

Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar quits, says too old for the job

Jawhar Sircar says he will stay till the prime time programming slots of Doordarshan are auctioned and the 'final phase of transparency is ensured'



A file photo of Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar. Photo: HT

New Delhi: Jawhar Sircar, the chief executive officer at public broadcaster Prasar Bharati, has submitted his resignation to the information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry four months ahead of his scheduled retirement due in February 2017. Prasar Bharati runs Doordarshan and All India Radio.

Sircar has expressed his wish to leave the organisation on 4 November, just after Diwali and will relocate to Kolkata.

"I am too old for the job. I have given a month's notice to the ministry. But I am not running away," said Sircar, adding that he will stay till the prime time programming slots of Doordarshan are auctioned and the "final phase of transparency is ensured". Sircar, a 1975-batch IAS officer joined Prasar Bharati in 2012 from the ministry of culture.

Sircar added that a meeting of Prasar Bharati board has been called to ensure that the prime time slot sale policy comes into force by the end of October.

In its 16 May board meeting, Prasar Bharati had decided to put up the 7-11pm slots on all weekdays on auction, while keeping the 7-8pm slot on Saturdays for its own content. Until now, Doordarshan used to purchase programmes from private producers and generate advertising revenues.

For about five months now, Doordarshan has been trying to sell off these slots to private producers and has had two rounds of application process, none of which materialised.

Although some leading production houses like Balaji Telefilms have evinced interest in the auction, none of the applicants were found eligible to participate in the auction by the broadcaster.

According to the slot policy of Doordarshan, a production house is eligible to bid if it has logged a revenue of at least `3 crore per annum in each of the past three financial years and has produced at least 200 hours of general entertainment programming, including feature films in the last three calendar years, among other conditions.

Doordarshan is now planning a third round of application process to sell off the prime time slots. Meanwhile, Doordarshan will continue to purchase programmes till the new policy kicks in.