

Pickle

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SEPTEMBER 2025

INDIA'S ONLY FILM BIZ MAGAZINE FOR THE WORLD

India At TIFF Special

tiff 50

Real life couple Pratik Gandhi & Bhamini Oza as Mahatma and Kasturba Gandhi bring iconic chapters of history to life in Hansal Mehta & Sameer Nair's highly anticipated series, Gandhi

Screenings On

▶ Sept 6, 7, 13
TIFF Lightbox
Scotiabank Theatre
Toronto

Time to Shine

Sameer Nair of Applause Entertainment & seasoned director Hansal Mehta team up for the breakthrough series Gandhi, India's first-ever TIFF Primetime entry



Pickle

Congrats
tiff 50

HALF A
CENTURY
INSPIRING
FILM LOVERS
WORLDWIDE

FROM THE EDITOR

As we celebrate the landmark 50th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), it is an opportune moment to reflect on the remarkable and evolving relationship between India and this globally prestigious cinematic platform. TIFF has established itself as one of North America's foremost film festivals, providing an extraordinary stage for world cinema and serving as a vital gateway for Indian and South Asian storytellers to engage with audiences worldwide.

In the past five decades, TIFF has presented more than 150 Indian films, capturing the rich diversity, creativity, and depth of Indian cinema. This longstanding collaboration has significantly elevated the global profile of Indian filmmakers, helping them achieve international recognition and acclaim. The festival's vibrant audience, which includes over 600,000 people of Indian origin, underscores the enduring enthusiasm for Indian stories, as well as the powerful impact of cultural representation on the global stage.

The momentum continues at the 2025 festival, which features an exciting and diverse selection of Indian works. Noteworthy premieres include Neeraj Ghaywan's *Homebound*, Anurag Kashyap's *Monkey in a Cage*, Bikas Mishra's *Bayaan*, and the debut feature *In Search of the Sky* by Jitank Singh Gurjar. Adding to the festival's innovative spirit, the highly anticipated web series

Gandhi, created by Sameer Nair and Hansal Mehta, will be showcased in TIFF Primetime.

A special highlight is the 50th anniversary restoration of Ramesh Sippy's iconic classic *Sholay*, which exemplifies TIFF's commitment to celebrating both contemporary storytelling and timeless masterpieces that continue to shape generations of filmmakers and audiences alike.

In this edition, we also present an in-depth interview with Sameer Nair, CEO of Applause Entertainment, who offers valuable insights into the creative vision and collaborative spirit driving the new wave of Indian content on the world stage. His perspective highlights how Indian storytelling is breaking new ground, forging meaningful global connections, and inspiring fresh conversations across borders.

Cameron Bailey, TIFF's CEO and former Artistic Director, has played a pivotal role in shaping India's presence at the festival. His two decades of dedicated scouting and championing of Indian talent have brought over 100 Indian films to international prominence, solidifying TIFF as a premier destination for Indian cinema.

This milestone edition of TIFF is a testament to the dynamic synergy between Indian cinema and the festival, charting a forward-looking path of innovation, cultural exchange, and artistic excellence for years to come.

If you have any questions, or are interested in collaboration opportunities, don't hesitate to get in touch.



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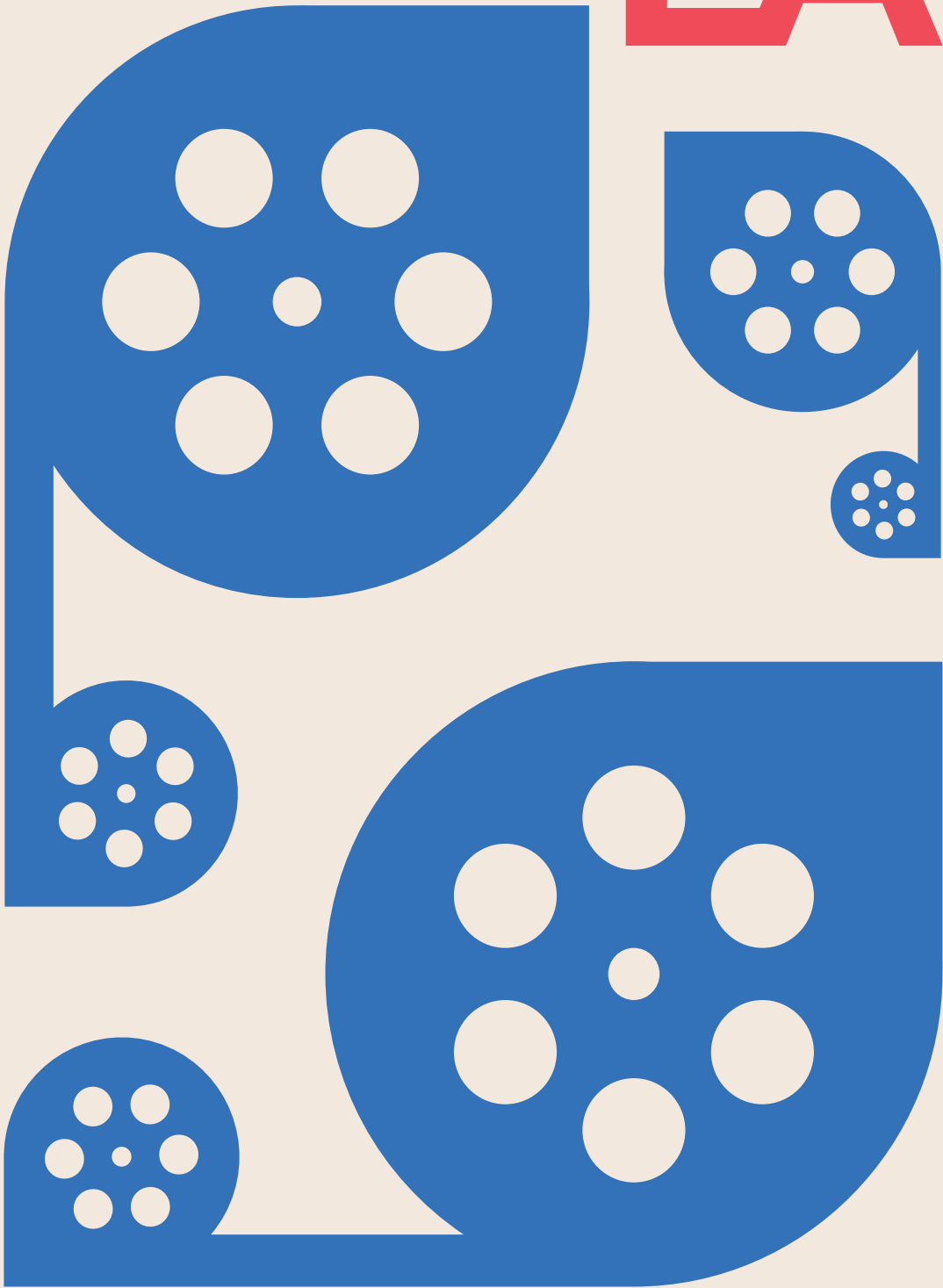
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CONGRATULATES

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tiff 

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TIFF's five decades of
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
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TIFF AT 50 LOOKS BEYOND THE HORIZON

As TIFF celebrates 50 years of cinematic storytelling, it honours its past, spotlights global voices, and sets the stage for the next era of film innovation



**AS THE FESTIVAL'S
50TH ANNIVERSARY
UNFOLDS,
AUDIENCES CAN
LOOK FORWARD TO
A DIVERSE SLATE OF
WORLD PREMIERES,
CANADIAN
TALENT, AND
UNFORGETTABLE
EXPERIENCES THAT
CONTINUE TO SHAPE
THE FUTURE OF FILM**

This year marks a significant milestone for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) as it celebrates its 50th edition, reinforcing its legacy as a premier gathering for screen storytellers from around the world.

Since its establishment in the mid-1970s, TIFF has undergone transformations that its founders could never have envisioned, evolving into a unique intersection of cultures, creativity, and cinematic innovation. In reflecting on TIFF's journey, CEO **Cameron Bailey** emphasises the festival's enduring spirit of creativity and innovation.

"Toronto is a unique gathering place in the world. For thousands of years, from First Nations fishers to the latest global migrants, Toronto has welcomed a vast array of people and evolved with the ideas, ambitions, and stories they bring," Bailey says.

He emphasises that this year's festival offers "the best of every kind of film imaginable, designed to open your eyes, your mind, and your heart."

As TIFF commemorates this significant edition, it remains committed to pushing boundaries by showcasing films from over 75 countries and introducing new initiatives, including the International People's Choice Award.

Chief Programming Officer **Anita Lee** expresses gratitude for the festival's vibrant community of filmmakers, fans, and programmers.

"We create collective experiences that delight us, challenge us, and hopefully unite us in our common humanity," says Lee.

She also looks to the future with excitement for the launch of TIFF: The Market next year, a new initiative designed to connect global creative leaders and foster the birth of groundbreaking cinema.

With its rich history guiding the way and innovative projects on the horizon, TIFF remains committed to championing global cinema and building new pillars for the next half-century.



Here are the winners of the annual **TIFF Tribute Awards** honoring outstanding cinema contributions. **Idris Elba** receives the Impact Media Award; Oscar-winning artist **Kazu Hiro**, the Variety Artisan Award. Acclaimed actors **Nina Hoss** and **Channing Tatum** get Performer Awards. Iranian auteur **Jafar Panahi** and Inuk filmmaker **Zacharias Kunuk** receive Special Tribute Awards. Canadian icon Catherine O'Hara earns the Norman Jewison Career Achievement Award. They join previously announced honorees **Guillermo del Toro**, **Jodie Foster**, **HIKARI**, and **Lee Byung Hun** in being celebrated for their remarkable achievements in film.

TIFF INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

The TIFF Industry Conference 2025 includes six pillars: Visionaries, Dialogues, Perspectives, Microsessions, Spotlight, and — new this year — Buyers in Focus, a series of panel conversations with global acquisition executives. TIFF Talent Development programming also returns with impactful labs, fellowships, and funds that support emerging creators and their projects.

Buyers in Focus emerges as a new pillar of the TIFF Industry Conference, offering attendees more access to decision-makers, and laying the groundwork for TIFF: The Market in 2026. This series of conversations offers an inside look at the evolving strategies, challenges, and opportunities shaping today's film marketplace and distribution landscape.

We create collective experiences that delight us, challenge us, and hopefully unite us in our common humanity.

Anita Lee
Chief Programming Officer, TIFF

Toronto is a unique gathering place in the world. For thousands of years, from First Nations fishers to the latest global migrants, Toronto has welcomed a vast array of people and evolved with the ideas, ambitions, and stories they bring

Cameron Bailey
CEO, TIFF



Charles Tremblay has been appointed Head of Market for TIFF: The Market, launching September 2026. With over 20 years in film distribution, he co-founded Metropole Films Distribution, launched MK2 | MILE-END (later Sphere Films), and recently oversaw successful Canadian releases at MUBI including *The Substance* and *Parasite*.



GANDHI
WORLD PREMIERE
PRIMETIME

Gandhi chronicles young Mohandas Gandhi (Pratik Gandhi) as he leaves India for London to study law, supported by his wife Kasturba and family. In Victorian Britain, he befriends vegetarian activist Josiah Oldfield (Tom Felton) and deepens his ethical convictions. Inspired by global ideas and colonial injustices, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery that foreshadows his future as a transformative leader.

Director: Hansal Mehta, Sameer Nair
Country: India | 2025 | 145m
Language: Hindi, English, Gujarati
Cast: Pratik Gandhi, Bhamini Oza Gandhi, Tom Felton, Kabir Bedi, Aseem Hattangady
International Sales Agent: Lenore Entertainment Group

Homebound follows Chandan (Vishal Jethwa), a Dalit, and Shoaib (Ishaan Khatter), a Muslim, who compete among 2.5 million applicants for 3,500 police jobs, seeking dignity through uniform. When exam results are delayed, economic pressures mount—Shoaib’s disabled father can’t work, while Chandan wants to build his parents a house. Religious and caste-based bigotry threatens their hopes and friendship in this Bollywood social drama featuring strong performances and atmospheric cinematography.



HOMEBOUND
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
GALA PRESENTATIONS

Director: Neeraj Ghaywan
Country: India | 2025 | 117m
Language: Hindi
Cast: Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, Janhvi Kapoor
International Sales Agent: Paradise City Sales

Bayaan follows Officer Roohi (Huma Qureshi), a young Delhi detective investigating sexual abuse allegations against a powerful Rajasthan cult leader (Chandrachur Singh). Her duty collides with brutal power dynamics as corrupt colleagues, her own high-ranking police father, and the cult leader’s influence work to bury the case. Struggling to find witnesses willing to speak, Roohi transforms from hesitant rookie to reluctant crusader in this devastating study of systemic complicity and silence.



