

'RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, July 27, 2023/ Sravana 5, 1945 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: I take the opportunity to wish birthday greetings to hon. Member of Parliament, Dr. Ameer Yajnik. She is a Member of this august House since April, 2018. She came to be elected from the State of Gujarat (unopposed). Like many others in this House, as also myself, she comes from the legal fraternity. A Doctorate in law from Stanford University, Shrimati Yajnik has authored books pertaining to electricity and power sector reforms. Her books, 'Electricity Reforms in India' and 'India's Power Sector Reforms' came to be published by the Institute for International studies at Stanford University. She is a founding Member of All India Federation of Women Lawyers. She has consistently espoused gender justice and advocated legal rights awareness at ground level. On my own and your behalf, I wish her a long, healthy and happy life.

SUO-MOTO STATEMENT BY MINISTER

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. JAISHANKAR): I rise to apprise this august House of the key foreign policy engagements and initiatives taken by India since the Budget Session, which ended on 6th April 2023.

This period witnessed several crucial high level diplomatic engagements including interactions by the Hon'ble President, Hon'ble Vice President and Hon'ble Prime Minister with foreign counterparts, in India and abroad. I myself visited a number of nations, as did our Ministers of State. And we received many of our foreign colleagues here in India. Through these efforts at multiple levels, we were able to advance our national objectives and interests in a volatile and uncertain world.

In terms of the diplomatic engagements of Hon'ble President, she hosted the King of Cambodia from May 29-31 on his State Visit. This marked the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. Hon'ble President was the Chief Guest of the celebrations commemorating the 150 years of the arrival of Indians in Suriname in June. She was conferred Suriname's highest distinction - "Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star." Hon'ble President also visited Serbia in the same month.

Hon'ble Vice President visited the United Kingdom on May 5-6 to attend the coronation ceremony of King Charles III. He interacted with various leaders, including with the Presidents of Germany, Israel and Brazil. He also met with Indian students and

members of the diaspora. In June, the Hon'ble Vice President engaged his counterparts from Zimbabwe and Gambia in New Delhi and received the Deputy Prime Minister of Democratic Republic of the Congo.

During this period, Hon'ble Prime Minister visited seven countries. Bilateral visits were made to Australia, the United States, Egypt, France and the UAE. Prime Minister participated in the Quad and G7 meetings in Japan and co-chaired the 3rd FIPIC Summit in Papua New Guinea. He also hosted the Prime Minister of Nepal and the President of Sri Lanka in New Delhi.

The official State Visit to the USA of Shri Narendra Modi from June 20-23, 2023 was only the second by an Indian Prime Minister. He was also accorded the rare privilege of addressing the Joint Session of the US Congress for a second time. In Washington DC, Prime Minister was given a formal State welcome at the White House. As a special gesture, the US Government invited nearly 8000 members of the Indian Diaspora to witness the ceremony. Prime Minister held bilateral talks with the US President on June 22. President Biden hosted both a State Dinner and a private dinner at the White House. The Prime Minister also interacted with several CEOs of tech companies individually, as also in a round-table that was co-chaired with President Biden. He invited them to strengthen their presence and operations in India. Prime Minister addressed young entrepreneurs and participated in a skill and innovation meeting along with First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

The key outcomes of the visit were reflected in a Joint Statement, as follows:

Both sides agreed to augment technology cooperation, especially through the initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) focussing on artificial intelligence, semiconductors, space, quantum, and telecom. India was included as a member in the Mineral Security Partnership, which aims to accelerate the development of sustainable global critical energy minerals supply chains.

Under a Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap, the defence industries and start-ups of both countries announced their intent to engage in co-production and other activities. A US company, GE Aerospace, announced that they would manufacture jet engines in India through transfer of technology to HAL for our Light Combat Aircrafts' indigenous production.

Indian Space Research Organisation [ISRO] signed the Artemis Accords with the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] for cooperation in civil exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes. NASA and ISRO announced that they would cooperate in human space flight and launch a joint effort to the International Space Station in 2024.

Both countries resolved six outstanding bilateral trade disputes in WTO through mutually agreed solutions. It was extraordinary. They agreed to strengthen collaboration between the respective SMEs and boost innovation linkages. It too is a very important step. It will take forward the semi-conductor mission.

In the semiconductor domain, three US companies made announcements for building a semiconductor assembly and test facility in India; and for training Indian engineers and workforce.

In the telecommunication sector, both sides agreed to collaborate towards a bilateral "Trusted Network/Trusted Sources" framework; enable participation of Indian companies in the U.S. Rip and Replace Program; and undertake ORAN reciprocal pilot

projects. India and USA also agreed to accelerate cooperation in green hydrogen and other emerging technologies.

To deepen the people to people ties which are anchored in a 4.4 million Indian Diaspora in USA, the US announced its decision to open two new consulates in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad. India will take steps to operationalize its consulate in Seattle later this year and identify locations for two more new Consulates in USA.

Both countries agreed to further strengthen higher education partnerships. After the Official State visit, the US Government has also returned to the Government of India 105 cultural antiquities that were illegally trafficked.

Given their shared vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, both countries agreed to commence an Indian Ocean Dialogue and USA announced that it would join the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative that was announced by India in 2019.

India and USA will work together for development of Digital Public Infrastructure and strengthen Multilateral Development Banks to address global challenges.

