

Wishing you the happiest of festive seasons and all good things for 2025!

We're taking a break for the holidays. See you in Jan 2025.

Squid Game S2 lights up Seoul ahead of 26 Dec release

Socio-political cloud hangs low; "I am here with a heavy heart," director Hwang says

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The full story is on page 6



Camilla Chiverton joins Stern & Wild U.K.; talent agency highlights Asia focus



U.K.-based documentary and factual filmmakers' talent agency, Stern & Wild, has appointed Camilla Chiverton as agent for premium unscripted creative talent.

Chiverton was most recently head of talent at U.K. independent production company, Plimsoll Productions (*Surviving Pompeii* with Tom Hiddleston). She previously worked for Tigress Productions and Halo Films.

Stern & Wild's Asia client list includes Beach House Pictures (BHP), which is majority owned by the U.K.-based Fremantle; IFA Media; and India's Jugaad Motion Pictures.

Taiwan's CTS unveils 2025 vision

"Diverse vitality" will drive the station's future, bosses say

Taiwan's free-TV giant, China Television (CTS), unveiled its 2025 vision today, headlining the coming year as one of "diverse vitality" ranging across original drama, variety shows, news and sports, as well as new media, technology and AI.

General manager Liu Changde, presiding over the star-studded launch event, touted a brave approach to the network's future, which includes a Lunar New Year's Eve extravaganza to welcome the Year of the Snake, and Spring drama, *The Train Comes and Goes*, directed by Li Yuefeng.

The Train Comes and Goes is set between 1970 and 1983. The story focuses on Taiwan's transformation from agricultural society to industrial society, showing the spirit of rural youth

working hard to achieve their dreams of moving to the city. "We hope that through this drama, the audience can feel the atmosphere of that era full of change and hope," Li says.

CTS chairman, Hu Yuanhui, said the station had followed its domestic success with international expansion.

Liu also said CTS would work with a wide range of partners to embrace its more innovative and diverse future.

Programmes for 2025 include the Lunar New Year special edition of popular long-running variety show, *Genius Chong Chong*.

The New Year's Eve special programme, *Golden Snake Stays New Year's Eve*, is hosted by Hu Gua, who is returning to CTS – his "first home" – after many years.





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Netflix opens new chef hunt

Culinary Class Wars 2 production kicks off



Culinary Class Wars

Netflix has opened "recruitment" for the second season of blockbuster reality show, *Culinary Class Wars*. The series is scheduled for a 2025 release.

The survival show, which premiered globally in September this year, was Netflix's first Korean unscripted show to top the global Non-English TV list for three consecutive weeks.

Season two is open to anyone anywhere, regardless of nationality or residence, Netflix says.

Season two judges are Paik Jong-won and Ahn Sung-jae.

Netflix Korea's director of content, Yoo Ki-hwan, announced the return of *Culinary Class Wars* in October.

China, Cambodia strengthen TV & radio cooperation

The governments of Cambodia and China have signed an agreement that will continue strengthening their TV and radio cooperation, according to the Cambodian daily, *The Khmer Times*.

The agreement was signed this month in Phnom Penh as part of the 6th Meeting on Cambodia-China Broadcasting Cooperation, the report said.

Agencies involved were the Ministry of Information of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the National Radio and Television Administration of the People's Republic of China (NRTA).

Signatories to the new agreement were Neth Pheaktra, Cambodian minister of information, and Yang Guorui, vice minister of NRTA.

The cooperation involves a wide range of activities, including news reporting and training.

MQ WORLDWIDE FILMS AND SERIES FROM THE PHILIPPINES

SONG OF THE FIREFLIES (2023) 96 MINS | DRAMA



In the 1980s, young grade schoolers Jacqueline and Herbert, along with their gifted choir mates, are led by choirmaster Alma Taldo through challenging choral competitions, aiming for the national contest. This small, unknown school choir from an inland town faces trials as they journey to audition in Manila.

