Censor Board

Why in news?

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The Central Board of Film Certification i.e the ‘Censor Board’ has turned down a film Ka Bodyscapes recently.

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What is CBFC?

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- CBFC is a statutory body under **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
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- It regulates the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952.
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- Films can be publicly exhibited in India only after they have been certified by CBFC.
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- The Board consists of non-official members and a Chairman (all of whom are appointed by Central Government) and functions with headquarters at Mumbai.
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- It has **nine Regional offices,** one each at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Cuttack and Guwahati.
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- The Regional Offices are assisted in the examination of films by Advisory Panels.
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- The members of the panels are nominated by Central Government by drawing people from different walks of life for a period of 2 years.
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- The Certification process is in accordance with The Cinematograph Act, 1952, The Cinematograph (certification) Rules, 1983, and the guidelines issued by the Central government u/s 5 (B)

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What is the film about?

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- It revolves around three characters.
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- It includes a homosexual couple, of which one happens to be a Muslim and the other is a Hanuman-bhakt who comes from a family of right-wingers.
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- Third is a feministic woman.
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- The story is about how they struggle to find space and happiness in a conservative Indian City.
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- The movie makers clarify that the film is about societal attitudes towards individual freedom and is not a critique of religion.
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What are the Board’s objections?

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- The board is of view that the film is glorifying the subject of gay and homosexual relationship.
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- They also held that the film is explicit of scene offending Hindu sensibilities depicting vulgarity, nudity and obscenity through the movie.
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- It also held that the movie might invoke a ‘law and order’ problem.
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Why is the move wrong?

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- It is against the freedom of expression
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- The view that the homosexuality is against culture is unwarranted as many temple sculpture in India celebrates sexual union of every kind.

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- Moreover, there is no stricture against the depiction of nudity in Hinduism.
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- Court judgments have categorically rejected the argument of ‘law and order’ as a criterion for banning a film.
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- The Constitution gives an individual the freedom to practise his or her religion.
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- It does not give the right to be protected from any reference to the religion that may be interpreted as giving offence. All practices are open to scrutiny and no ‘religious immunity’ is offered.
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- India is a secular republic and no special rights are accorded to religion. The political rights are due only to individuals not to a whole religion.
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What should be done?

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- The Board’s authority to effectively ban films should go.
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- CBFC should only be a film certification body whose scope should be restricted to categorizing the suitability of the film to audience groups on the basis of age and maturity
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Source: The Hindu

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