Hon'ble Members would also be interested to know that Prime Minister led the 9th International Day of Yoga Day on 21 June at the UN Headquarters in New York, which involved 135 nationalities and set a Guinness World Record.

Earlier, Prime Minister had participated in the G7 Summit and the Quad Leaders' Meeting in Hiroshima on 20 May 2023. At the Quad meeting, the leaders reviewed recent developments in the Indo-Pacific and discussed opportunities for Quad to work further on its priorities. They released the Quad Leaders' Vision Statement – *Enduring Partners for the Indo-Pacific*. They also announced a new Clean Energy Supply Chains Initiative, a QUAD Infrastructure Fellowships Program and a new QUAD Partnership for Cable Connectivity and Resilience. To take forward QUAD's commitment to collaborate for vendor diversification of telecom networks in the Indo-Pacific, leaders announced cooperation with Palau to establish the first ORAN deployment in the Pacific. The leaders also released a QUAD statement on critical and emerging technology standards, apart from reviewing the progress made under the Indo-Pacific Maritime Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness. Leaders also launched a Quad Investors' Network. The Prime Minister has invited Quad Leaders to India for the next Quad Summit in 2024.

Prime Minister participated in the outreach session of the G-7 Summit on 20 May, 2023. He held interactions with Presidents of Indonesia, South Korea, France, Ukraine, and Brazil; the Presidents of the EU Commission and the European Council; Prime Ministers of Japan, Vietnam, UK, Cook Islands; the Chancellor of Germany; and the UN Secretary-General.

Prime Minister made his landmark visit to Australia, thereafter, holding a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart on May 24. Signing a Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement was one of the highlights of the visit, signifying our commitment to support students and explore the global workplace. During his stay, Prime Minister interacted with prominent public figures, participated in a Business Roundtable with Australian CEOs and addressed the Indian community in Sydney. He joined his Australian counterpart to lay the foundation of the '*Little India Gateway*' at Harris Park, Sydney. Prime Minister also announced our intention to establish a new Consulate in Brisbane which will definitely help the NRIs in Australia.

From July 13-14, 2023, Hon'ble PM visited France at the invitation of their President. He was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade where a tri-services Indian armed forces contingent, participated in the parade. This included soldiers of the

Punjab regiment that had defended Paris 107 years ago in World War I. In a rare honour, Prime Minister was also conferred with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, France's highest civilian award. He held meetings with the President as well as the French Prime Minister and Presidents of the Senate and the National Assembly. Prime Minister separately interacted with the Indian diaspora, CEOs of Indian and French companies, and prominent French personalities. He also announced the setting up of an Indian Consulate in Marseille. India and France released a vision document: "Horizon 2047: 25th Anniversary of India-France Strategic Partnership, towards a century of India-France relations."

On his way back, Prime Minister visited UAE on July 15. In Abu Dhabi, Prime Minister held talks with the President of the UAE. The visit resulted in concluding agreements on trade settlement in national currencies and interlinking of payments of Central Banks. An MoU was signed for the establishment of an IIT-Delhi Campus in Abu Dhabi. Prime Minister also received the President-designate of COP-28.

The month before, Hon'ble PM paid a state visit to Egypt on 24-25 June, 2023. It was the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Egypt in 26 years. On June 25, Prime Minister held talks with the President of Egypt and signed an agreement to elevate India-Egypt bilateral ties to "Strategic Partnership." Agreements were signed in the fields of agriculture, protection and preservation of monuments and archaeological sites and competition laws. Additionally, direct flights between Delhi-Cairo sector and setting up of a Centre of Excellence of IT in Cairo were announced. In a special ceremony, Prime Minister was conferred with the 'Order of the Nile', the highest state honour of Egypt.

Another notable development in this period was India's co-hosting of the 3rd Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) jointly with the Papua New Guinea on 22 May 2023 at Port Moresby. Prime Minister was received with exceptional warmth and courtesy by Pacific leaders, starting with his arrival and all the hon'ble Members had an opportunity to see that arrival for themselves on the television. He was conferred with the Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu by the Governor-General of PNG, the Companion of the Order of Fiji by the Prime Minister of Fiji, the highest civilian awards of the two nations. He was also presented with Ebakl, a symbol of leadership and wisdom, by the President of Palau.

The main outcomes of the FIPIC Summit were:

- (i) Launch of Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) housed in Suva, Fiji.
- (ii) Launch of the Data Warehouse for Empowering Pacific Island countries (DWEPIC), which hosts geo-spatial data and has been developed by ISRO.
- (iii) PM also announced an action plan to strengthen the India-PIC partnership. This includes, a 100-bed regional super specialty hospital in Fiji; setting up of regional IT and cyber security training hub in Papua New Guinea; Sagar Amrit Scholarships; Jaipur Foot Camp; SME development project; solarization project for government buildings; desalination units for drinking water; supply of sea ambulances; setting up of dialysis units; creation of 24x7 emergency helpline; setting up of Jan Aushadhi Kendra, to make cost-effective and efficient pharmaceuticals available; and setting up of yoga centres.

For the first time since joining the organization as a full member state, Hon'ble Prime Minister hosted the Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of State in virtual format on 4 July 2023. The Summit adopted the New Delhi

Declaration and two Joint Statements on Countering Radicalization and Cooperation in Digital Transformation. During the course of India's Presidency, we successfully hosted 15 ministerial-level meetings, over 130 regular institutional meetings and socio-cultural events with a key focus on *SECURE: Security, Economic development, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for Sovereignty & territorial integrity and Environmental protection*.

