

## 6 COMPANIES

## 'Good content is good strategy'

What do you ask the chief executive of a newspaper company that is routinely called names by the President of the US? But the 'falling' The New York Times Company (NYT) has never been in better shape. Just over a billion dollars of its \$17-billion top line (TBL) comes from subscription; 40 per cent of this is digital. It has roughly 5 million subscribers, 3.2 million of them digital. It has 700 journalists, a figure that rose by 50 per cent over the past decade, while the rest of the US newspaper industry has been shrinking. MARK THOMPSON joined NYT from the BBC in 2012 and is credited with its turnaround. On an India visit this week, he spoke to Vanita Kohli Khambekar. Edited excerpts:

**What is the India trip about? Is there a tie-up in the offing?**

We are not talking up with anyone, nor are we looking at distribution or investment. In many markets outside the US, the NYT is becoming well known. India is an important market. It is potentially good market for journalism. We are here to meet people and understand the market better and think about what we should do.

**Would a recent proposal to cap foreign investment in online news at 26 per cent deter you? Would you look for a partner?**

Finding an Indian partner is not our main strategic thesis. What would be the right thing to do? Australia's News Corp. didn't make out marketing alliances but we are certainly not looking at tie-ups. Our model is very simple, we make great journalism, put it on the internet, encourage people to read it and ask for a fair subscription.

**Just your kind of journalism is possible in countries where the institutional framework backs it up. How do you do that?**

There are problems in many countries where the freedom of the press is not a spectrum. It may not be fully defended by the courts or by the constitution. In others, like China, the government simply doesn't accept that journalists have the right to find out the truth and write about it. Whenever

we can, we do carry on with our journalism. Our mission is to tell the truth and help people understand the world.

**But you are an outlier. The NYT, The Economist, The Guardian have this strong thing of investing in journalism. How much of it has to do with ownership structure?**

The [Sorberg] family trust has a controlling interest in the NYT. And the family is committed to high-quality journalism. We also think makes good business sense. At the heart of the NYTimes is very traditional belief in good journalism. If more newsmen followed this idea of investing in quality journalism, it will bring in more dollars of quality in content not out of the goodness of his heart but because good content is good strategy.

**Subscription revenues help produce journalism but limit its scope. How do you deal with this?**

These problems, most of the world's media has got to deal with, is dependence on advertising. It has to do with the psychological limitation of thinking that you have to please advertisers and that is the only way to pay for journalism. Advertising got publishers into the habit of the seasonal expansion and contraction,



"FOR CLOSE TO 100 YEARS, NEWSPAPERS AND BROADCASTERS REACHED AUDIENCES WHEN ADVERTISERS DID NOT HAVE TOO MANY CHOICES. THIS GAVE THEM HUGE PRICING POWER... IT WASN'T STOLEN, IT WAS A PIECE OF LUCK THAT LASTED FOR A CENTURY"

When the ad market is good they hire journalists and if there is a slowdown they reduce numbers. But what they were facing is not cyclical but a fundamental, secular challenge.

**If you were to offer advice to Indian publishers transitioning to digital what would it be?**

One, quality works strategically. Two, you need to digitalise news business as it was the same as print or a linear TV business. In the classic news publication, there is an almost perfect division of labour: ad sales, editorial, marketing, distribution, printing plant and so on. In digital, everything needs a multi-disciplinary

team. If you want to drive a deeper engagement or to improve the customer journey, you need to do different disciplines in the room.

**How do you tackle the whole issue of the dominance of Google/Facebook?**

I am not sure you can tackle that. It is a dominance of eyeballs, data and distribution, so they are dictating the terms of advertising. But ways of advertising is the next model for journalism. It is about monetising premium, unique and mid-tier advertising in newspapers and TV happened at the same time as the industrial revolution.

Close to 100 years, newspapers and broadcasters reached audiences when advertisers did not have too many choices. This gave them huge pricing power. In 2005, we had \$25 billion worth of job classifieds in the NYT at gross margins of about 95 percent. This year, it went to less than \$5 billion. It is gone. For me it is certainly worth weeping over — you weep dry now. It is the think of the future. However, it was a piece of luck that it lasted for accuracy.

**US President Donald Trump has been great for news business. What happens when he goes?**

Our world is going through big changes, a rapid disruptive transition. The president, nationalistic strains of politics go a lot wider than Trump. This is indeed looking a strain of populism which is connected with immigration, played on differences of religion, ethnicity, gender. These aren't just Trump's. There is a coherent shift in geo-politics and economic power, climate change, there is a whole series of fundamental forces at work. These have led to an incredibly lively news cycle that has been increasing in intensity since 2008.

