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Watch DD's viewer-friendly avatar

SUMI SUKANYA



A still from Yeh Hai India Meri Jaan

New Delhi, Feb. 4: For those who missed Doordarshan's "golden" days, there is good news.

The public broadcaster is working on an image makeover by bringing in entertaining fiction and reality shows.

The plan is to capture the interest of all — young and old, masses and intellectuals — with shows like *Gora*, Gulzar's *Tehreer*, *Yeh Hai India Meri Jaan*, *Bharat Ki Shaan* and *Yahan Ke Hum Sikandar*.

Among the most talked about shows the channel introduced in mid-January was director Saeed Akhtar Mirza's *Yeh Hai India Meri Jaan*, a first-of-its-kind attempt at a different type of reality show.

"Even now people talk about Mirza's *Nukkad* and we wanted to bring an equally popular show. It is a show where fiction meets documentary and we wanted to experiment what happens when the two collide. The protagonist is a fictitious character but she meets real people during her journey across the country. *Gora*, based on the novel of the same name by Rabindranath Tagore, has already been running on the channel and is vastly popular," said a DD official.

DD-1's sister channel, DD News, is not far behind either. In the tenth year of its birth, the channel is set to shed its old skin for a new avatar.

In a slew of measures to make the public bilingual channel more "lively" and "interesting", the first major change will soon be noticed during prime time.

To take on talk shows on private channels during the highest viewership slot of 8-10pm, the channel has begun hiring veteran journalists who will be assigned the responsibility of producing and anchoring "viewer-friendly and engaging" discussions during prime time.

"We realise that talk shows on some channels are very popular among viewers. While the reach of DD News is the highest among English news channels in the country, many people, especially the younger audience, feel that we are a bit boring and drab. To take ourselves closer to the masses, we are introducing several changes in the programmes and the most important of them is going for views and opinion-based news shows during prime time," S.M. Khan, director-general, DD News, told **The Telegraph**.

"However, we will retain our basic philosophy and that is to impart unbiased news to viewers at the earliest without compromising on accuracy."

Khan also said efforts were on to introduce significant changes in the channel's look, feel and design. "Our creative team is working to come up with a change in colour pattern for the channel that will give us a unique identity. It is slated to be finalised within a week," said an official.

The changes don't stop here. An experienced marketing team is being hired for the channel separately to generate revenues. At present, advertisement slots on the channel are sold to sponsors as part of a package that includes DD-1 and its other sister channels.

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