BAYAAN
WORLD PREMIERE
DISCOVERY

Director: Bikas Ranjan Mishra
Country: India | 2025 | 118m
Language: Hindi
Cast: Huma Qureshi, Chandrachur Singh, Sachin Khedekar, Swati Das, Vibhore Mayank

Bandar follows aging TV star Samar (Deol) whose celebrity is fading. While in a relationship with younger Khushi (Azad), his ex Gayatri (Pabbi) wants back in his life. When Samar ghosts her, Gayatri accuses him of rape, leading to his arrest. Facing a corrupt judicial system, this suspenseful drama explores #MeToo complexities, examining predation, victimhood, and a flawed man confronting changing attitudes about gender and power in contemporary society.



BANDAR
WORLD PREMIERE
SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Director: Anurag Kashyap
Country: India | 2025 | 140m
Language: Hindi, Marathi, English
Cast: Bobby Deol, Sanya Malhotra, Sapna Pabbi, Indrajith Sukumaran, Saba Azad



IN SEARCH OF THE SKY
WORLD PREMIERE
CENTREPIECE

In Search of Sky follows an elderly couple barely surviving on kiln brick hauling and cow-dung cake sales while caring for their mentally challenged son, Naran. Facing land-grab pressures and community whispers urging them to abandon Naran, they gamble on a pilgrimage to the Maha Kumbh Mela for hope. This poignant feature explores poverty's burden, familial love, and faith's enduring resilience.

Director: Jitank Singh Gurjar
Country: India | 2025 | 87m
Language: Hindi
Cast: Nikhil Yadav, Meghna Agarwal, Raghvendra Bhadoriya

Sholay follows two ex-convicts, Veeru (Dharmendra) and Jai (Amitabh Bachchan), hired by principled Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar) to defeat the ruthless dacoit Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan). Blending Western and Bollywood styles, they forge bonds, face epic battles, and deliver memorable songs and fights. This 1975 classic balances high-octane action, humor, and themes of loyalty, justice, and redemption.



SHOLAY
TIFF CLASSICS

Director: Ramesh Sippy
Country: India | 1975 | 204m
Language: Hindi
Cast: Sanjeev Kumar, Dharmendra, Hema Malini, Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bhaduri

INDIA OPPORTUNITY FOR TIFF DELEGATES

India's booming M&E sector, skilled talent, and government incentives make it a compelling choice for global content creators seeking world-class innovation and collaboration.

01

Create in India for the World

Prime Minister Modi's vision champions India as a global content creation leader, combining rich cultural heritage with cutting-edge technology to produce world-class media for international audiences.

02

Rapid M&E Growth

India's Media & Entertainment sector is growing at a 10–12% CAGR, expected to reach \$70 billion by 2030, fueled by digital innovation, expanding broadband, and increasing consumer spending.

05

State-Level AVGC Policies

Many Indian states are rolling out progressive AVGC policies and building infrastructure, creating regional hubs and attracting both domestic and international investment in media and entertainment.

03

India Cine Hub

The India Cine Hub streamlines permissions and offers incentives for foreign productions, positioning India as a preferred destination for international filmmaking and large-scale content projects.

04

AVGC Talent Development

New institutions are bridging skills gaps in Animation, VFX, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC), providing advanced training and research to ensure India remains a top global talent supplier.

06

Cultural Diversity & Incentives

India's diverse cultures, languages, and government incentives create a vibrant ecosystem for AVGC, making it an attractive location for creative projects and partnerships.

07

M&E Startup Boom

India's startup ecosystem in Media & Entertainment is thriving, driven by digital transformation, government support, and rapid growth in gaming, content creation, and tech innovation.

08

Co-Production Opportunities

International streaming platforms are leveraging India's co-production treaties and localizing content, opening new avenues for global collaborations and broader reach.

09

Cost & Talent Advantage

India offers competitive production costs, highly skilled creative and technical professionals, and access to advanced technology, making it ideal for international content development.

10

Expanding Digital Market

Widespread internet and smartphone adoption are driving a surge in digital content consumption, creating vast opportunities for new media and entertainment ventures.

Rapid Rise of JioHotstar in India

India's streaming platform, JioHotstar, has rapidly become the world's second-largest streaming service, driven entirely by its domestic market. In just three months, the JioHotstar attracted over 600 million users—including 75 million on connected TVs—and now counts 300 million paying subscribers. It offers more than 320,000 hours of content—six times the combined library of its two nearest rivals—and adds 30,000 hours annually.

At the recent Reliance Industries' AGM, Akash M. Ambani underscored JioHotstar's 34 percent share of India's television market, matching the combined share of the next three networks. Leveraging advanced AI, proprietary software, and technology innovations, the service delivers a seamless experience across mobile devices, smart TVs, and connected screens, with an ambition to reach a billion screens.

Describing its launch as a defining moment for India's media landscape, Akash Ambani highlighted how JioHotstar's strategic integration of content, AI, and technology is reshaping storytelling, distribution, and audience engagement. With plans for continued platform and geographic expansion, JioHotstar exemplifies the immense growth potential of India's digital entertainment market.

TAKEAWAYS

FROM THE SUCCESS OF WAVES 2025

From talent discovery to billion-dollar deals, WAVES 2025 proved India is no longer just participating in global media—it's shaping its future.

WAVES 2025—the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit—emerged as a transformative convergence for the global media, entertainment, and creator economies. Envisioned by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, WAVES 2025 not only underscored India's rising stature as a cultural and creative powerhouse but also set a new benchmark for global collaboration, talent discovery, and innovation in the digital era.

A VISIONARY PLATFORM FOR THE ORANGE ECONOMY

WAVES 2025 solidified the centrality of the "Orange Economy"—anchored in content, creativity, and culture—in India's growth narrative. The Prime Minister's articulation of the Orange Economy as India's dawn resonated throughout the summit, with the event serving as a dynamic stage for creative exchange, cultural diplomacy, and the strategic positioning of India as a preferred global media and entertainment investment destination. By gathering 20,000+ delegates from over 100 countries, WAVES 2025 fostered a collaborative environment for storytelling, technological innovation, and commercial partnerships.

2 INDIA AS A GLOBAL CREATIVE AND CULTURAL HUB

The summit's diverse programming, including the Bharat Pavilion, WAVES Bazaar, Creatosphere, and WaveX, showcased India's multifaceted creative landscape—from ancient oral traditions to cutting-edge digital storytelling. The Bharat Pavilion, with its thematic zones, celebrated India's regional diversity, while the WAVES Bazaar became a year-long global marketplace, facilitating over 3,000 B2B meetings and INR 1,328 Crore in business, and deepening India's ties with major international players like Netflix, Amazon MGM Studios, and Warner Bros. Discovery.

The launch of notable collaborations, including Indo-European and UK-India co-production deals, as well as the inauguration of India's first Film Festival in New Zealand, underscored India's emergence as a springboard for cross-border creative ventures. These developments signal the country's growing influence in shaping global content trends and catalyzing international investments.

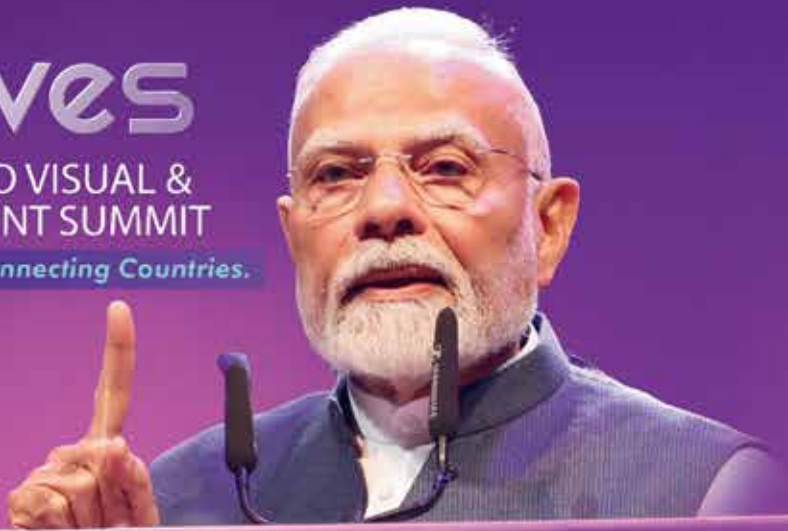
WAVES OF CHANGE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi calls for a Create in India, Create for the World Movement

WAVES

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GLOBAL MEDIA DIALOGUE

WAVES 2024

THE REMAINING

3 EMPOWERMENT AND DISCOVERY OF NEXT-GEN CREATORS

WAVES 2025 placed a strong emphasis on talent discovery and creator empowerment. The “Create in India Challenge” attracted over 100,000 registrations from 60+ countries, culminating in 34 competitive challenges across animation, gaming, music, and more. Creatosphere and masterclasses provided a nurturing ground for young talent, promoting innovation and digital skills necessary for the future of media and entertainment. These initiatives not only celebrated the creative spirit but also promoted inclusion and diversity, giving a platform to untold stories and emerging voices.

4 INNOVATION, INVESTMENT, AND TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP

A key differentiator for WAVES 2025 was its focus on technological advancement and the creator economy’s monetization. The summit facilitated MoUs worth over INR 8,000 Cr., including landmark investments in creative infrastructure, such as the development of a Film City, new academic campuses, and media technology hubs. The launch of the Nifty WAVES Index and MoUs between the Indian Institute of Creative Technology and global technology giants (Google, Apple, Microsoft, Meta, etc.) signaled a strategic focus on research, talent skilling, and industry-academia linkages.

WaveX, the summit’s innovation platform, connected 127 startups with leading investors, validating India’s potential to nurture world-class creative tech ventures. The summit’s focus on immersive technologies, VFX, AI, and gaming further positioned India at the forefront of global media innovation.

5 INCLUSIVITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND SOCIAL IMPACT

WAVES 2025 distinctly advanced the agenda of inclusivity and sustainability in the media and entertainment sector. The recognition of 12 community radio stations for excellence, focus on regional voices, and adoption of the WAVES Declaration at the Global Media Dialogue reflected a

WAVES 2025 solidified the centrality of the “Orange Economy”—anchored in content, creativity, and culture—in India’s growth narrative

commitment to ethical media, bridging the digital divide, and championing diverse narratives. The Declaration’s emphasis on cultural heritage, equitable access, human-centric outcomes, and responsible use of AI is particularly significant in today’s rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Through initiatives like the “Waves of India” album and the WAVES Sankalp pledge, the summit celebrated India’s unity in diversity and reinforced shared values of creativity, responsibility, and cultural stewardship.

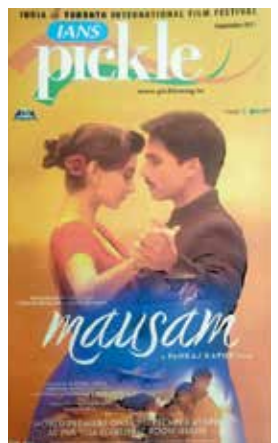
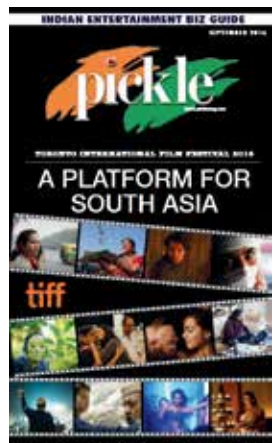
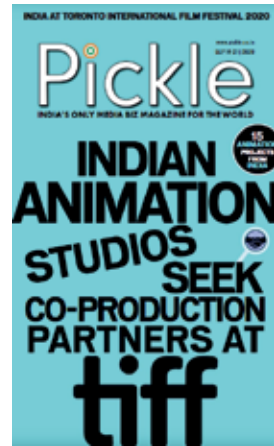
6 STRATEGIC OUTCOMES AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

The summit’s success is also measured by the strategic partnerships it forged, the actionable insights it generated, and the momentum it created for the Indian creative economy. Reports launched during WAVES, such as ‘Mapping India’s Creator Economy’ and ‘Press Play – India’s OTT Story Goes Global,’ provided valuable knowledge resources for policymakers and industry leaders.

The summit’s high-level dialogues, including the PM-CEO Roundtable and plenary sessions, fostered meaningful exchanges between government, industry, and creators, promoting India’s vision of becoming a global content creation and export hub.

WAVES 2025 has set a new global standard for media and entertainment summits. By blending visionary leadership, robust international participation, and a strong focus on innovation and inclusivity, the summit has amplified India’s voice in the global creative arena. Its legacy lies in the vibrant networks, transformative collaborations, and empowered creators it has nurtured—heralding a new era for India’s Orange Economy and its role in shaping the world’s creative future.

