

# Doordarshan's 'saffron' logo sparks political slugfest

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NEW DELHI: The visual makeover for Doordarshan's news channels marked by a change in the colour of its logo from red to orange has sparked a controversy, with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and I&B minister locking horns over what the opposition called an attempt to "saffronise" the national broadcaster.

Mamata slammed the move calling it "absolutely unethical, grossly illegal, and speaks loudly of the pro-BJP bias of the national public broadcaster" and demanded Election Commission's intervention.

I&B minister Anurag Thakur, however, shrugged off the charge and suggested that Mamata's stand was in keeping with her resistance to "anything saffron".



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Prasar Bharti CEO Gaurav Dwivedi also pushed against the charge saying, "No surprises there, your love for 'saffron' is publicly known :) Didi, Bharat Mata ki Jai." He argued that the move was meant for visual enhancement and the colour that has raised hackles is, in fact, orange and not saffron as being alleged.

Congress MP and former I&B minister Manish Tewari criticised the switch saying it was a move to assert BJP govt's control over the public broadcaster. "This is an attempt on the part of the govt to saffronise and capture the govt institutions. The said move clearly undermines the neutrality and credibility of India's public broadcaster," he wrote on X.

TMC MP Jawahar Sircar, who served as CEO of Prasar Bharati, also criticised the alleged saffronisation of the national broadcaster saying, "As ex-CEO of Prasar Bharati it hurts to see the saffronisation of Doordarshan's logo - just before elections! It will influence voters, by overlaying the colour one religion and Sangh Parivar colour with a 'neutral' Public Broadcaster and a biased Govt/Regime."

Dwivedi, however, argued that the adoption of a vibrant, visually appealing colour was part of the channel's branding and aesthetic upgrade. "The colour is orange, not saffron," he clarified, further explaining, "It's not just the logo that underwent change, the entire visual identity has been revamped. It's regrettable that people are reading more into this than necessary. We've been working on revitalising DD's look and feel for the past six to eight months."

Established on Sept 15, 1959, the national broadcaster had its logo designed by Devashish Bhattacharya, a student of the National Institute of Design.

Contrary to political speculations, the broadcaster clarified that the colour change is rooted in the logo's history and aesthetic appeal. It pointed out that the original logo, chosen by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and introduced in 1976 along with theme music composed by Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan, featured an orange hue against a green backdrop.

The vice-president of Andhra BJP, Vishnu Vardhan Reddy attacked the critics saying, "When #Doordarshan was launched in 1959, it had a saffron logo. Now, as the govt reintroduces the original logo, liberals and #Congress are outraged over it. It's blatantly obvious they harbour hate against 'Bhagwa' and Hindus."