

Pickle

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SEPTEMBER 2026

INDIA
at
tiff
2026

INDIA'S ONLY FILM BIZ MAGAZINE FOR THE WORLD



FILMED BY PRIYADARSHAN



STARRING: AKSHAY KUMAR AND SAIF ALI KHAN PRODUCED BY VENKAT K NARAYANA AND SHAILAJA DESAI FENN
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SCREENPLAY BY PRIYADARSHAN ACTION DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DIVAKAR MANI MUSIC PRITAM
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ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS POOJA SHAH AND DHAVAL JATANIA BACKGROUND MUSIC RONNIE RAHMANAL VFX SUPERVISOR SIDDHARTH PRIYADARSHAN
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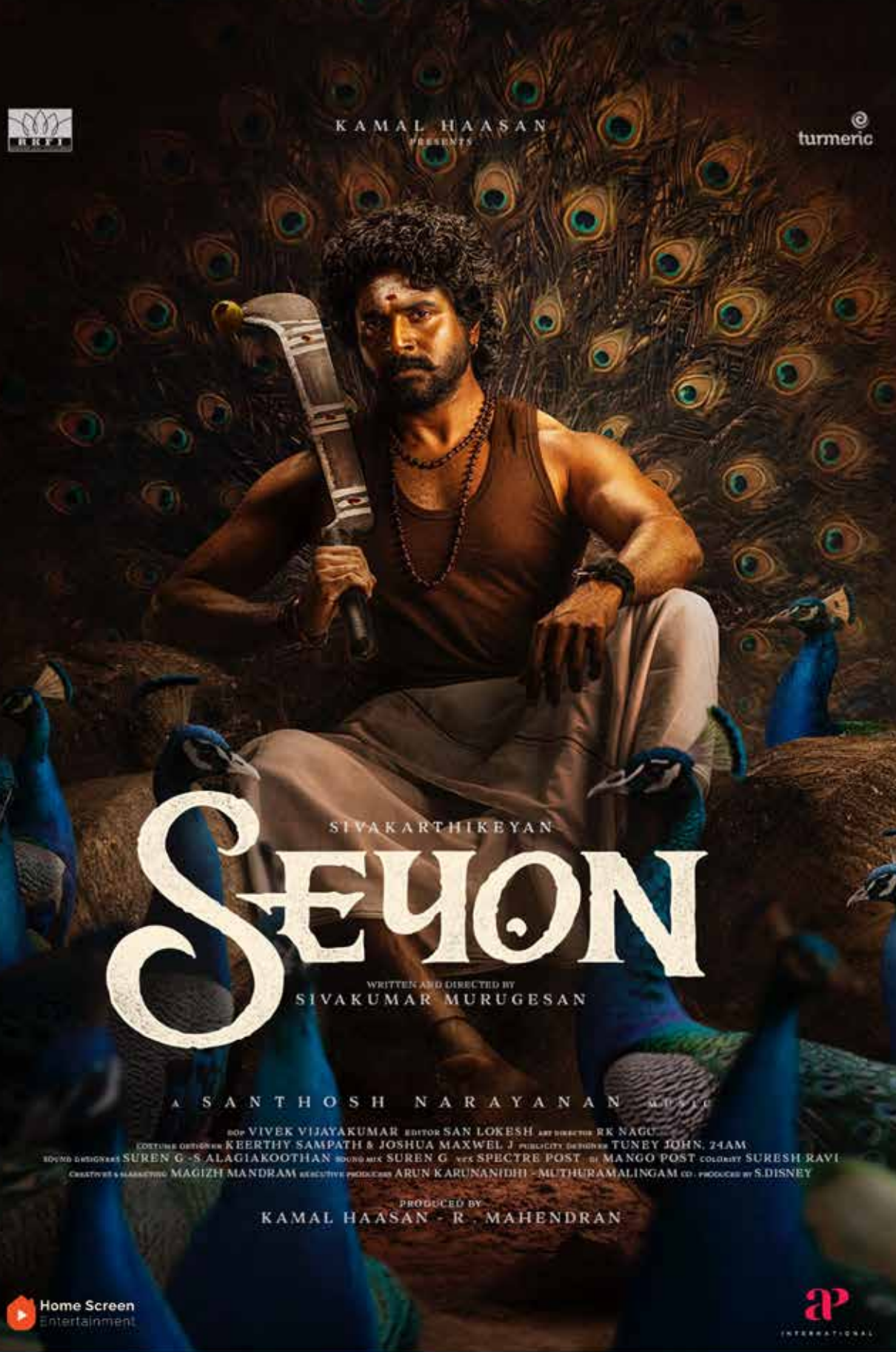
IN CINEMAS
11th SEPTEMBER

For
More Details



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FROM THE EDITOR

Pickle comes to Toronto as a partner and supporter of TIFF: The Market, in the trade racks at the 51st Toronto International Film Festival. Fifteen years of India-focused editions have carried one argument to the world's major markets: Indian content and Indian studios are a business proposition, and a dependable partner to work with.

TIFF is one of North America's foremost festival and market and a proven gateway for Indian and South Asian storytellers. Over five decades it has presented more than 150 Indian films, and its audience — including over 600,000 people of Indian origin — is a standing signal of demand.

Seven Indian films are at TIFF 2026. Karthik Subbaraj's Tamil feature Dorothy, with Keerthy Suresh, world premieres in Centrepiece. Richie Mehta's Phoolan screens in Special Presentations. Theja Rio's Nagaland-set Angh is India's sole entry in Platform Competition, now an Academy Award qualifier. Samjad's Malayalam vampire thriller Half takes Midnight Madness. Shaunak Sen's Termite and Rahul Roye's Aman are in Short Cuts. And John Abraham's 1986 Amma Ariyan, restored in 4K by Film Heritage Foundation, has its North American premiere in Toronto Classics.

TIFF: The Market launches this year at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, giving Toronto a formal business floor alongside the festival. It brings 150-plus sales and promotional companies, national film bodies, Market Screenings and direct buyer access under one roof, plus a dedicated genre programme with Fantasia's Frontières. For sellers, it shortens the distance between a premiere and a closed deal.

More than 50 Indian companies are here — for collaboration, co-production and top-line production services. That is the real business opportunity.

The timing helps. AI is reordering pipelines, and the economics of windows, rights and audiences have changed. India arrives with scale, talent depth, cost advantage, a maturing AVGC-XR base and a growing home market. The task is conversion: turning presence into partnerships.

For collaboration opportunities, do get in touch. We are in Toronto.



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Platforms

AI Leaders

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innovators

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288 Films

380 Screenings

84 Participating Countries

26 World Premieres

48 Asia Premieres

99 India Premieres

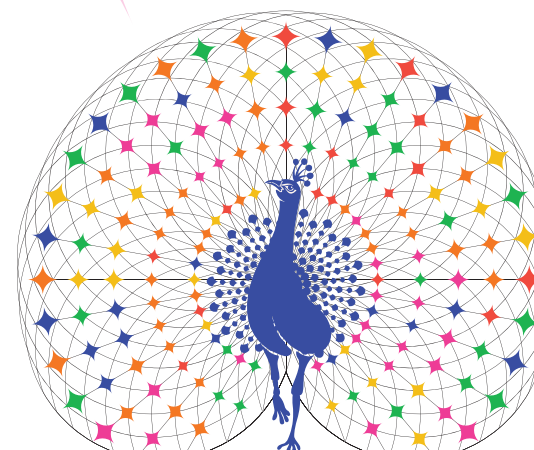
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DIRECTOR OF



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CHIDAMBARAM

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CII Big Picture delegates have to apply separately for Investor-Investee meet

For Details
madhurima.maniyara@cii.in

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Industry partner



Outreach Partner



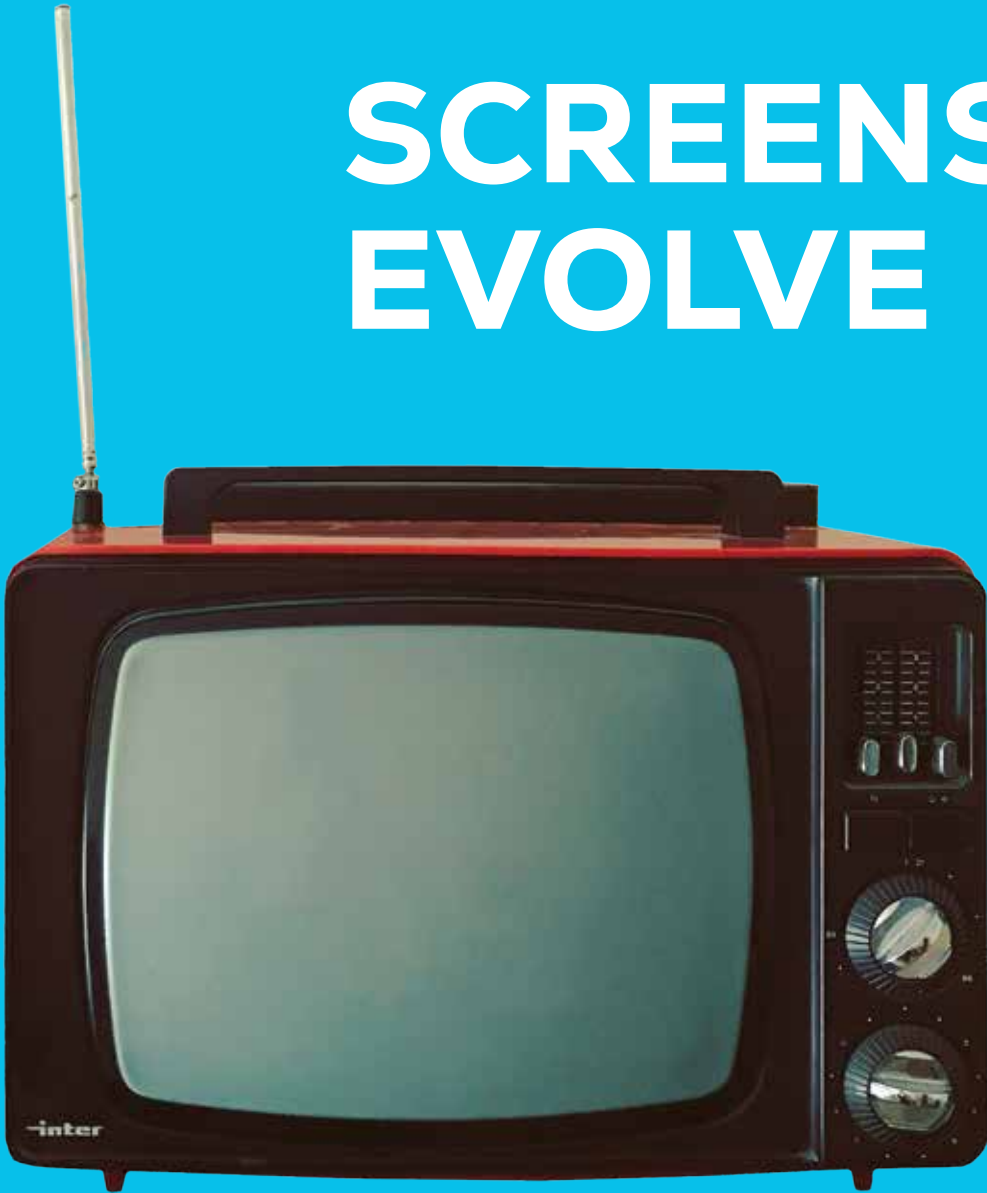
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10 THINGS TO DO

AT TIFF MARKET

1

Register early and collect your badge before the opening-day rush

Walk the exhibitor floor daily; sellers rotate their meeting slots

3

Pitch adaptable book, game and brand rights to visiting studios

7

Sit in on pitch sessions to read current financier appetite

9

Prioritise market screenings over public galas when hunting acquisition titles

5

2

Request buyer meetings ahead, because on-site diaries fill within hours

4

Attend Summit sessions matching your slate, not just the star names

8

Use the national pavilions and delegation hubs for curated introductions

10

Keep evenings free; informal King Street conversations close real business

6

Sample immersive and interactive work; buyer appetite is visibly shifting

TIFF: THE MARKET

The 51st festival runs September 10–20; the market runs 10–16

Visit Bharat Pavilion C-22 at TIFF: The Market

Meet NFDC, SEPC, Jio Studios, Ramoji Studios, VR Films, STAR Entertainment, NH Studioz, PVR Cinema, Pickle Media at TIFF: The Market

Ottawa committed C\$23 million across three years, with Telefilm Canada support .

