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Big TV ties up with Thomson to increase channel capacity

Corporate Bureau
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Big TV, Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group's (ADAG) direct-to-home (DTH) service provider, has joined hands with Thomson, a provider of solutions for the creation, management, delivery and access, of video for the communication, media and entertainment industries.

This tie-up will help Big TV increase its channel capacity and offer a number of global niche channels in India. Big TV is expected to announce the genres of channels soon. Big TV is expected to launch 100-200 additional television channels, as well as 50 radio channels, using a complete head end system from Thomson. Big TV currently has 200 television channels and 10 radio channels. Thomson has offices in France, USA, UK, India and China.

Arun Kapoor, chief executive officer, Reliance Big TV, said, "This is an ambitious project and launching such a large bouquet of channels is a challenging proposition"

He added that viewer quality expectations are high and satellite bandwidth over India is limited. "We selected Thom-

son's solutions as they offer best performance for picture quality and compression capacity."

During the annual general meeting held on September 30, 2008, Anil Ambani, chairman, Reliance ADAG had said, "Reliance Big, with a bouquet of over 200 channels will further be expanded to over 400 channels in future."

He further added, "Backed by an exclusive technology tie-up with Microsoft, we will soon launch our premium IPTV services in India's top cities. This will be a multi-play services platform, including entertainment, telephone and Internet connectivity, and leverage the largest optic fiber Ethernet network in the country."

India's television viewership is already the second largest in the world at 130 million households. This market continues to grow rapidly as TV penetration expands from the current 54%. Of these 130 million TV households, 80 million currently have access to cable and satellite (C&S) services. Ambani said, "Our state-of-the-art MPEG 4 technology will further strengthen our position as the premium operator in this space."