## Subhash Chandra to become minority shareholder in Zee

Will sell 16.5% and retain 5.9%; promoters to keep management control

VIVEK SUSAN PINTO  
Mumbai, 20 November



### CONTOURS OF THE DEAL

Promoter stake%	Balance 5.9%
22.4%	22.4%
Sale to financial investors	16.5%
Total	54.9%
*As on September 30, 2019	

Zee Entertainment

Promoter share (mn)	Stake (%)
Foreign	10.62
Indian	108.6
Total	119.24

Source: Capitaline, BSE  
Price in ₹



month that it had received lender protection rights in Essel Media Ventures, a promoter group entity in Zee, whose shares were pledged to it.

The deal will be closed on 22.37 per cent promoter stake in Zee, 96 per cent is pledged to lenders. The loan amount against the shares is ₹2,000 crore.

Market sources said the transaction to be executed via block deals, would be done at the price of ₹277 per share, a discount of nearly 10 per cent to Wednesday's closing price of ₹307.5 on the BSE.

The deal size would be ₹4,200 crore. The promoters were expecting ₹5,000 crore. The block deals are likely to be executed over the next few days, sources said. The group has entered into agreements for this.

Essel Group indicated on Wednesday that OPI Global China Fund, a subsidiary of Investco Oppenheim, would pick up 2.3 per cent of the nearly ₹51 billion shares being sold by the promoters.

In August, reached an agreement with ZEE to buy 11 per cent of the promoter stake for ₹4,244 crore, of which sale of 8.7 per cent had been completed.

Besides mutual funds and other domestic lenders, Chandra and his family have to repay Russian financial services major VTB Capital from whom they had taken loans against shares for their privately-held ventures.

Or the 22.37 per cent promoter stake in Zee, 107.1 per cent is held by ZEE Capital. The latter had indicated last

Wednesday that it had received lender protection rights in Essel Media Ventures, a promoter group entity in Zee, whose shares were pledged to it.

The deal will be closed on 22.37 per cent promoter stake in Zee, 96 per cent is pledged to lenders. The loan amount against the shares is ₹2,000 crore.

Market sources said the transaction to be executed via block deals, would be done at the price of ₹277 per share, a discount of nearly 10 per cent to Wednesday's closing price of ₹307.5 on the BSE.

The deal size would be ₹4,200 crore. The promoters were expecting ₹5,000 crore. The block deals are likely to be executed over the next few days, sources said. The group has entered into agreements for this.

Essel Group indicated on Wednesday that OPI Global China Fund, a subsidiary of Investco Oppenheim, would pick up 2.3 per cent of the nearly ₹51 billion shares being sold by the promoters.

In August, reached an agreement with ZEE to buy 11 per cent of the promoter stake for ₹4,244 crore, of which sale of 8.7 per cent had been completed.

Besides mutual funds and other domestic lenders, Chandra and his family have to repay Russian financial services major VTB Capital from whom they had taken loans against shares for their privately-held ventures.

Or the 22.37 per cent promoter stake in Zee, 107.1 per cent is held by ZEE Capital. The latter had indicated last

## TCS banks on BaNCS to clinch large finance deals

ROMITA MAHIMDAR  
Mumbai, 20 November

With information technology (IT) services companies seeing subdued demand from the banking, financial services and insurance (BSI) segment, industry leader Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is trying to expand its universal banking platform, BaNCS, to clinch large deals in the space.

Last week, the Mumbai-based major announced it had a multi-year IT outsourcing contract from Scotland-based Phoenix Group; the industry estimate is

\$2 billion. Phoenix is Europe's largest life insurance and pensions consolidator.

This is the second such large deal the company has signed in BSI which involves large-scale deployment of its BaNCS solutions; the Transamerica contract last year is said to be of similar size. The latter deal marked TCS' entry into a complex insurance third-party administration marketplace in the US, establishing BaNCS in the region.

The expanded partnership (with Phoenix) will result in the digital transfor-

mation of Standard Life's pension and savings operations onto the TCS BaNCS digital

platform, powered by TCS BaNCS. This will expand the overall scope by further 4.2 million policies, taking the total number of policies managed by Diligent, TCS' regulated subsidiary in the UK to nearly 10 million, said Sudhir Muthuswami, president of BSI Platforms at TCS.

