



BACKGROUNDERS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

IFFI: A Journey Written in Frames

November 15, 2025

Key Takeaways

- **IFFI 2025 will be held in Goa from November 20-28**, carrying forward the festival's legacy as South Asia's only FIAPF-accredited competitive film festival since 1952.
- **Japan (Country of Focus), Spain (Partner Country) and Australia (Spotlight Country)** lead this year's international collaborations.
- **Key highlights include** restored classics, centenary tributes, curated global sections, the first-ever IFFIESTA, an expanded WAVES Film Bazaar and the debut CinemAI Hackathon.
- IFFI 2025 features **240 films from 81 countries**, highlighting the festival's wide global participation.

Introduction

Since 1952, the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) has stood as South Asia's only International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF) accredited festival in the Competitive Feature Films category, signalling its stature on the global cinematic map. What began as an effort to bring the world's finest films to Indian audiences has, over the decades, transformed into a vibrant meeting ground for filmmakers, cinephiles and creative professionals from across continents.¹

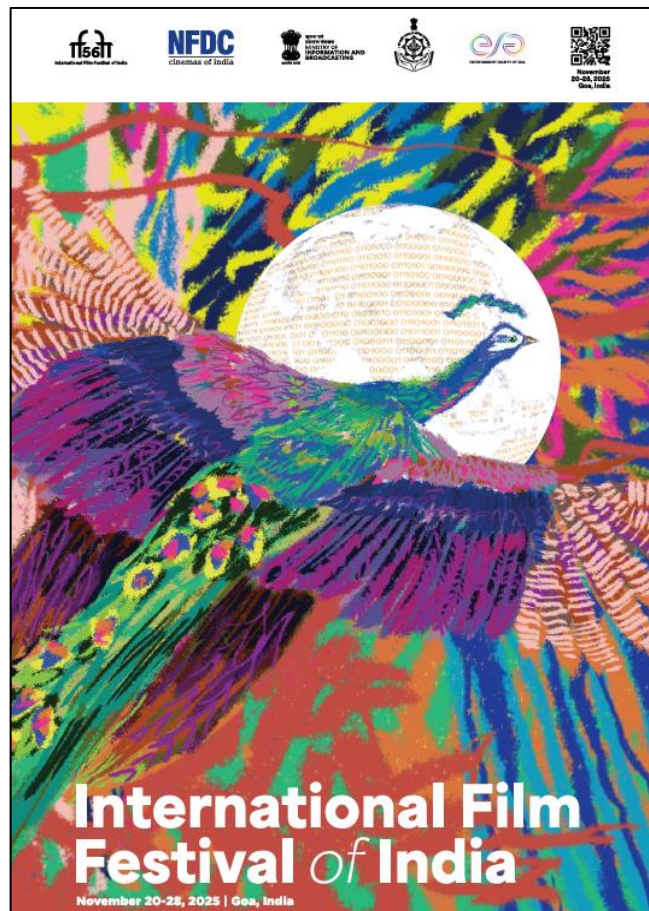
This year, the festival will be organised from **20th – 28th November**, bringing another dynamic edition to life in the heart of Goa.

At its core, IFFI embodies the belief that great cinema thrives when cultures meet. Each edition brings together an eclectic selection of films – culturally rich, and thoughtfully curated by distinguished industry

¹ <https://www.iffigoa.org/about-iffi>

experts – ensuring that the festival remains a trusted platform for artistic excellence. Its International Cinema section, in particular, showcases works that challenge conventions and expand the vocabulary of storytelling, reaffirming the commitment of IFFI to presenting the most compelling global voices of the year.

The festival found its permanent home in Goa in 2004, where it is jointly organised by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG)². Against the scenic backdrop of coastal Goa, what makes IFFI truly distinctive is its inclusive cultural spirit. The festival mirrors India's wider ethos of *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*—bringing together diverse creators, audiences and artistic traditions. Whether it is the increasing participation of women-led creative teams, the growing presence of young professionals, or the representation of tribal and indigenous narratives, IFFI offers space to voices that reflect the country's depth and diversity. This inclusivity not only strengthens the creative ecosystem but also echoes India's commitment to making culture and opportunity accessible to all.



IFFI 2025: Innovation, Inclusivity, and a Global Cinematic Spectacle³

This year, the 56th International Film Festival in Goa from **20th – 28th November**, will showcase an expansive programme that reflects the growing global stature of IFFI. This edition deepens the festival's international partnerships with **Japan** as the *Country of Focus*, presenting a panoramic showcase of six contemporary Japanese films across genres and forms. **Spain** joins as the *Partner Country*, while **Australia** enters the festival as the *Spotlight Country*, each bringing curated packages, institutional collaborations and cultural programmes that enrich global dialogue.