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Sameer Nair , Managing Director, Applause Entertainment

SAMEER NAIR ON TAKING INDIAN STORIES GLOBAL

With Applause Entertainment's Gandhi series making history at TIFF, **Sameer Nair, Managing Director, Applause Entertainment** reflects on the creative journey, the alchemy of content, and how Indian stories can shape global narratives. Sameer Nair chats with Pickle

Sameer Nair, Managing Director of Applause Entertainment, is a trailblazer in Indian media known for pioneering bold content strategies. From his start at Goldwire Communications to leading Applause—a flagship Aditya Birla Group venture—Sameer Nair's vision has produced acclaimed series like *Scam 1992*, *Criminal Justice*, *Black Warrant* and *The Hunt*. Under his leadership, Applause has become a top content studio, collaborating with platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, SonyLIV, and Jio Hotstar, and is recognized for its unique “hub and spoke” production model.

Now, Applause marks a milestone as its international project *Gandhi*—directed by Hansal Mehta and starring Pratik Gandhi—becomes the first Indian series selected for the Toronto International Film Festival's (TIFF) Primetime Programme. Adapted from Ramachandra Guha's biographies, the

series explores Gandhi's formative years, redefining the icon as a young man facing change and challenge.

In this conversation with **Natarajan Vidyasagar**, Managing Editor of Pickle, Sameer Nair discusses the vision behind *Gandhi*, the global rise of Indian storytelling, and Applause's approach to shaping the future of entertainment.

The Gandhi series marks a historic milestone—being the first Indian series selected for TIFF Primetime. How did this journey begin?

The Gandhi series has been a long-cherished project for me. My initial inspiration came from memories of my father's involvement via NFDC in the Attenborough film on Gandhi in 1982. In 2019, I approached Ramachandra

Guha, whose biographical works on Gandhi are definitive and celebrated. At first, he declined, but the pandemic changed perspectives. By late 2020, he was more receptive to the idea, and by mid-2021, we secured the rights to his books.

It came together organically. Pratik Gandhi joined early, having already performed on stage “Mohan No Masalo,” a powerful monologue about Gandhi. Hansal Mehta, with whom we had collaborated on the Scam franchise before, immediately expressed his interest when we announced the project. It was Hansal’s suggestion to take the series to TIFF and it’s paid off—it is a tremendous honour to showcase our series at TIFF and a validation that nuanced Indian stories have global resonance.

Applause Entertainment’s Gandhi Series differs from conventional portrayals. What was your approach to humanizing this iconic figure?

This series isn’t about the “Father of the Nation” as we know him, but rather about a young Mohandas discovering himself. Season One, titled ‘Mohan,’ tracks his journey from ages 18 to 46, ending with his return to India. It’s essentially a young adult drama—migration, identity, friendships, transformation—universal themes that echo with today’s youth. Gandhi’s messages of self-belief, self-respect, discipline, and patience are timeless and deeply relevant.

Working on the writing closely with Hansal, Vaibhav, Karan, Priya, Deepak, Ankur, Felix, Ram Guha and Siddharth Basu, we explored Gandhi’s human side—his family

GANDHI: THE SPIRIT OF EVOLUTION

The Gandhi series doesn’t just retell the myth—it seeks the man behind the Mahatma. Gandhi’s journey from uncertainty to greatness, from Mohan to Mahatma, reflects the spirit of evolution and self-discovery. His ethos of self-belief, resilience, and principled action—rooted in truth and humility—resonates through Sameer Nair’s vision for Indian storytelling. As India’s creative industry scales new heights, Gandhi’s legacy reminds us that greatness begins with questioning, evolving, and believing in the power of one’s journey.

life, relationship with Kasturba, insecurities, ambitions, and flaws. No one is born great. Gandhi’s story is full of ‘what ifs’—what if he’d never gone to London, what if he became the Diwan of Porbandar, what if he became a successful Bombay lawyer? These are the kinds of crossroads that young people everywhere face—leaving home, confronting identity, grappling with failure and growth. Supported by a stellar ensemble cast with Bhamini Oza, Tom Felton, Kabir Bedi, Aditya Rawal, and music by maestro A.R. Rahman, Hansal’s delicate directorial touch and Pratik’s outstanding performance, helped us ‘find our Gandhi’.



A still from Gandhi series

“

**A GOOD
STORY, TOLD
WELL, WILL
ALWAYS
FIND ITS
AUDIENCE—
NO MATTER
THE
PLATFORM**



How do you reflect on the 25-year journey of Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)?

Kaun Banega Crorepati has been an incredible journey. When we created KBC 25 years ago, the landscape was entirely different. The show became a cultural phenomenon, and seeing it continue to thrive to this day is deeply satisfying. KBC is Mr. Amitabh Bachchan all the way—his discipline, passion, and hard work exemplify longevity in this industry. Hosting and anchoring the show 25 years later is an incredible achievement, and all credit goes

THE APPLAUSE ‘HUB AND SPOKE’ MODEL

- Central focus on design and IP
- Collaboration with diverse creative minds
- Organizational and financial support for execution
- Flexibility for innovation and scale

to Sony Pictures Network India for taking the brand forward. Every time I watch KBC, I’m reminded of the first day and amazed that the team continues to do it so well.

How has your creative philosophy evolved over three decades in the industry?

I began as a creative who learned business out of necessity. Early days at Goldwire meant being a one-man army—creating, producing, editing, even managing accounts. This holistic exposure taught me that creativity and commerce, often seen as opposites, can and should coexist.

At Applause, we operate with the ‘4 Ps’: Patron (Aditya Birla Group’s strong backing), Passion (unwavering commitment to quality), Purpose (meaningful storytelling), and Profit (sustainable business models). We’re not interested in art for art’s sake or commerce at the cost of substance. Our goal is smart, meaningful, entertaining content that’s also profitable.

Applause operates as a ‘hub and spoke’ model. How does this content alchemy work?

We often compare ourselves to Apple—designed in California, manufactured anywhere. Applause handles creative design, raising capital, and marketing & distribution, but works with a diverse pool of creators for production. We’re alchemists, assembling different talents and ideas—sometimes the talent finds us, sometimes we adapt international formats or books, and sometimes it starts with a writer’s pitch.

This model lets us work with creators as different as Hansal Mehta, Vikram Motwane, Sudhir Mishra and Nagesh Kukunoor—each bringing unique perspectives. It prevents creative stagnation, builds institutional knowledge and adds organizational structure to individual genius. Over eight years, we’ve evolved from a learning start-up to a learning organization that thrives on diversity and collaboration.

Applause completes content/series before going to streamers. Does this make the process less stressful?

Actually, there is more stress in delivering good content with this approach. The risk is much higher because we make decisions on our own regarding casting, scale, and investment. We create and present a finished product that streamers must like. While some may think independence makes things easier, it's actually more stressful than just getting commissioned by a streamer and following their guidelines. But if it were easy, why would we do it? The passion and conviction drive us to take on this challenge. It also makes the buy decision easier for platforms.

What's your approach to balancing creative freedom with commercial viability across diverse projects?

The secret-sauce is a disciplined partnership—clear creative design coupled with robust production. Each project is a true collaboration: we bring capital, production support, and distribution insights, while giving autonomy to the creative teams. Commercial viability is a natural outcome when authenticity leads the process.

Scam 1992, Criminal Justice, Rudra, The Hunt, Gandhi—each required a different approach. Our creative teams enjoy complete freedom within frameworks designed for quality assurance. Everyone benefits, from the talent to the company, ensuring sustainable business and consistent quality.

You've worked across multiple platforms rather than being exclusive to one. What's the strategy?

Every platform has its own audience and positioning. Our content is designed for audiences but often tailored to individual platform strategies and sensibilities—Netflix, Amazon Prime, SonyLIV, Jio Hotstar, and more. This means adapting formats, pacing, tone, and marketing to fit each platform.

Working with diverse partners expands our creative reach and business growth. Our success with format and book adaptations,

IF STREAMERS CREATE A GLOBAL VILLAGE, INDIAN CREATORS MUST MAKE CONTENT FOR THAT VILLAGE

GANDHI'S RELEVANCE TODAY

- Young people leaving home to study and work abroad
- Navigating identity in foreign lands
- Facing racism and adversity
- The need for self-belief, self-respect, discipline, and resilience
- A message for global peace, and need over greed

as well as original IP, is founded on platform-driven audience insights. Flexibility and adaptability are the keys to ensuring content can travel across geographies.

The star system seems different in streaming. How do you view this evolution?

Each medium breeds its own stars. Streaming has given rise to "OTT stars"—actors like Pankaj Tripathi, Manoj Bajpayee, Pratik Gandhi—who are now household names in the digital space. Stardom isn't manufactured; it's market-driven. Attention, love, and commercial success create stars, and the economics of streaming determine their value.

This dynamic is true across all platforms—YouTube, Instagram, even fields like medicine. The entertainment ecosystem always rewards those who attract and sustain audience interest for extended periods of time.

You've been notably progressive in embracing AI. What's your practical approach?

AI, like any tool, is an enabler. The film industry has always used technology—from physical effects to CGI, and now AI. It streamlines processes and improves efficiency, much like Excel revolutionized accounting or Zoom enabled remote work. The key is to ensure AI serves the creative vision, not the other way around.

The human touch—intuition, empathy, narrative insight—remains irreplaceable. AI augments our capabilities, but artistic integrity must prevail.



A still from Gandhi series

YOU CAN'T PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE—CREATE AUTHENTIC CONTENT FIRST, AND THE MARKETS WILL FOLLOW

What is your perspective on the Indian content market and its global potential?

India is a very large market with one and a half billion people, and we are well acquainted with the content business. TV played a crucial role in bringing content to every village in India, and in the last 25 years, satellite television has significantly grown the content business. For Indian storytelling to succeed internationally, we must produce content at global standards—not just in storytelling but also in execution.

With increasing collaboration with global platforms and exposure to international markets, Indian creative talent now has a great opportunity to excel and contribute to

the world. This is a great moment in time, and collaboration among government, private sector, and creative professionals is essential for the rise of the orange economy.

International co-productions have historically struggled in India despite 17 treaties. What's your perspective?

Successful co-productions are rooted in authenticity—content made for a primary audience first and then traveling globally because of its real, rooted quality. The original Gandhi film, for instance, was a co-production with NFDC.

Most fruitful international co-productions are about supporting good cinema—investors who believe in the story, not just chasing blockbusters. For larger commercial films, economics must make sense independently. But for quality cinema, co-productions bring vital support from those invested in ideas and storytelling.

In the past eight years, is there anything you wanted to achieve but couldn't?

There are several things we may have wanted to do but couldn't, such as more co-productions with international studios. The Covid pandemic disrupted many plans when we were in a good space, and then there was a downturn in the US with the writer and actor strikes and a general slowdown.

These events dampened spirits and stalled some initiatives. However, I believe in the idea of a global village. If streamers are making

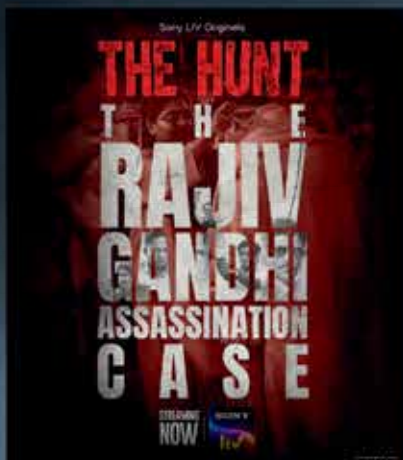
AI IN CONTENT CREATION

- workflow and efficiency
- Serves, not replaces, creative vision
- Complements human intuition and empathy



APPLAUSE ENTERTAINMENT

INDIAN STORIES FOR A GLOBAL STAGE



60 PROJECTS

APPLAUSE ENTERTAINMENT

WHERE TO WATCH



Hasmukh
Call My Agent: Bollywood
Black Warrant
Modern Masters

Emmay Entertainment
Banijay Asia
Andolan Production
Film Companion Studios

Mind The Malhotras
Rasbhari
Mind The Malhotras 2
Sharmajee ki Beti
Zwigato

Born Free Entertainment
Ding Entertainment
Madiba Entertainment
Ellipsis Entertainment
Nandita Das Initiatives



Criminal Justice - S1 - S4
City Of Dreams S1 - S3
Hostages S1 - S2
The Office S1 + S2
Rudra: The Edge of Darkness
Do Aur Do Pyaar

BBC Studios India
Kukunoor Movies
Banijay Asia
BBC Studios India
BBC Studios India
Ellipsis Entertainment

Iru Dhuruvam S1- S2
Your Honor S1 - S2
Undekhi S1 - S3
Avrodh: The Siege Within S1-S2
Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story
Salt City
Tanaav S1- S2
Kafas
Scam 2003: The Telgi Story
36 Days
Zindaginama
The Hunt: The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case
Por Thozhil

Sign of Life Productions
SphereOrigins
Edgestorm Prod
Irada Entertainment
Studio Next
Sunshine Productions
Applause production
Madiba Entertainment
Studio Next
BBC Studios India
Anit Matter
Kukunoor Movies
E4 and Eprius

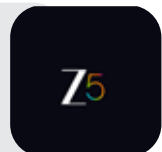


Hello Mini S1 - S3
Madhuri Talkies
Bhaukaal S1- S2
Mannphodganj Ki Binny
Kuruthi Kalam
Vadham
Chakravyuh - An Inspector
Virkar Crime Thriller

Rose Audio Visuals
Elio Motion Pictures
Baweja Movies
DJ's A Creative Unit
Arpad Cine Factory
Tasa Media
Mayavid Online

Kaun Banegi Shikharwati
Mithya S1- S2
Bloody Brothers

Emmay Entertainment
Rose Audio Visuals
BBC Studios India



the world a global village, creators should also approach content creation globally. Hopefully, India and our company, Applause, will continue to work towards that.