JUST REVENGE (2024) 100 EPS x 30 MINS | ACTION DRAMA



The life of Norman dela Cruz takes an unexpected turn when his mother and a retired judge, Benito Balmores, engage in an intense legal dispute. Benito then orders the murder of both Norman and his mother. Norman survives the ordeal and vows to avenge the murder of his mother, yet he finds himself falling in love with Benito's daughter, Mercy.

THE GIFT OF NIÑO 100 EPS x 30 MINS | FAMILY-ORIENTED COMEDY-DRAMA



Gloria is left with the heart-wrenching decision of leaving her son Niño to her trusted friend Gege.

Niño is suddenly forced to face the harsh realities of life. He finds hope through Mars, and a new sense of love and acceptance in the warm and welcoming community of Bukang Liwayway.

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Taiwan's Chunghwa, Netflix roll out new bundles

Taiwan's Chunghwa Telecom has launched a range of expanded bundles with Netflix, promoting the new 5G mobile/high-speed broadband/entertainment packs as a streaming experience upgrade and using the 26 December premiere of Squid Game season two as a sweetener.

The telco also said consumers could save up to NT\$3,000/US\$92 a year, depending on the services they chose.

The original Chunghwa-Netflix partnership launched in 2019.

The new bundles follow a stellar quarter for the Taipei-based telco, which reported double-digit video-related revenue growth for the quarter to end September 2024 compared to the same quarter the previous year.

Chunghwa has 13 million mobile subscribers and more than three million subs to its video platforms.

KPI warns ANTV about morning horror *Jodoh Wasiat Bapak Babak 2* lands Indo station in trouble

The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) has sanctioned free-TV station ANTV for long-running soap opera, *Jodoh Wasiat Bapak Babak 2*, after the series was judged to have violated the country's broadcasting regulations.

Jodoh Wasiat Bapak, which blends horror, comedy and drama in one of Indonesia's characteristic sinetrons, is about a young man who inherits his father's profession as a mortician.

The offending episode from the second season aired on 19 November at 8.17am local time.

The show is believed to have violated eight provisions of the code.

KPI says the programme is classified R13+ and that its horror content had no place during a slot intended for

children and teens.

KPI referred to a 2018 notice regarding mystical, horror and supernatural broadcast programmes on domestic stations.

Horror falls into the same category as "promiscuity, consumerist and hedonistic lifestyles".

"There is a mismatch between the programme classification and the horror content shown," said Tulus Santoso, coordinator of KPI's Broadcast Content Supervision Division.

R-classified broadcast programmes "must contain content, narrative styles, and presentations appropriate for the psychological development of teenagers," commissioners said.

KPI issued a written warning, but did not impose any penalty.

Welcome in the New Year

LIVE FROM THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



Watch ABC Australia's annual New Year's Eve concert and fireworks celebration

EXCLUSIVELY
BROADCAST ON



Squid Game S2 lights up Seoul ahead of 26 Dec release

Socio-political cloud hangs low; "I am here with a heavy heart," director Hwang says

The current political context in the South Korean capital city, where martial law was briefly declared and then cancelled last week, did not disrupt or derail the launch of the second season of *Squid Game* today (Mon, 9 Dec). But, for all the glad tidings mouthed by Netflix executives and finger hearts flashed by an array of stars at a press conference, the social context was never far from the surface.

"There is political turmoil in Korea, and I am here with a heavy heart," director Hwang Dong-hyuk said. At another moment, he said that he had second thoughts about coming to the launch event.

That Hwang and stars Lee Jung-jae (portrayer of protagonist Gi-hyun), Lee Byung-hun (portrayer of Frontman) and Wi Ha-jun (portrayer of Detective Hwang), turned up, must have been a relief to Netflix.

The Monday launch is said to be the streamer's largest ever event for a non-English-language show. That befits the 2022 original series' status as Netflix's most-watched programme of all time, with some 330 million viewers, 2.8 billion hours of viewing and Korea's first Emmy Award.

"*Squid Game* became a phenomenon that crossed orders and languages," said Netflix co-CEO/chief content officer, Ted Sarandos, in Seoul this evening.

