



Post-Budget 'josh' is high in Bollywood

Interim finance minister Piyush Goyal announces single-window clearance for Indian filmmakers and anti-camcording provisions in the Interim Budget 2019.

Multiple meetings of Bollywood actors and filmmakers with Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the past couple of months on issues concerning the entertainment industry have paid off with interim finance minister Piyush Goyal announcing single-window clearance for Indian filmmakers in the Interim Budget. Now filmmakers can submit all paperwork for their movies at a single location/authority—saving them a lot of time and extra costs. Till now only foreign filmmakers were allowed this facility.

“Regulatory provisions will rely more on self-declaration. We will also introduce anti-camcording provisions in the Cinematograph Act to control the menace of piracy,” Goyal added.

Goyal was full of praise for the industry, which he said was a major employment generator. According to consultancy firm Deloitte India, the Indian film industry employed nearly 250,000 people in 2017, compared to 160,800 in 2013. He made a particular mention of recently released Uri: The Surgical Strike, a Hindi movie based on the army operation against militants in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. “It was fun watching Uri. There was a lot of energy in the movie (Uri movie mein jo maza aaya. Jo Josh tha),” Goyal said.

The movie industry was delighted by the budget announcements. Siddharth Roy Kapur, president, Producers Guild of India, said, “We are delighted that the immense contribution of Indian cinema towards employment generation in the country has been acknowledged and applauded in Parliament during the presentation of the Union Budget. The announcement of a single-window clearance mechanism for Indian filmmakers filming within India is a significant step and has the potential to play a huge role in boosting tourism in the country.”

“The amendments in the anti-camcording provisions will support the industry’s growth by curtailing illegal recordings of films in cinema halls and will go a long way towards reducing piracy.”

Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar also tweeted, “Welcome move by the Narendra Modi government for initiating anti-camcording provision in the Cinematography Act to fight piracy and single-window clearance for film shootings. This will help the film industry in a big way.”

Goyal also mentioned that cinemagoers who were subjected to multiple taxes up to 50% are mostly paying much lower tax at 12% now. Sudhanshu Vats, group CEO and MD, Viacom18, said that such policy provisions will enhance ease of doing business.

“It will help the Rs 156 billion industry grow at a faster clip. I also welcome the move to include anti-camcording provisions as part of the Cinematography Act. This will ensure that in-theatre pirated recordings now become a penal offence and will act as a strong deterrent to piracy,” Vats added.

Goyal’s announcements are also going to benefit the cinema exhibition industry in many ways. “We believe that this is a great move for the Indian film industry. We welcome the government’s initiative to introduce the anti-camcording provision. This will give teeth to the law to take stringent action against the offender. We are sure that this is a very pragmatic step by the government and it will ensure reduction of losses the film industry incurs,” Rajesh Mishra, CEO (Indian operations), UFO Moviez, said.