As part of Neighbourhood First policy, engagements with immediate neighbours have been prioritized over the last decade. Two prominent visits that Hon'ble Members should note are those of the PM of Nepal and the President of Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister of Nepal paid an official visit to India from May 31 to June 3. After bilateral talks, the two Prime Ministers participated in virtual ground-breaking ceremonies of six projects, including integrated check-posts, railway lines, petroleum pipeline facilities and transmission lines. The leaders virtually witnessed the handing over of the Kurtha-Bijalpura section of railway line. Understandings reached included that on electricity imports from Nepal as well as allowing export of Nepal's electricity to Bangladesh using the Indian grid. India also committed to expand cross-border petroleum pipeline infrastructure.

The President of Sri Lanka paid an official visit to India on 21 July 2023, his first in his capacity as President. PM and the President had productive discussions and agreed on a vision document to promote connectivity and catalyse prosperity. This covered multiple facets including maritime, air, energy and power, trade, economic and financial, as well as people-to-people connectivity. Agreements were concluded on development projects in Trincomalee district, on animal husbandry & dairying, on renewable energy, and on UPI interface. PM discussed the issues related to the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and reiterated the need to fulfil their aspirations. He underlined the importance of implementing the 13th amendment and conducting provincial council elections. PM also took up the issues of Indian fishermen and requested Sri Lankan side to approach it on a humanitarian basis.

Allow me Sir, to turn now to the subject of G20. During our Presidency, we have been able to focus attention on the most pressing challenges faced by humanity, especially developing countries. This includes Mission LiFE for empowering climate friendly lifestyles and the popularization of Millets to address the challenge of food security. We have also advocated an inclusive human-centric approach to climate action and development, as well as use of technology to transform the lives of people.

Since April 6, we have hosted the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi, the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad, the Tourism Ministers' Meeting in Goa, the Education Ministers' Meeting in Pune and the Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting in Gandhinagar, Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting in Indore, Energy Ministers' Meeting in Goa, Environment & Climate Sustainability Ministers' Meeting in Chennai, and the Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment in Gandhinagar. As envisaged, we are realizing our intent to showcase India to the world. I would also like to share with the House that the Ministers of MEA have been equally active during this period. My official visits were to Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and Tanzania in Africa, to Guyana, Panama, Colombia and Dominican Republic in Latin America, apart from visiting Bangladesh, Sweden and Belgium. The visit to Latin America included co-chairing the India-CARICOM and India-SICA Ministerial Meetings. Many of these visits were the first ever by an External Affairs Minister. I also visited Indonesia for the Foreign Ministers' Meeting under the ASEAN-India format, East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum. This also saw participation in the 2nd India-Australia-Indonesia trilateral. After Jakarta, I

travelled to Thailand to co-chair the 12th Foreign Ministers' Meeting of Mekong Ganga Cooperation Mechanism, while also attending the BIMSTEC.

In Sweden, I participated in the second EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum and the inaugural session of the India- Europe-US Trilateral Forum. Along with my esteemed colleagues, the Commerce & Industries Minister and the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, we attended the first Ministerial meeting of the India - EU Trade and Technology Council at Brussels. In South Africa, I had the opportunity to take part in the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Friends of BRICS Meeting. In the same period, I have had the privilege to host my counterparts from the Republic of Korea, Israel, Philippines, Maldives and Japan apart from the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, and chairing the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Goa and the G20 Development Ministers' meeting in Varanasi. Our Ministers of State also actively engaged in promoting India's interests. Shri Muraleedharanji oversaw 'Operation Kaveri' from Jeddah in April, and paid official visits to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Maldives and Syria. Shrimati Meenakashi Lekhi ji visited Croatia, Slovenia and North Macedonia. Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singhji visited Singapore and Fiji. During our interlocutions, we noticed a growing interest among partners and business leaders to be part of India's growth story and engaged in development partnerships. India's undertaking of greater responsibilities was widely welcomed and our views on key global issues taken very seriously. We aim to realize the Prime Minister's vision to make India a leader in democratizing technology, a trusted geography and an important part of global supply chains. In our travels abroad, I am glad to report that we are now seen as a credible and effective development partner. Our development partnership portfolio now spans 78 countries and the hallmark of these projects is that they are demand-driven, transparent, empowerment oriented, environment friendly and rely on a consultative approach. We have also been spearheading promotion of Digital Public Infrastructure and sharing best practices in digital governance especially in the Global South. Indian nationals were brought to Port Sudan from different conflict zones and then ferried to Jeddah, using Indian Air Force aircraft and Indian Naval ships. During Operation Kaveri, like Operation Ganga, we not only evacuated thousands of Indians, but also assisted in the evacuation of citizens from other countries. 4,075 Indian nationals were safely evacuated. Our diplomats and our armed forces displayed exemplary courage. I must mention to the House that many movements took place amidst firing and one particular aircraft landing was very challenging. So, I would like to underline that we have proven once again that India will never leave its people behind during a crisis, be it in Ukraine last year, or in Sudan in this one.

