

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Rajat Sharma Elected NBA President.**

New Delhi: November 19, 2020 News Broadcasters Association (NBA) today elected Mr. Rajat Sharma as the President. At the NBA Board Meeting held today the members unanimously asked Mr. Rajat Sharma, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief, India TV to continue as the President. The board also elected Mrs. Anuradha Prasad Shukla, Chairperson-cum-Managing Director - News24 Broadcast India Ltd, Vice President and Mr. M.K. Anand, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer – Times Network - Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd, Honorary Treasurer of the NBA for the year 2020-2021.

The other members on the NBA Board are: -

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

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

Mr. Avinash Pandey, Chief Executive Officer - ABP Network Pvt. 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.

Enclosed below is the message of President, NBA to the members delivered at the 13th Annual General Meeting of the NBA.

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

Annie Joseph
Secretary General



Message from President, NBA

It gives me great pleasure to present the 13th Annual Report of NBA. The management report contains in detail all the actions that we have taken in the last one year.

It gives me immense satisfaction to inform members that on the various issues that NBA has represented upon during the last one year, before the government and other bodies, such representations once finalized and notified will facilitate 'ease of doing business'. NBA is also privileged to have made submissions before the Joint Parliamentary Committee and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology of Lok Sabha on the 'Draft Data Protection Bill' and 'Ethical Standards in Media Coverage'.

I do not wish to get into any of the issues that are already in the Management Report. I will only impress upon issues which need our collective attention i.e. content, ratings and the need to strengthen self-regulation to improve broadcasting standards.

During the last six months, the entire world has gone through an unprecedented crisis due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Businesses across the globe have seen disruption. News broadcasters are no exception to this disruption. Overnight everything changed for one and all. Our responsibility as news channels increased manifold when the Government declared us as "essential services". In such an unexpected situation, news broadcasters had a huge responsibility to deliver credible news and information relating to the Covid pandemic, to millions of our viewers who were dependent on us. In view of the lockdown, we had to find urgent and immediate solutions for our news room operations, so that there would be no disruption in the delivery of news/ information. Our members stood up to all the difficulties and ensured that news was delivered seamlessly and without any glitches. During the lockdown there was an unprecedented spike in the viewership of news channels.

NBA salutes our journalists, camera persons and editorial staff who have gone beyond their line of duty, putting their lives at risk, and ensured that news and information of the pandemic reached millions of viewers.

This year also witnessed an unprecedented challenge of unregulated toxic content by some channels who are not NBA members. I am happy to share that NBA members stood together to fight against this menace. NBA believes in editorial standards ensuring objectivity, neutrality, fairness and accuracy in reporting. We have appealed to the advertisers not to support toxic content and sensationalism that promotes hate. I am happy to share that reputed brands have come forward and supported our stand.



For many years, NBA has been highlighting its concerns about the veracity of TV viewership data, which have been prone to irrational fluctuations. The lid was blown with the recent revelations by the Mumbai police relating to tampering of meters installed in panel homes by BARC. This has led to BARC suspending the weekly individual ratings for all news channels for twelve weeks.

NBA has welcomed the decision of BARC to suspend the measurement of television viewership ratings of news channels for a period of twelve weeks. I have said in my statement “that the corrupted, compromised, irrationally fluctuating data is creating a false narrative on What India Watches and has been putting pressure on our members to take editorial calls that run counter to the journalistic values and ideals of journalism. The current atmosphere of toxicity, abuse and fake news is no longer tenable and NBA as the custodian and guardian of Indian broadcast media believes a bold step of putting ratings of news genre on hold will help in improving the content”.

I would urge all the members broadcasters during this twelve-week period to take all the necessary steps to improve the content of their channels and move away from the tyranny of ratings and ensure that the independent self-regulatory model adopted by the news broadcasters is vigorously supported and its decisions adhered to by all of us.

The present dispensation in the government has publicly acknowledged that they are for “self regulation” and not for any “statutory regulation”. To strengthen self-regulation, the Government should recognise the NBA Code of Ethics and make it part of the Programme Code under the Cable TV Rules as has been done in the case of ASCI, a long-standing demand of the NBA. We hope the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting would take steps in this direction.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Prakash Javadekar, Hon’ble Minister, Secretary and officials in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the TRAI for their continued understanding and support on issues which confront us.

Since 2008, our self-regulation initiative has been a source of pride for us. On behalf of the NBA 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 NBSA for their support, invaluable guidance and time.

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

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