

FIPRESCI-INDIA NEWSLETTER-52

APRIL 2025

Monthly Bulletin of the India Chapter of International Federation of Film Critics

Website: <https://fipresci-india.org>

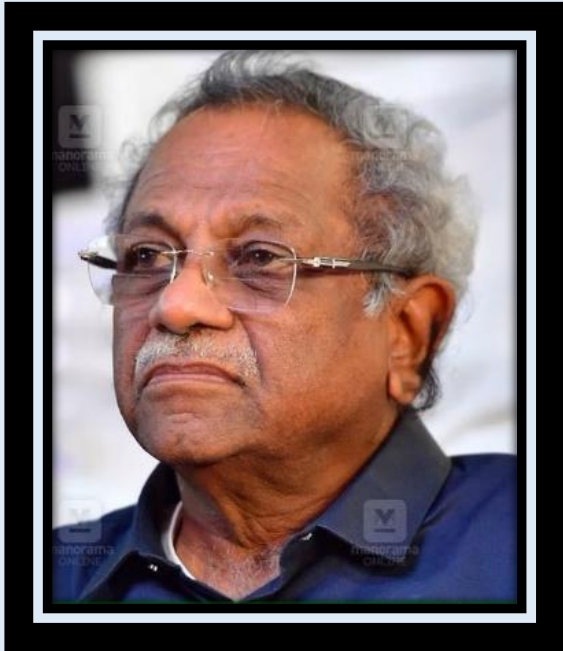
PRADIP KURBAH CREATED HISTORY IN MOSCOW INTL. FILM FESTIVAL



Indian filmmaker Pradip Kurbah created history in the 47th Moscow International Film Festival (17-24 April 2025) by winning three prestigious awards – NETPAC Award for the Best Asian Film, Best Director Award, and Best Film Award in the international competition for his film *The Elysian Field* (Ha Lyngkha Bneng, India, Khasi, 2025, 123 mins). While giving the NETPAC Award, the Jury President Premendra Mazumder said, “It is a cinematic gem which takes us to a beyondness through a brilliant philosophical journey enriched with humour and satire on love, life and death with astounding poetic visuals where nature acts as a stimulant keeping us engrossed from beginning to end.” Grand Jury member Cornel Gheorghita from Romania, while giving the Silver Saint Goerge for the Best Director said, “This is a very important film, which took me to a new level in world cinema when Sokurov, Kurosawa and Beckett come together. And this film stands out from all what we saw at the competition.” Another member of the Grand Jury Aleksey German Jr. from Russia also said, “This is an incredibly bold film by a courageous, smart, subtle and perfectly humane director who did exactly what one should not do to win at a festival – he removed all powerful narratives and themes and took people’s feelings and emotions instead.” While awarding the Golden Saint George for the Best Film the Chairman of the Grand Jury Luis Miñarro from Spain said, “The title of the film *The Elysian Field* can be interpreted as a place where superior souls meet.” There were 13 films from 13 countries in the main competition of the festival showcasing more than 200 films in different sections. The Indian Embassy in Moscow congratulated Pradip Kurbah on their Facebook page on 26 April saying that “This remarkable triple win represents an unprecedented achievement for an Indian regional-language film at a major international festival.” *The Elysian Field* is a futuristic film set in 2047 when India celebrates the centenary of independence in a village in the Khasi hills where only six characters – Complete, Livingstone, Maia, Friday, Miss Helen, and Promise live. Brilliant cinematography and music of the film done by Pradip Daimary and Anderson Warlarpah respectively. Three other Indian films, a short fiction *The First Film* (2024, 19 mins) by Piyush Thakur, a documentary *Baghjan* (2024, 78 mins) by Jaicheng Xai Dohutia, and an experimental film *Joker* (2025, 74 mins) by Sourish Dey were also showcased in different sections of the festival. All the directors were present in person.