We have also made consistent efforts to secure the release of Indian fishermen and civilians. Seventy-four have been returned from Sri Lanka and 398 from Pakistan. In conclusion, at a time when international relations have become unprecedented and complex, our people-centric foreign policy, which is guided by the demands and aspirations of our society, has shown that India speaks as the voice of peace, of security, and of prosperity for all as a force of global prudence and stability. We have also vigorously defended our national interests. In 2022, at the beginning of the *Amrit Kaal*, India assumed the landmark G-20 Presidency. We will host the Summit this September. Our Presidency has invigorated our foreign policy and given more force to realize the Prime Minister's vision of an *Atmanirbhar* and *Viksit Bharat* that regains its rightful place in the world.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, as per rule 251, no clarifications are permitted at the time of statement by the Minister. However, as per past practice and precedents, after a suo-moto statement is made by the Minister, Members may seek clarifications on the statement, to which the Minister will reply immediately or later.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said: The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 is very important in itself because any major amendment that took place after the Cinematograph Act, 1952, was in 1984. Almost four decades have passed and in these four decades there has been a lot of change in technology, the number of viewers has also increased significantly and the reputation of Indian film industry has also increased all over the world. India is the largest film producing country in the world today. The Indian film industry also won an Oscar. This is a huge success of the Indian film industry. We are bringing a major amendment after 40 years. We are presenting the bill in a new form but unfortunately, looking at the attitude of the opposition, it seems that they are neither in favour of the film fraternity nor in favour of India which is emerging as a soft power. We have brought this to prevent piracy. Secondly, this bill will also provide impetus to further simplify the process of licensing. Thirdly, we have worked to harmonize with the decisions of the High Courts and the Supreme Court through this Bill. I hope that this Bill will receive overwhelming support of the whole House.

DR. PRASHANTA NANDA: This is a subject very close to my heart because I have been in the film industry for the last 60 years. I have also suffered due to piracy. I am happy today that a new Bill has come which has taken care of so many things out of which the stringent law against piracy is very much in favour of the whole film industry of India. It includes imprisonment for three years and Rs. 10 lakh penalty for those found involved in piracy. The act of piracy will be a legal offence and even transmitting pirated content will be punishable. Number two is regarding the dialogues being spoken by characters on the OTT platforms. They should not use any word which is unparliamentary. This needs to change. I request that my suggestions are taken seriously.

DR. ASHOK BAJPAI: India is the largest film producing country in the world. Cinema is the cheapest source of entertainment and music in our country, but the unfortunate thing is that due to piracy of cinema, the industry suffers huge loss of revenue. I think cinema loses revenue of more than 150 billion rupees in about a year due to this. Viewed in this background, there was a need to amend the Bill. If you see, films have become a big medium in our country, whether it is about the promotion of Hindi or the promotion of the language or, for that matter, the promotion of culture. Films have also played a big role in preserving nationalism in the country. But there are some films which were made only from pure commercial point of view. There, by compromising with ethics, the work of serving wrong material to the society was done by making films of substandard quality. The amended rule will definitely help to curb it. According to the provisions made in this amendment, work has also been done to increase the authority of our Censor Board, so that it can dispense with these indecent scenes.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: I welcome the Amendment Bill introduced by hon. Minister. I am also involved in the film industry, so I have some knowledge about it. Piracy is a major problem due to which producers are facing a lot of issues. It is rightly mentioned by some hon. Members that the films are meant not only for entertainment but to highlight the social problems and also how to solve them. The films can be based on family problems also. They should give some message to the people. That is another way as to how the films should be produced. At the time of our freedom, most of the films were based on patriotism to arouse the feeling of patriotism among the people of the country and to fight for it.

Our former Chief Minister, Shri Annadurai, known as Anna, was a prolific film maker. He made a number of impactful films, particularly on historical and social issues, including "*Velaikkaran*." The party gained popularity by addressing social problems through films when other platforms were limited. However, the current film industry's excessive violence and repetitive nature of themes happens to be a cause of concern. The Censor Board needs to be advised to take responsibility for ensuring the good quality of film contents. The content piracy must be checked and age classification alone will not solve the problem.

DR. RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL: I feel proud that piracy in ration cards, housing schemes, and gas supply has been stopped by the policy of zero tolerance of the hon'ble Prime Minister. Now the Government has done the work of bringing this law to prevent piracy in films. As a public representative, I would like to make one more request that these days such films are coming which are against our culture and it is not possible to watch them while sitting with the family. In these, our religion and culture is being deliberately insulted by showing the characters of our Hindu deities in a distorted form. These films have also been glorifying Naxalism. I hope that adequate steps are taken on this issue and the quality of films is improved. In most of the films, Baniyas were shown as dishonest, Sikhs were ridiculed, women were shown depraved and they were called Christians. On the contrary, even the biggest terrorist belonging to Islam was shown to be a true Muslim. Under Section 5B of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Censor Board was permitted not to recommend certain types of films. But, they did not take any action on the films made against the country, religion and judicial system. I whole heartedly support this Bill and urge the Hon'ble Minister to consider public sentiments as well.

