growing demand for India-centric programming among the Indian diaspora and global audiences.

⁵<https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-10/annual-report-2023-24-english.pdf>

⁶<https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-10/annual-report-2023-24-english.pdf>

⁷<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2147342>

⁸<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1888540>

⁹[https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152142&ModuleId=3#:~:text=On%20March%2007%2C%202022%2C%20India's%20public%20broadcaster,with%20Yupp%20TV'%2C%20an%20over%2Dthe%2Dtop%20\(OTT\)%20platform](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152142&ModuleId=3#:~:text=On%20March%2007%2C%202022%2C%20India's%20public%20broadcaster,with%20Yupp%20TV'%2C%20an%20over%2Dthe%2Dtop%20(OTT)%20platform)



May 26, 2015 - DD Kisan launched
May 26, 2024 - DD Kisan launched
AI anchors: AI Krish and AI Bhoomi,
proficient in 50 languages

Doordarshan Kisan, the agricultural channel, has embraced technological innovation by introducing two AI anchors, **AI Krish** and **AI Bhoomi**, making it the first government TV channel in India to employ artificial intelligence for 24/7 news delivery^{10 11}. These AI anchors, capable of presenting in 50 languages, deliver seamless, multilingual content to farmers and rural audiences, enhancing accessibility and engagement on topics like agriculture, rural development, and environmental sustainability. This integration, launched in recent years, complements Doordarshan's broader digital strategy, including the Waves OTT platform, and demonstrates its commitment to leveraging next-generation technologies to serve diverse communities while maintaining its public service mandate.

Conclusion

Doordarshan, marking its 66th anniversary in 2025, stands as a cornerstone of India's public broadcasting, evolving from its modest beginnings in 1959 to a dynamic network that blends tradition with innovation. Its iconic programs like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, and *Malgudi Days* have shaped cultural memory, while milestones like broadcasting the space journey of India's first cosmonaut in 1984 united the nation. Today, with 35 satellite channels, 66 digitised centres, and the expansive DD Free Dish serving over 45 million households, Doordarshan remains a vital force in delivering inclusive, multilingual content. Through digital transformation via the Waves OTT platform, AI integration in DD Kisan, strategic partnerships with Yupp TV and IIT Kanpur, and initiatives like PB-SHABD, Doordarshan is embracing next-generation technologies and global outreach, and upholding its legacy of fostering education, cultural preservation, and national integration for future generations.

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