"For many people, *Squid Game* was the very first Korean show they had ever seen. And now, over 80% of Netflix members around the world watch K-content," Sarandos added.

Held at the futuristic Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP), today's event consisted of: a photo call and press



Squid Game 2 launch event in Seoul



season two sees game-winner Gi-hyun abandon his plans to flee to the U.S. and instead attempt to uncover the people who organise the deadly game.

At today's event it was explained that the characters sucked into the deadly game in season two skew younger and are dealing with more post-pandemic issues, such as cryptocurrencies and transgender people. (Having wasted him behind a black mask throughout season one, the show also deploys Lee Byung-hun, one of Korea's finest actors, as a more fully-fledged antagonist.)

"[Since the pandemic] the social ladder is no longer there. Young people no longer feel that hard work gets them rewards, so they instead turn to [dubious] investments and gambling," Hwang said.

"Season two draws a lot of parallels with what we are witnessing in the world right now. And with a heavy heart, I feel that watching the second season of 'Squid Game' is not going to be very different from watching the news." – Patrick Frater

conference involving Hwang and a dozen of the principal cast; an afternoon press junket (mini-interview sessions with a select coterie of journalists and influencers); and a wing of the DDP that was filled with Instagram-friendly replicas of *Squid Game*'s iconic sets, costumes and symbols.

That was followed by an evening-time red-carpet parade and a big-screen premiere of the second season's first episode.

The viewing public will have to wait till 26 December to see the new season's eight episodes. (A third season was shot at the same time as season two, but details, including its payout date, have been kept under wraps.)

Between them, Hwang and trailer footage have previously revealed that



Media Prima Berhad stands as Malaysia's preeminent integrated media entity, encompassing a diverse array of media-centric ventures spanning television, print, radio, out-of-home advertising, content creation, commerce, and digital media. Within its TV division, Media Prima Television Networks commands Malaysia's most prominent FTA channels: TV3, 8TV, ntv7, and TV9, alongside streaming platform tonton, and content production titan & purveyor of premium programming, Primeworks Studios.

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Trends & Outlook 2024

“In 2024, we foresee three major industry trends in Asia: the importance of localised high-quality content for streaming platforms in their targeted regions; the interdependence of linear channels, social content creators, and streaming platforms in content viewing in this competitive and diversified market; and an increase in cross-region co-production opportunities to enhance IP market value and content impact.”



Asia focus in 2024

“Our priority is to position ourselves as the premier destination for top-notch local content across various genres such as drama series, movies, and more, aligning with market demands. Additionally, we recognise the significance of integrating AI to enhance our technological capabilities and processes, ultimately improving our ecosystem across various industry facets.”

Kevin Foo, Content & Commercial
Media Prima Television Networks

Media Prima Television Networks' Primeworks Studios champions a dual programming mandate: delivering fully-integrated content solutions and curating top-tier Asian narratives for global audiences. By spotlighting unexplored tales from Asia and customising content for specific markets, Primeworks Studios cultivates collaboration among international producers. Amidst an increasingly interconnected landscape, the Primeworks Studios team remains proactive, continually aligning with emerging entertainment trends to engage and enthrall audiences.

Genres

Malay and Chinese content in various genres, including drama, movies, variety shows, travelogue, lifestyle, talk shows and kids programming.

Top shows are...

MARINA

[Watch Trailer](#)

After her sister's tragic death, Marina vowed to escape poverty and pursued wealth at any cost. Moving to Kuala Lumpur city, she worked at an exclusive club, where she met Dato' Fahaad, a charming bachelor surrounded by beautiful women. Though she saw him as a stepping stone, Marina unexpectedly fell in love, only to be heartbroken when he abandoned her. Disillusioned, she encountered Haqiem, the "Most Eligible Bachelor," admired for his charm and strong personality even after his fiancée left him days before their wedding. As Haqiem offered her steadfast love and understanding, Marina had to make a choice between her ambitions or instead find true happiness. Cast: Sophia Al Barakbah, Remy Ishak, Hisyam Hamid. Genre: Drama. Episodes/Length: 30x42 mins