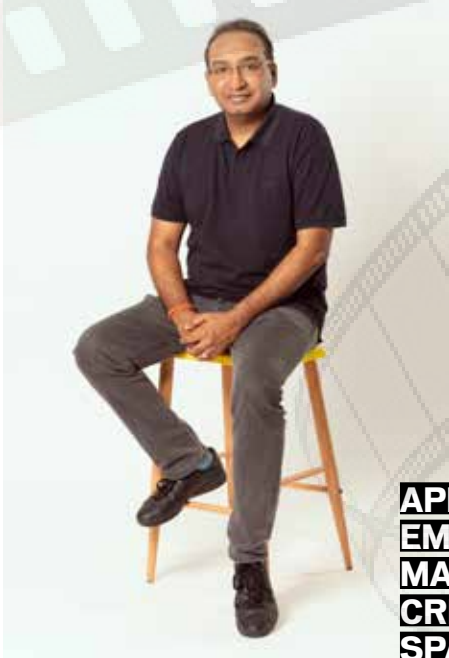
How are you building institutional strength beyond individual leadership?

Building an enduring institution means creating systems that thrive beyond individual leaders. Applause is designed around empowered teams—producers, marketers, directors, creative heads—each given the space to innovate and lead.

We're a learning organization, growing with every project. The Aditya Birla Group provides financial muscle, but it's the people, values, and commitment to quality that sustain us. Our team, including Deepak, Prasoon, Priya, Swati, Siddharth, Rahul & Rahul, Sunil, Pramod, Devnidhi and Maansi, to name a few, have all grown with Applause.

What does India need to realize its creative economy potential?

India's creative economy has immense potential, but it requires infrastructure investment and policy support. The number of cinema screens has dropped from 16,000 to 9,000—streaming alone can't compensate that retail revenue loss. We need more affordable theatre screens. We need better facilities, single-window clearances, and international-standard policies.



GANDHI'S TIMELESS LESSONS FOR CREATORS

- Embrace change and growth
- Find strength in humility
- Pursue truth and authenticity
- Let the journey shape the leader

Streaming platforms are a boon, but global acceptance requires international-quality production. With the right exposure and cross-pollination, Indian talent can excel worldwide.

Looking ahead, what excites you most about Applause's future?

We're expanding in scale—moving into movies with the same variety and quality as our series. Animation, unscripted content, and new genres are all on the horizon. The upcoming Tamil film "Bison" by Mari Selvaraj is a great example of our ambitions.

I believe in creating content for a global village. Streamers are building this global village, and Indian creators have a tremendous opportunity to contribute lasting, meaningful stories.

How do you view the current era compared to previous decades?

I prefer the present because it's where we are and where our opportunities lie. Nostalgia has its place, but the present is filled with unprecedented opportunities for Indian storytelling to shape global narratives.

We are at an inflection point—Indian content can become truly global while staying rooted. Achieving that balance, combining global sophistication with the Indian soul, will define our success in the next decade.

APPLAUSE IS DESIGNED AROUND EMPOWERED TEAMS—PRODUCERS, MARKETERS, DIRECTORS, CREATIVE HEADS—EACH GIVEN THE SPACE TO INNOVATE AND LEAD

MAKING HISTORY

Gandhi, jointly created by Hansal Mehta and Applause Entertainment's Sameer Nair, is the first Indian series to premiere in TIFF's Primetime section. The show is a purely "swadeshi product," the director tells Saibal Chatterjee

With *Gandhi* making history as the first Indian series to premiere in the Primetime section at TIFF, acclaimed filmmaker Hansal Mehta sits down with us to discuss the making of this ambitious, all-Indian production. In this exclusive interview, Mehta opens up about collaborating with historian Ramachandra Guha, the challenges of reimagining the Mahatma's early years, and the pride of bringing a truly swadeshi story to the global stage.

How actively was Ramachandra Guha involved in the writing process of the series?

He has been there constantly to guide us. We sent him scripts. He loved some of the dramatization. But if he felt we'd taken any dramatic license, Mr. Guha has been quick to suggest corrections to maintain authenticity. He has been a very fine collaborator. Between him and Siddharth Basu, it worked very well for us. The series has been adapted from two of

This is such an important story to tell because it is a journey of self-discovery more than anything



Hansal Mehta, Director

Mr. Guha's books (Gandhi Before India and Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World). Siddharth Basu read the scripts to check for inaccuracies. He did very detailed fact-checking. We also worked with a company called Past Perfect. They are professional archivists. They assisted us with newspaper references, headlines, and specifications regarding props such as cars and other items. The three of them have contributed hugely to the detailing of the show.

Will the story of Gandhi encompass his life from birth to death, or will it solely concentrate on his early years and his contribution to the freedom struggle?

We are looking at three seasons of the series. The first season has eight episodes. Our first season covers Mohan's formative years. It follows his experiences as a young father in India, as a man in search of himself studying law in London and then his dramatic, transformative

Gandhi is, in the true sense, a swadeshi product. That makes us really proud, and we are excited to present it to the world

years in South Africa. It is a deep dive in to a fascinating internal and external journey of self-discovery. This is the story of a young man called Mohan who would much later acquire the status of a Mahatma. It is essentially a very universal story of every young man in search of identity and purpose. This is such an important story to tell because it is a journey of self-discovery more than anything. It chronicles in depth and detail Gandhi's life and a chapter of history that is largely unknown.

Did you always have Pratik Gandhi in mind for the titular role?

Before I was signed, Pratik Gandhi was signed. When Sameer (Nair) got the rights to Ramchandra Guha's books, Pratik was performing this solo play about Mahatma Gandhi's early life (Mohan No Masalo, in Hindi, English,

and Gujarati). Applause signed Pratik first. When the announcement came, I called Sameer and asked why I am not part of this. Sameer said he did not know that I had the time. I told him I'll drop everything and do this. Since I've taken this up, I have done absolutely nothing else. This project has consumed my entire life.

You have moved from stories of crime (scam and scoop) to something that is of historical significance, something sensitive because of the pressure to get everything right. In a scam or a scoop, there is scope for taking a few liberties. But there is none here. Was putting a show of this nature together a challenge in that respect?

It is painstaking. It is a lot of work. But it was a joy to see this world come alive, to see how we have managed to create a vision of the 19th century. I would say that you would never have



A still from Gandhi series

seen something this grand or cinematic coming from India, made by an all-Indian crew, from cinematography to editing to VFX. If you look at *A Suitable Boy* or *Delhi Crime* or *Poacher*, shows that have travelled internationally, all of them have been made by foreign crews. Gandhi is, in the true sense, a swadeshi product. That makes us really proud, and we are excited to present it to the world.

Apart from the epic cinematic vision that I try to achieve, whether it is *Scam* or *Scoop* or *Shahid* or *Aligarh*, my focus has always been on the human story. I make sure that focus never goes away. I am simply moving from one personality to another. My world has expanded into this, a canvas that is much bigger (than anything else I have attempted before). At its heart, Gandhi is a story of a human journey. You will forget that you are looking at Mahatma Gandhi as the series unfolds.

You would definitely have had Richard Attenborough's Gandhi and Shayam Benegal's The Making of the Mahatma in mind. But how did you ensure that they did not impinge upon your vision?

As you gather experience and evolve as a filmmaker, you learn to discern between what you admire and what you make. While both of them were special pieces of work in their own way, my Gandhi is

WE HAVE MANAGED TO CREATE A VISION OF THE 19TH CENTURY LIKE NEVER BEFORE—PURELY BY AN INDIAN CREW

in no way influenced by or carries any baggage of those two productions or, for that matter, of the Darshan Jariwala-Akshaye Khanna film, *Gandhi, My Father*. In each of them, the lens is very narrow. In Attenborough's film, the focus is on Gandhi as a saint. It is reverential. Benegal portrayed Gandhi in a way that humanized him, using his own understated and almost observational style. I have my own way of approaching human emotions. The world that Gandhi comes from is very, very close. In essence, it is a Gujarati family that the series deals with.

Who is your Kasturba?

It is Bhamini Oza, who happens to be Pratik Gandhi's wife in real life.

How did you go about casting the British actors?

We had two casting directors. Mukesh Chhabra did the casting of all the Indian talent. And we

had Shakyra Dowling in the UK. She did all the foreign casting, including that for the South African roles. It was a very long process. We auditioned extensively. What we have pulled off is a very, very interesting international cast. I don't think we have ever seen international actors like these in an Indian production. Even if you look at my writers' room, we had London-based Felix von Stumm. We specifically got him to write the parts for the British actors to make sure that the language, the grammar, and the conversations would be authentic. When we write for foreign actors, the language ends up sounding artificial. I think we have done away with that in Gandhi.

This is your third time at TIFF. You have been there before with Shahid and Omerta. But Gandhi is India's first-ever Primetime entry.

Yes, the third time is actually the most special. But *Shahid* was very special, too.

A NEW PUSH FOR INDIAN CINEMA

How Cameron Bailey and the Toronto International Film Festival helped redefine Indian cinema's global journey

By Saibal Chatterjee

It was in 2005 that Cameron Bailey first travelled to India to handpick titles for the Toronto International Film Festival.

What did the programmer return with? He had in his bag Shonali Bose's *Amu* for Contemporary World Cinema, Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam's *Dreaming Lhasa* for Discovery, Ashim Ahluwalia's *John & Jane* for Real to Reel, and Buddhadeb Dasgupta's *Kaalpurush* for Masters. That was the year that TIFF opened with a gala screening of the third film of Deepa Mehta's

Elements trilogy, *Water*. In the 20 years since then, both the festival and Indian independent cinema, which the TIFF CEO has consistently and vigorously championed, have grown, and the country's presence in North America's premier film festival has been steady and rewarding. The likes of Noah Cowan and Steve Gravestock, now no longer with TIFF, were instrumental in bringing Indian films to TIFF in the earlier decades of the festival, but Bailey's aggressive pursuit of films from the subcontinent significantly



Cameron Bailey, CEO, Toronto International Film Festival



FROM PROGRAMMING DEEPA MEHTA'S WATER TO THE LATEST INDIE SUCCESSES LIKE HOMEBOUND, TIFF'S EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA HAS BRIDGED THE GAP BETWEEN MAINSTREAM ENTERTAINMENT AND BOLD, NEW STORYTELLING, OFFERING A RICHER, MORE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVE ON INDIAN FILM

widened and altered the terms of engagement. In the first few years of the millennium, TIFF programmed films by Mani Ratnam, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and Buddhadeb Dasgupta. Post-2005, newer names from India's independent cinema space began to appear on the radar with regularity. In 2012, Bailey, who has been the CEO of TIFF since November 2021, received the title of

artistic director for the festival. That year TIFF showcased a package of ten Mumbai films for its 'City to City' segment, which assembled, among others, directors like Anurag Kashyap, Dibakar Banerjee, Hansal Mehta, and Anand Gandhi. His and his festival's relationship with Indian cinema that began earlier in the new millennium was well and truly cemented. The London-born,

Barbadian-origin Canadian film critic-turned-festival programmer was, until the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the world's plans, an annual visitor to Mumbai, where he would preview films from across the country. Bailey chose Indian films such as Kashyap's *Mukkabaaz*, Hansal Mehta's *Shahid*, and Nandita Das' *Firaaq* before they gained recognition



in their respective countries of production. As a programmer, he also celebrated the cinema of post-Ray generation Indian masters like Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Buddhadeb Dasgupta. Bailey did not, however, shy away from programming mainstream Bollywood movies. Star-studded Hindi films like *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna*, *Singh is Kinng*, and *Dil Bole Hadippa* have figured in the TIFF line-up as a result. In recent years, the likes of Anurag Kashyap have blurred the line between social commentary and visceral entertainment, allowing the TIFF CEO the luxury of not relying on Bollywood kitsch. Nothing probably proves that more emphatically than the inclusion this year of Neeraj Ghaywan's *Homebound*, produced by one of the Mumbai movie industry's top banners, Dharma Productions.

