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PRESS RELEASE

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Mandate from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Multiple LCN's - Major victory for NBA.

Mr. Ashish Bagga, President, News Broadcasters Association (NBA) stated that in a major victory for the News Broadcasters Association (NBA), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a mandate against Multi System Operators (MSOs) regarding usage of multiple LCNs. This mandate was released within 2 weeks by TRAI on representations made by NBA.

NBA had filed a complaint with TRAI against unethical distribution practices adopted by a new entrant in the English news genre: Republic TV, to boost its Rating Points (TVTs). NBA had also appealed to BARC not to release data for the English general news category for Week 19, 2017 as the rating was corrupted due to unfair distribution tactics. Consequently, major English news Channels who are also members of the NBA had opted out of the measuring system to protect themselves from being measured in a non-level playing field and had clarified that they would return only after the unethical practices had been stopped.

After a series of discussions and complaints to BARC and TRAI, the English news broadcasters have resumed their Watermark last Friday night subjecting themselves to ongoing measurements as they were sufficiently satisfied that due to TRAI's intervention the malpractices were discontinued. This was confirmed by most MSOs.

Mr. Ashish Bagga, President, NBA, stated that the NBA's stance today stands vindicated. Not only had TRAI released this important mandate, it had also aggressively followed up with MSOs about putting a stop to malpractices. The NBA is grateful to the TRAI for taking swift measures to stop malpractices. TRAI in its recent mandate to the Multiple System Operators (MSOs), also emphasized on ensuring that all channels falling in a particular genre appear in its (MSO's) network's electronic programming guide (EPG) under that genre, to make services more consumer friendly.

As a result of TRAI's mandate and action, the rating of Republic TV have gone down by over 50% after the malpractice was discontinued. This drop in rating brings Republic TV closer to realistic levels of weekly reach of general English news channels which is an average of 0.6 to 0.8 million.

Mr. Bagga stated that this would not have been possible without the timely intervention of TRAI on NBA's complaints.

Annie Joseph
Secretary General