DR. SONAL MANSINGH: The word 'Piracy' is a negative word. In fact, this is not just theft of ideas. Rather, it is an act of harming the entire film industry and all the stakeholders. Due to the unprecedented spread of technology and the unclear definition of morality, there is a wide divergence of opinion among people. Considering the seriousness of the subject, I would like to present its definition according to our theology, languages, tradition and thoughts. I have seen some movies since childhood. I remember watching '*Do Bigha Zameen*' produced by V. Shantaram, which was a wonderful film on prison reforms. I express my support for The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023. But, I have certain concerns as well. I believe that there haven't been enough films highlighting women's empowerment and tribal communities' perspectives. I urge a thoughtful consideration while certifying films, especially those portraying tribes, as some content can be objectionable. I also doubt about the relevance of age classifications when most people have mobile phones. Despite supporting the Bill, I suggest contemplating the impact of certain content and age restrictions.

SHRI S. NIRANJAN REDDY: I rise to support this Bill on behalf of my party. As a film producer, I have been creatively involved in films. There are four important features of this Bill. I would like to outline four significant features of the Bill. Firstly, the

Government has reduced its control by removing one round of revision power under Section 6, granting more creative freedom. Secondly, the certification period has been extended from ten years to perpetuity, which is widely welcomed. Thirdly, age-appropriation now needs to be mentioned in the certification, providing viewers with informed choices when deciding to take children to watch films. The UA certification indicates the appropriate age for children to watch the film. This feature empowers the audience and improves information dissemination. Lastly, the most crucial aspect of the Bill is the inclusion of an anti-piracy provision. While commending the Government for this measure, I believe that it might have come a little late and could have been more comprehensive. I compare it to the Anti-Camcorder legislation in the USA, South Korea, and the Philippines, which had a greater impact. I fully acknowledge the usefulness of the current provision but suggest that there might be room for further improvement to address the menace of piracy more effectively. Implementing the law against piracy has become challenging due to widespread use of mobile phone. I commend the Government's efforts, but further action is needed. Previously, infringement under the Copyright Act required exhibiting copied content, but now, recording in theaters alone is punishable. However, it's difficult as everyone carries a mobile phone. The film's common mode of piracy is through streaming on pirated sites, and the Government has laws like the IT Act, Copyright Act, and Cinematography Act to prevent this. But blocking streaming on a film-to-film or site-to-site basis is challenging. The economic cost of piracy is highly significant. It is approximately Rs. 20,000 crores. Stopping piracy can help Indian cinema reach larger audiences like Korean cinema has done. I urge the Government to address piracy seriously and protect the Indian film industry.

SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA: I express my gratitude for having an opportunity to speak on The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023. I fully support it. Most of the points I had prepared have already been covered by my colleagues. I come from a State with a rich film industry history. Shri Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, the first filmmaker of Assam, directed the movie "*Joy Murti*" in 1935, and we are now celebrating 100 years of Assamese cinema. "*Joy Murti*" was among the first 10 talkies in India and featured a female protagonist, a remarkable feat for its time. With 25 years of experience in the Assamese film industry, I am proud to be part of the film fraternity. Being a film industry professional, I commend the Government's steps in The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill. This Bill highlights the detrimental impact of film piracy on the entire film ecosystem, from producers to actors and directors. I appreciate the provision for age-appropriation certification, dividing films into three age-based categories (U/A 7+, U/A 13+, and U/A 16+). I would like to emphasize the potential of the film industry and therefore support the Bill. There is a need to combat piracy to double the industry's revenue. As a Member of the film fraternity and the Bharatiya Janata Party, I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for this Amendment.

SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK: I would like to raise a couple of very important points in support of this Bill. Firstly, in this Bill, there is a proposal to amend the Cinematograph Act, 1952. Secondly, there is a provision for harsher punishment in piracy. Thirdly, there is a provision to make separate categories for each age group. Our school and college education influences us, our Guru's knowledge and training influences us, similarly cinema also influences our life. Many hon'ble Parliamentarians have also pointed out that cinema is very important for the economy of our country. This creates employment. I come from Kolhapur, Maharashtra. Almost all the hon'ble Members have taken the name of Dadasaheb Phalke, who is called the father of film industry, he was also from Kolhapur. There were many other big personalities in the film industry from Kolhapur, like Shri V. Shantaram ji, Master Vinayak ji, Shri Bhalji Pendharkar ji. All of

them earned the international reputation for Indian cinema. Bhalji Pendharkar made the film camera in our country about 100 years ago. Today, Marathi film industry is giving competition to Bollywood. Many films have earned 100 crores. The State Government gives some grants to make Marathi films. There should be some cooperation from the Centre as well. Theaters should be made available for regional language films. Today, piracy is happening on a very large scale. I express my gratitude to the Minister that he has made different categories for different age groups, such as - UA 7+, UA 13+, UA 16+. These categories have been created for different age groups. However, the control of the Internet is more on that and there are many private players in the Internet. I will also demand from the Government that the Government's internet broadband should be in every household across the country. I would request the Government through you that just as a huge film industry is being set up in Uttar Pradesh at a cost of 1,000 crores, in the same way a film studio should be set up in each state, especially in Maharashtra, with the help of the Government. There are many artistes in Kolhapur in our Maharashtra, they will be benefited by this. I support this Bill presented by the Government to work in this direction.

MS. KAVITA PATIDAR: I congratulate the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Minister of Information and Broadcasting for this Amendment Bill. The art is an important part of our culture. The cinema world has changed with time. That's why it is necessary to change its certification system as well. We all know that this Amendment Bill is an important Bill to make the certification process more effective and to check film piracy in a holistic manner and to promote the creation of jobs in this sector. The cinema is a wonderful achievement of man. We know that through this there is a live depiction of various aspects of human society.

