

Bollywood suggests acting schools, more theatres in UP

'It Will Also Ensure More GST For UP'

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Film producer Boney Kapoor and actor-BJP MP Dinesh Lal Nirahua at the meeting of film fraternity with UP CM in Mumbai on Thursday

Lucknow: A group of eminent actors, producers, directors and musicians, who met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Mumbai on Thursday, said for the film industry to flourish more than subsidies and cost of films drawing audiences to the cinema halls was imperative.

Director Om Raut pointed out the need for more cinema halls in UP, citing data to show that there was tremendous scope in the state for creating infrastructure.

"UP has 2.3 screens per 10 lakh people. Maharashtra has 8.9 screens while Andhra Pradesh, which tops the list, has 21. We have scope for improvement. If we look at ticket buyers who are 12 years and above, 24.5% have access to cinema halls in UP. On the other hand, this figure is 35% in Maharashtra and 47% in AP. Another way to look at this is through postal codes. UP has 1,631 postal codes of which only 174 have access to cinema halls," he said. The representative from Carni-

val Group said despite having the largest population in the country, UP's contribution to box office collections was just 6%, which if increased, would also mean more GST revenue for the state.

Actor Jackie Shroff raised the issue of expensive food items in the halls, saying that popcorn prices needed to



be reduced otherwise very few would visit theatres.

Another demand raised by the members was the need to have a film school in the state. Chaitanya Chinchlikar, vice president of Whistling Woods, an acting school of director Subhash Ghai, said they get most students from four UP cities -- Lucknow, Kanpur, Meerut and Prayagraj. Therefore, the go-

vernment would have no shortage of demand if it sets up a high-quality film school.

Ghai said other than artistes, UP should focus on training technicians as well.

The demand was supported by actor Suniel Shetty, who said one should travel to UP for a shoot with the smallest possible crew if locally trained technicians were available.

Shetty also raised concerns about frequent demands for boycotting Bollywood over various controversies.

Tej Karam of Jio Studios said: "Having shot in big cities like Lucknow, Kanpur and Prayagraj, one would like to go into interiors of UP."

Ashish Singh from Lyca Production suggested that the government also hold roadshows in south India where people know about UP but not its potential for film shooting infrastructure.