In the ongoing year, TCS has announced several other deals which are led by BaNCS, in Europe, the Asia-Pacific and West Asia. "Despite headwinds in the BSI vertical, TCS has indicated that the BaNCS platform is doing fairly well and has been able to achieve six new sites and six go-lives in Q2 (September quarter)," says Girish Patel, research head at online share market trader Nirmal Bang.

TCS already services around 35 million policyholders globally through the platform business.

The new mandate from Phoenix will make it 40 million. "This will cement our market leadership in the life and pension insurance segment, with a strong presence in open book deals," added Muthuswami.

and West Asia. "Despite headwinds in the BSI vertical, TCS has indicated that the BaNCS platform is doing fairly well and has been able to achieve six new sites and six go-lives in Q2 (September quarter)," says Girish Patel, research head at online share market trader Nirmal Bang.

TCS already services around 35 million policyholders globally through the platform business.

The new mandate from Phoenix will make it 40 million. "This will cement our market leadership in the life and pension insurance segment, with a strong presence in open book deals," added Muthuswami.

This said information is also available on the company's website at [www.ashikagroup.com](http://www.ashikagroup.com) and on websites of stock exchange at [www.mseaindia.com](http://www.mseaindia.com).

Place : Kolkata  
Date : 20.11.2019

### Advertisement for Inviting EoI for Sale of Education Institute situated at District Patiala, Punjab

Expression of Interest (EoI) is invited from reputed Educational Institutes/Half - owned/Individuals/Investors for sale of education institute situated at District Patiala, Punjab. The institute is located in a prominent location of Patiala. The institute is built on a land area measuring around 50 acres, having a building area of 36,400 sq ft, with all the facilities of an educational institute maintained in favour of Lender. Interested parties with sufficient funds and capabilities to acquire such institutions are requested to submit their EoI by 21st Dec., 2019, addressed to P.O. Box 16327, N.M. Joshi Marg Post Office, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai - 400013.

### SCOOTERS INDIA LIMITED

TE No. SJPUR/Leaf Spring Assy/2019-21

Sealed Tenders are invited in single bid system for "Leaf Spring Assy." for two year consumption. For tender form and further details please visit our website [www.scootersindia.com](http://www.scootersindia.com)

HOD (Materials)

### OFFICE: ADDITIONAL PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FOREST, CAMPA, JHARKHAND, RANCHI

REF No.: RFP-No.-220785, Dated 20.10.2019 & PRNo. 221214 dated 31.10.2019 (RFP No. 03/2019)

Notice Inviting RFP for Selection of Agency for Third Party Evaluation of works done under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) in Jharkhand

Notice is also available on the website of the BSI and National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (i.e. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.mseaindia.com](http://www.mseaindia.com)) and the Stock Exchanges where the Company's shares are listed.

For Sandhar Technologies Limited

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 20 November, 2019  
Arrived: 20 November, 2019  
Whole Time Director  
Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary

NOTICE

Pursuant to the Regulation 23 and Regulation 17 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Monday, the 10th February, 2020, commencing inter-alia, to consider and approve the Un-Audited Financial Results (Statement & Consolidated) for quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2019 and to consider and approve the audited financial results for the year ended December 31, 2019.

Further the Trading Window shall remain closed for the period from Wednesday, the 12th February, 2020.

The information is also available on the website of the BSI and National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (i.e. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.mseaindia.com](http://www.mseaindia.com)) and the Stock Exchanges where the Company's shares are listed.

For Sandhar Technologies Limited

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 20 November, 2019  
Arrived: 20 November, 2019  
Whole Time Director  
Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary

NOTICE

e-tenders are invited for the supply of following items.

(1) S3031-Clothesline Pole & Distribution & Screen Hanger, (2) S3132-Synthetic Braided Cloth Line, (3) S3133-Plastic Cloth Line, (4) Synthetic Polyester Cloth Line, (5) Nylon Cloth Line with 300 Mts. of Thread, (6) Plastic Cloth Line (100 Mts. of Thread), (7) S3537 - Inner Cloth & Outer Cloth, (8) S3538 - Industrial Safety Harness (without Head Rest).

Additional Details : ARC AND DRC for further details.

Issued by : Deputy General Manager (ABC)

Date: 21-11-2019

Deputy General Manager (ABC)

GENERAL MANAGER

PRIO/RAM/10/2019