With the advent of new digital technology, the film industry has suffered a lot due to reduction in the number of people going to theatres and piracy of films through internet or social media. This amendment has been brought with the primary objective of curbing the menace of film piracy in a big way and to protect the creative industry of cinema. According to a report by 'Ernest & Young', the Indian film industry has suffered a loss of around Rs. 18,000 crore in 2019 due to piracy. This Bill will not only help the film industry and creative industries to get rid of the epidemic of piracy but will also help in the rapid development of the film industry. The Bill will not only bring uniformity in the classification of films and content across platforms, but at the same time will be a revolutionary step towards promoting films and helping local content go global.

SHRIMATI GEETA ALIAS CHANDRAPRABHA: Films of any country are the mirror of the social and cultural life of that country. Through this Bill, many provisions are being made by the government in the interest of the Indian film industry. Piracy of film content has emerged as a major problem in the Indian film industry today. Indian film industry is losing about 20 thousand crore rupees every year due to piracy of film material. Through this Bill, strict provisions are being made by the government to stop the piracy of film material. Today, the content of Indian films is being westernised. The decision to classify films on the basis of age group is a positive step by the government to control such practices. The way Indian films have been westernised, in the same way a conspiracy has been hatched to establish many other systems in Bollywood to destroy the country's cultural heritage. But today the directors and producers of films are making films without any fear in the interest of the country, in the interest of the country's culture. I congratulate and give best wishes to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the country and the Hon'ble Minister for all these arrangements.

SHRI BIPLAB KUMAR DEB: The land of Tripura that I come from is the land of Sachin Dev Burman, the land of Rahul Dev Burman. I consider media and

entertainment sector as sunrise sector. By the amendment brought in this Bill, it is estimated that by the year 2025, 4 lakh crore and by the year 2030, about seven and a half lakh crore jobs can be created. Through this, piracy can be stopped, censors have been arranged, and provisions have been made to ban OTT. The employment that will be generated through this will benefit the young generation.

SHRI G. K. VASAN: Films give powerful message to the society and films are watched by crores and crores of people in various languages in various States in the country. Last time, around four decades ago, in 1984, certain amendments were brought forward, and now, after forty years, a lot of amendments and changes have been brought. The important issues being talked about are piracy and unauthorized recording. Simple licensing, no renewals, lifelong certificates, censorship, powers of the Tribunal are certain important aspects in the Bill. This Bill will help the industry to run without problems.

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: In China, there are about 80,000 theatres, whereas in India, there are only 8,000 theatres. It is imperative on the part of the Government to encourage theatre construction by taking appropriate measures because cinema is the cheapest industry for many grass-root level workers. The Censor Board Certificate means that the film is perfectly in order. Once the Certificate is issued, it means that there should be immunity for the director and producer against any criminal cases that are likely to be filed. The Bill does not contain any such provision. Even though the cinema industry has got about two lakh workers, the real beneficiaries are only the heroes who are hardly 50 or 60 in number in India. Therefore, appropriate provisions have to be brought in for equitable distribution of the benefits to all the workers because hero alone cannot produce the movie.

SHRI AJAY PRATAP SINGH: There are mainly three amendments in this Bill. The first amendment is in reference to the audience. Previously, the U.A. category was twelve years or more. Now, the U.A. category has been divided into three categories. The government has given an opportunity to the Indian society to decide what their family, their children should see, and what they should not see. The second major amendment is in the context of piracy, in which not only piracy of films, but also its promotion and telecast have also been kept under its ambit. If this film piracy stops, then the income of the film industry will increase, and more contribution will be made by the film industry to the coffers of India. Our film industry will stand on its feet. Earlier, a film had to come back for certification after ten years. Now a provision has been made in this that once the certificate is taken, there is no need to come again. With this, filmmakers and people of the film industry will be able to do their work fearlessly, which will not only increase the country's income, but will also provide employment opportunities to the people.

SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR: The Bill aims to comprehensively address the issues relating to film certification, unauthorized recording, curb the menace of film piracy. The Bill aims to substitute certain Sections of the Act so as to introduce the age-based certification in UA category into three age-based categories; to empower the Board to sanction the film with a separate certificate for its exhibition on television or such other media as may be prescribed; to give perpetual validity to the certificate of Central Board of Film Certification; to prohibit unauthorized recording and unauthorized exhibition of films. Earlier, a Censor Certificate issued by the Censor Board was valid for 10 years. The Government, through this amendment Bill, makes the Certificate issued by the Censor Board as a perpetual one. I request the hon'ble Minister to encourage the Telugu film industry because it is getting worldwide fame.

SHRI BABURAM NISHAD: Our films become a school for the people of rural areas as well as general public of the country from which the society has learned a lot. It should also be ensured that negative attitudes and violence are not glorified through films, Censor Board should study the films closely on the basis of Indian tradition and culture and only then allow them to be screened.

