

Netflix, Apple cross swords in Indian streaming market

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Competition in India's booming streaming market is heating up as Netflix joins forces with a director of Bollywood feel-good blockbusters

and Apple launches its TV platform for 99 rupees (\$1.39) a month.

Netflix announced late Wednesday a long-term partnership with Karan Johar's Dharmatic Entertainment to make a range of new fiction and non-fiction series and films for the platform.

Johar has directed eight films including "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai" with Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, and "Raazi", nominated for best picture at next week's Indian International Film Academy (IIFA) Awards, dubbed the Bollywood Oscars.

"It's going to be P.H.A.T—pretty hot and tempting," said Johar, whose Dharma Entertainment is one of India's biggest production firms and which already teamed up with Netflix for the successful "Lust Stories" anthology.

Netflix launched in India in 2016 and two of its Indian-made series have won critical acclaim—"Sacred Games" starring Saif Ali Khan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and "Leila" with Huma Qureishi.

But Netflix faces stiff competition in Asia's third-largest economy as Amazon's Prime Video, Disney's Hotstar, Alt Balaji and other local platforms jostle for digital subscriptions and eyeballs.

US technology giant Apple on Wednesday announced the launch of its streaming [platform](#) Apple TV+ in India, hoping to upend competition.

Netflix is available in India from 199 rupees a month and as millions of first-time users access internet in Asia's third-largest economy, analysts expect [competition](#) to intensify.

India's video-streaming industry is expected to grow at nearly 22 percent per annum to 119 billion rupees (\$1.7 billion) by 2023 according to

consultancy PwC, Bloomberg News reported.

Netflix chief Reed Hastings has said the company's goal is 100 million customers in India—almost 25 times its estimated subscriber base there as of this year, Bloomberg said.

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