Homebound, about two young men whose friendship is severely tested by the social fault lines of Indian society, is part of TIFF's Gala Presentations lineup, once a preserve of conventional Bollywood potboilers targeted principally at Toronto's Indian immigrant community. By gradually breaking down the gap between popular Bollywood films and socially relevant movies (like Kiran Rao's *Laapata Ladies* in 2023 and Reema Kagti's *Superboys of Malegaon* in 2024), Bailey and his programming team have made a significant change that has given Indian cinema a more global and independent identity. TIFF has for many years been the place to be for anybody who wants to sample the diversity of Indian films—from Sthal and Boong to *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota* and *Thank You for Coming*.

tiff 50

INDIA on the MOVE





Around the time that Bill Marshall, Dusty Cohl and Henk Van der Kolk founded that the **Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)**, then known as a “Festival of Festivals”, dramatic changes were sweeping through the Indian movie industry. In 1975, the era of multi-starrers, inaugurated a decade ago by *Waqt*, took firm roots in the Hindi movie industry with *Sholay* achieving unprecedented commercial success and Amitabh Bachchan cementing his status as a superstar with *Deewar*. Down South, Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth, who would impact the next five decades of Tamil cinema in no uncertain terms, debuted in the mid-1970s. In Bengal, Satyajit Ray made *Jana Aranya* (*The Middleman*), the last film of his Calcutta trilogy, in 1975 before directing his first Hindi-language film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (*The Chess Players*, 1977), which was to become TIFF’s first-ever Indian entry. While TIFF has evolved in striking ways the past five decades – the festival dropped its original moniker and officially became TIFF in 1994, the year it hosted a large “India Now!” retrospective, Indian cinema, too, has made its way, for better or for worse, into its modern era. Films from the world’s largest movie industry (in terms of the number of yearly productions) continues to figure prominently in North America’s premier festival, representing a parallel growth path of great significance. **By Saibal Chatterjee**



INDIA'S TOP SIX



The first two editions of TIFF – in 1976 and 1977 – had no official Indian entry, but the festival's inaugural year saw Deepa Mehta, then 26, checking in with the short documentary film, *At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch*. Before its TIFF screening, the film was adjudged “the best documentary under 30 minutes” at the Canadian Film Awards in 1975. It was about a music teacher who, aged a year shy of 100, lived independently in her own home. Louise Tandy Murch was the mother of painter Walter Tandy Murch and the grandmother of Academy Award-winning film editor Walter Scott Murch, who was the first-ever technician in history to receive a “sound designer” mention in the credits (for his work in *Francis Ford Coppola's epochal Apocalypse Now*). Amritsar-born, Toronto-based Mehta returned to TIFF 15 years later with her first fiction feature *Sam & Me*, which revolved around a young Indian boy and his relationship with an elderly Jewish gentleman in a Toronto neighbourhood. Mehta has been in the TIFF program nine more times, with *I Am Sirat*, an Indian-Canadian documentary profile of transgender Delhi woman Sirat Taneja, being the last of her many entries. In an unmatched distinction, all three films of her acclaimed Elements trilogy – **Fire**, **Earth** and **Water** – have played TIFF.

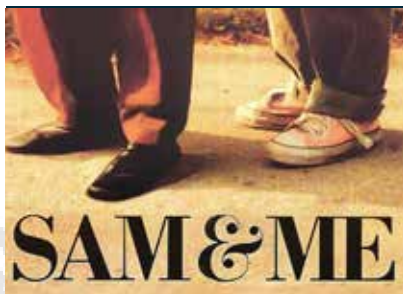
At 99: **A Portrait of Louis Tandy Murch** (1976); **Sam & Me** (1991); **Fire** (1996); **Earth** (1998); **The Republic of Love** (2003); **Water** (2005); **Heaven on Earth** (2008); **Midnight's Children** (2012); **Beeba Boys** (2015); **Anatomy of Violence** (2018); **I Am Sirat** (2023)

Deepa Mehta co-wrote another TIFF title, **Cooking With Stella** (2009), written and directed by her photojournalist-brother Dilip Mehta

Cooking With Stella



SAM & ME



Heaven on Earth



Beeba Boys



Fire



Earth



INDIA'S TOP SIX



Indian-American director Mira Nair started her TIFF run, like Mehta, aged 26 with the 52-minute documentary *So Far from India* (1983). The film is about a young Indian newspaper dealer in the subways of New York who returns home to Ahmedabad to reunite with his wife and is confronted with a conflict between his traditional upbringing and his new life. Nair has made it to TIFF on seven more occasions since. Her last appearance was in 2020 with the British television miniseries *A Suitable Boy*, featuring Tabu, Ishaan Khatter, Tanya Maniktala and Shahana Goswami. A TIFF Tribute Award was also bestowed on Nair that year.

So far from India

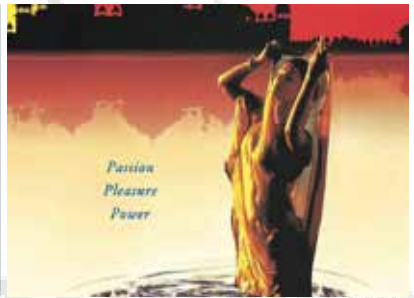


Queen of Katwe



So far from India (1983); ***Salaam Bombay!*** (1988); ***Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love*** (1996); ***Monsoon Wedding*** (2001); ***The Namesake*** (2006); ***The Reluctant Fundamentalist*** (2012); ***Queen of Katwe*** (2016); ***A Suitable Boy*** (2020)

Kama Sutra A Tale of Love

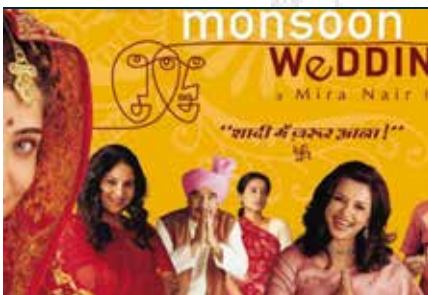


TIFF FRAMED MIRA NAIR AS A TRANSFORMATIVE STORYTELLER, HONORED WITH THE JEFF SKOLL AWARD FOR IMPACT MEDIA, CELEBRATING HER FILMS' CULTURAL RESONANCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The Namesake



Monsoon Wedding



The Reluctant Fundamentalist



BUDDHADEB DASGUPTA
8 FILMS



Charachar



Janala



Mondo Meyer Upakhyan



Uttara



Swapner Din



The Kolkata-based Bengali auteur known for an uncompromising cinematic vision, harmonised poetry, moving image and socio-political commentary in his inimitable works. He figured in TIFF's now-defunct Masters segment more often than any other Indian director.

Charachar (The Shelter of Wings, 1994); **Uttara** (The Wrestlers, 2000); **Mondo Meyer Upakhyan** (A Tale of a Naughty Girl, 2002); Swapner Din (Chased by Dreams, 2004); **Kaalpurush** (Memories in the Mist, 2005); **Ami, Yasin Ar Amar Madhubala** (The Voyeurs, 2007); **Janala** (Window, 2009); **Tope** (The Bait, 2016)

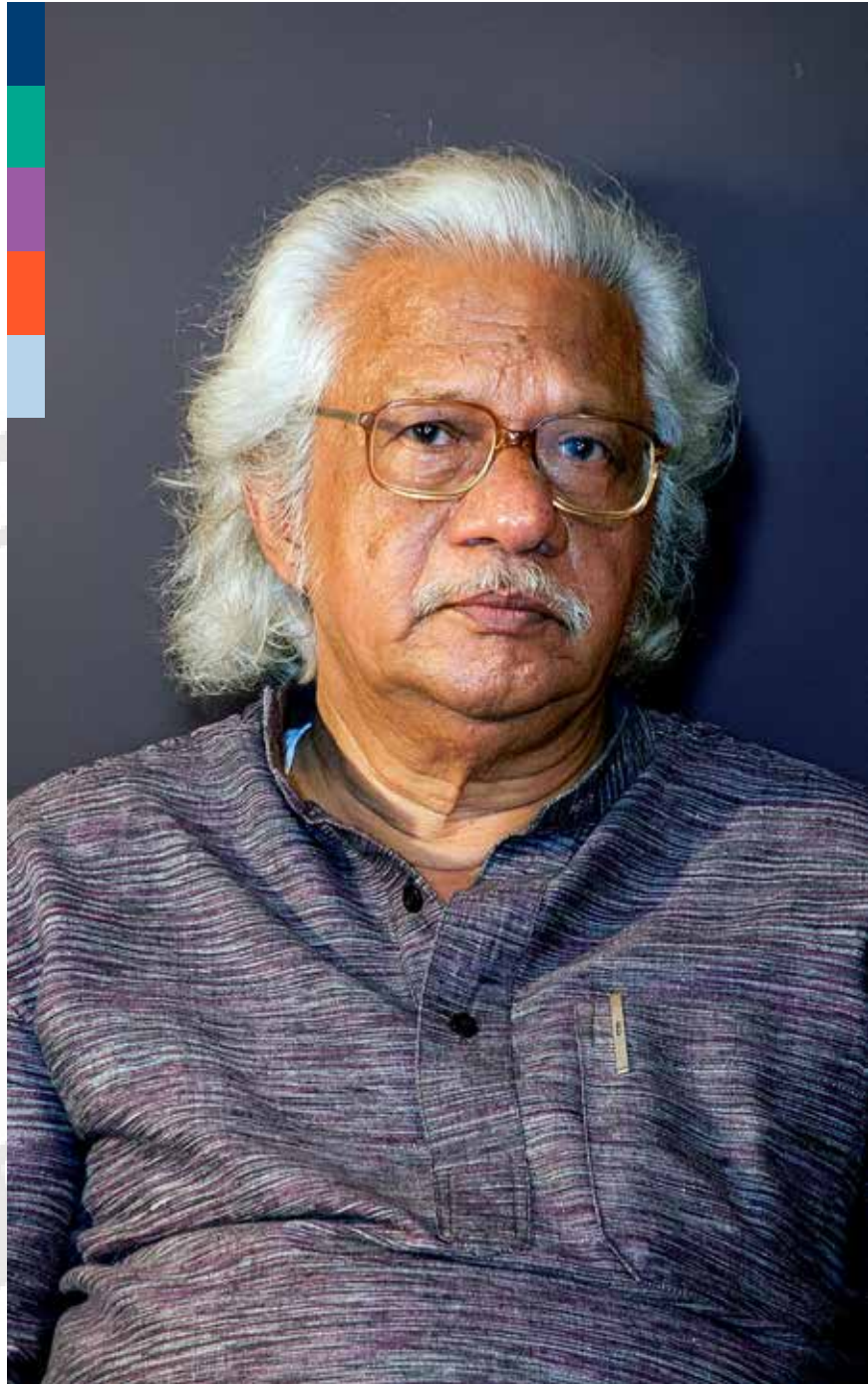
**BUDDHADEB DASGUPTA
INFLUENCED TIFF WITH
POETIC, SOCIALLY
CONSCIOUS BENGALI
FILMS, BLENDING
VISUAL ARTISTRY AND
STORYTELLING, ENRICHING
INDIAN CINEMA'S
GLOBAL PRESENCE AND
RETROSPECTIVES**

Tope



ADDOOR GOPALKRISHNAN
6 FILMS

INDIA'S TOP SIX



Kalamandalam Gopi



One of the leading lights of the post-Ray generation of Indian filmmakers, the Malayali maestro made half a dozen trips to TIFF with works that represent the high points of contemporary cinema from Kerala. The public shows of his films in Toronto have always played to full houses.

Naalu Pennungal



Mathilukal (The Walls, 1990); **Vidheyan** (The Servile, 1994); **Kalamandalam Gopi** (2000); **Nizhalkkuthu** (Shadow Kill, 2002); **Naalu Pennungal** (Four Women, 2007); **Pinneyum** (Once Again, 2016)

Mathilukal



ADOOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN'S FILMS BROUGHT AUTHENTIC MALAYALAM STORIES, SOCIAL REALISM, AND CULTURAL DEPTH TO TIFF, ENRICHING ITS SHOWCASE OF GLOBAL INDIAN CINEMA

Nizhalkkuthu



Vidheyan



Pinneyum



ANURAG KASHYAP
6 FILMS

INDIA'S TOP SIX



Bandar



Michael



Manmarziyan



Anurag Kashyap's latest TIFF entry, **Bandar** (Monkey in a Cage, 2025), starring Bobby Deol and Sanya Malhotra, is his sixth. Among his films that have been selected by TIFF are the two parts of *Gangs of Wasseypur*. Kashyap was associated as producer/presenter of two other TIFF selections from India – **Michael** (2011), directed by Ribhu Dasgupta with Naseeruddin Shah in the titular roles, and sound designer-turned-filmmaker Nithin Lukose's Malayalam-language **PAKA – River of Blood** (2021).

