

Censorship challenges of fringe elements will be overcome through the strength of Constitution and rule of law: I&B Secretary

Copyright Board to oversee implementation of IP laws for film industry in the offing

3-day FICCI FRAMES 2017 gets under way

MUMBAI, 21 March 2017: The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) has initiated discussions with the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, on the modalities of setting up a Copyright Board which would oversee strict implementation of IP laws for the entertainment industry, particularly the film sector. This was stated here today by **Mr. Ajay Mittal, Secretary, Information & Broadcasting**, Government of India, while inaugurating the 18th edition of **FICCI FRAMES 2017**.

The three-day mega event of the business of Media and Entertainment (M&E) is on the theme, 'Digital: Divide or Dividend'. The event is partnered by Canada, which has sent a 100-member strong delegation led by the Mayor of Toronto, Mr. John Tory.

Secretary Mittal assured the M&E industry professionals that the censorship challenges posed by fringe elements would be surmounted by the strength of the Constitution and the rule of law. He said that the Government has created a new category of visa called 'Film Visa'. Shooting of a film in India would be enough ground for issuance of such a visa for the crew, he added.

In order to make the country more attractive for production of films by foreign production houses in India, Mr. Mittal said that an award has been instituted by the Central Government for the most film-friendly State of India. This year an amount of Rs 1 crore has been set apart for such a State.

While the norms for ease of doing business for the industry were being simplified, the government was also looking at the creation of suitable content for kids that brings them closer to their culture and moral values.

Mr. Sudhanshu Pandey, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, in his remarks, spoke about the commercial and economic dimensions of films and the global regimes for the M & E sector.

He said that the Indian film industry accounted for a mere 7 per cent of the global industry's revenue. This needed to be raised significantly to bring in investments and funding for ploughing back into the industry.

Mr. Pandey said the need of the hour was to create 20,000 more digital screens in the country to create a critical mass which the industry could leverage. It was also important for the M&E sector to make a major contribution in marrying the two flagship programmes of the Government – Make in India and Digital India- for the benefit of industry.

Mr. John Tory, Mayor of Toronto, Canada said that the city of Toronto has signed an MoU with the Indian Consulate to give a fillip to the India-Canada Co-production Agreement. "We

want to collaborate with you and extend to you the financial incentives offered by Toronto to filmmakers from India,” he said.

Mr. Nadir Patel, Canadian High Commissioner to India, said that it was time to narrate the Canada story to India in an ambitious and aggressive manner. “We need to talk about what Canada is doing to facilitate industry collaborations with professionals and we see a lot of relevance in coming to FICCI FRAMES as a partner country.

Mr. Pankaj R. Patel, President, FICCI and Chairman and Managing Director, Cadila Healthcare Ltd., said that the need of the hour was to maintain a balance between content and its monetization. The M& E industry witnessed many landmark policies and measures and after the implementation of GST, ratification of taxes and policies on digital media would enable the sector to flourish.

Mr. Uday Shankar, Chairman, FICCI Entertainment Committee& CEO, Star India, said that with the increased incidence of self-appointed street side groups trying to push censorship through, the creative minds were imposing self-censorship and freedom of expression was being undermined. He added that such censorship left no room for civil debates and disagreement.

Mr. Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Chairman, FICCI Film Forum, Director and Founder, Romp Pvt Ltd., said that the committee on censorship headed by Mr. Shyam Benegal has strongly recommended the abolition of censorship and advocates the issuance of film certification based on age for preserving freedom of expression in the country. He added that people's theatres and cultural centres must be built across the country which are reasonably priced and provide a clean environment for taking content to people.

Dr. A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI, said that that the industry was growing almost at the rate of nine per cent and the market was also maturing. This was FICCI FRAMES' 18th year and the media and entertainment industry which was growing for strength to strength offered immense business opportunities.

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