Dhia Kasyrani

[Watch Trailer](#)

Dhia Kasyrani, heiress to Anggun Textile, is shocked when her uncle insists she marry Azri Mursyid, a school teacher. Despite initial resistance, Dhia agrees. Mursyid challenges her to live with him, and after some teasing, Dhia eventually follows him to a village where he works. Reluctantly, Dhia falls in love with him, but Mursyid's eldest sister disapproves of their marriage and plots to tear them apart. As lies and deceit threaten their fragile bond, Dhia and Mursyid must fight to save their relationship. Cast: Ben Amir, Rita Nadira. Genre: Drama. Episodes/Length: 24x60 mins



Lara Kasih (Ties Of Sorrow)

[Watch Trailer](#)

Syuhadah feels unloved by her mother, Hasnah, who is very superstitious and believes she'll bring wealth later in life. Syuhadah marries Khairil after her sisters persuaded their mother, fearing no one will care for Hasnah. However, their marriage is challenged when Azura, an educated woman, enters their lives, causing Khairil's faith to waver. Syuhadah must fight to save their marriage and hold onto hope. Cast: Fikry Ibrahim, Chacha maembong, Laila Nasir. Genre: Drama. Episodes/Length: 15x60 mins



Chinese-language shows take top billing at ATF in Singapore

Delegates highlight collaboration, creative funding to get through hard times

Chinese-language programming and production showcases took centre stage during the ATF market in Singapore last week, echoing the creative energy and resources currently being poured into the segment.

Mainland Chinese streamers, iQiyi and WeTV, and producers including Linmon, along with the Taiwan teams behind *The World Between Us II* and *Breeze by the Sea*, all held their own events, populating conference corridors with stars including Vic Chou, Hsueh Shih-Ling, Hsieh Hsin-Ying, Puff Kuo and Hong Hui Fang.

Company heads spoke about bigger/better dramas targetting broader audiences, and about Taiwan's resurrection that started about five years ago after a prolonged post-idol drama slump.

"Taiwanese dramas have matured significantly over the past five years," DaMou Entertainment's Jayde Lin, who produced both seasons of *The World Between Us*, said during the series showcase in Singapore.

Collaborations, creative funding and different ways of working with partners were the driving commercial themes of the three-day market, delegates said repeatedly.

Although the prizes were small and the promises vague, a handful of pitches created predictable levels of excitement, including a win for ABS-CBN's supernatural feature, *Hysteria*, pitched by Philippines' writer Jaymar Santos Castro during the dedicated horror pitch.

ABS-CBN, which appeared at ATF under its newly announced ABS-CBN Studios' banner, brought the project, about a self-righteous priest who investigates



Jaymar Santos Castro



From left: Daphne Yang, CATCHPLAY; Jayde Lin, DaMou Entertainment; cast members Hsueh Shih-Ling, Vic Chou, Hsieh Hsin-Ying; Alice Hsieh, Pei-Hua Yu, Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation (PTS)

a series of demonic possessions plaguing a small town, to ATF seeking co-production partners.

The three winners of the inaugural ATF x Mediacorp Drama Concepts & Co-production Pitch were from Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan/U.S. Picked from about 150 entries, each took home a cash prize of S\$10,000, and may get to work with Mediacorp on their show.

The most sprawling pitch came from the 2024 LEAP Co-Development Programme: Variety Show, co-organised with Hong Kong-based AR Asia Productions, and *Something Special*, a Seoul-based format agency.

The eight pitches, ranging from a culinary contest focused on historical recipes to a BL couple's talent competition, capped a nine-month development process supported by Taiwan's TAICCA.

Singapore Media Festival/ATF host country Singapore, heavily supported

by the government's Infocomm Media Development Agency (IMDA), made the most announcements, leading with a commitment to refreshing the country's media skills framework.