That Girl in Yellow Boots (2010); **Gangs of Wasseypur Part 1** (2012); **Gangs of Wasseypur Part 2** (2012); **Mukkabaaz** (2017); **Manmarziyan** (2018); **Bandar** (Monkey in a Cage, 2025)

ANURAG KASHYAP'S FILMS AT TIFF ARE KNOWN FOR BOLD STORYTELLING, GRITTY REALISM, AND DYNAMIC NARRATIVES, SIGNIFICANTLY ELEVATING INDIAN INDEPENDENT CINEMA'S GLOBAL PRESENCE

Mukkabaaz



That Girl in Yellow Boots

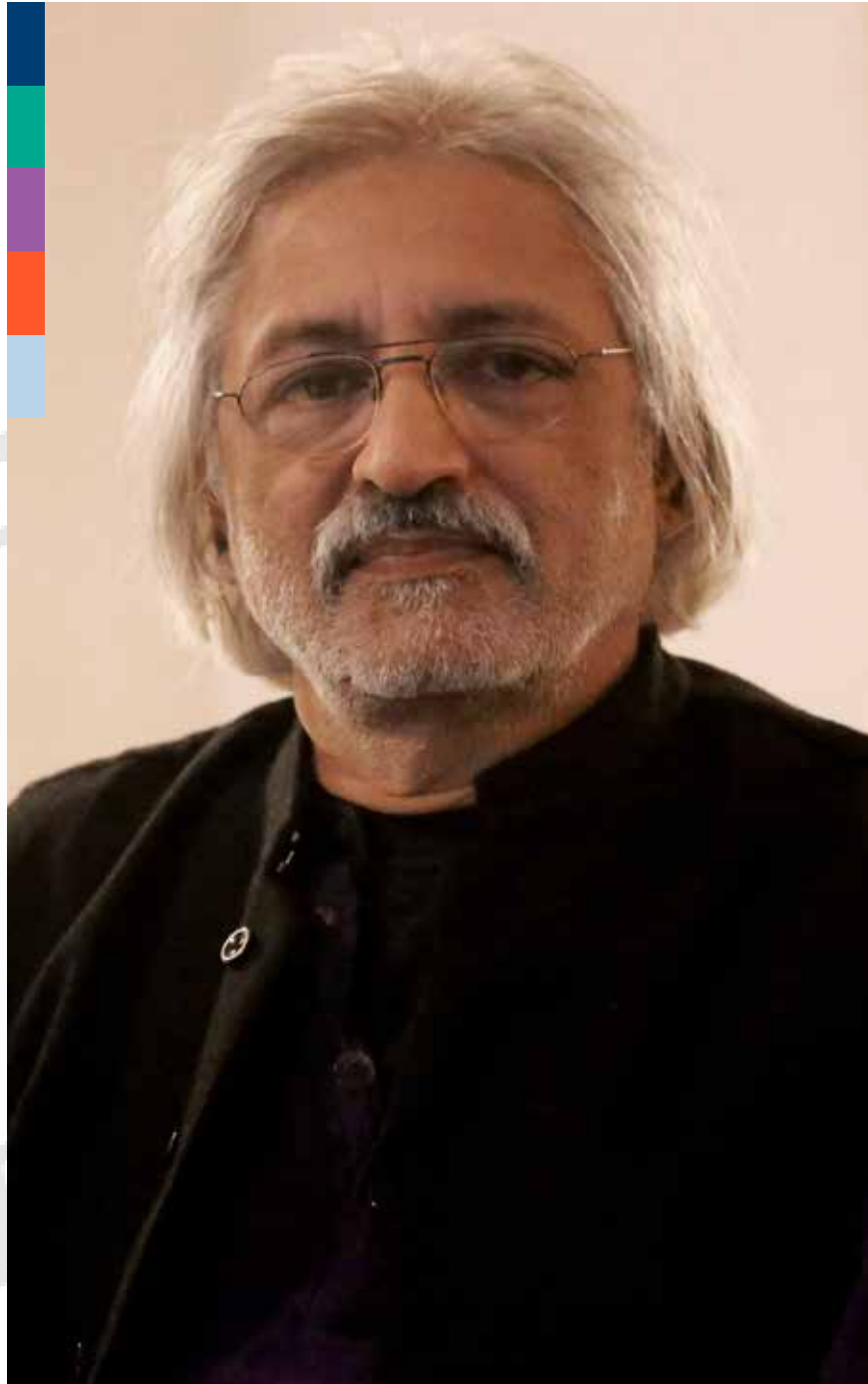


PAKA – River of Blood



ANAND PATWARDHAN
5 FILMS

INDIA'S TOP SIX



The celebrated documentary filmmaker's TIFF outings, every one of them with a watershed film, straddle almost the entire span of the festival's 50 years. Five films by Anand Patwardhan, doyen of the Indian independent documentary movement, have played at TIFF, from the 40-minute film *A Time to Rise* in 1981 to the 96-minute *The World is Family* in 2023. *A Time to Rise*, which was screened at the sixth edition of TIFF, documented the conditions of Chinese and Indian immigrant workers in British Columbia that led to the formation of the Canadian Farmworkers Union. Patwardhan has had at least one film in the TIFF programme in almost every decade since then. He travelled to TIFF in 2018 with *Vivek* (Reason), a 218-minute documentary that scrutinises the dismantling of democracy in one of the world's most populous nations.

A Time to Rise (1981); ***Raam Ke Naam*** (1992); ***Father, Son and Holy War*** (1994); ***Vivek*** (Reason, 2018); ***The World is Family*** (2023)

ANAND PATWARDHAN'S DOCUMENTARIES AT TIFF EXPOSE SOCIAL INJUSTICE, COMMUNALISM, GENDER ISSUES, AMPLIFYING MARGINALIZED VOICES, INSPIRING ACTIVISM AND GLOBAL AWARENESS



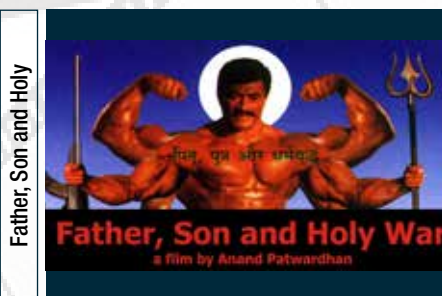
Vivek



Raam Ke Naam



The World is Family



Father, Son and Holy War



A Time to Rise

OTHER TIFF REGULARS

Numerous Indian filmmakers have had multiple films in the TIFF selection



Kannathil Mutham Ittal



Bandit Queen



Asoka

Mani Ratnam (4 films): A master craftsman and storyteller who put Tamil films on the world map

Thiruda Thiruda (1994); **Bombay** (1995); **Iruvar** (1997); **Kannathil Muthamittal** (2002)

Shekhar Kapur (4 films): The globally feted Indian filmmaker began his TIFF journey in the mid-1990s with the hard-hitting *Bandit Queen* and followed it up with three international productions.

Bandit Queen (1994, as part of a section named 'India Now'); **Elizabeth** (1998); **The Four Feathers** (2002); **What's Love Got to Do With It?** (2022)

Santosh Sivan (4 films): The celebrated Indian cinematographer, too, has had a quartet of appearances at TIFF.

The Terrorist (Tamil, 1998); **Malli** (Tamil, 1999); **Asoka** (Hindi, 2001); **Before the Rains** (English/Malayalam, 2007)

Dev Benegal (3 films): Among a crop of Indian filmmakers who burst on the scene in the mid-1990s, Dev Benegal found ready takers in TIFF

English, August (1994); **Split Wide Open** (1999); **Road, Movie** (2009)

TIFF HAS OVER THE YEARS CELEBRATED WORKS OF ALL HUES FROM INDIA'S DIVERSE MOVIE-MAKING TRADITIONS



Angry Indian Goddesses

Pan Nalin (3 films): The Indian director who has lived and worked in different parts of the world is a three-time TIFF participant

Samsara (2001); **Faith Connections** (2013); **Angry Indian Goddesses** (2015)



Shahid

Hansal Mehta (3 films): First City to City, then Special Presentations and now Primetime, the veteran Mumbai filmmaker, no stranger to TIFF, has been on the move

Shahid (2012); **Omerta** (2017); **Gandhi** (2025) (co-created with Sameer Nair) – the first Indian series in Primetime, section launched ten years ago



Peddlers

Richie Mehta (3 films): The Mississauga-born Canadian director of Indian descent cut his teeth at his home festival with three films shot in India

Amal (2007 – Canada First!); **Siddharth** (2013); **India in a Day** (2016, Next Waves – Documentaries)



Bombay

Vasan Bala (2 films): His debut film reached TIFF via Cannes Critics Week before Vasan Bala became the first-ever Indian director to break into Midnight Madness

Peddlers (2012); **Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota** (The Man Who Feels No Pain, 2018)



What Loves Got To Do With It

TWO BUMPER YEARS 1994 & 2012

Thevar Magan



Ilayum Mullum



Dharavi



TIFF 1994 and **TIFF 2012** showcased India and Mumbai respectively with large selection of films. In 1994, at the festival's 19th edition, programmers Noah Cowan and David Overby curated a 22-film package under the rubric "India Now!". It consisted of 14 narrative features and eight documentaries ranging from Anand Patwardhan's two-hour-long *Father, Son and Holy War* to the six-minute *Tragedy of an Indian Farmer*, made by Murali Nair.

The films that constituted the “India Now!” selection in 1994 were: Shekhar Kapur’s **Bandit Queen** (opening night), Goutam Ghose’s **Patang**, Bharathan’s **Thevar Magan** (Tamil, written and produced by and starring Kamal Haasan), Dev Benegal’s **English, August**, Nabyendu Chatterjee’s **Shilpi** (The Dreamer, Bengali), Adoor Gopalakrishnan’s **Vidheyam** (The Servile, Malayalam), K.P. Sasi’s **Ilayum Mullum** (Leaves and Thorns, Malayalam), Dilip Ghosh’s **Aadhi Haqeeqat Aadha Fasana** (Children of the Silver Screen), Jill Mischitta’s **The Clap Trap** (about Hindi cinema junior artistes), **Father, Son and Holy War**, Buddhadeb Dasgupta’s **Charachar, Tragedy of an Indian Farmer**, Reena Mohan’s **Kamlabai**, Bikramjit “Blondie” Singh’s **Bollywood** (based on Shashi Tharoor’s ‘Show Business’), Riyad Vinci Wadia’s **Fearless: The Hunterwali Story**, Ruchir Joshi’s **Tales from Planet Kolkata**, Pankaj Butalia’s **When Hamlet Went to Mizoram**, Raja Mitra’s **Ekti Jiban** (Portrait of a Life, starring Satyajit Ray collaborators Soumitra Chatterjee and Madhabi Chakrabarty), Sudhir Mishra’s **Dharavi**, M.T. Vasudevan Nair’s **Kadavu** (The Ferry, Malayalam), G. Aravindan’s **Marattam** (Masquerade, Malayalam) and Abbas-Mustan’s **Baazigar** (starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol).

These films apart, the TIFF 1994 lineup had Mani Ratnam’s **Thiruda Thiruda**, Ismail Merchant’s directorial debut **In Custody** and Indian-born Canadian documentarian Ali Kazimi’s **Narmada: A Valley Rises**.

In 2012, the year in which the current CEO of TIFF, Cameron Bailey, was appointed the festival’s artistic director, Mumbai was under the spotlight in the short-lived City to City programme. The segment was made up of ten narrative features:

The City to City: Mumbai films were: Habib Faisal’s **Ishaqzaade**, Mohit Takalkar’s **The Bright Day**, Anurag Kashyap’s **Gangs of Wasseypur Part 1 & Part 2** (picked from Cannes Directors Fortnight), Ashim Ahluwalia’s **Miss Lovely** (from Cannes Un certain regard section), Manjeet Singh’s **Mumbai Cha Raja**, Vasan Bala’s **Peddlers** (from Cannes Critics Week), Hansal Mehta’s **Shahid**, Dibakar Banerjee’s **Shanghai** and Anand Gandhi’s **Ship of Theseus**.

