

# FIPRESCI-INDIA NEWSLETTER-61

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

## FIPRESCI-INDIA AWARD IN 11TH AJANTA-ELLORA INTL. FILM FESTIVAL



FIPRESCI-India National Critics Award for the Best Debut Film in 11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival was given to *Songs of Forgotten Trees* (India, Hindi, 2025, 80 mins) by Anuparna Roy. The FIPRESCI-India National Critics Jury composed of Dr C.S.



Dr C.S. Venkiteswaran, Dr Minakshi Dutta, and Anna M.M. Veticad (*in pic left*) in their citation said, “Anuparna Roy’s tender film, *Songs of Forgotten Trees*, expands the definitions of friendship and intimacy through a tale of two women adrift in a metropolis. Shot primarily within the restrictive physical space of a flat in which the action is largely set, Roy’s writing and Debjit Samanta’s camera sensitively portray the emotional journey of two women finding

solace and meaning in each other.” The jury also awarded Special Mention to *Silent Rebellion* (Switzerland, Belgium, France, 2025, 98 mins) by Marie-Elsa Sgualdo. The festival was held from 28 Jan to 1 Feb 2026 in Aurangabad, renamed as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, a historic city in Maharashtra renowned for UNESCO World Heritage sites like Ajanta and Ellora Caves. During the opening ceremony, legendary composer Padmavibhushan Ilaiyaraaja received the Padmapani Award 2026 (*in pic right*). The Official Jury chaired by the iconic sound designer Resul Pookutty awarded *Parajya* by Mahadev Hadapad as the Best Film, Anuparna Roy for Best screenplay for *Songs of Forgotten Trees*, Naaz Shaikh as Best Actor (Female) for *Songs of Forgotten Trees*, and Prajwal Kollal as Best Actor (Male) for *Parajya*. The jury also awarded Special Mention to *Magazine* by Shubham Sanjay Shevade, and *Secret of a Mountain Serpent* by Nidhi Saxena. Best Film Award in Marathwada Short Film Competition went to *Mukta-Article 21A* by Satish Dhutadmal. Audience Choice Award went to the Marathi film *Sabar Bonda* by Rohan Kanawade.



## **JAFFNA FILM FESTIVAL**

11th Jaffna International Cinema Festival opened on 30 Dec 2025 at Jaffna, Sri Lanka concluded on 4 Jan 2026 by giving the following awards: Audience Choice to the film *Dheera* (Sri Lanka, 2025, 16 mins) by Sayanthan Abisaran, Best National Short Film to *The Last Endless Night* (Sri Lanka, 2025, 19 mins) by Jacob Luke Jeroshan, Best International Short Film *Under The Snow* (Iran, India, 2025, 19 mins) by Nafieh Zare, Best Debut Feature Film to *Victoria* (India, Malayalam, 2024, 85 mins) by Sivaranjini J, Best Documentary in New Asian Current section to *32* (Sri Lanka, 2025, 75 mins) by Visakesa Chandrasekaram. Dr Ankuran Dutta, Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (Formerly Indian Cultural Centre), High Commission of India in Colombo, inaugurated the festival (in pic) followed by screening of Pradip Kurbah's award winning feature film *The Elysian Field* (India, Khasi, 2025, 123 mins). At the closing ceremony the festival honoured Premendra Mazumder with the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award was handed over to him by the eminent filmmakers of Sri Lanka Asoka Handagama, and Visakesa Chandrasekaram, and the Festival Director Anomaa Rajakaruna.