TIFF targets 6,000 delegates drawn from more than 80 countries

Over 150 sales, promotion and distribution companies confirmed as exhibitors

CAA, UTA and WME attend with completed, fully packaged projects

More than 130 buyers from 49 countries have confirmed attendance

TIFF invited 250 new buyers beyond its 800 annual regulars

Sellers receive 650 screening slots, starting two days before opening

Ontario Creates presents the International Financing and Project Market incubator

Its slate holds 51 projects: 40 features, six series, five innovation

TIFF: THE MARKET

Over 50 producers from 13 territories, India included, will pitch

Deepa Mehta and David Hamilton bring a Jeremy Irons project

The Summit's Visionaries, Dialogues and Perspectives strands carry 70-plus sessions

Danny Boyle discusses his career and new feature Ink onstage

Seth Rogen talks Babies, Tangles and The Studio's second season

Gary Oldman, Lee Chang-dong and Mattel's Robbie Brenner complete Visionaries

Hirokazu Kore-eda and Yeon Sang-ho anchor the craft-focused Dialogues strand

Warner Bros. chiefs Pam Abdy and Mike De Luca also speak

Christine Vachon, Pamela Koffler and Colman Domingo headline independent-sector conversations

Roeg Sutherland and Glen Basner assess global sales in Perspectives

Canada Media Fund presents eight immersive XR, VR and AI exhibits

Fantasia's Frontières showcase presents five genre projects seeking financing partners



Dorothy
Karthik Subbaraj
India | 2026 | 150m |
Tamil
CENTREPIECE

DOROTHY

Set in a world shaped by caste, violence, and toxic masculinity, two childhood friends grow up inseparable in rural Tamil Nadu. Their lives are transformed by the arrival of Dorothy, a woman whose compassion quietly challenges the world around them.

Set in the early 1990s, Dorothy follows Karthi and Subbu, two boys who grow up within an unforgiving landscape of rural Tamil Nadu. When a misfortune befalls Dorothy (Keerthy Suresh), a member of the household who always treated the childhood friends with gentleness, the story takes an unexpected turn, shifting from their mere survival into a harsh, scorched-earth reality shaped by rigid patriarchal hierarchies and everyday violence.

The loss profoundly affects Subbu (Sananth), who finds an unlikely community of people living outside society's expectations, and vanishes. Karthi (Rishikanth) is sent on a mission across rural India to hunt Subbu, the person who once saved him from schoolyard fights. Conflicted and caught between the bonds of friendship and filial demands, the two embark on a journey of friendship, love, and the profound courage it takes to live honestly.

Director Karthik Subbaraj leaps across genres with his striking visual style, inviting viewers along on this wild ride, combining elements of noir thrillers, gangster films, and romances. With references to the action sequences of Bruce Lee and the physical comedy of Howard Hawks, Subbaraj writes a love letter to cinema where tenderness finds a way to thrive in the most unexpected places.

Dorothy offers not only an exhilarating and touching portrait of two individuals whose loyalty is tested by a legacy of violence but a celebration of friendship and a passionate critique of gender oppression.



Karthik Subbaraj

DETAILS

Producers

Jyoti Deshpande
Guneet Monga Kapoor
Achin Jain

Production Companies

Jio Studios
Sikhya Entertainment

SHOWTIMES

Saturday, September 12
Scotiabank Theatre
Press & Market
9:05 am

Saturday, September 12
Scotiabank Theatre
2:30 pm

Sunday, September 20
TIFF Lightbox
7:15 pm



Phoolan
Richie Mehta
India | 2026 | 113m |
Hindi
SPECIAL
PRESENTATIONS

PHOOLAN

In the heartland of India, a young Phoolan Devi becomes one of the most famous outlaws in Indian history and the target of 2,000 heavily armed men sent to kill her over a gruelling 48-hour siege.

A small village in the heartland of India forms the backdrop of a high-intensity 48-hour siege where a young Phoolan Devi and her group of outlaws must outsmart the Indian police. Richie Mehta's interpretation of the life and legend of Devi centres on a pivotal moment in her life, contextualized by but never exploitative of her traumatic past. Though young, Devi is already mythologized widely and garners support across caste, class, and gender barriers, showcasing precisely why she was a force to be reckoned with.

Mehta (Amal, TIFF '07) brings his restrained and realistic true-crime sensibilities from Delhi Crime to this biopic, heavily inspired by her 1996 autobiography, I, Phoolan Devi: The Autobiography of India's Bandit Queen. In the book, Devi recounts the trauma of her child marriage, the caste discrimination she experienced, and her journey to becoming the Bandit Queen. Devi eventually surrendered, served a prison sentence, and ultimately grew to political power as a Member of Parliament before she was assassinated in 2001. Those familiar with her life story will appreciate this immersive, taut thriller that highlights her moment of becoming.

Brought to life by Sneha Kumari, this Devi is riveting — unflinchingly challenging the suffocating patriarchy and commanding respect from the men around her in ways that belie her age. Supported by compelling performances by Anurag Thakur, Vikram Pratap Singh, Aakash Dahiya, Prateek Pachori, and Dev Dutt Budholiya, Kumari shines on screen.



Richie Mehta

DETAILS

Producers

Shareen Mantri Kedia
Kanwal Kohli
Kishor Arora
Richie Mehta

Production Companies

Namah Pictures
Amazon MGM Studios

SHOWTIMES

Friday, September 11
TIFF Lightbox
Press & Market
10:45 am

Wednesday, September 16
VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales
6:00 pm

Thursday, September 17
TIFF Lightbox
12:15 pm

Saturday, September 19
Scotiabank Theatre
2:30 pm



HALF
Samjad
India | 2026 | 96m
| Malayalam, Hindi,
English, Telugu, Tamil
MIDNIGHT
MADNESS

HALF

Twin half-blooded vampires (Ranjith Sajeew and Aiswarya Raj) wage war with desert highway hijackers in a gory martial arts curry western from writer-director Samjad and choreographer Very Tri Yulisman (The Raid 2, The Night Comes for Us).

Since its 1970s heyday, the “curry western” has been a popular genre style across the Indian film industry. Indebted to American and Italian varieties of the form, these epics remixed the iconography and style of filmmakers like John Ford and Sergio Leone with culturally specific ingredients to fit a rural Indian frontier beset by roving gangs of bandits known as dacoits. In Samjad’s HALF, the subgenre further mutates with the introduction of vampires, a hallowed horror archetype that has previously permeated neo-Westerns like From Dusk Till Dawn and Near Dark. In this context, it bears down on those aforementioned bandits with a righteous fury and insatiable thirst for vengeance.

Following a wintery prologue that establishes our vamps Ethan (Ranjith Sajeew) and Ivy (Aiswarya Raj), twin siblings whose interspecies parentage (human mother, revenant dad) grants them supernatural abilities and spares them from the usual inconveniences, we catch up with the pair as they are traversing the desolate roads of the Rajasthan desert. Suddenly ambushed by local marauders who brutalize their bodies with a viciousness that recalls Mario Bava’s Rabid Dogs, brother and sister soon recover under cover of darkness and set out to maul, maim, and murder everyone responsible for the offense.

With action skilfully choreographed by Very Tri Yulisman — who conducted the martial mayhem of The Raid 2, The Night Comes for Us, and Headshot — HALF is a rousing cavalcade of guts and gore, set to the eclectic Malayalam soundtrack of the nonverbal Ivy’s cellphone playlist and the percussive pummeling of Ethan’s fists.



Samjad

DETAILS
Producers
Anne Sajeev
Sajeew PK
Production Company
Fragrant Nature Film Creations
SHOWTIMES
Sunday, September 13
TIFF Lightbox
8:15 am

Monday, September 14
Scotiabank Theatre
Press & Market
11:30 am

Friday, September 18
Royal Alexandra
11:59 pm

Saturday, September 19
Scotiabank Theatre
6:15 pm



Angh
Theja Rio
India | 2026 | 103m |
Konyak
PLATFORM

ANGH

In a deserted Nagaland village in the early 1960s, a chief must choose between his family and a transforming world embodied by an incoming American missionary in filmmaker Theja Rio’s gripping feature-length adaptation of his award-winning 2021 short.

Set in the early 1960s in a remote jungle near the Indo-Burma border, Angh follows Anghba, the last surviving chief of a Nagaland village that has been deserted by its people. He remains behind with his ailing wife and non-speaking young son, holding on as the world around them shifts irrevocably.

The arrival of an American missionary (Douglas Henshall, Shetland) sets the region’s transformation in motion, leaving Anghba to guard the beliefs and customs that have been passed down through generations. What emerges is a haunting and intimate story of a father and son, the latter increasingly seduced by the comforts of the mission. The film avoids sentimentality, instead observing how conversion operates deliberately by offering gifts even as the local culture is reframed as deficient.

Theja Rio’s debut feature — strikingly photographed and built on a richly spatial sound design — follows the success of his short film of the same name, which won a special jury award at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in 2021. Shot on 16mm, the film’s grain seems to hold the passage of time. Texture is drawn from the spiritual and storytelling traditions of the Naga people.

Nagaland, an Indigenous region of Northeast India, has rarely been depicted on screen. Rio views the film as an offering, “A gesture of remembrance, of pride, and of presence. A way of saying that we are here, that we have always been here, and that our stories deserve to stand alongside the rest of the world.”



Theja Rio

DETAILS
Producers
Nancy Nisa Beso
Theja Rio
Jai Vir Rodgers
Bernardo Angeletti
Production Companies
Winter Hymns Films
Undercover Squirrel
SHOWTIMES
Sunday, September 13
Scotiabank Theatre
Press & Market
11:40 am

Tuesday, September 15
TIFF Lightbox
9:00 pm

Wednesday, September 16
Scotiabank Theatre
12:00 pm

Saturday, September 19
Scotiabank Theatre Torontolocation_on
12:20 pm

TIFF PEOPLE'S

CHOICE:

12 CONTENDERS

The Toronto International Film Festival's People's Choice Awards are a failsafe predictor of awards season success. Will it be any different this year? The Cannes Film Festival in May unveiled a bunch of films that look set to go all the way to the Oscars in both the principal categories and the Best International Feature Film race. *Fjord*, *La Bola Negra*, *Minotaur* and *All of a Sudden* will be hard to ignore as the Academy Awards nominations process approaches culmination. And, of course, there is Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* dominating all the conversations. But, as always, the TIFF selection has a healthy slew of entries that could garner ready support from Toronto audiences, bag the People's Choice Award, and make the Academy members pause and think before they vote. We pick 12. **By Saibal Chatterjee**



Shaunak Sen
SHORT CUTS
India | 2026 | 31m |
Hindi, Urdu

TERMITE

Shaunak Sen's follow-up to the Academy Award-nominated documentary *All That Breathes* is an evocative drama set in the vibrant neighbourhoods of Old Delhi, where the routined lives of two middle-aged termite exterminators are about to drastically change when one of them receives an unexpected marriage proposal

AMAN

A heart-piercing bond between two trans siblings forms the emotional core of Rahul Roye's profound exploration of identity, body, and the meaning of manhood, as a trans man's journey takes an unexpected turn on the eve of his gender-affirming surgery.



Rahul Roye
SHORT CUTS
India, United Kingdom,
United States of
America, France
| 2026 | 16m |
Bengali, Hindi

REPORT TO MOTHER



Amma Ariyan
John Abraham
India | 1986 | 115m |
Malayalam
TIFF CLASSICS
4K Restoration!