Marattam



Baazigar



Thiruda Thiruda



In Custody



Mumbai Cha Raja



A DISTINCT STRAND

Stalwarts and pathbreakers whose unique cinematic sensibilities resonated at TIFF and represented the diversity and depth of non-mainstream Indian cinema

Charulata



Satyajit Ray (4 films): **Shatranj Ke Khilari** (1978), the first-ever Indian film at TIFF; **Kanchenjunga** (1987), screened as part of section called “Buried Treasures”; **Charulata** (1998), part of Dialogues: Talking with Pictures; **Aranyer Din Ratri** (TIFF Classics 2025)

Lunchbox



Mrinal Sen (3 films): **Akaler Sandhane** (1981); Cannes Jury Prize winner **Kharij** (1983); **Khandhar** (1984)

Murali Nair (3 films): **Tragedy of an Indian Farmer** (short film); Cannes Camera d’Or winner **Marana Simhasanam** (Throne of Death, Malayalam, 1999); **Pat-tiyude Divasam** (A Dog’s Day, Malayalam, 2001)

QISSA



Aribam Syam Sharma (2 films): **Imagi Ningthem** (My Son, My Precious, Manipuri, 1983); **Ishanou** (The Chosen One, Manipuri, 1991)

Ketan Mehta (2 films): **Mirch Masala** (1987); **Maya Memsaab** (1993)

Rituparno Ghosh (2 films): **Chokher Bali** (Bengali, 2003); **The Last Lear** (English, 2007)

Sudhir Mishra: *Dharavi* (1994)

Pattiyude Divasam



G. Aravindan: *Marattam* (Masquerade, Malayalam, 1994)

K.P. Sasi: *Ilayum Mullum* (Leaves and Thorns, Malayalam, 1994)

Dharavi



M.T. Vasudevan Nair: *Kadavu* (The Ferry, Malayalam, 1994)

Nabyendu Chatterjee: *Shilpi* (The Dreamer, Bengali, 1994)

Raja Mitra: *Ekti Jiban* (Portrait of a Life, Bengali, 1994)

Kurumavataara



Jahnu Barua: *Hkhagoroloi Bohu Door* (It's a Long Way to the Sea, Assamese, 1995)

Amol Palekar: *Daayra* (The Square Circle, 1996)

Kumar Shahani: *Bhavantarana* (1994), documentary on Odissi dance maestro Kelucharan Mohapatra

Mirch Masala



Girish Kasaravalli: *Kurumavataara* (The Tortoise, An Incarnation, Kannada, 2012)

Ritwik Ghatak: *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-Capped Star, Bengali, 2012) – TIFF Cinematheque

Meghe Dhaka Tara



Anup Singh: *Qissa – The Tale of a Lonely Ghost* (Punjabi, 2013)

Ritesh Batra: *The Lunchbox* (2013)

WOMEN TO THE FORE

Barring the dominant Deepa Mehta and Mira Nair, and the exceptions of Reena Mohan (Kamlabai) and Jill Misquitta (The Clap Trap) in 1994, which was a year of plenty for India at TIFF, it wasn't until the mid-noughties that the festival turned its attention to women filmmakers from the subcontinent. In the 20 years since then, it has been a steady stream. Significantly, all the seven Indian short films that have played TIFF thus far have been made by women. Only two animation features from India have travelled to Toronto and both have been directed by women.

These women directors hit the high notes at TIFF and helped emphatically altered the gender balance:

A Death in the Gunj



Reena Mohan: *Kamlabai* (1994), documentary about Kamlabai Gokhale, pioneering actress of Marathi stage and films

Jill Misquitta: *The Clap Trap* (1994)

Shonali Bose: *Amu* (2005); ***Margarita, With a Straw*** (2014); ***The Sky is Pink*** (2019)

The Sky is Pink



Ritu Sarin (with Tenzing Sonam): ***Dreaming Lhasa*** (2005); ***The Sweet Requiem*** (2018)

Chitra Palekar: *Maati Maay* (A Grave Keeper's Tale, 2006), a Marathi film based on Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi's story

Nandita Das: *Firaaq* (2008); *Manto* (2018); *Zwigato* (2022) - every narrative feature made by actor-turned-director Nandita Das has found favour with TIFF selectors



Kiran Rao: *Dhobi Ghat* (2010); *Laapata Ladies* (2023)

Gauri Shinde: *English Vinglish* (2012)

Shilpa Ranade: *Goopy Gawaiya Bagha Bajaiya* (2013 TIFF Kids, animation), one of only two Indian animation ever featured at TIFF



Meghna Gulzar: *Talvar* (2015)

Leena Yadav: *Parched* (2015)

Konkona Sen Sharma: *A Death in the Gunj* (2016)

Bornila Chatterjee: *The Hungry* (2017)

Rima Das: *Village Rockstars* (Assamese, 2017); *Bulbul Can Sing* (Assamese, 2018); *Tora's Husband* (Assamese, 2022), the first Indian film selected for TIFF's competitive Platform section



Pakhi Tyrewala: *Pahuna: The Little Visitors* (2017), produced by Priyanka Chopra

Geetu Mohandas: *Moothon* (Elder Brother, Malayalam, 2019)

Gitanjali Rao: *Bombay Rose* (Animation, 2019)

Payal Kapadia: *A Night of Knowing Nothing* (2021); *All We Imagine as Light* (2024) - both films arrived in Toronto with awards won in Cannes



Lakshmi Priya Devi: *Boong* (Manipuri, 2024)

Reema Kagti: *Superboys of Malegaon* (2024)

Khusboo Ranka (with Vinay Shukla): *An Insignificant Man* (2016)



Shirley Abraham (with Amit Madhesiya): *Cinema Travellers* (2016)

STAR-STUDDED AFFAIRS

Big-banner productions that swept into downtown Toronto with their complement of movers and shakers

Hey Ram



Baazigar (1994) – Director: Abbas-Mustan; Cast: Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Shilpa Shetty

Hey Ram (2000) – Director: Kamal Haasan; Cast: Kamal Haasan, Shah Rukh Khan, Hema Malini, Rani Mukherji

Lagaan



Asoka (2001) – Director: Santosh Sivan; Cast: Shah Rukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Ajith Kumar; Producers: Juhi Chawla, Shah Rukh Khan

Lagaan (2001) – Director: Ashutosh Gowariker; Cast: Aamir Khan; Producer: Aamir Khan

Dil Bole Hadippa



Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna (2006) – Director: Karan Johar; Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukherji, Abhishek Bachchan, Preity Zinta; Banner: Dharma Productions

The Last Lear (2007) – Director: Rituparno Ghosh; Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Preity Zinta, Arjun Rampal

Singh is King (2008) – Director: Anees Bazmee; Cast: Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif

Singh is Kinng



Dil Bole Hadippa (2009) – Director: Anurag Singh; Cast: Rani Mukherji, Shahid Kapoor; Banner: YRF

What's Your Rashee? (2009) – Director: Ashutosh Gowariker; Cast: Priyanka Chopra, Harman Baweja; Producer: Ronnie Screwvala

English Vinglish



Mausam (2011) – Director: Pankaj Kapur; Cast: Shahid Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor

English Vinglish (2012) – Director: Gauri Shinde; Cast: Sridevi, Adil Hussain

Mary Kom



Shuddh Desi Romance (2013) – Director: Maneesh Sharma; Cast: Sushant Singh Rajput, Parineeti Chopra, Vaani Kapoor; Banner: YRF

Mary Kom (2014) – Director: Omung Kumar; Cast: Priyanka Chopra; Producers: Viacom18, Sanjay Leela Bhansali

Shuddh Desi Romance



The Sky is Pink (2019) – Director: Shonali Bose; Cast: Priyanka Chopra, Farhan Akhtar

Thank You for Coming (2023) – Director: Karan Boolani; Cast: Bhumi Pednekar, Shehnaaz Gill

Homebound (2025) – Director: Neeraj Ghaywan; Cast: Ishaan Khatter, Janhvi Kapoor; Banner: Dharma Productions

Homebound



DIFFERENT STROKES

Forest of Bliss



Ganga (TIFF 1985; French title: Eau) – Velu Viswanadhan – 150-minute documentary, second film in the Paris-based painter-sculptor’s pentalogy on the elements of Indian cosmology – sand, water, fire, air and ether

Forest of Bliss (TIFF 1986) – Robert Gardner – 89-minute documentary by the American ethnographic filmmaker about a day in Varanasi. The film unfolds from one dawn to the next.

The Mahabharata



The Mahabharata (TIFF 1989) – Peter Brook. Written by Jean-Claude Carriere, who worked for eight years to develop the epic for the screen

Bollywood (TIFF 1994) – Bikramjit “Blondie” Singh. A no-holds-barred parody of Bollywood potboilers and the creative ecosystem that produced them. Based on Shashi Tharoor’s novel Show Business, the film stars Chunky Pandey as Ashok Banjara as a “serious” film actor who develops the ambition to achieve commercial success and become a movie star.

Cooking With Stella



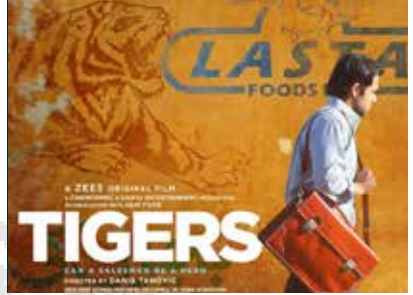
Brick Lane (TIFF 2007) – Sarah Gavron. A film based on Bangladeshi-British writer Monica Ali’s book of the same name. Cast led by Tannishtha Chatterjee and Satish Kaushik.

Monsoon



Cooking With Stella (TIFF 2009) – directed by photojournalist Dilip Mehta. Canadian drama filmed in Delhi. Co-written by the director's sister Deepa Mehta. About a Canadian diplomat (Lisa Ray), her husband (Don McKellar) and their cook Stella (Seema Biswas).

Tigers



Chatrak (Mushrooms, 2011) – directed by Vimukthi Jayasundara. A Bengali film made by a Sri Lankan filmmaker, an alumnus of FTII Pune, with a cast of actors from Kolkata. It premiered in Cannes Directors Fortnight before heading to TIFF.

Chatrak



Monsoon (TIFF 2014) – Sturla Gunnarson (part of Canada's Top Ten – Features programme). A sprawling two-hour documentary that tracks the course of the Indian monsoon.

Tigers (TIFF 2014) – Danis Tanovic. The film by the Oscar-winning Bosnian director stars Emraan Hashmi as a Pakistani medical salesman who rebels against the system when he discovers the harmful effects of the baby formula he sells on behalf of a multinational company. The cast of Tigers has several other Indian actors, including Adil Husain and Geetanjali Thapa.

Ganga



The Fall (TIFF 2006) – Tarsem Singh Dhandwar. The Jalandhar-born director shot the film in 20-odd countries. It celebrates the power of storytelling through a legend of five heroes fighting an evil governor that a hospitalised silent-era stuntman narrates to a Romanian immigrant girl recuperating in the same medical facility. Seventeen years later, Dhandwar's film, Dear Jassi, an India-Canada-US co-production, won TIFF's coveted Platform Prize.

The Fall



THE SLUMDOG STORY



In 2008, Danny Boyle's **Slumdog Millionaire**, a loose adaptation of diplomat-turned-writer Vikas Swarup's Q & A, screened at TIFF after its Telluride world premiere. It was an instant hit, with the audience at the press and industry screening of the film transfixed by the energy and momentum of the film. Not a soul left the hall as the closing song, the Oscar-winning **A.R Rahman**-composed **Jai ho**, played on the screen, a sure sign that there was something in the film that had captured the imagination of the viewer. The film, shot in the slums of Mumbai and revolving around an 18-year-old impoverished but spirited lad played by **Dev Patel** in his screen debut, won the TIFF People's Choice Award, which set it on course for major Oscar triumph.

It won eight Academy Awards, including for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay (for Simon Beaufoy). Slumdog Millionaire, lensed by Anthony Dod Mantle, was the first digitally shot film in history to win the Best Cinematography Oscar. Besides Dev Patel, the cast included **Freida Pinto**, **Anil Kapoor** and **Irrfan Khan**. In the wake of its global success, the film divided audiences, critics and academics, with many critiquing it for peddling "poverty porn" and promoting a problematic "end-justifies-the-means" philosophy.

But that made no dent in the film's popularity. The chord that it struck with audiences probably had something to do with the incredible story that it told – that of an underdog negotiating severe hardships and yet not keeling over in a time in which the real world was struggling with a severe financial meltdown triggered by unbridled corporate greed and the US subprime mortgage crisis.

‘DISCOVERED’ AT TIFF

Breakout Indian talent that TIFF sought out over the years and showcased in its Discovery section – and elsewhere

Kaizad Gustad – *Bombay Boys* (1998)

Cheran – *Porkkalam* (Golden Age, Tamil, 1998)

Pankaj Butalia – *Karvaan* (1999) – Butalia’s documentaries *Moksha* (1993) and *When Hamlet Went to Mizoram* (1994) played TIFF before he made his first, and to date only, narrative feature

Rahul Bose – *Everybody Says I’m Fine* (English, 2001)

Vishal Bhardwaj – *Maqbool* (2003)

Manish Jha – *Mathrubhoomi* (2003)

Bharat Bala – *Hari Om* (Hindi/French/English, 2004)

Rajnish Domalpalli – *Vanaja* (Telugu, 2006)

Shivaji Chandrabhushan – *Frozen* (2007)

Laxmikant Shetgaonkar – *Paltadacho Munis* (Konkani, 2009)

Aamir Bashir – *Harud* (Autumn, 2010)

Sidharth Srinivasan – *Pairon Talle* (2010)

Rima Das – *Village Rockstars* (2017)

Ritwik Pareek – *Dug Dug* (2021)

Nithin Lukose – *Paka: River of Blood* (Malayalam, 2021)

Jayant Digambar Somalkar – *Sthal* (A Match, Marathi, 2023)

Lakshmi Priya Devi – *Boong* (Manipuri, 2024)

Bikas Ranjan Mishra – *Bayaan* (2025)

Jitank Singh Gurjar – *Vimukt* (In Search of the Sky, Braj, 2025), the director’s second feature; Part of the festival’s Centrepiece (previously Contemporary World Cinema)

Maqbool



Vanaja



ROOTED IN REALITY

Many significant Indian documentaries brought tales of real people, places and phenomena to Toronto.