Programme Scale, Premieres & Selections

² <https://www.iffigoa.org/about-iffi>

³ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2187436>

IFFI 2025 presents an exceptional lineup of **240+ films from 81 countries**, including **13 world premieres**, **5 international premieres**, and **44 Asian premieres**. A record **2,314 submissions from 127 countries** reflects the festival's expanding global resonance. The opening film — *The Blue Trail* by Brazilian auteur **Gabriel Mascaro**, winner of the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at Berlinale 2025 — sets the tone for an edition defined by bold storytelling and cinematic ambition.

The Gala Premieres segment will present 18 titles, including 13 World Premieres, 2 Asia Premieres, 1 India Premiere and 2 Special Showcase screenings. The red carpet will welcome a distinguished line-up of artists and filmmakers.



International Competitions & Awards

Three major international competitions will feature **32 films from five continents**, bringing some of the year's most celebrated titles to Indian audiences for the first time. IFFI will also present award-winning films from Cannes, Berlinale, Venice, Locarno, TIFF, Busan and IFFR, reinforcing its role as India's gateway to outstanding contemporary cinema.



Curated Sections

This year's programming includes **nine curated sections** — *Docu-Montage*, *From the Festivals*, *Rising Stars*, *Mission Life*, *Experimental Films*, *Restored Classics*, *Macabre Dreams*, *UNICEF*, and *Cinema of the World*. In total, IFFI will present **15 competitive and curated segments**, including the International Competition, Best Debut Feature Film of a Director, and the ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal⁴.

Centenary Tributes

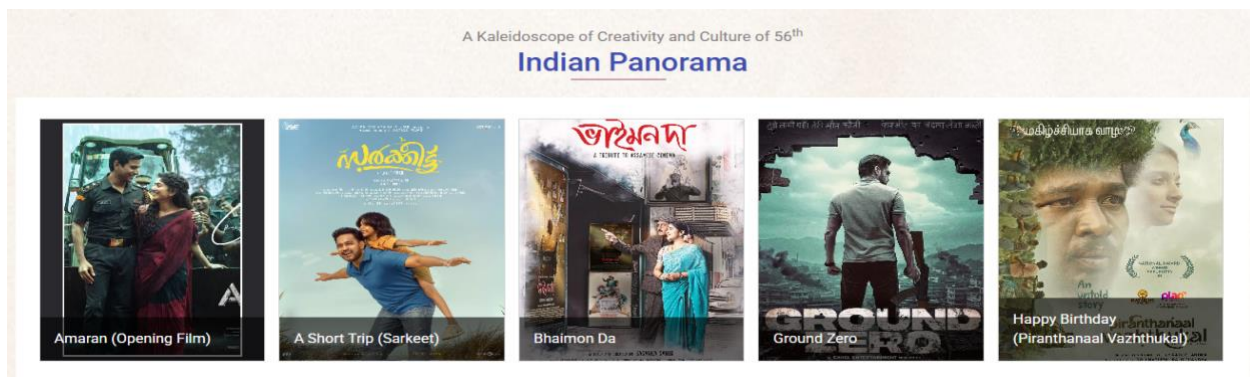
Celebrating legacies central to Indian cinema, IFFI 2025 will honour the centenaries of **Guru Dutt, Raj Khosla, Ritwik Ghatak, P. Bhanumathi, Bhupen Hazarika** and **Salil Chowdhury**. Restored masterpieces like *Musafir* and *Subarnarekha* will offer audiences rare encounters with cinematic heritage.

Rajnikanth's Golden Jubilee

IFFI 2025 will honour **legendary actor Rajinikanth** for completing **50 years in cinema**, marking a milestone that celebrates his enduring influence on Indian film culture. He will be felicitated at the **Closing Ceremony**, recognising his iconic body of work, widespread popularity, and contribution to shaping Indian storytelling across decades.

Indian Panorama and New Horizons

The **Indian Panorama 2025** will present **25 feature films, 20 non-feature films and 5 debut features**. The Opening Feature Film is *Amaran* (Tamil), while the Opening Non-Feature Film is *Kakori*.



A special *New Horizons* segment will screen up to five curated titles selected for their fresh cinematic approaches.

