

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Rajat Sharma Elected NBDA President.**

**New Delhi: September 27, 2021** ..... At the News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA) Board Meeting held today Mr. Rajat Sharma has been elected as its President. The Board also elected Mr. Avinash Pandey, Chief Executive Officer - ABP Network Pvt. Ltd., Vice President and Mr. M.K. Anand, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer – Times Network - Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd, Honorary Treasurer of the NBDA for the year 2021-2022.

The other members on the NBDA Board are: -

Mrs. Anuradha Prasad Shukla, Chairperson-cum-Managing Director - News24 Broadcast India Ltd.

Mr. M.V. Shreyams Kumar, Managing Director - Mathrubhumi Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd.

Mr. Rahul Joshi, Managing Director - TV18 Broadcast Ltd.

Mr. I. Venkat, Director - Eenadu Television Pvt. Ltd.

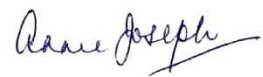
Ms. Kalli Purie Bhandal, Vice-Chairperson & Managing Director - TV Today Network Ltd.

Ms. Sonia Singh, Editorial Director, NDTV - New Delhi Television Ltd.

Mr. Sudhir Chaudhary, Chief Executive Officer - Cluster 1 - Zee Media Corporation Ltd.

Given below is the message of President, NBDA to the members of the NBDA as published in the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2020-2021.

NBDA is the largest organization of news broadcasters, consisting of almost all major news networks of the country.



Annie Joseph  
Secretary General



Mr. Rajat Sharma



Mr. Avinash Pandey



Mr. M.K. Anand

## Message from President, NBDA

It gives me great pleasure to present the 14th Annual Report of NBDA. The management report contains in detail all the actions taken by us in the last one year.

Technological advances have changed the media landscape drastically. Massive choices are available to viewers to access content on various mediums. Mobile and internet have become the predominant mode to access content. While television may still be a dominant medium but with digital being the future, news broadcasters have transitioned from linear to digital. Businesses are being leveraged to meet the challenges and adapt to this new reality.

To embrace this changing landscape, the Board decided to bring digital media news broadcasters within the membership of the Association. The change in name of the Association was inevitable with the inclusion of digital media news broadcasters. Board decided to change the name from News Broadcasters Association (NBA) to “News Broadcasters & Digital Association” (NBDA). The members at the EGM unanimously passed the modification in the name of the Association and the amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association. I am glad to inform the members that the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India has approved the new name and the amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board also decided that with the inclusion of digital media news broadcasters, the name of the self-regulatory body, News Broadcasting Standard Authority (NBSA) be rechristened as "News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority" (NBDSA). The NBDSA will look into complaints of both broadcasters and digital news media.

Despite the assurance given by the present dispensation that they are committed to “self-regulation” and not for any “statutory regulation”, the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines & Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules), thereby bringing digital media, including OTT platforms, digital news broadcasters and news aggregators, for the first time, within the ambit of government supervision. The IT Rules which have been framed to regulate digital media, not only lay down a Code of Ethics to be complied by digital news broadcasters but also establishes a Three-Tier Grievance Redressal Mechanism to ensure observance of the same. Similarly, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting also notified the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021 (Cable Amendment Rules) to establish a Three-Tier Complaint Redressal Structure to ensure observance to the Programme Code and Advertisement Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.

NBDA has challenged the constitutionality of the both the IT Rules and Cable Amendment Rules in the Hon’ble Kerala High Court on various grounds including on the grounds that the Rules give the Government Authorities excessive powers to unreasonably and impermissibly restrict the freedom of speech and expression of the media under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Interim Orders were granted in favour of NBA in both matters.

Despite several months having passed, BARC ratings have not been restored as yet. The NBDA Board and BARC have had several rounds of discussions to ensure that reliable credible, tamper free data is made available to the news broadcasters. NBDA has stated that the corrupt, compromised, irrationally fluctuating data will not be acceptable as the false narrative puts pressure to take editorial calls that run counter to the principles and ethics of journalism. NBDA believes in editorial standards of ensuring objectivity, neutrality, fairness and accuracy in reporting.

The pride of the Association is the independent self-regulatory body set up fourteen years ago. NBDSA (formerly known as News Broadcasting Standards Authority) has put in place a time-tested complaint redressal system and process, headed by eminent judges of the Supreme Court of India and eminent persons who have striven to improve broadcasting standards.

I firmly believe that the NBDA will become a strong collective voice for both the broadcast and digital media. Along with commercial and regulatory issues, it will also enable the Association to defend the fundamental right of free speech and expression guaranteed to the media under the Constitution of India in a better manner.

The Covid pandemic started in March 2020 resulting in broadcasters having to completely recalibrate their working environments and practices. Working from home and using new tools became the new norm. The second wave of the pandemic was unprecedented this year. However, despite the enormous difficulties, our journalists, camera persons and editorial staff went beyond their call of duty, put their lives at risk, and ensured that news and information of the pandemic and other important news reached millions of viewers. The seamless delivery of news to our viewers came at a huge cost - the loss of precious lives of our "Covid Warriors". I salute our journalists and others who have lost their lives in the Covid Pandemic. Our condolences to the family members who lost their near and dear ones.

We are extremely grateful to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP), who facilitated the free vaccination drive for media personnel and their families. Over five thousand vaccinations were given in the first round. We are also grateful to the Chief Minister of UP for providing financial support of Rs 10.00 lakhs each to the family members of media persons who lost their lives during the pandemic.

My gratitude to the members of NBDA for the unstinted support the Board and I have received in conducting the affairs of the Association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Anurag Thakur, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Prakash Javadekar former Minister, MoI&B, Secretary, MoI&B, Chairman TRAI and officials in various Government Departments and the States for their continued understanding and support on issues which constantly confront us.

On behalf the Board and on my own behalf, I would like to place on record our sincere gratitude and thanks to the Chairperson and Independent Members of the NBDSA for their support, invaluable guidance and time.

Finally, I would like to thank Mrs. Annie Joseph, Secretary General, NBDA for her efforts in ensuring that the objectives and initiatives of NBDA are achieved and implemented. I would also like to thank the staff of the NBDA Secretariat, Legal Counsel, Financial and Corporate Consultants as well as the Auditors of NBDA and Bankers for their valuable time and cooperation.

\*\*\*\*\*