

## News

# Jawhar Sircar: Future of Prasar Bharati lies in FM Radio, and Internet Radio

Radio

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## AIR

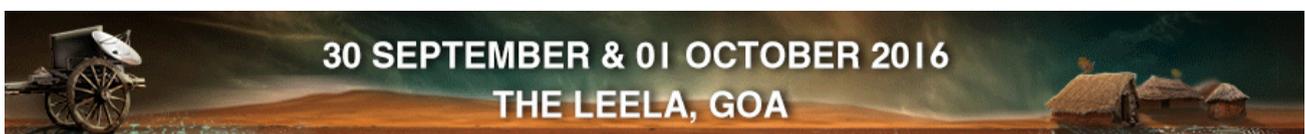
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NEW DELHI: On 12 November, Prasar Bharati Chief Executive Officer Jawhar Sircar said the pubcaster would have to strengthen its direct-to-home Freedish and its FM services if it has to survive.

He said that when Freedish utilises its full strength, it will give the other DTH operators 'a run for their money,' while addressing a function organised by the Broadcast Engineering Society (India) on the occasion of Public Service Broadcasting Day.

Similarly, he said he was conscious that FM was on analogue and may have to be phased out at some stage, but it is the best alternative at present, since medium wave and short wave were on the way out. That was the intent in his plan to simulcast MW programmes on FM channels. He said AIR should direct its resources to strengthening FM broadcasts, particularly as even mobile phones and car radios could catch these signals.



He also felt that Internet Radio was the best alternative at present to short wave and asked the engineers to work on this.

The day is marked as Public Service Broadcasting Day as it coincides with the only time that the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, ever visited All India Radio. He had come to the station in Delhi to make a broadcast in 1947 aimed at Hindu refugees from Pakistan then staying in a camp near Kurukshetra.

AIR Director General F Sheheryar referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to talk to the people through AIR and to the disaster management that AIR had helped in during the floods in Jammu and Kashmir or the storm in the Bay of Bengal. In Kashmir, he said people depended either on the Army for help or AIR for information on how to get that help.

He said the clear philosophy of the public service broadcaster was to do more than just entertain, as private FM channels were doing. A pubcaster gave precedence to public welfare over pecuniary gain.

A pubcaster also helped in development of languages and literature and taking forward classical art, music and dance.

He said AIR had now undertaken a major exercise to record for posterity all the dying forms of folklore and folk music before these vanish.

From six stations in 1947, he said AIR had grown to 414 stations at present. However, there was severe dearth of technical staff, he added.

Speaking earlier, Doordarshan Engineering-in-Chief N A Khan said terrestrial transmission was necessary for narrow casting.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi, who was the Chief Guest, said that he had depended on AIR when he set up Bachpan Bachao Aandolan to reach out to parents who had lost their children or to get information about forcibly kept children.

He also lauded radio for its work when the country was struck by disasters like the floods in J and K and the storm in the Bay of Bengal.

He wanted AIR to work towards democratisation of knowledge. The pubcaster could help the people march from despair to hope and the dissemination of collective construction of information.

While AIR had united India, he wanted it to help create a child-friendly India.

Three former engineers of Prasar Bharati –M C Aggarwal, G S Sarma, and A R Krishnamurthy – were given lifetime achievement awards. BES(I) President O K Sharma and AIR E-in-C Animesh Chakravarty also spoke on the occasion.

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