Mostly Sunny



Ali Kazimi: *Narmada: A Valley Rises* (Perspectives Canada, 1994); ***Shooting Indians: A Journey with Jeffery Thomas*** (1997)

Reena Mohan: *Kamlabai* (1994)

Kumar Shahani: *Bhavantarana* (1994)

Ruchir Joshi: *Tales from Planet Kolkata* (1994)

Riyad Vinci Wadia: *Fearless: The Hunterwali Story* (1994)

Adoor Gopalakrishnan: *Kalamandalam Gopi* (2000)

Mira Nair: *So far from India* (1983)

Ashim Ahluwalia: *John & Jane* (2005)

(Miss Lovely (2012), Ahluwalia's fiction feature debut, was part of TIFF's City to City: Mumbai programme)

John & Jane



Pan Nalin: *Faith Connections* (2013)

Khusboo Ranka and Vinay Shukla: *An Insignificant Man* (2016)

Shirley Abraham and Amit Madhesiya: *Cinema Travellers* (2016)

Dilip Mehta: *Mostly Sunny* (2016)

Cinema Travellers



VITAL VOICES

Ismail Merchant – *In Custody* (Hindi/Urdu, 1994)

Priyadarshan – *Kanchivaram* (Tamil, 2008)

Suseenthiran – *Azhagarsamiyin Kud-hirai* (Tamil, 2011)

Dibakar Banerjee – *Shanghai* (2012)

Anand Gandhi – *Ship of Theseus* (2012)

Mohit Takalkar – *The Bright Day* (2012)

Manjeet Singh – *Mumbai Cha Raja* (2012)

M. Manikandan – *Kakaa Muttai* (Tamil, 2014)

Lijo Jose Pellissery – *Jallikattu* (2019)

Chaitanya Tamhane – *The Disciple* (2020)

In Custody



Jallikattu



SHORT AND SOLID

Shambhavi Kaul – 21 Chitrakoot (nine-minute short, TIFF Wavelengths 2012); Mount Song (nine-minute short, TIFF Wavelengths 2013); Night Noon (12-minute experimental short, TIFF Wavelengths 2014)

Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia – I Am Micro (15-minute documentary, 2012 TIFF Wavelengths)

Megha Ramaswamy – Newborns (nine-minute documentary short, TIFF Short Cuts 2014); Bunny (15-minute short, 2015)

Subarna Dash and Vidushi Gupta – This is TMI (7-minute animated documentary, TIFF Short Cuts 2023)

(Interestingly, all the Indian filmmakers whose short films have been to TIFF thus far are women)

tiff 50

AWARD WINNERS



The Man Who
Feels No Pain

Vasan Bala

Indian tales that struck a chord with TIFF audiences and, in one recent breakthrough, with a Platform jury consisting of filmmakers Barry Jenkins, Nadine Labaki and Anthony Shim



Maya, Hindi film directed by Digvijay Singh – First Runner-up, People’s Choice Award, TIFF 2001

Monsoon Wedding (Hindi/English), directed by Mira Nair – Second Runner-up, People’s Choice Award, TIFF 2001

(Monsoon Wedding, winner of the 2001 Venice Golden Lion, was pushed to the third place in the People’s Choice honours list by a surprise favourite of the TIFF public. Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s Amelie won the TIFF People’s Choice Award)

Paltadacho Munis (The Man Beyond the Bridge), Konkani film directed by Laxmikant Shetgaonkar – Discovery FIPRESCI PRIZE, TIFF 2009

Angry Indian Goddesses, directed by Pan Nalin – People’s Choice Award – First Runner-up, TIFF 2015

Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota (The Man Who Feels No Pain), directed by Vasan Bala -Midnight Madness People’s Choice Award, TIFF 2018

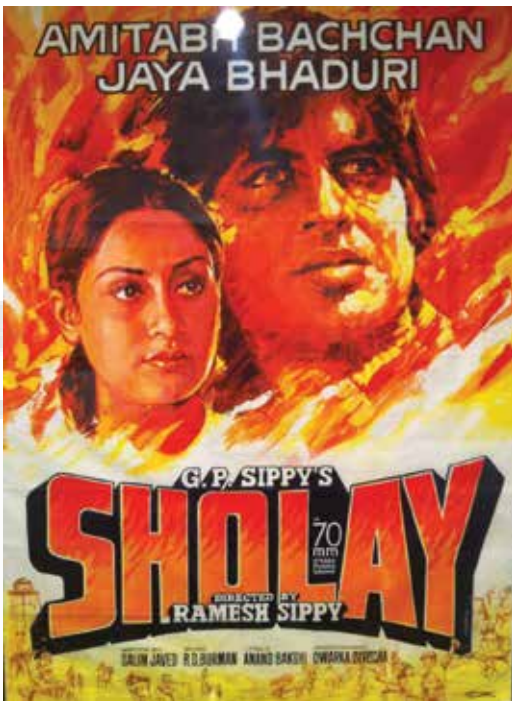
To Kill a Tiger, directed by Indian-born Canadian filmmaker Nisha Pahuja – Award for Best Canadian Feature, TIFF 2022

Dear Jassi, directed by Tarsem Singh – Platform Prize, TIFF 2023

Sthal (A Match), Marathi film directed by Jayant Digambar Somalkar – Discovery Netpac Award, TIFF 2023

Kill, directed by Nikhil Nagesh Bhat – Midnight Madness People’s Choice Award – First Runner-up, TIFF 2023

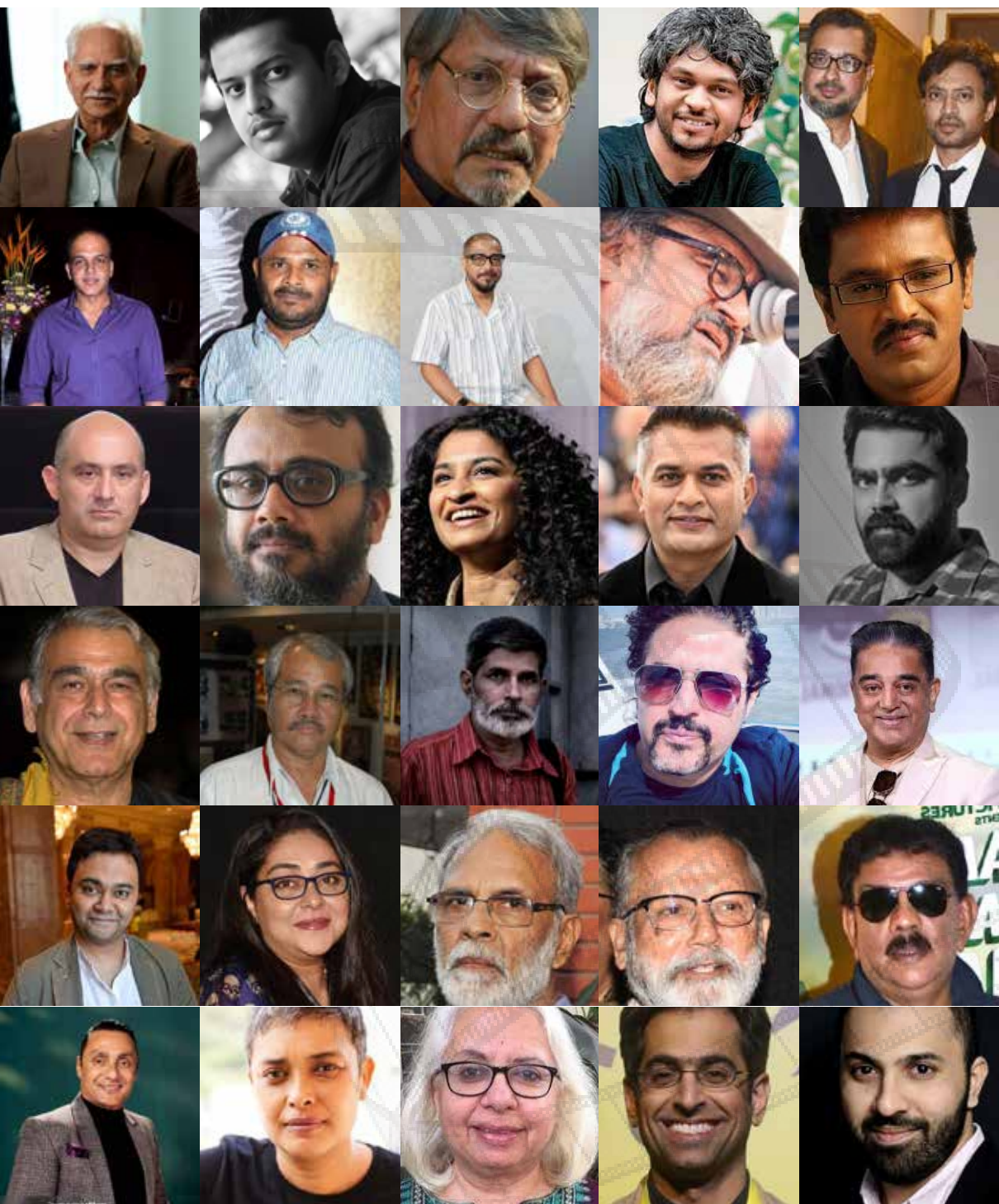
TIFF 2025 CELEBRATING SHOLAY@50



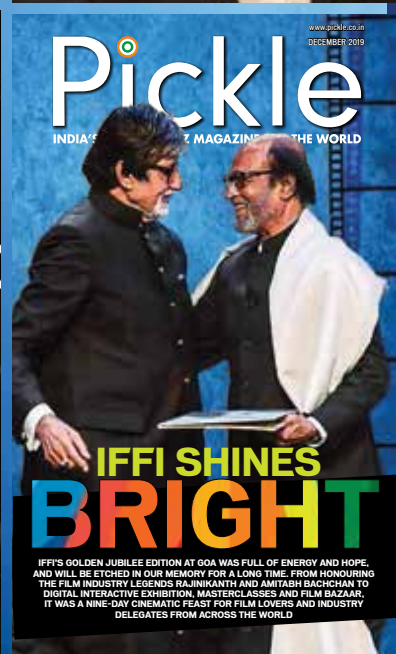
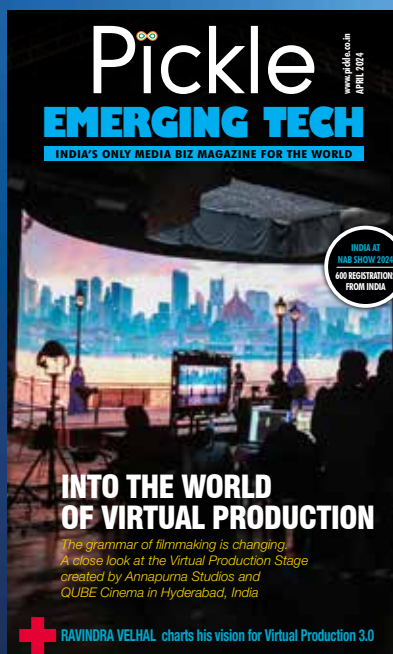
The latest edition of TIFF hosts a Gala screening of a 4K restored version of Ramesh Sippy's *Sholay* at the Roy Thomson Hall to mark the 50th anniversary of the iconic Hindi film. The restoration of *Sholay* has been done by the Film Heritage Foundation in association with Sippy Films.



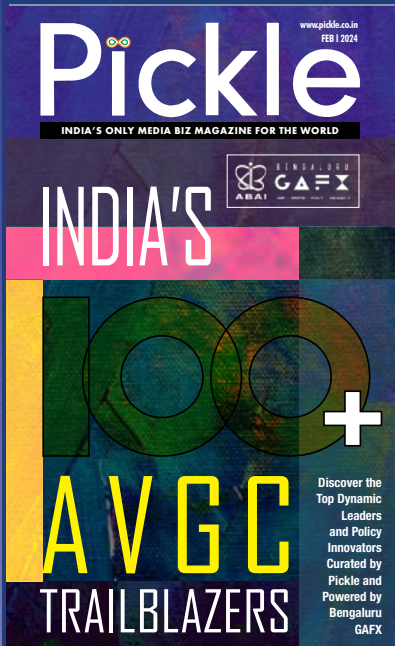
ICONS OF INDIAN FILMMAKERS AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



India's only film biz magazine for the world markets



MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



Congratulations, TIFF, on 50 Golden Years! Thank you for five decades of passion, creativity, and unforgettable movie moments

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