EMINENT FILMMAKER SHAJI N. KARUN PASSED AWAY

Eminent Indian filmmaker Shaji Neelakantan Karunakaran, popularly known as Shaji N. Karun was born on 1 January 1952 in Kollam district of Kerala. He was the eldest son of



Mr. N. Karunakaran and Mrs. Chandramati. He studied at Palkulangara Higher Secondary School. He was graduated from the University College Thiruvananthapuram. He entered the Film and Television Institute of India Pune in 1971 from where he took his diploma in cinematography. His diploma film *Genesis* (1974), directed by Rahul Dasgupta, won many awards. He also won the Gold Medal on graduation in 1974. On later days he worked with many notable filmmakers like G. Aravindan, K. G. George, and M. T. Vasudevan Nair as a cinematographer. His debut film as a director, *Piravi* (1988) won the Caméra d'Or – Mention d'honneur at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival. He also won the National Award for Best Director for his debut film *Piravi*. He was the first Chairman of the Kerala State

Chalachitra Academy, the first film academy of India. He was the Executive Chairman of the International Film Festival of Kerala from 1998 to 2001. He is best known for his award-winning films *Piravi* (1988), *Swaham* (1994), *Vanaprastham* (1999), and *Kutty Srank* (2009). He won seven National Film Awards and many Kerala State Film Awards. He was selected as the President of Purogamana Kala Sahitya Sangham (Progressive Arts & Literary Organization) in 2018. In 2019 he was appointed as the Chairman of Kerala State Film Development Corporation. Recently he was honoured with the J C Daniel Award for lifetime contribution to Malayalam cinema, the highest film honour instituted by the state government. He was honoured with the Padma Shri by the Govt. of India, Order of Arts and Letters by the Govt. of France. For a short period of time, he was the Vice President of the Federation of Film Societies of India from Kerala Region. He died on 28 April 2025 at the age of 73 in Thiruvananthapuram survived by his wife, Anasuya Devaki Warriar, and two sons, Appu and Anil. FIPRESCI-India pays tribute to this great director of Indian cinema.

MANOJ BARPUJARI DELIVERED J P AGARWALA MEMORIAL LECTURE

National Award-winning film critic, FIPRESCI member Manoj Barpujari delivered the 16th Jyoti Prasad Agarwala Memorial Lecture at the newly renovated Kanaklal Baruah Auditorium, Assam State Museum Complex, Guwahati on 26 April 2025 on the occasion of the celebration of 60 glorious years of Gauhati Cine Club, founded in 1965 by Bhupen Hazarika. Manoj Barpujari (in pic) talked on the topic 'Close observation of film culture: Ours and Others.' His well-researched insights captivated the audience, comprising of students, film enthusiasts, and cine club members, who warmly appreciated his address. To mark this historic event, 60 earthen lamps were lit, symbolising six decades of dedication of the Gauhati Cine Club (affiliated to the Federation of Film Societies of India) to propagate film culture in Assam.



ZAGREBDOX INTL. FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 21st ZagrebDox International Film Festival Croatia, 30 Mar to 6 Apr 2025, awarded to the film *Night of the Coyotes* by Clara Trischler (Austria, Germany, 2024, 82 min). The jury was composed of Dimitra Bouras (Belgium), Armando Russi (Colombia), and Sara Simić (Croatia). The film tells us about an indigenous Mexican village which is turning into a ghost town as many of its inhabitants emigrate. To survive this, the villagers start simulating an experience they all know: crossing the border to the US illegally.



VISIONS DU RÉEL INTL. FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 56th Visions du Réel International Film Festival, Switzerland, 4-13 April 2025 awarded to the film *To the West, in Zapata* by David Bim (Cuba, Spain, 2025, 75 min). The jury composed of Štěpánka Zapata (Czech Republic), Sanjin Pejkoć (Sweden), and Anne-Sophie Scholl (Switzerland) in their motivation said, "In a constantly changing and insecure world, we would like to highlight a timeless and an exceptionally



beautiful depiction of everyday life struggle set in a brutal, almost mythical, environment. The quality of this film lies, among other things, in the extraordinary black and white imagery complemented by the intense surrounding sounds. Although the observation is framed in a rough way, it values tenderness and love at a very fundamental level."

HONG KONG INTL. FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 49th Hong Kong International Film Festival, Hong Kong, 10-21 April 10 - April 2025 awarded to the film *The Botanist* by Jing Yi (China, 2025, 96 min). The Jury composed of Amarsanaa Battulga (Mongolia), Artur Zaborski (Poland), and Yam Lau (Hong Kong) in their motivation said, "This film is a beautifully cinematic introduction to Kazakh culture, caught between tradition and modernity, told with subtle awareness through the eyes and voice of a young boy. It's a visually astonishing coming-of-age narrative, with great attention to minute details and carefully arranged composition in both still and moving shots."