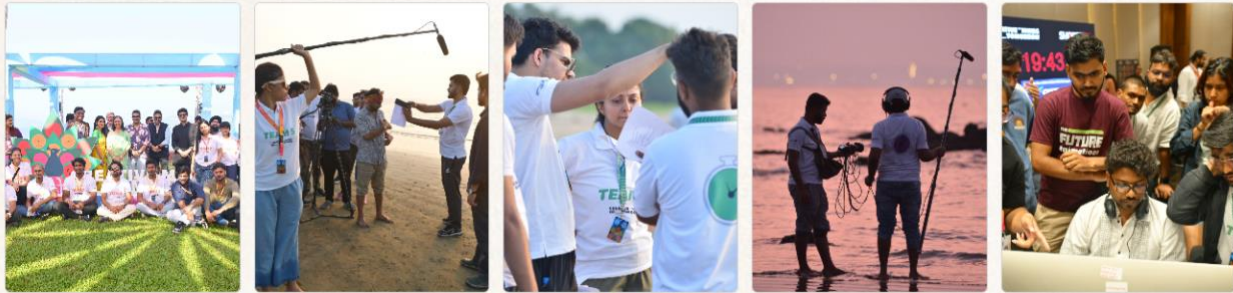
Women, Debut Voices & Emerging Talent

Inclusivity remains at the heart of IFFI this year, with **50+ films directed by women** and **50+ debut works** being showcased. The **Best Debut Indian Director Award** carries a cash prize of ₹5 lakh, and the **Best Web Series Award** will honour excellence in streaming content with ₹10 lakh.

Creative Minds of Tomorrow

The CMOT programme continues to expand, with **799 entries** this year and **124 selected participants** representing **13 filmmaking crafts**. The 48-hour filmmaking challenge with ShortsTV remains a core highlight.

Creative minds of tomorrow



Masterclasses, Panels & Knowledge Series

Festival attendees can look forward to [21 masterclasses and panel discussions](#), featuring Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Anupam Kher, Christopher Charles Corbould OBE, Bobby Deol, Aamir Khan, Suhasini Maniratnam, Pete Draper, Sreekar Prasad and others — covering story craft, acting, editing, cinematography, VFX, AI and the future of filmmaking.

Key Highlights This Year

Waves Film Bazaar: India's Creative Marketplace Goes Global⁵



India's flagship film market—formerly known simply as Film Bazaar and now reimagined as **WAVES Film Bazaar**—has grown since 2007 into one of the most influential co-production and content-discovery platforms in Asia. Held annually alongside IFFI, it has become the meeting ground where Indian storytellers, global producers, festival curators, technology partners and investors converge to shape the films of tomorrow.

What's Happening This Year:

The **19th edition** brings a significantly expanded and more dynamic marketplace from **20–24 November 2025**. This year's Bazaar strengthens its global footprint with:

- A robust **Co-Production Market** for features and documentaries, including curated projects shortlisted for international financing and festival circulation.
- The **Screenwriters' Lab**, Work-in-Progress Lab and a rapidly growing **Viewing Room**, enabling producers and sales agents to discover new voices across diverse languages and genres.
- A re-energised **Knowledge Series** featuring pitching sessions, country and state showcases, and practical workshops on production, distribution and emerging storytelling tools.

⁵ <https://films.wavesbazaar.com/>

- Enhanced international participation through dedicated pavilions, delegations and stalls, showcasing incentives from over ten Indian states and several partner nations.

With its growing emphasis on technology, collaboration and fresh talent, WAVES Film Bazaar continues to be the engine room of creative exchange at IFFI—where projects are discovered, partnerships are forged and the next generation of cinema finds its first champions.

IFFIESTA

Making its debut this year, IFFIESTA introduces a vibrant cultural layer to the 56th edition of IFFI. IFFIESTA 2025 will bring together four evenings of vibrant music, expressive live performances, and cultural storytelling from **21st – 24th November** in Goa. Designed as a celebration of sound and stagecraft, the festival will offer audiences a chance to experience everything from contemporary indie music to classical artistry and live theatrical moments. With young talents, seasoned performers, and diverse genres coming together, IFFIESTA aims to create an atmosphere where people can enjoy, participate, and feel part of a shared cultural experience.



Event Line-up

Date	Programme	Details
21 Nov 2025	Osho Jain Live Concert	Opening night performance
22 Nov 2025	Festival Showcase	Battle of Bands (India & International), Suron Ka Eklavya, Waah Ustad
23 Nov 2025	Festival Showcase	Battle of Bands (India & International), Suron Ka Eklavya, Waah Ustad, Devanchal ki Premkatha
24 Nov 2025	Festival Showcase	Battle of Bands (India & International), Suron Ka Eklavya, Waah Ustad

CinemAI Hackathon⁶

Hosted by the WAVES Film Bazaar in partnership with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and LTIMindtree, the CinemAI Hackathon is the first-ever AI film hackathon to be held as part of the 56th



edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI). It brings together art, technology and ethical innovation in storytelling.

