

**Cooks, labourers  
turn DD producers**

**NEW DELHI:** A cook, a labourer and a travel agent are among 400 'professionals' chosen by Doordarshan to produce programmes worth Rs 240 crore for its Kashir Channel.

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# Cook turns producer for DD

## KASHIR CHANNEL Persons with no background in TV to helm shows worth Rs 240 crore

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**NEW DELHI:** A cook, an *anganwadi* worker, a labourer, a travel agent. They are among the 400 'professionals' chosen by Doordarshan (DD) to produce programmes worth Rs 240 crore for one of its channels.

The national broadcaster has reportedly picked people with no background in TV as producers for programmes to be telecast on Kashir Channel — DD's Kashmir-centric channel — from next month.

"I was shocked to find my former cook, Mohammad Abdullah, who is a resident of Uri in the Kashmir Valley, was allocated a programme of 13 episodes," said Rubi Singh, who owns a production house and has been a producer for DD for two decades. "His qualification was that he works at the home of an influential DD official."

Singh, in comparison, has been allocated five episodes.

DD has received complaints that among the 400 are an *anganwadi* worker, Praveena Akhtar, and a businessman, Miyan Jaan. An assistant with a Delhi-based production house also got eight episodes while the production house's proposal was rejected.

Ananya Banerjee, director of programmes in charge of empanelling producers for Kashir, said she wasn't authorised to comment.

B.S. Lalli, chief executive offi-

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**RUBI SINGH**  
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cer of Prasar Bharati, the corporation in charge of DD, said the Doordarshan director general was "emphatic the selection process was transparent". But, he added: "I have ordered a vigilance inquiry into the allegations. If any lapse is found on the part of any DD official, strict action will be taken."

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ambika Soni has appointed a private consultant to review Kashir Channel. "All aspects of Kashmir Channel, including allegations of corruption, are being looked into," a ministry functionary said.

Kashir was launched in 2003 to counter Pakistan television propaganda and generate employment for Kashmiri youth. In August 2009, DD initiated a process to allocate programmes with 75 per cent reserved for producers from the Valley. It got over 1,200 applications.

According to Singh, DD failed to physically authenticate the documents presented with the application forms.

### CHANNEL SURFING

■ Kashir was launched in 2003 to counter Pakistan television propaganda and to generate employment for Kashmiri youth

■ It was allocated Rs 500 crore under the Prime Minister's Special Package for Kashmir

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producers from the Valley; it received over 1,200 applications

■ Kashir was involved in a similar controversy in 2006, when the then Information and Broadcasting Minister P.R. Dasmunsi scrapped DD's panel of producers after top production firms accused alleged corruption in allocation of programmes