SHRI G.V.L. NARASIMHA RAO: While supporting the Bill, I would like to make some significant points. Theatre ticket sale is a big source of earnings for the film industry. But, with the rise of OTT platforms and digital streaming, the experience of watching movies in theatres, which was a family as well as a community experience, is becoming almost extinct. Also, Movie tickets in multiplex theatres are so expensive that one can get entire year's subscription of OTT platforms for that amount. This is a matter which needs discussion with the industry and evolving policies in conjunction with the State Governments so that we can protect our industry. I would like the hon. Minister to dwell upon the kind of regulations that exist today with regard to regulating OTT content. If there are no such regulations, then either the Cable Television Networks Act, which controls content on television, should regulate OTT content or OTT industry should be asked to have self-regulation.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE): Film industry is a very important industry. The censor board also needs to pay attention to the scenes of suicide in films. Dadasaheb Phalke started many good films not only in Maharashtra but across the country. Many actors from all over the country come to Mumbai to work in the film industry. Nowadays, the income of the film industry has decreased due to the advent of internet and piracy of films. So, on my behalf and on behalf of my Party, I support the Bill.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: The original Bill, the Cinematograph Act was passed in the year 1952. The present Bill, brought by the hon. Minister, has brought revolutionary Amendments in that original Bill. An important point is the perpetual validity of certification and the revised power of the Central Government. This Bill ensures the appropriateness of films contents for different age groups. I would like to know about the measures that will be taken to enforce this classification effectively. Also, the manner in which this Bill, as amended, will bring job creation and revenue generation should be explained in detail. Another important thing is the tackling of unauthorized film recordings and exhibition, especially, considering the prevalence of large pirated media network worldwide and the challenges posed by digital platforms facilitating free distribution. I would like to know more about it.

The hon'ble Minister, replying to the debate, said: It is true that the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 has taken a long time to be brought. After 1952, a major revision was done in 1981. After that, a lot has changed in the nearly four decades including both the way films are produced and the way films are stolen through piracy. Today, pirated content can be delivered to any part of the world within seconds through the Internet. In a way, today the House is going to take a big step for the interests of everyone associated with the film industry. I thank all the members for supporting this bill. We have many achievements in this journey of Indian film industry from the year 1913 to

2023. Our films present the art, culture, literature and society of the country to the world. Our films and their songs are loved all over the world. This is an example of India's soft power and today this great House is working to give it more strength. Some members pointed out that the films are produced on a large scale using technology, especially in South India. Not only this, but today the post production work of the biggest films of the world is also done in India. AVGC i.e. Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics sector is growing rapidly. So overall we should look at the film industry as a huge opportunity. When this bill was brought in 2019, there was only a small amendment in it, which could not have solved today's problem. It was sent to the Standing Committee on which the members of the committee gave their suggestions and then in the year 2022 the new draft of the bill was placed before the general public, many suggestions came from them as well. Suggestions from entire film industry were also taken and then, this Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 has been brought in the House. CBFC, or commonly known as Censor Board is an autonomous body and has its own powers. After this bill, the government will not even have the power of revision. Autonomy of CBFC will be maintained. One member suggested that the members in the revision panel should not be same. This provision was there earlier also in the bill and will remain so now. All five members of the revision panel will be new. This bill has been harmonized as per the orders of the Supreme Court and the High Court, so that no problem arises in future. The biggest problem mentioned by entire House is the problem of unauthorized recording and exhibition of films i.e. piracy. This ruins the years of hard work of the Artistes. For this, there is a provision of fine up to three lakh rupees, which can be increased to five percent of the cost of the film. There is also a provision of three years imprisonment in the bill, so that the film industry can be saved. The bills we used to bring earlier to deal with piracy were not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir due to Article 370 and 35A. But on August 5, 2019, Articles 370 and 35A were abolished by the Parliament forever. So, we are omitting the provision related to this in this bill also. Be it BAFTA or Oscar, the country's films have achieved great success on all international platforms and have also won awards. Not only are we the second oldest film industry, the maximum number of films in the world are also made in India. The cost of film production in India is also relatively low and that is why people from all over the world want to come here. Work has also been done to introduce plans for incentives for shooting films in India. States like Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have started giving incentives. Very soon we are going to open many institutions for AVGC sector, so that thousands of our students can take training in this sector, enhance their skills and strengthen the film industry. Piracy is the biggest threat to the Indian film industry. According to the report that came after the Covid pandemic, online digital piracy of films has increased by more than one and a half times in a single month. The earlier law had very less punishment that is why we have brought this amendment bill.

I would like to tell you about the concerns regarding OTT platforms and cable television regulations that OTT platforms are managed through self-regulation, where the visual content is controlled by program code. Today, the purpose of such rules is to spread awareness, and not to punish. In this regard, the division is also important for telecasting films, thereby affecting the budget of the audience. The segmentation of films provides more convenience to television viewers. The validity of certificates has been extended, so that there is no need to come back again and again for revision. Further, the amending power of the Central Government has been taken away and a separate law is provided under the Copyright Act. It is also necessary to clarify that the penalty of three years for motion picture modification needs to be separated from the Copyright Act. In addition, the guilty person will also be liable to pay fine. It was also clarified that certain acts provided