A daring clarion call and one of the most significant works of Indian political cinema, John Abraham's extraordinary final film *Amma Ariyan* (*Report to Mother*) follows a young man in 1970s Kerala as he journeys — with a progressive swell of companions — to inform a mother of her son's death, amid widespread unrest.

Restored by Film Heritage Foundation at L'Imagine Ritrovata laboratory and Digital Film Restore Pvt. Ltd. in association with Odessa Collective. Special thanks to cinematographer Venu ISC and editor Bina Paul. Funding provided by Film Heritage Foundation. *Amma Ariyan* was restored in 4K from one of the only two surviving prints: the first-generation 35mm release print preserved at the NFDC – National Film Archive of India.

SHOWTIMES
Sunday, September 13
TIFF Lightbox
3:30 pm

(Source: www.tiff.net)



I PLAY ROCKY

In the 50th year of *Rocky* comes a highly anticipated biographical drama that traces the development and production of the iconic film that launched Sylvester Stallone's storied career. *I Play Rocky*, directed by Peter Farrelly and world premiering at TIFF, could turn out to be a star-making outing for lead actor Anthony Ippolito as well as a frontrunner for the festival's People's Choice Award, a trusted bellwether for the Academy Awards. In a year with a crowded Best Actor Oscar field, Ippolito could land a surprise nomination. And that would be one of the stories of the year. Watch out!



THE LIFE AND DEATHS OF WILSON SHEDD

Indie actor-writer-director Tim Blake Nelson's prison break drama starring Amanda Seyfried (as a teacher who finds employment in a maximum-security jail) is reported to be a psychologically layered tale of crime, punishment, hope and redemption. The protagonist is a woman coming off an abusive marriage. She develops a bond with a prison inmate (Scoot McNairy). Her steely exterior gives way and she stakes her all to help the eponymous character with a shot at freedom. *The Life and Deaths of Wilson Shedd* Sounds strong enough in terms of its storyline to stand a chance of jockeying its way into the People's Choice Award mix.

TIFF hosts a Gala screening of Dutch director Anton Corbijn's *A Talent for Murder*, adapted by Joanna Murray-Smith from her own 2014 play, *Switzerland*. The film is expected to be in the People's Choice Award contention and enjoy a steady Oscar run-up. A young man travels from New York to Switzerland in order to persuade Patricia Highsmith (the American thriller writer is played by Helen Mirren) to write a final instalment of her Tom Ripley novels. His efforts turn increasingly persistent and sinister as the writer stonewalls the suggestion. With its intriguing premise and Helen Mirren at the centre of it, the film has undeniable potential. Toronto audiences will certainly have it in their sights.



A TALENT FOR MURDER

Directed by John Madden, whose *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) won the Best Picture Oscar, premieres his new film, *Onwards and Sideways*, at TIFF this year. The story centres on a schoolteacher (Rhys Ifans) and a composer and piano tutor (Laura Linney). The two strangers meet one morning in a health care clinic after both are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. They form a friendship. The Norfolk-set drama combines humour with solemnity. It could make Toronto audiences laugh and cry in equal measure, a surefire formula for success. About disease and degeneration, *Onwards and Sideways* is also about a life-affirming connection. We expect it to start a conversation.



ONWARDS AND SIDEWAYS



TENDER LOVING CARE

Seven-time Oscar nominee Mike Leigh's *Tender Loving Care*, which is slated to be his final film, is about a committed social service worker and her mother dealing with her ailing father. An uplifting drama about the act of dealing with grief, navigating the process of ageing and enjoying life even as it poses daunting challenges, *Tender Loving Care* is a characteristic Mike Leigh film, filled with insight, warmth and keen understanding of the rhythms of real life. Starring Kate O'Flynn, Paul Jesson and Alice Bailey Johnson, the film has everything that TIFF attendees and Oscar voters usually like.



BUNKER

French playwright, novelist, theatre director and filmmaker Florian Zeller brings *Bunker*, psychological thriller starring Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem, to TIFF after it competes for the Golden Lion at Venice. A tech billionaire commissions an architect to build a bunker for him. The assignment and the questions that it triggers test the former's marriage. *Bunker* is Zeller's third film. It probes the challenges that the couple faces amid the tensions gripping their immediate environment and the world at large. Cruz is having a fantastic run. She is likely to earn more than one nomination this year, with her turn in *The Invite* being a shoo-in and the one in the Cannes hit *La Bola Negra* also a strong contender. Add *Bunker* to the list.

One TIFF 2026 film that we would love to see scale the Oscar summit is Australian director Jennifer Peedom's *Tenzing*, which narrates the story of Sherpa climber Tenzing Norgay and New Zealander Edmund Hillary's pioneering ascent to the peak of Mount Everest in 1953. Peedom's 2015 documentary *Sherpa* had also played at TIFF. The *Tenzing* cast features Chinese actor of Tibetan descent Genden Phuntsok in the titular role, with Tom Hiddleston as Sir Edmund, Willem Dafoe as expedition leader John Hunt and Caitriona Balfe as expedition secretary Jill Henderson. The film is written by Luke Davies, Academy Award nominee for *Lion*. Pravesh Sahni is a co-producer while the film has been line produced by India Take One Productions.



TENZING

Danny Boyle's *Ink*, the Venice Film Festival opener, is adapted by James Graham from his stage play. With Jack O'Connell as *The Sun* editor Larry Lamb, Guy Pierce as media magnate Rupert Murdoch and Claire Foy as a fictional reporter, *Ink* traces the rise of UK's tabloid culture on the back of an unprecedented owner-editor partnership that produces the most successful newspaper ever in the UK. By focusing on a specific turning point in journalistic history, Boyle, whose 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire* won big both in Toronto and at the Oscars, alludes to the steady decline in the power of news gathering and dissemination.



INK



MISTY GREEN

Scripted and helmed by Chris Rock, *Misty Green* (the actor's fifth film as director) seeks to lay bare contemporary Hollywood's growing propensity towards excess and exploitation. Starring Rosalind Eleazar, Adam Driver, Daniel Kaluuya, Anna Kendrick, Topher Grace and Rock himself, the film hinges on a once-feted actress who, after a slump in her career, reconnects with her former agent in a bid to start over in showbiz even as she grapples with her personal demons. *Misty Green* has the makings of a success story that could last well beyond its TIFF premiere.



THE DEBUT

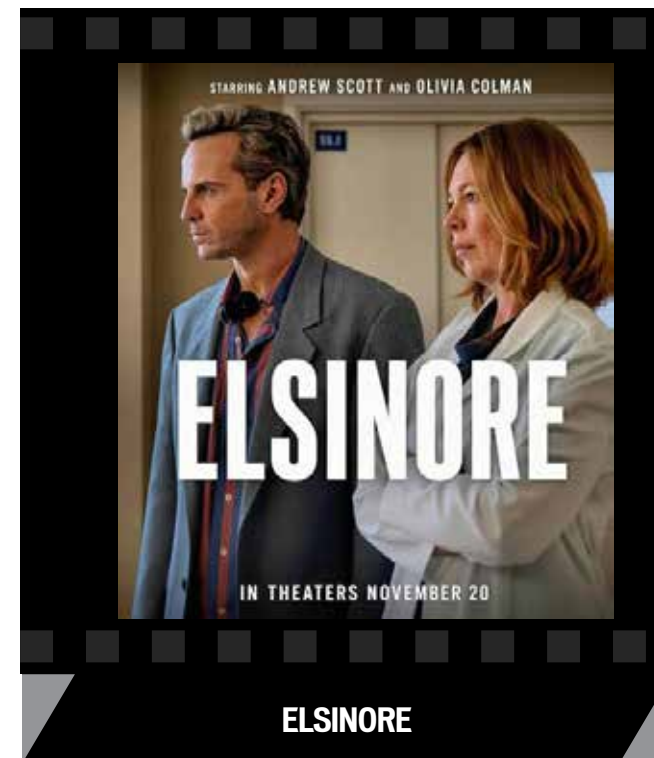
Actor Jesse Eisenberg's third directorial, *The Debut*, reunites him with his *When You Finish Saving the World* lead Julianne Moore in a drama that seems destined for great things. Both Moore and co-actor Paul Giamatti could be in contention for Oscar nominations, the former as Best Actress, the latter as Best Supporting Actor. *The Debut* is about a awkward and shy woman who is cast in the production of a musical. Under the guidance of an enigmatic director, she begins to lose herself in the role. Can Julianne Moore ever not be a contender for an Oscar? She has won one before (*Still Alice*, 2014) after four previous nominations. She is only one of two actresses (the other is Juliette Binoche) to win the best actress prize in all of the big three European festivals – Cannes, Venice and Berlin.

Adapted by Suzie Miller from her own West End play, the Susanna White-directed *Prima Facie* tells the story of a woman from a working-class background who becomes a successful lawyer sure of her professional acumen and the legal system's efficacy. But when an untoward incident rattles her, her faith in the processes she swears by is shaken. Cynthia Erivo, nominated twice for Best Actress Oscar (*Harriet*, *Wicked*) as well as for Best Original Song (*Wicked*), plays the central character. An Oscar nomination for her individually looks assured.



PRIMA FACIE

Simon Stone's biographical drama about Scottish film and theatre actor Ian Charleson, best known to cinema lovers for *Chariots of Fire* and *Gandhi*, could be Andrew Scott's greatest chance to leap into the Oscar race. *Elsinore* also stars another formidable screen performer, Olivia Colman (Best Actress Oscar for *The Favourite*, 2018). The film follows Charleson in the final months of his life as he prepares for the role of Hamlet at the National Theatre. He was cast as Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark as replacement for Daniel Day-Lewis when the latter quit the production. Charleson dies of AIDS at the age of 40.



EL SINORE

MAKE IT INDIAN, THEN MAKE IT TRAVEL

As Toronto International Film Festival 2026 opens, Priyadarshan sends 'Haiwaan' into theaters — and makes the case for Indian films that stay Indian

On September 11, one day after the Toronto International Film Festival opens its 51st edition, an Indian director with 98 films behind him will release his 99th in theaters across India and the world.

"Haiwaan," Priyadarshan's Hindi reworking of his own 2016 Malayalam thriller "Oppam," arrives with Akshay Kumar as a cold-blooded killer, Saif Ali Khan as a blind caretaker trained in the Kerala martial art of kalaripayattu, and a cameo by Mohanlal, who played the lead in the original. Kajol, Bobby Deol, Boman Irani and Saiyami Kher fill out the cast of the KVN Productions-Thesopian Films co-production.

Priyadarshan has spent 43 years doing what global buyers keep asking Indian cinema to do — travel without translation — and he is blunt about why the industry still fails.

"As far as Indian cinema is concerned, my only problem is that we are not selling our culture," he said in an interview. "So-called big filmmakers, including corporates, want to do films which are a kind of cheap knockoffs of Hollywood."

His benchmark is South Korea. "Korean cinema is actually forging linkages with global cinema, but they are not downplaying their culture in any of their films," he said. "We should also stick to our culture and make commercial films so that our creative values give us a distinct identity in the world."

That is the frame he brings to "Haiwaan," which he insists is not a copy of "Oppam" but a relocation of it. When he remakes his own work, he said, he keeps only the essence and rebuilds the rest around a new setting — the way "Gardish," conceived as a village story, ended up in Mumbai's underbelly.

