

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:27
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2000
APPROVAL TO FILM TITLED WATER
RAMDAS ATHAWALE;RIZWAN ZAHEER KHAN

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government had accorded permission to film producer Deepa Mehta to shoot her film titled 'Water' at Varanasi;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the date of according permission;
- (c) whether this film has been has been scrutinized afresh and certain portions have been removed from this film;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the details of agreement made between the Government and the film producer;
- (e) whether there was an attack on the shooting set by some activists;
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the total damage to life and property as a result thereof; (g) whether the State Government of Uttar Pradesh has imposed a ban on shooting of the film; (h) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and (i) the present status of the film?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (Shri Arun Jaitley)

(a) to (i) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO

(i) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.27 REGARDING APPROVAL TO FILM TITLED 'WATER' FOR ANSWER (C) 25.2.2000

(a) to (i)

M/s Flagship International Limited, a Canadian company, had applied to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 1st October, 1999 for permission of the Government for shooting of the feature film 'WATER' in India. Ms. Deepa Mehta is the Director, Script Writer and Co-producer of the film. Procedure regarding shooting of feature films in India by foreigners is laid down in the Visa Manual of the Ministry of External Affairs. The application was accordingly considered in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs is made for ensuring acceptability of proposal from the point of view of security.

2. While considering the proposal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting keeps in view the concerns of integrity of the nation, friendly relations with other countries and communal harmony while adhering to the policy of freedom of expression. Accordingly with the concurrence of the Home Ministry, the Ministry communicated its concurrence for the shooting of the film vide letter of 6th January, 2000. The Government does not enter into agreement with applicant film makers in this regard. The concurrence given by the Ministry was subject to certain conditions, one of which was that shooting on locations will be subject to permission being granted by the respective controlling authority.

3. On 31st January, 2000 the Government of Uttar Pradesh conveyed that there were protests by organizations and persons in Varanasi about the content of the script and suggested re-examination of the script by the Government of India. Thereafter Ms. Deepa Mehta approached the Ministry for approval of a modified version of the script containing dialogues in Hindi. She deleted/changed some sentences in her script. This altered script was considered and approval of the Government was accorded to the amended script for shooting of the film on that basis on 2nd February.

4. Government of Uttar Pradesh informed that on 30th January, 2000 a group of persons demonstrated on the location of the film during which some damage was caused to some of the sets prepared for the shooting of the film. There was no loss of life. Demonstrations against the shooting of the film by several organizations in Varanasi and group of persons continued. Some shooting of the film was done on 5th February, 2000 but due to the law and order problem created by protests, demonstrations and an attempted suicide, the District Administration Ordered stoppage of shooting for 15 days under section 144 of Cr. PC by their order of 7th February, 2000. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has not imposed ban on the shooting of the film.

5. As reported in Media, the production team has left Varanasi. The Ministry has not been approached by M/s. Flagship International Limited thereafter.

