

BARC India sets up independent Disciplinary Council for transparency in measurement system

Mumbai, 29th March, 2017

India's sole TV viewership measurement company, BARC India, has set up an independent Disciplinary Council to further strengthen transparency and credibility of its measurement system. The 6-member BARC India Disciplinary Council (BDC) will investigate and address complaints related to viewership malpractices and tampering of BARC India's measurement system.

The BDC will be headed by Justice Mukul Mudgal, Former Chief Justice, Punjab & Haryana High Court, and has D Shivanandan, Former Mumbai Police Commissioner & DGP Maharashtra, and Paritosh Joshi, Independent Technical Expert as its members. Sujeet Jain, Group General Counsel and Company Secretary, Viacom18; CVL Srinivas, CEO South Asia, GroupM and Pankaj Phadnis, AVP Corporate Legal, GCPL are the other members, representing the three stakeholder bodies - IBF, AAI and ISA.

BARC India has already set up a Vigilance Team to probe viewership malpractices complaints, as well as investigate abnormal viewership data recorded from BARC India Panel Households. The Disciplinary Council will independently examine Vigilance Team reports, and where culpability is clearly established, it will be empowered to order punitive action appropriate to level of offence. The action could range from written warning and a fine for first level offence, to suspension of viewership data for 3 months, leading up to termination of BARC India's contract with subscriber.

Alongside setting up of the high-level BDC, BARC India has re-drafted terms of the contract it signs with its subscribers. This has been done to address limitations in the current End User License Agreements (EULA) and strengthen legal provisions that will allow the BDC to act against viewership malpractices. The updated EULA will soon be circulated to all BARC India subscribers, and they would be required to sign them.

"The BDC is a step forward in our commitment to ensuring transparency, and eradicating this long existing malpractice of panel tampering. We hope to build further credibility in our processes and systems under guidance of Justice Mukul Mudgal. The independent Council will also benefit from the advice of a seasoned law enforcement expert like Mr. Shivanandan, and the continued support of industry stakeholders," said Partho Dasgupta, CEO, BARC India.