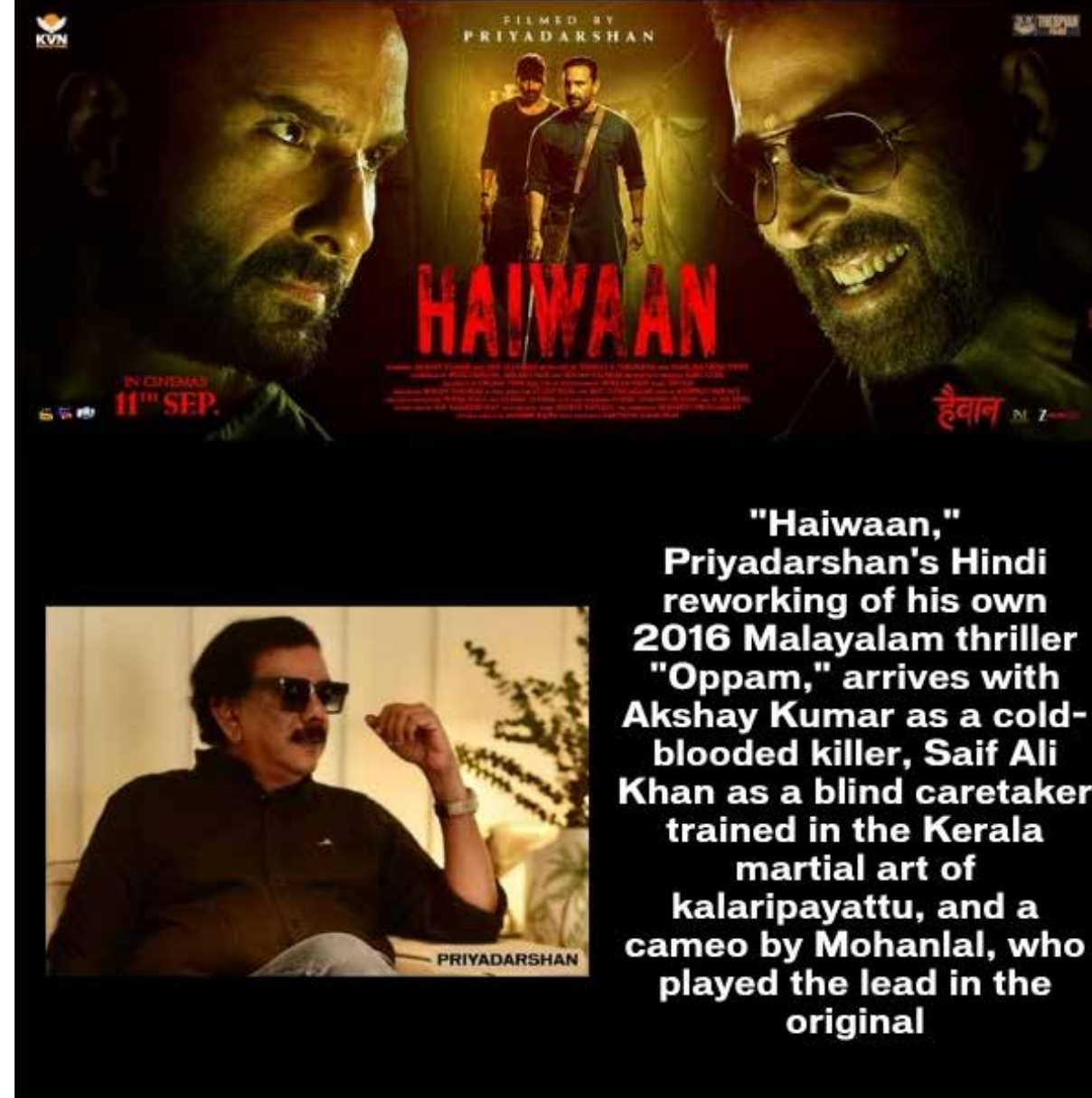
"It should look like a purely Indian film," he said. "It should convince a global audience that it could happen only in India."

He is equally unsentimental about which canvas he is painting on. "Here I'm playing to the gallery," he said of the film. "When I'm doing that, I have to think about what the people in the gallery want. This clarity is essential."

The gallery has rewarded him. In April, his horror comedy "Bhooth Bangla," also with Kumar, crossed 200 crore rupees worldwide. Haiwaan reunites Kumar with Saif Ali Khan, an actor with whom the Mumbai superstar formed a hit buddy-buddy screen pair in the 1990s, after a 18-year hiatus.

Comedy, the genre that made Priyadarshan a household name with "Hera Pheri" (which was also one of Kumar's most successful forays into the genre) and "Malamaal Weekly," is also what the successful director wants to escape.

"There is a huge scarcity of humour in the world today. You cannot see a good Hollywood comedy," he said. "There is a thin line between humour and



"Haiwaan," Priyadarshan's Hindi reworking of his own 2016 Malayalam thriller "Oppam," arrives with Akshay Kumar as a cold-blooded killer, Saif Ali Khan as a blind caretaker trained in the Kerala martial art of kalaripayattu, and a cameo by Mohanlal, who played the lead in the original

buffoonery. I play only with situations." His method is to find the child inside an adult audience. "To make the audience laugh in today's time is a very, very difficult thing to do."

The prizes came from elsewhere. "Kanchivaram," his 2008 Tamil film about a silk weaver, won the National Film Award for best feature; "Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea" won the same honour a decade later. Kanchivaram had its world premiere at TIFF with the director in attendance 18 years ago.

None of all this was supposed to happen in Priyadarshan's life. His father, a chief librarian who translated Russian plays, refused to let him study film in Pune,

fearing the stigma would jeopardise his sister's marriage. Across school and college, their conversations totalled "hardly three minutes," Priyadarshan estimated. Then the first National Award came. "He actually hugged me, and he cried."

As a young man interviewing a celebrated director, he suggested there comes a point in one's career when one has to stop. "There is a saying: when your sur is still good, stop singing." The man was furious.

Film No. 100, a thriller with Mohanlal — the actor from his 1983 debut — is now set for 2027. The script is currently undergoing rewrites

THE CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT BETTING ₹2,000 CRORE ON INDIAN CINEMA

No Indian producer has ever carried this much risk on this few films. **K. Venkata Narayana** has committed close to ₹2,000 crore across five titles, walked into a certification battle, a piracy leak and three postponements, and come out the other side with a functioning national studio

Six years ago, K. Venkata Narayana was signing off audited accounts at one of India's largest listed real-estate firms. Today he is the single largest risk-taker in Indian film production — and the industry is still working out whether his method is a template or a one-off.

Narayana's KVN Productions has assembled a slate valued at close to ₹2,000 crore across five marquee titles, with trade analysts pegging just three of them — Jana Nayagan, Toxic and KD: The Devil — at ₹1,300 crore to ₹1,500 crore. That is concentration risk of a kind no Indian studio has carried before: not forty

medium-budget films spreading exposure, but a handful of very large ones, each capable of moving the company's entire valuation.

The risk ledger

The test came with Jana Nayagan. Directed by H. Vinodh and starring Vijay (Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay) in his final screen role, the film ran into a seven-month certification battle, litigation, and a high-definition pre-release leak. Any of those events would normally trigger a distressed sale. Narayana instead absorbed carrying costs, took the certification fight



K Venkata Narayana of KVN Productions — India's savviest film financier, backing films across four language markets at once and building the country's boldest new studio in the process

through the courts, and waited. The film secured an 'A' certificate and released worldwide on July 23, closing at ₹324.4 crore gross worldwide and ₹198.3 crore net.

Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, co-produced with Yash's Monster Mind Creations, is the bigger exposure — budgeted between ₹500 crore and ₹800 crore depending on the estimate, and postponed three times in pursuit of a synchronised global release. Released August 26, it crossed ₹322 crore worldwide in eight days. Roughly half the budget was reportedly recovered ahead of release through OTT, satellite and non-theatrical deals. — a structure that keeps theatrical upside with the producer rather than trading it away.

That is the tell. A financier by training — Chartered Accountant, Company Secretary, cost accountant and law graduate, formerly chief financial officer and then chief executive of the Prestige Group — Narayana prices risk rather than avoiding it, and he does not sell into weakness.

The reward curve

The rewards are structured to arrive late, not fast. Balan: The Boy, the Malayalam drama from Manjummel Boys director Chidambaram co-produced with Thespian

Films, grossed ₹33.2 crore worldwide on a fraction of the slate's cost after a Cannes market showcase — modest in rupees, valuable in credibility and library value. Haiwaan, Priyadarshan's Hindi remake of his own Oppam with Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, releases nationwide on September 11, taking KVN into its fourth language market in eighteen months.

Read as a portfolio rather than four releases, the logic clarifies. Tamil star power, a Kannada global swing, Malayalam prestige and Hindi scale, built on financing structures that de-risk before release and keep residual value in-house. Backing Balan, Toxic, Jana Nayagan and Haiwaan in the same cycle is what a new generation of Indian producers looks like: capital-market discipline applied to creative bets that older studios would have declined.

Narayana's June appointment as Tamil Nadu's Special Representative in New Delhi, unusual for a non-politician, places him at an intersection of boardroom, film set and government few executives occupy.

The open question is repeatability. Carrying costs on large slates compound; KD: The Devil opened modestly. But the ledger so far suggests strategic patience can be priced as an asset. He simply never feared a big number.

HAIWAAN AND THE MAKING OF A PRODUCER

Two films, shot simultaneously, finished simultaneously. For **Shailaja Desai Fenn** of Thespian Films, 2026 is a very special year as two of her films Produced in association with KVN Productions releases in theatres. The first film *Balan: The Boy* released was released in June 2026 and Priyadarshan's *HAIWAAN* releases worldwide on 11th September



Shailaja Desai Fenn
Thespian Films

Haiwaan opens worldwide on 11 September, and for Shailaja Desai Fenn the release is a turning point. Thespian Films, a Mumbai based Production company produces Priyadarshan's 98th film in association with KVN Productions — a Hindi thriller carrying Saif Ali Khan, Akshay Kumar and a Mohanlal cameo. For a producer who grew up on Hindi cinema, putting a film of this scale into theatres is the milestone the rest of the business was always building towards. It is also Thespian's debut in the top tier of Hindi production.

And it is the first film which didn't play by design and was destined to produce.

An ad shoot that became a slate

In 2024, Shailaja Desai Fenn and her husband Satish Fenn, who had run their talent-and-advertising business for years, made a Kalyan Jewellers commercial with Priyadarshan. Conversation drifted to a thriller the director wanted to make in Hindi. They took it to Saif Ali Khan, who agreed at the first meeting.

Then came the moment that changed the company's business model: Priyadarshan asked them to produce it.

He had an appreciation for the emerging producers — especially the “bright boy” Satish Fenn — and believed in their passion for production. Pooja Shah is the associate producer in this co-production venture.

Haiwaan is Priyadarshan's Hindi reworking of his own 2016 Malayalam hit *Oppam*, with Saif Ali Khan as a blind man who witnesses a murder and Akshay Kumar, against type, as the predator hunting him. It is the pair's first film together in 18 years. Mohanlal, who led the original, appears in a cameo.

Akshay Kumar effectively cast himself. He heard about the project on the set of *Bhoot Bangla*, where Priyadarshan mentioned it in passing, and asked for the part — knowing it was not the protagonist's role. He had apparently said, “Yeah, I know, so what.”

The financing came from Venkat K. Narayana, the real-estate entrepreneur whose KVN Productions now sits behind some of India's biggest films. He backed Haiwaan outright. “For stalwarts like these to trust us as first-time producers, that is a big thing,” Desai says.

What a producer actually does

Here is Desai's take on the job: a producer takes the ship ahead in all weathers, managing egos, tantrums and everyone else's fear, and answers to the film — not the actor, not the director. If a director wants a name that breaks the budget, the producer finds the money or finds the alternative. Respect does not arrive with the title.

Since January 2024, actors have committed and withdrawn; capital has arrived, walked and occasionally been returned. Roughly seventy per cent of their network advised against the venture. Satish Fenn, she notes, treats a loud no as an accelerator; her job was the engine room — keeping the advertising business trading so salaries were paid while the films were financed.

Told to take a bigger office and look the part, they refused. “Every rupee we spend, we should know where it went. Sitting in a fancy office does not make the film better.” Money has never frightened her, she adds — she has been respectful of it. “Fear makes you freeze. Respect makes you careful.”

A market that keeps rewriting its own rules

Haiwaan lands in a market still adjusting to a single outsized national release



Producer Duo: Sathish Fenn and Shailaja Desai Fenn, Thespian Films

earlier this year, *Dhurandhar*, which reset what a theatrical event is expected to look like and shortened the runway for everything mid-sized.