What's Happening This Year

- The Hackathon is open to individuals or teams (up to 5 members), globally, aged 18 and above. Submissions began on 1 November 2025, with a deadline of 10 November. Final shortlisted teams will be announced around 16 November.
- Ten shortlisted teams will partake in a 48-hour creative sprint during IFFI (theme revealed on 20 Nov). Each must conceptualize, produce and edit a 1-2 minute short film entirely using AI tools.
- Recognition & Awards include:

Category	Prize Amount
Best AI Film	₹ 4,00,000
Most Innovative Use of AI	₹ 2,00,000
Best Storytelling	₹ 1,00,000
Best Visuals	₹ 1,00,000

⁶ <https://films.wavesbazaar.com/programme/cinemai-hackathon/>

Best Sound/Music Design

₹ 1,00,000

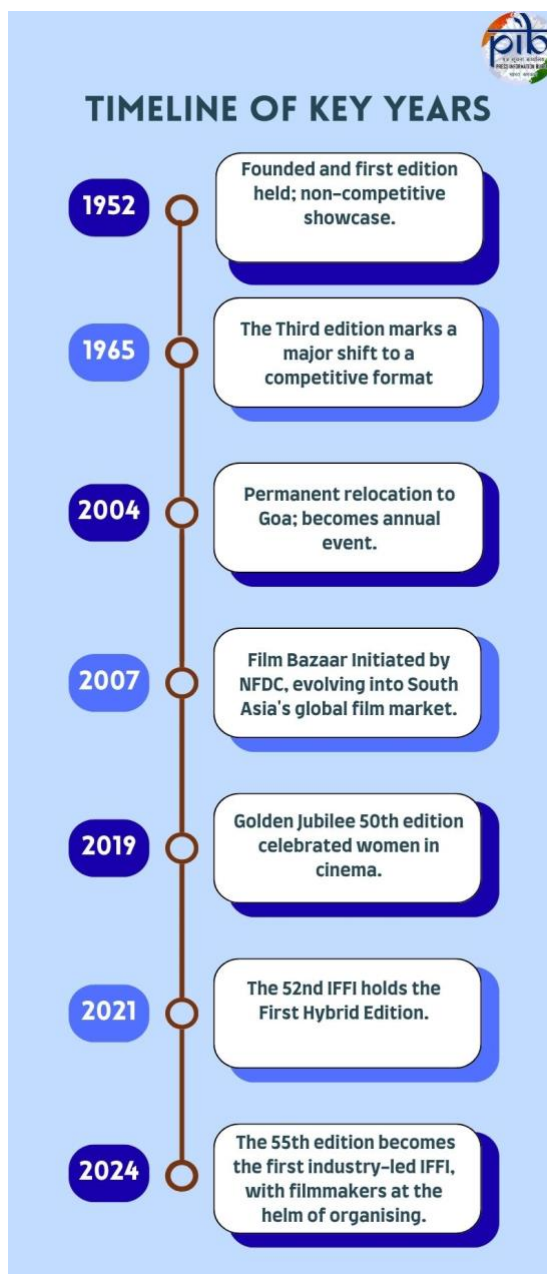
- Winning films will premiere at IFFI Goa and be featured on NFDC and LTIMindtree platforms.

Journey of IFFI: Memories and Evolution

IFFI was founded in 1952, shortly after India's independence, as an embodiment of the nation's freedom struggle values—justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, non-violence, unity in diversity, and solidarity. Organised by the Films Division under the Government of India, it embodied the Vedic philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family), the phrase which exemplifies the Indian notion of non-violence and peaceful coexistence.

The inaugural edition was held in Mumbai from January 24 to February 1, 1952, featuring approximately 40 feature films and 100 short films. It subsequently toured Madras, Delhi and Calcutta, marking India's entry into the global film festival circuit as South Asia's premier event.

Since its inception in 1952, the IFFI has been the largest event of its kind in India. Subsequent editions were held in New Delhi. From the 3rd edition in January 1965, IFFI became competitive. In 1975, the Filmotsav was introduced as a non-competitive festival to be held in alternate years in different filmmaking cities. Later, Filmotsavs were merged with the IFFI. In 2004, the festival found a permanent home in Goa, and has been organised there every year as a competitive event.⁷



⁷ <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/nov/doc20231120272601.pdf>



1st Edition of International Film Festival of India, 1952



Posters and stills exhibited in the Czechoslovakian stall of the International Film Festival exhibition in Bombay, 1952.