under section 52 of the Copyright Act would not be punishable under this provision. I have to read a couple of more lines for the knowledge of the House. Clause 7(1)(b) of the 2023 Bill also provides that any person who is holder of the copyright of a film may, and whose copyright has been infringed in the manner provided under Section 6AA and 6AB, can, in addition to actions taken under the Cinematograph Act, take suitable action for infringement of his copyright in the film under Section 51 of the Copyright Act, 1957, or take suitable action for computer-related offences under Section 66 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, or any other relevant laws for the time being in force. Further, appropriate Government, or its agencies, shall not be prevented from taking suitable action against an intermediary under sub-Section 3 of Section 79 of the Information Technology Act. While inserting clauses for piracy, the 2023 Bill aims to harmonise the Cinematograph Act with the existing laws which address the issues of piracy and the Information Technology Act, 2000. So, I think, this makes the things very clear. There are a couple of more things which were asked by our hon. Members. Shri V. Vijayasai Reddy asked about the immunity to be given to the producer or to the director, and he also talked about the distribution of the profits to the various stakeholders. He mentioned one more thing that son of a hero should not be a hero. That's a hereditary practice So, I think let us leave a few things to the industry. Let us not restrict it. We have given more freedom in the OTT sector, but many hon. Members have raised some issues related to the OTT sector. Let me say this here that the rules for the OTT platforms are a little different and these come under the Code of Ethics under the Information Technology Act, which gives self-regulatory powers. I have noted the complaints made by the hon. Members about the language, vulgarity or nudity. About seven days back, I had called a meeting with all the big and other OTT players in Delhi. I told all these OTT platforms people that self-regulation means that the responsibility is on your shoulders. For creativity, they have to be given some space. You have raised very important topics. Kalita ji said something about parents. I have already mentioned that how we can take care of them. I have answered all the questions of Nanda. Dr. Ashok Bajpaiji has spoken from King Harishchandra to everyone else. Dr. M. Thambidurai ji has said about the contribution of Tamil film industry and Reddy ji in Telugu film industry. Both the film industries have a huge contribution. It would have been better if the MPs from West Bengal were also present here and talked about the West Bengal film industry. The rest of the Members have also spoken about the people of their respective regions. Dr. Sonal Mansingh ji is a big name in herself in the field of art, literature and culture. I am taking all your suggestions as suggestions. I have answered most of the issues that were your concern here. You had a question regarding regional language. Marathi film industry has a huge contribution .We have provisions through NFDC. We support this through NFDC. This Bill has been brought to save us from the loss of Rs. 20,000 crore due to piracy. On the one hand, where Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living has been promoted, on the other hand, strict action has been taken against those who promote piracy. We have done the work of harmonizing this law from the point of view of the law after the judgment of the Supreme Court and High Court. Steps have also been taken within it to promote a simple process for certification. It has also provisions on the content that you have created, so that you can get perpetual rights for it for a long time. We will also use technology and introduce new features. Piracy is like a cancer and we are trying to eradicate this cancer through this Bill. Our content is also going everywhere from Russia to Central Asia, Europe to China, Korea. I would like to thank you for your kind co-operation and suggestions.

The motion for consideration of the Bill, was adopted.

Clauses etc. were adopted.

The Bill was passed.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

1. Demand for Renaming Country as 'Bharat' by Amending Article 1 of Indian Constitution

SHRI NARESH BANSAL: Hon'ble Prime Minister in his Address to the nation from the Red Fort on August 15, had clearly said that it is necessary to liberate the country from the symbols of slavery. The British had changed the name of the country from 'Bharat' to 'India'. In the Constitution in 1950, we wrote - "India, that is Bharat". 'Bharat' or 'Bharatvarsha' is the real name of this country. In the Amrit Kal of freedom, the symbol of English slavery should be removed and Article 1 of the Constitution should be amended to rename country 'Bharat' again.

2. Demand for enhancing amount under MPLAD Scheme

SHRI IRANNA KADADI: Through Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme, MPs can recommend development works for creation of community assets in their constituencies. The amount available for development works after deducting GST and other administrative expenses is only Rs 3.5 to 4 crores. This amount is not enough to do development work in every village of a district. I request the government to increase this fund to 10 crores and make it tax free.

3. Need for Development of National Strategy for optimizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Accelerating India (AI)

SHRI BIPLAB KUMAR DEB: Artificial Intelligence has the potential to act as a kinetic enabler of the digital economy and innovation ecosystem in India. The optimal harnessing of the potential of Artificial Intelligence can also lead to more efficient delivery of personalized and interactive citizen-centric services through Digital Public Platforms to our citizens. The Union Government must develop a National Strategy with the objective of optimizing 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Accelerating India (AI)'. Efforts must be made to develop comprehensive programmes and schemes for leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) related transformative technologies to foster inclusion, innovation etc. for social impact in the country. These initiatives will strengthen India's capabilities as a global leader in creating digital public infrastructure through the development of a robust ecosystem ensuring 'Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) for All'.

4. Need for Considering Railway Recruitment of Course Completed Act Apprentices (CCAAs)

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: It is very concerning that hundreds of eligible candidates, mostly from Andhra Pradesh, are being denied railway recruitment due to an unfair technicality. In 2019, a notification was issued to fill one lakh vacancies, of which around 20,000 posts were reserved for Course Completed Act Apprentices (CCAAs). Accordingly, candidates completed their course by December, 2018 and also cleared the exam and got their National Apprenticeship Certificate. Now, their candidature is being rejected because they did not clear the exam before the cut-off date of 12th April, 2019. But this is not the fault of the candidates since the exam was postponed from April, 2019 to July, 2019 due to general elections. The largeness of the affected candidates merits a speedy resolution to this issue. I urge the hon. Railway Minister for his swift intervention.

P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

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