ISTANBUL INTL. FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 44th Istanbul International Film Festival, Turkey, 11-22 April 2025 awarded to the feature film *Lesson Learned* by Balint Szimler (Hungary, 2024, 119 min) in the Golden Tulip International Competition, and short film *Citizen-Inmate* by Hesam Eslami (Iran, 2025, 15 min). The jury composed of Dmytro Desiateryk (Ukraine), Simon Popek (Slovenia), and Ayla Kanbur (Turkey) in their

motivation for the feature film said, "The FIPRESCI jury awards *Lesson Learned* for its elegant structure and powerful voice. Set in a school, the film tackles urgent social and political issues in contemporary Hungary. With emotional precision, humour, and outstanding work with child actors, director Bálint Szimler moves beyond conventional social critique, mocking cowardice, narrow-mindedness, and aggression to offer a bold and humanist reflection on sacrifice and the pursuit of freedom."

JULIEN DUBUQUE INTL. FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in Julien Dubuque International Film Festival, USA, 23-27 April 2025 awarded to *Nothing Wrong* by Samuel Plante (Canada, 2024, 103 min). The jury composed of Carlos Aguilar (USA), Alfredo Naime (Mexico), and Andreina Di Sanzo (Italy) in their motivation said, "The recipient of our award showed a strong directorial hand to elicit heartbreaking and truthful performances from their actors. The film presents an original perspective on a difficult subject while avoiding melodrama. And despite the suffering and guilt it powerfully puts on screen, it reaches for a hard-earned, luminous resolution. We feel privileged to be able to award this filmmaker early in what we hope is a long career."



jury was composed of Marko Stojiljković (Slovenia), Hugo Emmerzael (The Netherlands), and Jenni Zylka (Germany).

APARAJITA PUJARI IN CBFC AS A PANEL MEMBER

Aparajita Pujari (in pic), a member of FIPRESCI, has been appointed as a member of the Advisory Panel of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) on 16 April 2025. CBFC has nine Regional Offices (RO) at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Cuttack and Guwahati with its Head Office in Mumbai. The ROs are assisted in the examination of films by the Advisory Panels constituted for the purpose by Govt. of India with experts from different walks of life for a period of 2 years. Aparajita Pujari has been appointed as a member of this panel associated with the Guwahati RO of CBFC.



GOEAST -FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 25th goEast -Festival of Central and Eastern European Film, Germany, 23-29 April 2025 awarded to the docu-fiction *Eighty Plus* by Želimir Žilnik (Serbia, Slovenia, 2025, 118 min) and the found footage documentary *A Year in the Life of a Country* by Tomasz Wolski (Poland, 2024, 85 min). The

UPCOMING FESTIVALS WITH FIPRESCI INTERNATIONAL JURY

Mastercard OFF CAMERA Intl. Festival of Independent Cinema, Poland, April 25 - May 4 [Jury: Salome Kikaleishvili (Georgia), Daniel Oliveira (Brazil), Hanna Margolis (Poland)]; **International Short Film Festival Oberhausen**, Germany, April 29 - May 4 [Jury: Giuseppe Di Salvatore (Switzerland), Nini Shvelidze (Georgia), Kathrin Haeger (Germany)]; **Schwerin Filmkunstfest**, Germany, May 6-11 [Jury: Hadwiga Fertsch-Röver (Germany), Roman Scheiber (Austria), Sarah Stutte (Switzerland)]; **Flying Broom Intl. Women's Film Festival**, Turkey, May 27 -June 4 [Jury: Senem Erdine (Turkey), Adriana Fernández (Mexico), Bettina Hirsch (Germany)]; **Cannes Intl. Film Festival**, France, May 13-24 [Jury: Laurent Delmas (France), Mariana Hristova (Bulgaria), CJ Johnson (Australia), Michael Ghennam (France), Eva Novrup Redvall (Denmark), Hosam Fahmy (Egypt), Ioannis Raouzaios (Greece), Olga Ruin (Sweden), Freddie Wong (Hong Kong)].

Edited & Published by: General Secretary, FIPRESCI-India (Reg No TVM/TC/7/2021) from Chirakkulam Rd, Thiruvananthapuram-695001, Kerala, India. Ph+91-98301-40517. E-Mail: indiafipresci@gmail.com