Entrance to the International Film Festival Grounds in Bombay, 1952.



An exterior view of the entrance to the International Film Festival exhibition grounds in Bombay, 1952.



Shri R.R. Diwakar, Minister of State for I&B to meet the delegates to the I.E. Festival at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi on February 22, 1952.

Strategic Impact of IFFI: Driving Cinema, Culture, and Commerce

IFFI, has evolved into Asia's oldest and India's premier cinematic platform. Backed by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Government of Goa, it drives soft power diplomacy, industry growth, and technological innovation in Indian cinema. IFFI, therefore, holds significance in many ways:

Cultural Significance: Bridging Indian and World Cinema

The International Film Festival of India is more than a screening venue; it is a government-backed platform that intentionally positions Indian cinema within a global conversation. IFFI works towards the discovery, support, and promotion of films across genres, cultures, and languages with a vision of connecting Indian cinema to the world and bringing world cinema to India. Growing in consistency with the motto of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The whole world is a family), the festival has facilitated interaction between Indian cinema and world cinema.⁸

Films have served as a successful tool for boosting India's diplomatic and trade relations worldwide, with the role of films in projecting India's soft power and leading to new opportunities. India produces more than 2,000 films annually in over 20 languages – the largest in the world.⁹

Film Market and Co-Production Opportunities

The WAVES Film Bazaar, held alongside IFFI since 2007, runs a Co-Production Market, Work-in-Progress labs, viewing rooms and networking events that convert festival attention into financing, distribution and festival strategies. Film Bazaar's curated programs have directly facilitated co-productions, sales and international festival placements for Indian projects, creating tangible career and revenue pathways for

⁸ <https://www.utsav.gov.in/view-event/international-film-festival-of-india-1>

⁹ <https://indbiz.gov.in/50th-iffi-showcases-over-250-films/>

filmmakers and producers. WAVES Film Bazaar, the 19th edition of India's premier film market, will present over 300 film projects for co-production and distribution opportunities and cash prizes worth \$20,000 will be awarded to winning entries.¹⁰

AVGC-XR Industry Development

A dedicated Tech Pavilion at IFFI highlights innovations in VFX, animation, and CGI, aligning with the festival's theme of technological creativity.¹¹ The WaveX platform under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting's WAVES initiative has established incubation centers to support startups in the Media, Entertainment, AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics), and XR (Extended Reality) sectors.¹²

The Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), a National Centre of Excellence for AVGC-XR, aims to drive innovation, research, and development in animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, film, and extended reality, with partnerships with global industry giants including NVIDIA, Google, Adobe, Meta, and Microsoft.¹³

Tourism and Economic Impact on Goa

As Goa's permanent host, IFFI enhances tourism and attracting global visitors and stimulating local economy. The Entertainment Society of Goa facilitates all procedures and permissions for film shooting in Goa through a single window system, with the International Film Festival held in Goa every year promoting film tourism in a significant way.¹⁴ Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant noted that IFFI and Goa are well connected, with the festival becoming a major event on the calendar, and infrastructure being upgraded every year to make it a world-class experience.¹⁵

Conclusion

As the 56th edition of IFFI prepares to unfold, the festival stands at a compelling crossroad of heritage and innovation. From celebrating cinematic legends to championing new voices, from showcasing restored classics to embracing the possibilities of AI-driven creativity, IFFI continues to reaffirm its role as a platform where the past, present and future of storytelling meet. With its expanded programming, global partnerships and a renewed cultural dimension through the first-ever IFFIESTA, this year's festival promises to offer audiences far more than a viewing experience — it offers participation in a living, evolving cultural journey.

¹⁰ <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/waves-film-bazaar-unveils-20000-cash-grants-for-co-production-market-at-19th-edition-in-go/>

¹¹ <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/iffi-2025-to-showcase-innovation-inclusivity-and-global-cinema-rajinikanth-to-be-honoured-for-50-years-in-film/>

¹² <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/wavex-launches-seven-new-incubation-centers-to-boost-media-entertainment-and-avgc-xr-startups/>

¹³ <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/india-launches-iict-to-revolutionize-avgc-xr-sector-with-global-industry-partnerships/>

¹⁴ <https://esg.co.in/film-shooting-permission/>

¹⁵ <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/iffi-has-become-important-milestone-in-development-of-film-industry-ashwini-vaishnaw/>

In bringing together artists, audiences, creators and communities alike, IFFI remains a testament to cinema's enduring power to connect people across borders, languages and imaginations. As Goa prepares to host another memorable edition, the festival looks ahead with optimism, creativity and an unwavering belief in the stories yet to be told.

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