The counter-evidence has been just as loud. *Hanuman Ansh* opened on roughly 250 screens for ₹10 lakh on day one, was nearly pulled, then climbed past ₹100 crore as exhibitors added shows to meet demand they had not forecast. Imtiaz Ali's *Main Vaapas Aaunga* did the same in reverse order, crossing ₹90 crore worldwide after a weekend the trade had written off.

Shailaja Desai treats both as the operating thesis. “You can't say this film is doing well, so let's make a film like that. Audiences are too smart. They sense a good film — call it vibe or buzz — and it will have its due.”

Her own scorecard is different: two films delivered in one year, shot and finished simultaneously and neither planned that way, after *Balan: The Boy*, which had a market release at Cannes and opened in five languages on 19 June. “You make the film and give it a good release. After that, it is in the hands of the public.”

How Jio Studios turned India's No. 1 slate into the country's first true content multinational

THE BLUE-SKY STUDIO

Three years, three biggest films in the country. Stree 2 in 2024. Dhurandhar in 2025. Dhurandhar: The Revenge in 2026. No Indian studio has ever strung that together, and RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani said so himself when he told shareholders that Jio Studios had achieved “the unique distinction of having the highest-grossing film three years in a row... demonstrating consistency and undisputed leadership”

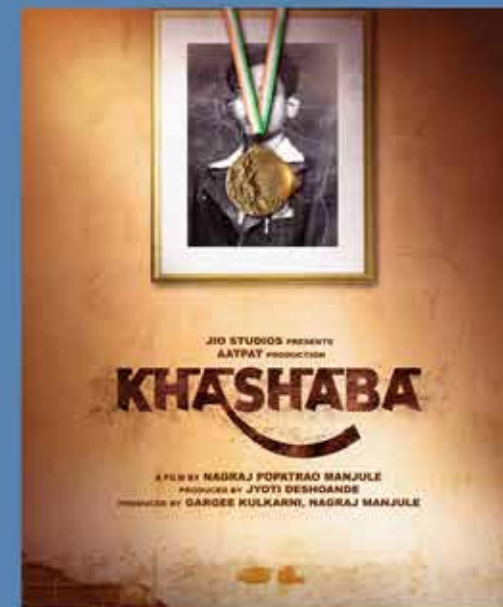
The gap is no longer a lead. It is blue sky.

At the Reliance AGM in June, Akash Ambani described Jio Studios as India's No. 1 content studio by revenue, catalogue size and box-office share, with the Dhurandhar duology crossing ₹3,100 crore worldwide — the first Indian two-part franchise in which each film crossed ₹1,000 crore globally. Trade analysts put the duology's combined cost at under ₹500 crore. That is not a hit. That is a business model.

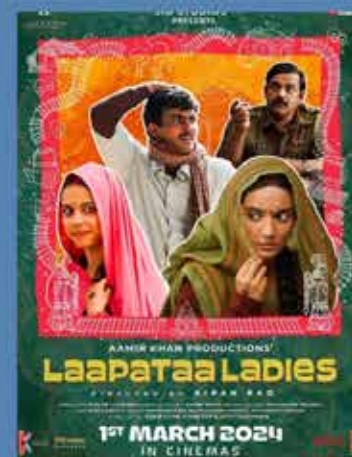
The eight-year build

Jyoti Deshpande, President, Jio Studios set the studio up in 2018 and has described it as something she built “from the ground up”, from zero. Eight years on, the catalogue runs past 200 films and series, with more than 60 titles carrying awards. The 100-film slate she unveiled at Jio World Convention Centre in 2023 has since been deliberately narrowed into a sharper doctrine: fewer films, bigger bets, what she calls “massive cinematic excellence” designed to pull audiences back into theatres.

Her greenlight test is unquantitative. “I am more focused on looking into the eye of a filmmaker and gauge his or her conviction,” said Jyoti Deshpande. “This is vital for me in backing a film. And then other variables follow”. She framed the portfolio logic plainly: diverse genres, diverse budgets, diverse audiences, with hundreds of stories heard before five or six are backed in a year. “A fantastic story and a big star cast is magic, but just having a star and a sub-standard story will not guarantee you success”.



Jio Studios: India's Global Cinema Powerhouse



And she plays offence. “I don’t make films looking at the downside... I always play for the upside and not really looking to break even in a film,” she had said of the Dhurandhar call.

The year the awards followed the money

At the 72nd National Film Awards, Article 370 — produced by Jio Studios with B62 Studios and directed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale — won the Swarna Kamal for Best Feature Film, along with Best Actress for Yami Gautam and Best Music Direction (Songs) for Shashwat Sachdev, making it one of the most-awarded films of the year. Stree 2 added Best Choreography for Vijay Ganguly. No other studio carried both the nation’s top honour and the year’s top grosser.

The pattern was set a season earlier, when Jio Studios took 16 wins at the 70th Filmfare Awards from 54 nominations and three of five Best Film nominees — the highest ever for a studio, with Laapataa Ladies alone winning 13.

Look at what produced those trophies. Laapataa Ladies, a small-town comedy with no stars, India’s official Oscar entry and a Netflix international Top 10 title watched in more than 43 countries. Shaitaan, a supernatural family horror. Article 370, a policy thriller. Mrs, a domestic drama. Stree 2, a horror-comedy franchise built without an A-lister. Five films, five different rooms of Indian cinema.

The talent machine

The real dividend is the bench. Article 370 made a national-award-winning director of Jambhale, who followed it with the Netflix release Baramulla. Dhurandhar handed Aditya Dhar the biggest canvas in the industry; when 40 days of Thailand shooting outgrew the script, Jyoti Deshpande funded the overrun and split it into two films rather than compress it. “It was more deeply patriotic than many films that pretend to be patriotic. That is why I greenlit it. It was bold, different and clutter-breaking,” she said.

The same instinct opened languages. Jio Studios backed Riteish Deshmukh’s directorial Raja Shivaji, which released on Maharashtra Day 2026 in Marathi, Hindi and Telugu and grossed over ₹130 crore.

Next on that ladder: Nagraj Manjule’s Khashaba, the Marathi biopic of India’s first individual Olympic medalist, with music by Ajay-Atul, opening worldwide on January 1, 2027.

Buying the festival gene

In February 2026, Reliance Strategic Business Ventures acquired 50.1% of Guneet Monga Kapoor and Achin Jain’s Sikhya Entertainment for about \$16.6 million, valuing the two-time Oscar-winning house at roughly

AT THE RELIANCE AGM IN JUNE, AKASH AMBANI DESCRIBED JIO STUDIOS AS INDIA’S NO. 1 CONTENT STUDIO BY REVENUE, CATALOGUE SIZE AND BOX-OFFICE SHARE, WITH THE DHURANDHAR DUOLOGY CROSSING ₹3,100 CRORE WORLDWIDE – THE FIRST INDIAN TWO-PART FRANCHISE IN WHICH EACH FILM CROSSED ₹1,000 CRORE GLOBALLY



Jyoti Deshpande's stated ambition is to sit alongside Paramount, Disney, Lionsgate and MGM within five years — through organic and inorganic moves, separating India rights from overseas rights, appointing sales agents across Europe, North America and Australia, and working titles through Berlin and Cannes into 100 to 135 markets

\$33 million. Sikhya brought Period. End of Sentence., The Elephant Whisperers, Masaan, Soorarai Pottru and Kathal.

The first fruit arrived fast. Dorothy, Karthik Subbaraj’s tenth feature with Keerthy Suresh, produced by Sikhya, Dhammam Films and Jio Studios, world-premiered in the Centrepiece section at the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival before its September 25 worldwide release. A Tamil independent film, cast light on stars, carried to Toronto by the same studio that owns the year’s biggest blockbuster. That is the whole thesis in one credit block.

The MNC question

Jyoti Deshpande’s stated ambition is to sit alongside Paramount, Disney, Lionsgate and MGM within five years — through organic and inorganic moves, separating India rights from overseas rights, appointing sales agents across Europe, North America and Australia, and working titles through Berlin and Cannes into 100 to 135 markets. Franchise IP — Stree, Bhediya, Munjya, Thama, Mahaavatar — is the compounding asset. “Our dream is to unlock the 360-degree value of our IPs,” she says.

Behind it sits ₹4,000–5,000 crore committed to content over three years, 30-40% above the previous cycle, and 10-12 films a year across languages — with distribution muscle now extending to acquisitions such as North India rights for Ram Charan’s Peddi.

Indian cinema needs this output. A theatrical business recovering its confidence needs one house willing to fund the ₹1,000-crore swing and the Toronto premiere in the same quarter, to launch a first-time director and a Marathi Olympic biopic while running the country’s top franchise. Jio Studios is that house. Its scoreboard is the industry’s floor now — and the distance behind it is the clearest signal of how much room Indian cinema still has to run.

THE AI LAYER HAS ENTERED THE BUDGET SHEET

Brad Pitt did not defend artificial intelligence. He defended the mid-budget movie



“There’s a lot of pushback against AI, but AI is going to be the very thing that, if used as a tool, is going to help these mid-budget films, \$40 to \$90 million-budgeted films, get made,” Brad Pitt told Esquire. He was more guarded about synthetic performance, noting that a machine could imitate his choices but that “the final product might not be my choices.”

That distinction — AI as production infrastructure rather than AI as talent — is now the industry’s real fault line. And it is where the money is moving.

The cost curve, not the culture war

The numbers arriving from working productions are unusually consistent. George Strompolos, chief executive

AI AS PRODUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE RATHER THAN AI AS TALENT – IS WHERE THE MONEY IS MOVING

of the Google- and Disney-backed AI studio Promise, estimates that hybrid films combining live actors with AI-generated environments run 20% to 50% cheaper than conventional shoots, while Obsidian executive producer D Ryan Reeb puts his own savings at 30% to 40%, according to The Guardian. Netflix has said AI was used on 300 of its 1,000 titles in 2026. Ron Howard is preparing an AI-enabled animated documentary. Promise shot its horror feature Touch Grass with one actor, a handheld camera and white sheets hung around an office, with Chinese model Seedance 2.5 generating a swaying meadow live on the director’s monitor.

The resistance is equally organised. Christopher Nolan has called the technology “so completely rejected by the public.” Guillermo del Toro insists there is “absolutely no goddamn AI” in his Pan’s Labyrinth re-release. Emily Blunt’s response to AI performers was blunter: “Please stop taking away our human connection.”

India skipped the debate

While US guild contracts constrain digital replicas and creative decision-making, India has gone straight to deployment — “at a scale unseen elsewhere,” Reuters reported after visiting two AI studios and interviewing 25 executives.

The pressure is structural. Indian admissions fell from 1.03 billion in 2019 to 832 million in 2025 even as box office hit a record \$1.4 billion, and streaming has squeezed budgets across the middle of the market. EY estimates AI could lift Indian media and entertainment revenue 10% and cut costs 15% over the medium term.

So the tools went where the margins are thinnest. Rahul Regulapati, who runs Collective Artists Network’s Galleri5 AI studio in Bengaluru, says

mythology and fantasy production now costs a fifth of traditional filmmaking and takes a quarter of the time. JioStar, the Reliance–Disney venture, ran a 100-episode AI-generated Mahabharat that drew 6.5 million views on launch day, 2.1 times its platform average, per CNBC. Abundantia Entertainment has put \$11 million into an AI studio and expects AI-assisted work to be a third of revenue within three years. Eros Media World re-released Raanjhanaa with an AI-altered ending — and got a public rebuke from its star Dhanush, who said the recut “stripped the film of its very soul.”

The startups underneath

The layer beneath the studios is where Indian firms are building. Bengaluru’s NeuralGarage rebuilds mouth and jaw movement so dubbed performances stop looking dubbed, work now used on Yash Raj Films titles including the Telugu War 2. Koovis is selling screenplay-to-rough-cut previsualisation with Telugu text-to-speech. Stoiria is pitching script-to-storyboard in minutes. Working creators cycle through Seedance, MiniMax, Kling, Midjourney, Adobe Firefly, Google’s Flow and Higgsfield, which is popular precisely because it aggregates the rest.