Among multiple daily releases, Singapore's largest media platform, Mediacorp, unveiled its latest virtual production project, fantasy romance, *Perfectly Imperfect*, scheduled to debut on me-watch and Channel 8 in August 2025; and showcased mega-production, *Emerald Hill*, which simulcasts on me-watch premium and Netflix on 10 March 2025.

Other Asian markets took a lower-key approach to last week.

The exception was Indonesia, which turned its brightest lights, bells and whistles to the Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival, popularly known as JAFF. The event, which included a market for the first time, sucked 90% of Indonesia's energy and attention away from ATF.

JAFF's success highlighted the pull of feature films among producers across the region. Facing oversupply and shrinking demand for premium TV series, producers are pragmatic. "It's just so difficult to get TV series made now," more than one filmmaker said.



Asia Music Voyage

Asia Music Voyage is a music competition that unites diverse Asian cultures on one stage. Six talented Chinese singers embark on a luxurious cruise, visiting cities across Asia, including Japan, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, while competing against local talents. The show features mentors, industry experts, and nearly 40 young singers, creating a unique cultural exchange at sea. Audiences will witness inspiring stories and fierce competition, while learning about various customs and traditions. Produced by the team behind *The Voice of China* and *The Rap of China*, the show promises high-quality entertainment and aims to inspire young dreamers to pursue their musical passions. Length: 10x90 mins
IQIYI E: Kelvin Yau, kelvinyau@iqiyi.com



Death Dial

A devious call center gang mercilessly victimising people all over the city meets its match when they ring a mysterious medium called Pa Cha Ba, an elderly woman desperate to avenge her dead niece they have previously scammed. A simple scam phone call turns into a bloody vengeance story as Pa Cha Ba tracks down the ring that runs the scam ring in the city. Length: 110 mins (feature film) **Night Edge Pictures** E: Hans Audric Estialbo, hans@nightedgepictures.com

Lembayung

Lembayung is a horror film about Arum and Pica, two interns at Lembayung Hospital, who encounter terrifying events linked to a woman believed to have hanged herself in the bathroom. Their search for help only escalates the situation, endangering their lives and the safety of others. With the haunting intensifying, Arum and Pica uncover dark secrets hidden within the hospital, facing a chilling journey that threatens their survival and everything they hold dear. Directed by Baim Wong, the film stars Arya Saloka. Length: 122 mins **MNC Contents**
E: Aliza Marcella, aliza.lubis@mncgroup.com / sales.contents@mncgroup.com

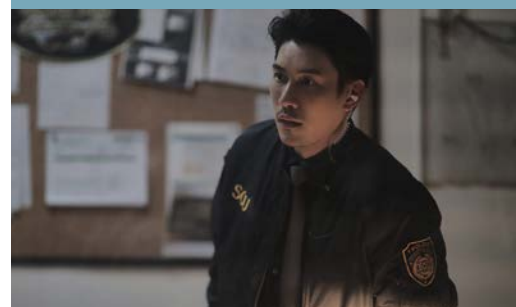


Sherlock & Daughter

After her mother's mysterious murder, young American woman Amelia learns that her missing father may be the legendary Sherlock Holmes. She journeys to England and, upon meeting him, discovers Holmes is stymied and unable to investigate a sinister case without risking the lives of his closest friends. They must work together to solve this global conspiracy and to prove that she is, in fact, the detective's daughter. Length: 8x48 mins (for Asia, Australia and New Zealand) **Escapade Media** E: Sarah Kwek, sarah@escapademedias.com.au

Ghost (ลวง_ลับ_จับตาย)

Every crime leaves a trace, but in the cyber world, the real ghosts might be someone closer than you imagine. When a famous actress is murdered, hacker Hades becomes the prime suspect. Captain Pakorn discovers that Hades is his old friend, Pirawat. However, shocking evidence points to Pakorn himself as the murderer. As the real killer hunts them down, Pakorn is killed, and Pirawat is left severely burned. Lieutenant Wiwlada helps Pirawat assume Pakorn's identity through surgery. Together, they must unravel the mystery and catch the real villain before it's too late. Length: 16x60 mins **Mono Streaming**
E: Sang Ho Lee, filmsales@mono.co.th



