

News**Radio**

All India Radio station aimed at Bangladesh to be launched next week

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AIR**International Radio****Private FM Stations****Community Radio****Marketing and Advertising****Programming****Tags:** AIR | Prasar Bharati | Jawhar Sircar | Rabindra Bharati | Amlan Jyoti Mazumdar | Bangladesh | Vekaiah Naidu | All India Radio

NEW DELHI: The new radio station of All India Radio with exclusive programmes aimed at listeners in Bangladesh and the Indo-Bangla border is expected to be launched by President Pranab Mukherjee on 23 August 2016.

Although the channel was slated for launch on 28 June 2016, this could not happen as the President put off his visit to West Bengal.

This was conveyed by Information and Broadcasting Minister M Vekaiah Naidu to his Bangladesh counterpart Hasanul Haq Inu at a meeting here today.

Naidu said "Akashvani Maitree" would "act as a bridge of amity between the two countries". He Naidu added that the relationship between the two countries would strive to promote the commonality of heritage and culture.

The channel is also unique as it is a terrestrial channel, to be beamed from Chinsurah from a state-of-the-art 1,000 KW DRM high power transmitter which was capable of reaching out to listeners in the entire

country (Bangladesh). Officials said AIR was talking to FM stations in Bangladesh to relay the programmes to ensure better service in hinterland Bangladesh.

AIR External Services Director Amlan Jyoti Mazumdar had earlier told radioandmusic.com that the most unique aspect was that the new channel would also beam programmes that are either co-productions or made by Bangladesh programmers.

He also confirmed that artistes from both sides of the border had arrived in Kolkata for the formal inauguration at Rabindra Bharati auditorium, but said the artistes would come again when a new date is fixed.

He also said that another unique aspect of this channel was that it could be streamed online on airworldservice.org and through Apps from anywhere in the world and would therefore prove popular among people who spoke Bengali anywhere in the world.

This is not the first time that an attempt has been made to reach out to audiences across the border in Bangladesh as a Bangla radio service had been launched in 1971 during the Bangladesh Liberation Movement and discontinued in 2010.

But he stressed that the uniqueness is that this channel will have co-productions and artistes from Bangladesh taking part.

AIR sources said the channel was being re-launched in view of the changed circumstances and the important place Bangladesh occupies in India's foreign policy.

Earlier, the radio service ran for 6 hours 30 minutes daily, but the new Akashvani Maitree will run 16 hours a day which will include three news bulletins, one from Bangladesh.

The content would cover issues ranging from healthcare to agriculture. A programme series profiling different premier medical institutes, super speciality treatments available here, procedures to be followed for availing these services, tentative costs, visa facilitation etc. is also proposed to be broadcast on the service.

Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar had earlier said the service was meant specifically for the people of Bangladesh and will primarily be in Bangla and will highlight the common cultural heritage that connects India and its neighbour.

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