The results scale down as well as up. FirstAI Consultancy shot human actors, then generated animated characters from their expressions — a job that would have cost millions and taken a year, delivered for a few hundred dollars in weeks. AI artist Prasad Gori, who three years ago chased production houses for work, now fields 10 to 15 offers a week.

That is the changing phase of cinema. Not machines replacing directors, but a compression layer wedged between the script and the shoot — and, for the first time, a route to market for filmmakers who never had one.

HYBRID FILMS' PITCH TO HOLLYWOOD: CUT 70% OF THE SET



Hybrid Films blends live action, VFX, CG and AI. Madhav Reddy is taking the proposition to IBC and TIFF: The Market

Mike Madhava Reddy
CEO Hybrid Films

Hybrid Films' Mike Madhava Reddy is selling global filmmakers a faster schedule: shoot real actors, generate the world behind them, save 70%

Madhav Yatham Reddy has spent 18 years cleaning up other people's frames. Now he wants to change how those frames get made in the first place.

His Hyderabad group already sits deep inside the global supply chain: What he is taking to IBC in Amsterdam and TIFF: The Market in Toronto is something else. A different production method, sold under a new brand — Hybrid Films.

"We focus on hybrid filmmaking," Madhav Reddy says. "Live action, VFX, CG and AI, all combined together."

The 50-to-70% pitch

The mechanics are deliberately unglamorous. Actors perform in the foreground against green or blue screen. Everything behind them is generated rather than built or modelled.

"Before, we needed to do the background

sets in CG. Now we don't have to do it in CG. We can generate that in AI, embed it and blend it with effects," Madhav Reddy says. "Suppose you want to make any set — you really don't have to make the set."

Hybrid Films is already running this for clients in Europe and for small and medium-budget producers in the US and Asia, and he puts the saving at 50% to 70%. The bigger prize is the calendar. A schedule that would need three months of set-building and location work compresses to about one. Travel disappears entirely: "You want to go shoot something in Paris, London — you don't need to travel. You can just shoot here and replace the backgrounds, and they feel like they are in Paris or London."

Two things anchor the claim. The tooling is a blend of ComfyUI-based workflows,

machine learning and proprietary systems the group built in-house. And the performances stay human. "The actors are not AI. They will be regular, real actors," Madhav Reddy says. Only the sets get replaced. His shorthand for the result: "It doesn't look like AI."

Build the film in AI, then shoot it

The second product is the more interesting business idea, and it comes in two sizes.

The small version is a pitch instrument. Hybrid Films will turn a story into a two-to-three-minute AI film in one to two weeks, at low cost, for filmmakers to take to producers and distributors to raise finance. Madhav Reddy compares it to the animation bible that once took two years to assemble.

The large version is a scheduling instrument. "We can do a three-minute teaser, or we can also do the entire movie first in AI, and plan the schedule accordingly," he says. Used as reference, it briefs every department at once: "The actor will know what to act. The camera will know what lighting setup we need. The art director will know what needs to be done on stage."

That is also his answer to Brad Pitt's argument that mid-budget American films will only survive by passing through an AI layer. Madhav Reddy agrees, and

locates the saving in waste rather than wages. Productions routinely shoot 30% to 40% more coverage than they use and only discover it in the edit. Pre-build the film and the day shrinks: "An eight-hour shoot can be done in four or five hours, because we have already planned and everybody knows what they need." Ten shots instead of thirty or forty.

Structured for export

Madhav Reddy runs separate teams for hybridfilms.ai and rotomaker.ai, with sibling brand AdsAI handling TV commercials, corporate films and documentaries produced fully in AI. The service spans advertisement to feature film, short film to documentary — and it travels. When a client shoots in Switzerland, Hybrid Films sends a team to supervise from storyboard through the green-screen shoot, then brings post-production home to the group's Hyderabad facility.

In Toronto, the target is explicit: small and medium-budget producers, with free consultancy on offer to show them what hybrid filmmaking would save.

On India's positioning, he is firm that this is not the old arbitrage. What India offers is skill, talent and an industry already established. "We have more trained, skilled people."

Hybrid Films now wants a seat at the front of the schedule.



ADOOR: A LONG, STEADY WALK TO GREATNESS

TIFF 2026 has shunned Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Padayaatra, produced by and starring megastar Mammooty. The loss might not be the iconic director's, not entirely at any rate by Saibal Chatterjee

Adoor Gopalakrishnan has been making films and earning laurels for upwards of 60 years. He needs no endorsement from a film festival. So, this article is not so much about his first film in a decade not making it to the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) this year as about what the festival might be missing as a consequence.

TIFF 2026 has chosen to ignore his 13th narrative feature, Padayaatra. The festival no longer has the Masters strand where the Kerala auteur, one of Indian cinema's all-time greats, was a regular since his sixth film, Mathilukal (The Walls), made the cut in 1990.

Produced by and starring Mammooty, Padayaatra, about a Gandhian doctor who opts to shift to a tribal area to work among the poor and disadvantaged, would have been a great fit for Gala Presentations especially since India has drawn a blank in TIFF's splashiest section.

Given the huge following that Mammooty enjoys among the Malayali Diaspora, which has a sizeable representation in Toronto and beyond, selecting Adoor's new film should have been a no-brainer.

The 86-year-old filmmaker's achievements have been greater and more consistent than that of any

THE 86-YEAR-OLD FILMMAKER'S ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN GREATER AND MORE CONSISTENT THAN THAT OF ANY LIVING INDIAN DIRECTOR

living Indian director. A film that he has made after the longest creative lull of his 61-year-old career should, by all reckoning, have been a TIFF shoo-in even if, for the sake of argument, we were to accept that Padayaatra might not be in the league of his early films.

Padayaatra, which will now probably premiere at a European festival early next year, reunites Adoor with Mammooty for the first time since Vidheyam (The Servile, 1994).

Their previous collaborations were on Anantaram (Monologue, 1987) and Mathilukal (1990). Like the latter film, Vidheyam travelled to TIFF in the mid-1990s, cementing the reputation





of both the director and the actor among film lovers in Toronto.

Had Padayaatra made it to Toronto, it would have been Mammootty's third time at the festival – and a full-blown event for Indian and Malayalam cinema watchers.

Although Adoor has made only 13 fiction features, he has crafted more than 30 short films and documentaries, one of which, Kalamandalam Gopi, bowed at TIFF in 1995, the year in which he also made his eighth narrative feature, Kathapurushan (The Man of the Story).

Adoor, an unwavering perfectionist, takes his own time to develop a film. "I cannot make a film until an idea gets me really excited," he has often told this writer over the years.

Adoor debuted with Swayamvaram (One's Own Choice, 1972), seven years after earning a film school diploma. It took him three decades and a half to reach double figures as a director of feature-length fiction films.

Adoor's tenth film, Naalu Pennungal (Four Women, 2007), an anthology that adapted four stories by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai about women from

different strata of Kerala society, figured in the TIFF selection. So did his ninth, Nizhalkkuthu (Shadow Kill, 2002), the masterfully crafted moral allegory informed with pathos and restrained lyricism.

Considering that he passed out of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in 1965, 13 feature films may seem like meagre returns. But assess the intrinsic, sustained quality of his body of work and it becomes abundantly clear that each

THE STRENGTH OF ADOOR'S FILMS LIES PRIMARILY IN THE FACT THAT THEY ARE DEEPLY PERSONAL YET UNFAILINGLY UNIVERSAL. THEY ARE ILLUMINATING CHRONICLES OF A COMPLEX, CONSTANTLY EVOLVING SOCIETY

of his superbly crafted Malayalam-language cinematic essays is, in terms of impact and longevity, worth five films by a lesser mortal.

The strength of Adoor's films lies primarily in the fact that they are deeply personal yet unfailingly universal. They are illuminating chronicles of a complex, constantly evolving society.

His ability to spot and interpret the subtle nuances of societal upheavals and human foibles is nothing short of phenomenal, a fact that invests his films with the sort of emotional and intellectual depth that are completely out of bounds for lesser filmmakers.

From Swayamvaram all the way up to Pinneyum (2016), which, too, went to TIFF, in every single film that Adoor has authored has been an artistic triumph.

How many filmmakers in the world can boast an oeuvre as unwavering as Adoor's: Swayamvaram, Kodiyettam (Ascent, 1977), Elippathayam (Rat Trap, 1981), Mukhamukham (Face to Face, 1984), Anantaram (Monologue, 1987), Mathilukal, Vidheyam, Kathapurushan (Man of the Story, 1996), Nizhalkkuthu, Naalu Pennungal, Oru Pennum Randaanum (A Climate for Crime, 2008) and Pinneyum?

The creative, social and political concerns in these films appear to be the same on the surface, but the treatment and ambience are invariably entirely new and fresh each time Adoor writes a script.

Adoor was born in 1941. Having lived through the many tectonic shifts Kerala has experienced, he deciphers every little tremor of humanity, or the lack of it, with amazing acuity.

His idiom is his very own, his images clinical and deeply resonant, the emotions controlled. A deep understanding of the human mind in general and the recent history of Kerala in particular govern his approach to narrative situations and character traits.

In most of his films – from Swayamvaram, in which a man and a woman break away from their families to begin a new life together without the sanction of marriage, to Nizhalkkuthu, where an old, infirm

PADAYAATRA MIGHT HAVE BEEN SHUNNED BY TIFF, A FESTIVAL THAT HOSTED HIM SIX TIMES IN THE PAST. BUT ADOOR AND A FILM OF HIS HAVE NEVER FAILED TO FIND THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD

hangman grapples with pangs of guilt in pre-Independence Travancore to Pinneyum, which explores the repercussions of greed and criminality – socio-political realities inescapably impinge upon life and determine the nature of human striving.

His body of work is a stunning demonstration of artistic consistency. Whether it is the linear Kodiyettam (The Ascent), the poetic Elippathayam (The Rat Trap), the trenchant Mukhamukham (Face to Face), the elliptical Anantaram (Monologue) or the emotionally layered Mathilukal (The Walls), his control over the medium never wavers.

Adoor writes his own scripts, handpicks his actors and possesses a keen eye for detail both within the cinematic frame and the ideational framework of a film. He never ever plunges into a film like a quick-fix artist; he always ambles into it with the gentility and focus of a consummate craftsman, chiselling away with utmost patience.

The translucence of Adoor's magnificent films stem from their pure core, a core that embraces and internalizes without compromise the nuances of life, the workings of the human mind and heart, and the dynamics of society.

Padayaatra might have been shunned by TIFF, a festival that hosted him six times in the past. But Adoor and a film of his have never failed to find their place in the world.

10 INDIES FROM INDIA FOR FESTIVAL SCOUTS

BY SAIBAL CHATTERJEE

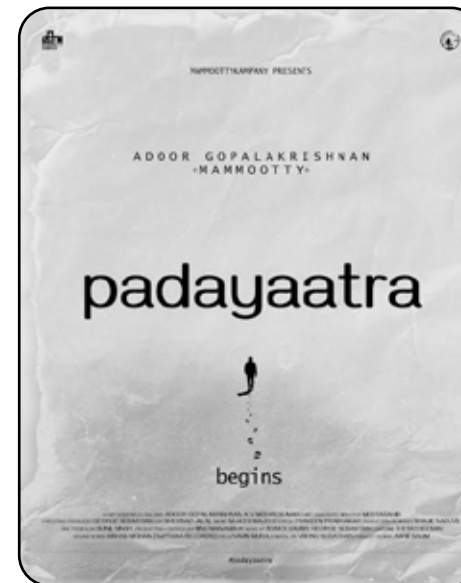
KHWAB HAI DEEWANE KA

The latest film from Ashish Avikunthak, whose cinematic oeuvre is more fascinating and challenging than that of almost any other director working in India, steadfastly steers clear of Indian cinema's conventional structures of creation and distribution. His last film Meghnad Badh Kavya (The Killing of Meghnad, 2026), premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) earlier this year. His Vidhvastha (Devastated) also played IFFR in 2024. Avikunthak's next film, Khwab Hai Deewane Ka, is an adaptation of the work of Hindi writer and playwright Krishna Baldev Vaid. It is titled after one of Vaid's literary works. You may not hear of Avikunthak's cinema among consumers of mainstream Indian films, but his films have greater and more permanent cinematic and artistic value than the viral images that assail us day in and day out. Khwab Hai Deewane Ka is his

first Hindi film since 2011's Katho Upanishad. All his films since then have been in Bengali.