Upcycling

Wasted materials are typically collected and returned to their original form. However, in this documentary, materials are upcycled, transforming into art through an aesthetic approach. This shows that art can emerge from anywhere, without the need for a palette or canvas. Even the plastic bottle you throw away can be converted into something unexpected – an upcycled piece of art. It's a new way of recycling, but with an artistic twist. Length: 52 mins one-off documentary **Blue Media**
E: Murat Yavan, murat.yavan@blue-media.tv



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Talking to 2024's Best Directors – Tushar Hiranandani, Hadrah Daeng Ratu, Lee Myungwoo, Lee Thean-Jeen, Patha Thongpan, Sidharta Tata & Fajar Martha Santosa

PLUS Taiwan's series of the moment, Max breakdown, Asia's place in Netflix viewing

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What's on where...

February 2025	23-27	Mip London 2025	London, U.K.
	23-24	Mip Doc 2025	London, U.K.
	23-24	Mip Formats 2025	London, U.K.
	23-28	The London TV Screenings 2025	London, U.K.
March 2025	2-5	Australian International Documentary Conference 2025	Melbourne / Naarm
	17-20	Hong Kong FILMART 2025	Hong Kong
	25-27	Series Mania Forum 2025	Lille, Hauts-de-France
April 2025	24-29	Canneseries 2025	Cannes, France
May 2025	28-31	19th Busan Content Market 2025 (BCM)	Busan, Korea
June 2025	12-14	Telefilm Vietnam 2025	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
	23-26	Sunny Side of the Doc 2025	La Rochelle, France
	24-26	APOS 2025	Bali, Indonesia
July 2025	2-4	17th Content Tokyo 2025	Tokyo, Japan
	7-8	DW Global Media Forum 2025	Bonn, Germany
August 2025	20-23	Beijing International Radio, TV & Film Exhibition 2025	Beijing, China
September 2025		ContentAsia Summit 2025	Taipei, Taiwan
		ContentAsia Awards 2025	Taipei, Taiwan
	17-26	Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) 2025	Busan, Korea
	20-23	Asian Contents & Film Market 2025	Busan, Korea
October 2025	11-12	MipJunior 2025	Cannes, France
	13-16	Mipcom 2025	Cannes, France
November 2025		Dubai International Content Market 2025	Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai
December 2025	3-5	ATF 2025	Singapore

* As of 9 December 2024

The full list of events is available at www.contentasia.tv/events

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Timo Tjahjanto's "The Shadow Strays" hits Netflix top 10 lists in 85 countries; high-action underworld feature debuts at #2 on non-English films global top 10
 Mediacorp's "Emerald Hill" in Netflix pre-sale; Chinese drama to simulcast on meWATCH 10 March 2025

