

## **Prasar Bharati, Digital Television Russia ink historic deal**

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Prasar Bharati (PB) and Russian Pay-TV programmer Digital Television Russia (DTR) on Thursday signed a deal on cooperation focussing on high quality production, marketing and distribution of content related to art, culture, research, technology in the two countries. Prasar Bharati chairman A Surya Prakash described the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as “natural corollary” to the existing strong bond between the two nations. “We have had a very long-standing and happy relationship.

So, the understanding between the two major broadcasters, is only a natural corollary to the strong bond that exists between the nations,” he said. Citing Raj Kapoor films, Prakash said Bollywood has potential to make it big in Russia. He also noted that Russian softwares, computer games and content on music, dance and tradition there will be of great interest to Indian viewers and vice versa and hoped that the programmes are cross-dubbed for respective audiences. Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar, who inked the agreement, said the deal was signed after weeks of negotiations which focused on eight areas mainly.

When asked whether Doordarshan being a free-to-air channel and the Russian party being a pay-tv programmer would affect kind of programmes exchanged, Sircar said, “Our objective is to see our programmes are broadcast. Whether through pay channels or non-pay, (it) doesn’t matter. As long as a programme is seen by more people than it is being seen now...” He said Prasar Bharati has in the past shared programmes to Canada and “limited groups” in US.

Dmitry Mednikov Yurievich, deputy CEO of Russia Television and Radio, said it will be “very interesting for (DTR) to launch channels which are fully dedicated to India” and that those will be promoted through different media. Mednikov said the Pay-TV programmer “would like” to create an infrastructure wherein Indian films can go to big screens in Russia, where Hollywood films are preferred most currently.

He further said his channel plans to make computer games for Russian audience out of Indian culture “which has many stories to offer”. Mednikov informed the programmer will translate first of their computer games in Hindi next year. “This is a very good chance and very big challenge because

we have together so many possibilities that they give very big responsibilities,” he said.

According to a statement issued by Prasar Bharati, in the wake of the agreement, Russian journalists will be in India to produce TV programmes on Indian economy, technology and culture. A series in this connection will be aired in Russia’s FTA channels Russia 1 and Russia 24. Deputy CEO, GM of International Networks, DTR, Ayuna Badmaeva said it is “an exciting time” for the Russian broadcaster. She said the company’s philosophy of creating local brands and formats will ensure these channels will resonate with local viewers “especially with a market like India where there are many regions and languages”.