PADAYAATRA

Adoor Gopalakrishnan's first film in a decade reunites the Malayalam cinema legend with Mammootty after a 32-year hiatus. The superstar, whose company Mammootty Kampany is the film's producer, plays a Gandhian doctor in 1970s-1980s Kerala negotiating a society in transition. The tale of a medical practitioner who relocates to the forests of Wayanad to work among the impoverished and marginalised explores ethics and professional probity. Padayaatra, scripted by Adoor and KV Mohankumar, co-stars Indrans and Grace Antony. The film is Adoor's fourth collaboration with Mammootty after Anantaram (in which the actor played a supporting role), Vidheyan (in which his performance fetched a best actor National Award) and the critically acclaimed Mathilukal.



ADDOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN'S FIRST FILM IN A DECADE REUNITES THE MALAYALAM CINEMA LEGEND WITH MAMMOOTTY AFTER A 32-YEAR HIATUS

PAGLA GHORA

National award-winning Bengali filmmaker Sekhar Das brings to the big screen the celebrated Pagla Ghora (Wild Horse), a hard-hitting, anti-patriarchal Badal Sircar play that continues to resonate more than 60 years after it was written and first staged. The director, who has a theatre background himself, has adapted the play in a manner that is purely cinematic while not doing away entirely with its intricate performative proscenium qualities. The film lands a strong hammer blow on a myopic male-dominated society in which women are compelled to struggle for agency. Das keeps the core of the Sircar play intact—four men wait at a cremation ground, drinking, playing cards and chit-chatting, while the body of a young woman burns on a pyre and her spirit (embodied by Gargee Roychowdhury) hovers around them. The demons that the four pall-bearers try to suppress bubble to the surface in the process.

LAVENDER FIRE

Raam Reddy, whose second film Jugnuma: The Fable premiered in Berlin two years ago, is now in the midst of his next film, Lavender Fire. It is reportedly about three Gen Z siblings whose lives converge in Mumbai and play out amid rising pressures of work, the quest of visibility on social media and rapidly shifting social priorities in a world where the real and the virtual collide. The exploration of Gen Z codes and their repercussions promises to be a lively examination of manners and mores, a far cry from the emotionally intense and stylistically elaborate Jugnuma. Reddy is of course no stranger to international film festivals. His debut Thithi was a Locarno award-winner in 2015. We expect Lavender Fire to surface at a major festival next year. Watch this space.

MOON

With three wins at the National Awards as well two key prizes at the 47th Moscow International Film Festival in 2025 for his delectable Ha Lyngkha Bneng (The Elysian Field), Pradip Kurbah is today one of Northeast India's most feted filmmakers. Regarded as a pioneer in Meghalaya's Khasi-language cinema, he is currently working on his sixth feature Moon, a psychological drama that alternates between Meghalaya and Delhi. A former rebel returns to his village in the hope of rebuilding his life but unanswered questions and unresolved issues get in the way of a clean break from the past. Kurbah's Iewduh (Market) screened in Busan in 2019. Moon was selected for the Busan Film Festival's Asian Project Market, a sure sign of the growing global acceptance of Kurbah's highly individualistic and rooted cinema.



VEIL OF DUST

Another Meghalaya filmmaker, Dominic Sangma, has been making waves with his culturally grounded and psychologically complex Garo-language films. His third film, Veil of Dust, revolves around a 12-year-old girl and probes what the filmmaker describes as "a degradation of soil and soul". It has been selected for the Asian Project Market – making it two in a row for Meghalaya – and Sangma is travelling to Busan in October. He plans to begin filming by the end of the year and hopes to complete it next year. The two previous films by the SRFTI alum – Ma'ama and Rapture – garnered international recognition. Rapture received widespread distribution in France in 2024. The plot of Veil of Dust is under wraps but what is amply clear is that the end product would be a film worth the wait.

NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING BENGALI FILMMAKER SEKHAR DAS BRINGS TO THE BIG SCREEN THE CELEBRATED PAGLA GHORA (WILD HORSE), A HARD-HITTING, ANTI-PATRIARCHAL BADAL SIRCAR PLAY THAT CONTINUES TO RESONATE MORE THAN 60 YEARS AFTER IT WAS WRITTEN AND FIRST STAGED



LEFTOVER

Produced by Anto Chittilappilly's Newton Cinema, the boutique banner behind films such as Don Palathara's Family and Prasanna Vithanage's Paradise, Leftover has the makings of an out of the ordinary cinematic work primed to strengthen the producer's reputation. Directed by the National Award-winning Kerala writer-director Salim Ahamed, the film is being screened in the newly-introduced Toronto Film Market. In a small town in South India, a couple is thrown into disarray after a shocking revelation about their son. The family's foundations begin to crack under the weight of caste, guilt and secrets unveiled. Leftover, on whose soundtrack audiences will hear a multiplicity of languages, has a cast of actors drawn from across India – Arjun Radhakrishnan, Roshan Mathew, Zarin Shihab, Tanmay Dhanania and Shweta Basu Prasad.

LEFTOVER HAS THE MAKINGS OF AN OUT OF THE ORDINARY CINEMATIC WORK PRIMED TO STRENGTHEN THE PRODUCER'S REPUTATION. DIRECTED BY THE NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING KERALA WRITER-DIRECTOR SALIM AHAMED, THE FILM IS BEING SCREENED IN THE NEWLY-INTRODUCED TORONTO FILM MARKET

KYAB

Diwa Shah, who works out of her native Nainital town, has already made her presence felt with the Kumaoni-language Bahadur The Brave (2023). It premiered at the 71st San Sebastian International Film Festival where it won the Kuxtabank New Directors Award. Her second project, Kyab (Refuge), was selected for La Residence du Festival de Cannes, where she won the top scriptwriters' grant. The under-production film, set in Delhi and McLeodganj, centres on two Tibetan brothers with opposing ideologies. Shah's films are rooted in her own lived experiences and drawn from her exposure to the people she grew up amidst. Bahadur the Brave was about Nepalese migrant workers in her hometown stranded due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Kyab puts the spotlight on a community displaced by the forces of history and grappling with notions of home and disruption caused by elements they can barely control.

BAJRANGI

The second film from Darbhanga filmmaker Parth Saurabh (Pokhar ke Dunu Paar), Bajrangi, set in the rural environs that he is personally familiar with, is ready to strike out on its own terms. Produced by actor-producer Anshuman Jha's First Ray Films, which revealed a slate of six titles in Cannes this year, is co-written and edited by the director himself. With filmmaker Devashish Makhija (Aaji, Bhonsle, Joram) serving as executive producer, Bajrangi has the wherewithal to secure its place on the world map. It centres on a strongman serving a village chief whose loyalty to his master is tested when he hears the chatter of a couple having clandestine sex in a mango orchard that guards. He sets his mind upon uncovering the identity of the lovers, opening a sluice-gate of complications in the bargain.



Nadhi

NADHI

Nadhi, a Telugu film by California-based Aditya Vempaty, is a result of the years that he spent with the Koya tribe of the Eastern Ghats. The film, starring Nandita Das, Nasser and Mia Maelzer, is currently in post-production. It is set in the mid-20th century in the forests of Andhra Pradesh. An ancient tribe struggles to hold on to its traditional way of life as its members are drawn towards modernity ushered in by the construction of a dam. Shot among the tribals, the film has Nandita Das in the role of a village matriarch and Nasser as a government official. Nadhi promises to deliver anthropological depth couched in a tale propelled by the drama of life.

11 FILMS ALREADY WINNING FESTIVAL ATTENTION

Lovers in the Blue Night (Hindi)

Director: Anuparna Roy
Orizzonti, 83rd Venice Film Festival
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

Dorothy (Tamil)

Director: Karthik Subbaraj
Centrepiece, 51st Toronto International Film Festival

HALF (Malayalam)

Director: Samjad
Midnight Madness, 51st Toronto International Film Festival

Rehmat (Punjabi)

Director: Gurvinder Singh
International Competition,
79th Locarno Film Festival

Birds in the Dark (Hanere de Panchi, Punjabi)

Director: Shashank Walia
Vision Asia, 31st Busan International Film Festival

Selvi (Tamil)

Director: Sailesh Rathnakumar
Vision Asia, 31st Busan International Film Festival

Khoriya (Hindi, Nepali)

Director: Vishwendra Singh
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

Chevittorma (The Soul Whisperer, Malayalam)

Director: Leo Thaddeus
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

Birds on Ice (Ladakhi)

Director: Sahil H. Shah
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

About An Intimate Matter (Ekanta Byaktigata Bishoy, Bengali)

Director: Sandeep Kumar Paul
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

Not a Hero (Assamese)

Rima Das
A Window on Asian Cinema,
31st Busan International Film Festival

MOST-ANTICIPATED INDIAN FILMS IN 2026

Ramayan Part 1



The first part of a planned two-part series, *Ramayan* is by far the most expensive Indian movie ever planned and mounted. The cumulative budget of the project is expected to top Rs 4,000 crore. Produced by Namit Malhotra's Prime Focus Studios, Yash's Monster Mind Creations and the American outfit Atlas Entertainment, the film is directed by Nitesh Tiwari and written by Sridhar Raghavan. Scheduled for a Diwali release, it has Ranbir Kapoor as Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravan and Sunny Deol as Hanuman. The adaptation of the Hindu epic is expected to benefit from a no-efforts-spared approach, with DNEG handling the film's VFX. The trailer of the film planned for July 24 was put on hold following a global distribution deal inked with Sony Pictures. Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman have scored the music. No Indian film has ever had ambitions as humongous as *Ramayan*. The world is watching.

King

Shahrukh Khan's next release, co-starring his daughter Suhana Khan in her theatrical debut (after the Netflix film *The Archies*), is a thriller that is believed to be inspired by Luc Besson's *Leon: The Professional* although the film is not officially acknowledged as a remake. Scheduled for release a day before Christmas, *King* is a multi-starrer. Deepika Padukone, Rani Mukherji, Abhishek Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Arshad Warsi and Raghav Juyal are part of the cast. The film is helmed by Siddharth Anand, director of the YRF Spy Universe films *War* and *Pathaan*. The joint production of Red Chillies Entertainment and the director's banner Marflix Pictures. *King* is SRK's first film since 2023, the year he delivered two megahits, *Pathaan* and *Jawan*. The film understandably has the superstar's fans as well as trade watchers in a state of excitement.

Athimanotharam

Kerala filmmaker Tharun Moorthy's fourth directorial (after last year's smash hit *Thudaram*) has all the makings of another box-office success. *Athimanotharam* reunites the writer-director with his *Thudaram* lead actor Mohanlal, who teams up on screen this time around with Meera Jasmine after a gap of well over a decade. The film is described as a family-themed cop drama that is planned for release (like SRK's *King*) on December 24. Scripted by Ratheesh Ravi, *Athimanotharam* has Mohanlal in the role of a police sub-inspector. It is the legendary actor's 366th film.



Jailer 2

The much-awaited sequel to Nelson Dilipkumar's *Jailer* (2023) will see Rajinikanth reprising the title role of retired prison chief "Tiger" Muthuvel Pandian with Mithun Chakraborty, Vidya Balan and S.J. Suryah being added to the cast in significant roles. Ramya Krishnan, Mirnaa, Shiva Rajkumar and Yogi Babu return to the film that continues from where the predecessor left off. In *Jailer 2*, Mithun will share screen space

with Rajinikanth after a gap of 30-plus years. The two veteran actors were last cast together in a Bengali film (*Bhagya Bidhata*) directed by South Indian choreographer Raghuram and featuring Rajini in a special appearance, his only film in that language. The Sun Pictures production is scheduled for release in Tamil and four other languages, including Hindi, a few days ahead of Dussehra.