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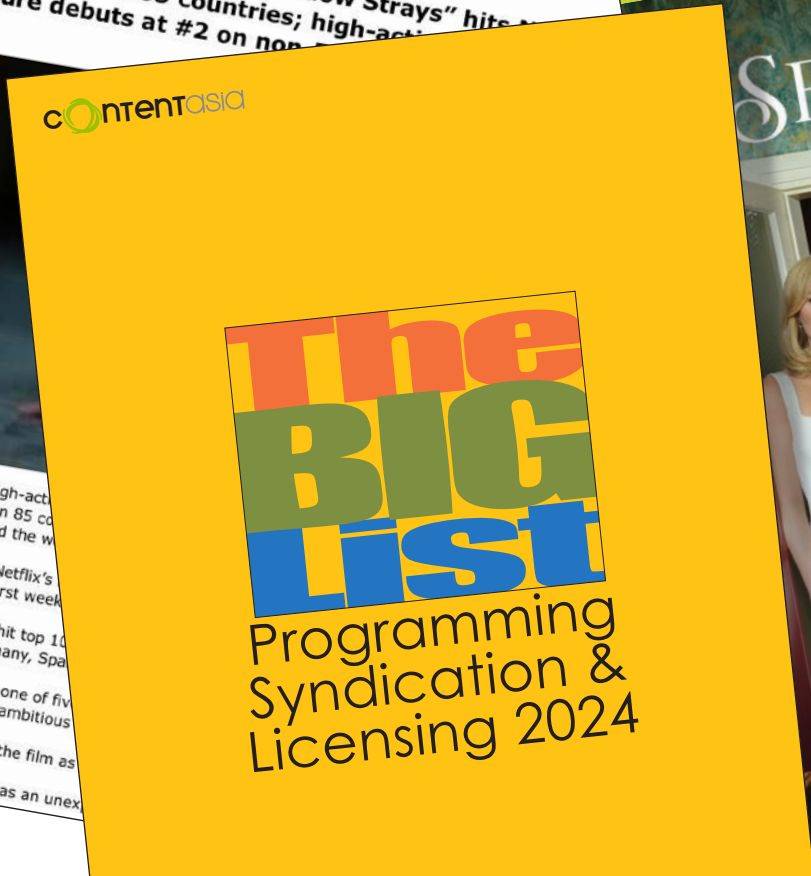
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Timo Tjahjanto's "The Shadow Strays" hits top 10 lists in 85 countries; high-act feature debuts at #2 on non-



SECRET OF PEARLS



The BIG LIST

Programming
Syndication &
Licensing 2024

Netflix wins the digital week in Taiwan

Arcane tops all demand – Parrot Analytics

Netflix's Taiwan drama, *Born for the Spotlight*, won the streamer a spot on Parrot Analytics' top three list of shows most in-demand in Taiwan for the week of 11-17 November.

On the digital list, the 12- episode drama about fame and celebrity was beaten only by *Arcane*. The U.S. animated adventure fantasy was by far the week's top show in Taiwan with almost double demand of its closest competitor.

Netflix was way ahead for the week, taking 50% of the top 10 list of titles most in-demand in the digital environment, including three of the top five.

The rest of the digital list was split between Disney+, HBO, Paramount+, Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV+, with one place each.

Animated/anime titles remain strong in Taiwan, taking four of the top 10 places on the overall list.

Top 10 overall TV originals: Taiwan

Rank	Title	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	<i>Arcane</i>	35.2
2	NBA	29.3
3	<i>Born For The Spotlight (影后)</i>	19.3
4	<i>Dandadan (ダンダダン)</i>	16.4
5	<i>My Hero Academia</i>	15.3
6	<i>Girls Band Cry (ガールズバンドクライ)</i>	15.0
7	<i>Love Game In Eastern Fantasy (永夜星河)</i>	14.8
8	<i>Agatha All Along</i>	14.7
9	<i>Laid-Back Camp</i>	14.6
10	<i>PAW Patrol</i>	14.5

Top 10 digital originals: Taiwan

Rank	Title	Platform	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	<i>Arcane</i>	Netflix	35.2
2	<i>Born For The Spotlight (影后)</i>	Netflix	19.3
3	<i>Agatha All Along</i>	Disney+	14.7
4	<i>Stranger Things</i>	Netflix	12.6
5	<i>The Penguin</i>	HBO	12.5
6	<i>Tulsa King</i>	Paramount+	12.3
7	<i>Bebefinn</i>	Netflix	10.8
8	<i>The Lord of The Rings: The Rings Of Power</i>	Amazon Prime Video	10.7
9	<i>Slow Horses</i>	Apple TV+	8.5
10	<i>The Only One (某某)</i>	Netflix	8.5

Date range: 11-17 November 2024

The total audience demand being expressed for a title, within a market. Audience demand reflects the desire, engagement and viewership, weighted by importance; so a stream/download is a higher expression of demand than a 'like'/comment. In this dataset we are comparing the demand that exists for each series in this market, against the average TV show. A difference of 1x represents the market average and 10x means a series is ten times more in demand than the average TV show in this market



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