Khalifa: Part 1 – The Intro

The opening salvo in a planned two-part film, this mega-budget underworld saga directed by Vysakh stars Prithviraj Sukumaran with Mohanlal playing an extended cameo. Centred on a gold smuggler and in-

ternational fugitive who fights for control of and survival in a world in which mobster-rivals and law enforcers alike gun for him. Mohanlal, who top-lined Vysakh's 2016 *Pulimurugan*, the first-ever Malayalam film to cross the Rs 100-crore mark, plays the founder of empire. *Khalifa: Part 1* will be followed by *Khalifa: Part 2 – His Reign*, which is reported to be an account of the gangster's grandfather whose story will find substantial space in the first film itself. *Khalifa: Part 1*, which co-stars Malvika Sharma in her Malayalam debut, Neil Nitin Mukesh, Tovino Thomas and Indrans, is scheduled for an Onam release.

Daayra

Bankrolled by Jungle Pictures, *Daayra* is the third collaboration between the production banner and writer-director Meghna Gulzar after *Talvar* and *Raazi*. In a casting coup of sorts, the crime thriller has Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran as two police officers pulled into a case in which an act of diabolical proportions sets off a chain of events. The film reflects on the distortions that creep into law enforcement and the dispensation of justice when opinions get divided. Meghna Gulzar's last film was the critically acclaimed *Sam Bahadur*. *Daayra* releases on September 18.

Om: Chapter 1: Udhiram – The Blood Wood

Co-produced by Dhanush's Wunderbar Films, this Tamil thriller is the 55th film of the actor's career. But that certainly isn't all there is to it. From what we have gathered, the film directed by Rajkumar Periasamy (Amaran) has greater depth of thematic vision than actioners usually do. It touches on the rights of forest dwellers under constant pressure to forgo access to the land, trees and other natural resources that have belonged to them since time immemorial. Besides Dhanush, the cast of *Om: Chapter 1* includes Mammooty, Sai Pallavi (who was also in *Amaran*), Sreeleela and Naseeruddin Shah (in his first Tamil film since *Hey Ram!*, released 26 years ago). The film releases on October 16. The title suggests that there might be a sequel or two in the pipeline although no official announcement has been made yet by the makers. Watch this space.



Arasan

Vetri Maaran expands the Vada Chennai universe in Arasan, a gangster saga releasing in the first week of November. The director's first film with Silambarasan has generated a buzz since the release of a promo showing the lead actor in two distinct avatars – a young street-smart man with a swagger and an older, greying, world-weary gangster. Like Vetri's *Vada Chennai* (2018) starring Dhanush, Arasan explores gang rivalries and underworld turf wars spread over several decades. A significant part of the Arasan cast is made up of actors who were also in the previous film – Andrea Jeremiah, Kishore Kumar G and Samuthirakani. Expectations are high.

Ranabaali

Real-life couple Vijay Devrekonda and Rashmika Mandanna, who tied the knot in February this year, have a film lined up to celebrate their marital union. Set in the 19th century, the action-oriented film has been helmed by Rahul Sankrityan (*Shyam Singha Roy*), who directed Deverakonda in the 2018 film *Taxiwalla*. Ranabaali centres on a warrior who leads a tribal resistance against the colonial British rulers in the Rayalaseema region during the time of the great famine of 1876-1878 that claimed millions of lives across the subcontinent. South African-American actor Hollywood actor Arnold Vosloo (*The Mummy*, *The Mummy Returns*) plays the main villain. Release in Telugu with dubs in the three other South Indian languages as well as Hindi is set for September 11.



Fauzi

In *Fauzi*, set for release on December 3 with multiple language versions, Prabhas plays an Azad Hind Fauj soldier in the 1940s whose exploits are derived from an unknown chapter of history. Helmed by Hanu Raghavapudi, the Telugu-language battlefield action film is the biggest production of the *Sita Ramam* director's career. Its budget is rumoured to be in the vicinity of Rs 600 crore. Backed by Mythri Movie Makers and presented by T-series, the film has pan-India distribution plans. The star cast includes newcomer Imanvi Ismail (an LA-born choreographer-turned-actor), Mithun Chakraborty, Anupam Kher and Jaya Prada. Given the budget, Fauzi will have to do extraordinarily well to erase the memory of Prabhas's last release, the underperforming *The Rajasaab*.

Don't Trouble the Trouble

Directed by Chennai-born Shashank Yeleti, the Telugu fantasy adventure stars Fahadh Faasil as an amiable magician who enjoys performing tricks for a little girl played Ssara Palekar. Owing to a sleight gone awry, the girl vanishes. Turns out that she is actually a genie who grants wishes. All hell breaks loose. The film is presented by S.S. Rajamouli. Fahadh Faasil's first lead role in a Telugu film is reason enough for us to be excited. Rajamouli's involvement is the icing on the cake. The film is due for release on September 11.

Emperor vs. Sarat Chandra

A Bengali historical epic written and directed by the prolific Srijit Mukherji, *Emperor Vs. Sarat Chandra* plays out in colonized India when the popular litterateur wrote the novel *Pather Dabi* (Right of Way) in 1927. It sold a large number of copies within a week but was banned on the grounds of being an outright critique of the British rulers. The film dramatizes that chapter of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's

life, which also saw the writer exchange a series of letters with Rabindranath Tagore, enmeshing the historical events with fictional ones described in the novel. Tota Roy Choudhury (seen in Karan Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*) plays the novelist. Originally scheduled for release in May, the film will now hit the screen in October during Durga Puja.

Seyon

Co-produced by Kamal Haasan's Raaj Kamal Films International and directed by Sivakumar Murugesan, *Seyon* is a rural action drama about faith, conflict and coexistence. Sivakartkeyan plays a soldier-turned activist who arrives in a village during a temple festival and finds himself intervening to stop disruptions of the traditional rituals. There is excitement over the prospects of the film following the box-office success of Murugesan's debut *Thaai Kizhavi*, a film produced by Sivakartkeyan and released earlier this year.

Sardar 2

A sequel to the Tamil language hit *Sardar* (2022), the spy action drama sees Karthi return in the dual roles of secret agent Sardar Chandra Bose and his son, Inspector Vijay Prakash. In the follow-up, which was announced immediately after the success of the precursor, is likely to focus more on the younger character. Rajisha Vijayan also reprises her role. P.S. Mithran, serving as the director again, has roped in S.J. Suryah, Malavika Mohanan and Ashika Ranganath. *Sardar 2* releases on September 10.





LATEST Blockbuster SPECIALS

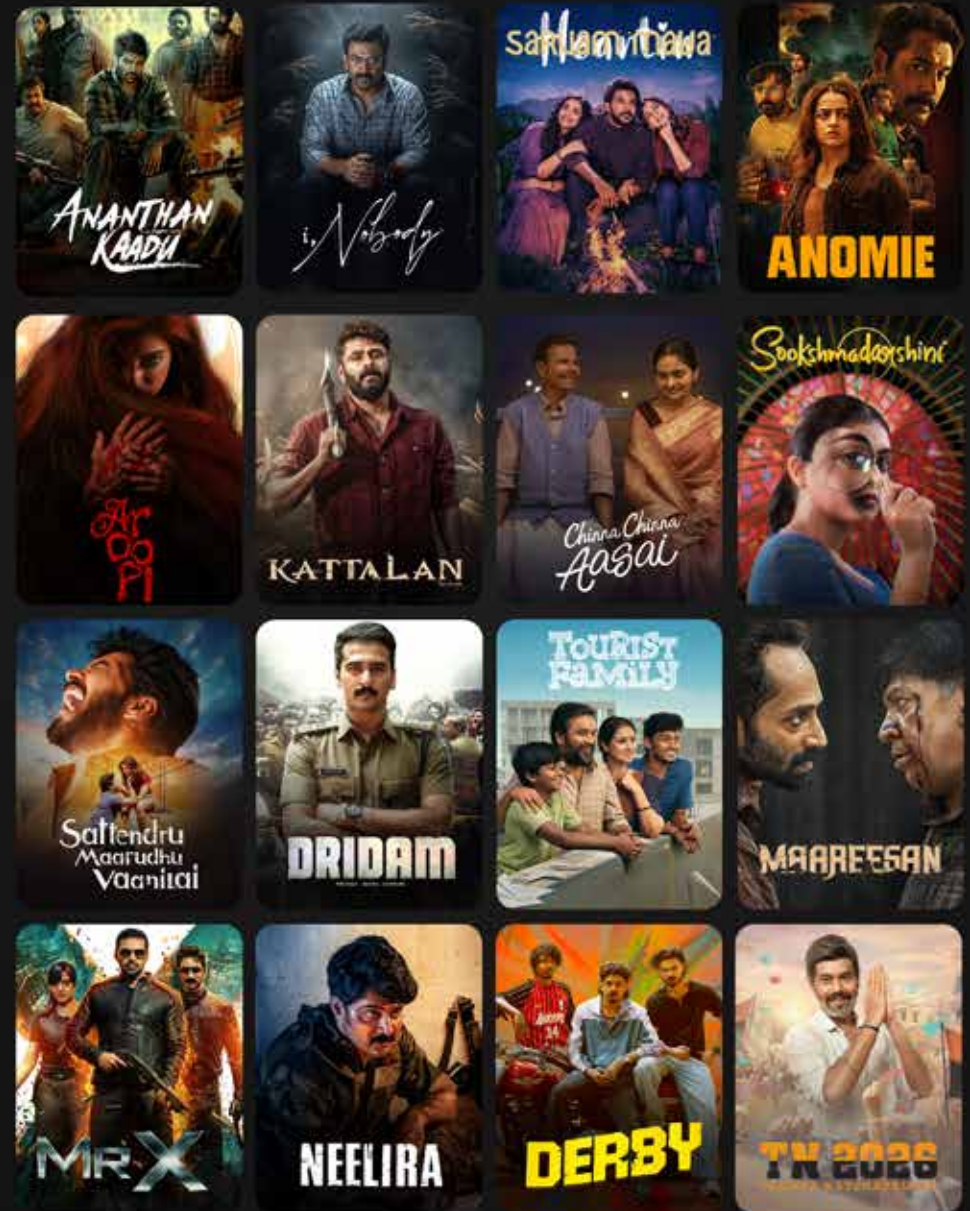


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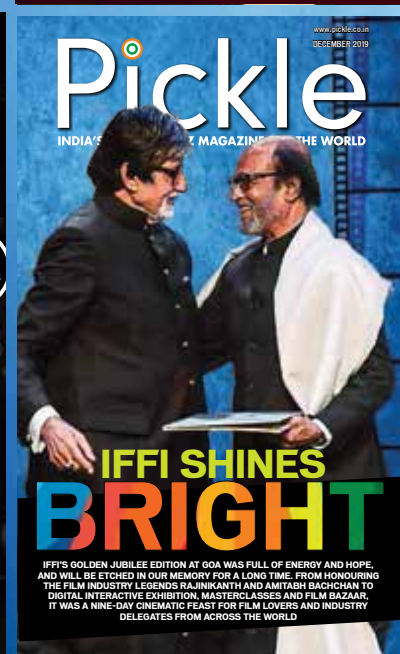
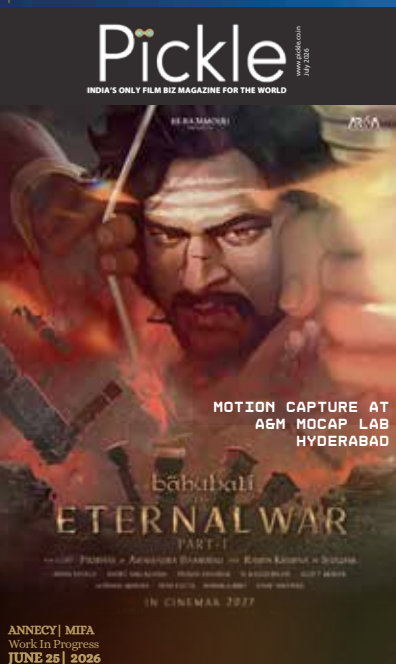
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