## **THIRD EYE ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL CONCLUDED IN MUMBAI**

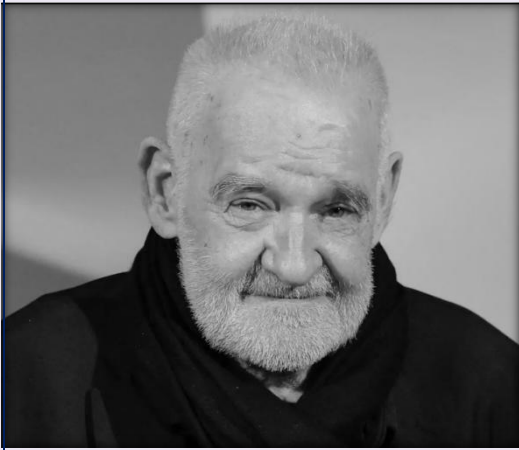


22nd Third Eye Asian Film Festival Mumbai opened on 9 Jan 2026 at P. L. Deshpande Maharashtra Kala Academy, Prabhadevi, Mumbai, concluded on 15 Jan by giving away several awards. Dr V Shantaram Award for the Best Debut Director was given to Tribeny Rai for her film *Shape of Momo* (India, Nepali, 2025, 114 mins). In Indian Competition the Best Film Award given to *Ballad to the Winds* (Assamese, 2025, 116 mins) by Sanjib Sabhapandit, Best Director Award to Monjul Baruah for *Romantic Affairs* (Assamese, 2025, 142 mins), Best Actress Award to Kasvi Sonkorisan for *Romantic Affairs*, and Best Actor Award to Manoj Sharma for the film *Body* (Hindi, Marathi, English, 2024, 142 mins) by Abhijit Mazumdar. In Marathi Cinema Competition, the Best Film Award given to *Sabar Bonda* (2025, 117 mins) by Rohan Kanawade. Asian Culture Award was given to Sai Paranjpye, and Satyajit Ray Award to Uma Da Cunha, a former member of FIPRESCI. Meenakshi Shedde, a member of FIPRESCI, won the Sudhir Nandgaonkar Memorial Award as the Best Film Critic (in pic). This award is given to pay tribute to Sudhir Nandgaonkar (11.06.1939–01.01.2023), former President of FIPRESCI-India, and founder director of the festival.

## **FIPRESCI-INDIA SEMINAR IN AURANGABAD**

FIPRESCI-India organised its first seminar of the year on 29 Jan 2026 at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) during the 11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival on the topic 'How Critics Nurture Good Cinema'. FIPRESCI-India jury members Dr C.S. Venkiteswaran, Dr Minakshi Dutta, and Anna M.M. Vetticad took part in the seminar (in pic).





## **BÉLA TARR PASSED AWAY**

Béla Tarr, a towering force in world cinema, passed away on 6 January 2026, at the age of 70. He stands among the rare artists who did not merely make films but redefined what cinema itself could be. His severe and uncompromising vision shaped what we now call slow cinema, asking viewers not to consume images but to inhabit them. Born on 21 July 1955 in Budapest, Tarr first gravitated toward philosophy, before discovering in cinema a deeper moral instrument—one capable of watching, listening, and bearing witness to the fragile,

often invisible rhythms of everyday life. As he reflected in 2014, the lesson that guided him from his earliest experiments was simple yet profound: respect for people, their lives, and their dignity. His early works emerged from a raw, vérité impulse, attending closely to ordinary Hungarians burdened by social injustice and private despair. *The Outsider* (1981), his unsparing portrait of an alienated, alcoholic musician, announced a filmmaker unwilling to compromise with illusion. “There were a lot of lies in cinema,” he said in 2001. “We didn’t knock on the door—we broke it down.” What Tarr pursued was not elegance for its own sake, but truth—cinema as resistance, as an anti-movie. From *Damnation* (1988) onward, his cinema grew increasingly poetic and existential. In stark black and white, through unbroken, hypnotic long takes, Tarr transformed stillness and duration into emotional force. In masterpieces like *Sátántangó*, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, and his final testament, *The Turin Horse* (2011), he revealed a vision of humanity marked by suffering yet illuminated by an austere, unforgettable beauty. His films inspired devotion, challenged patience, and left an indelible mark on generations of filmmakers and cinephiles alike.

## **PALM SPRINGS INTL. FILM FESTIVAL**

FIPRESCI Prize in 37th Palm Springs International Film Festival, USA (2-12 Jan 2026) for the Best International Feature awarded to *Sirāt* (Spain, 2025, 115 mins) by Oliver Laxe. The jury composed of Fran Romero (Chile), Davide Abbatescianni (Ireland), and Patrick Mullen (Canada) in their motivation said, “At a year when the competition featured such a strong presence for stories about children and their parents, this film thrillingly captured our attention with its portrait of a father’s devotion to his son and daughter, as well as the chosen family they encounter along the way....”



## **TROMSØ INTL. FILM FESTIVAL**

FIPRESCI Prize in 36th Tromsø International Film Festival, Norway (19-25 Jan 2026) awarded to the film *Broken Voices* by Ondrej Provaznik (Czech Republic, Slovakia, 2025, 106 min). The Jury composed of Tadeusz Szczepanski (Poland), Ida Madsen Hestman (Norway), and Sarah-Louise Pelletier-Morin (Canada) in their motivation said, “The FIPRESCI jury awards its prize to a film that has given a voice to young girls. Through outstanding performances and striking images shot in 16 mm, it explores how ambition and discipline can slip into coercion and abuse, with a restrained but deeply unsettling approach.”

## **FIPRESCI-INDIA GRAND-PRIX FOR BEST INDIAN FILM OF 2025**

FIPRESCI-India has started receiving entries for the Grand-Prix 2025. Only the Indian feature length films (minimum 70 mins), fiction and nonfiction, premiered or released between 1 Jan and 31 Dec 2025, are eligible to be considered. The FIPRESCI-India Grand Prix seeks to celebrate and recognize outstanding achievements in fiction and non-fiction filmmaking in India. The award comprises not only prestigious accolades but also a cash prize of Rs.10,000/- and a commemorative plaque. Distinguished members of FIPRESCI-India take part in the voting process in two phases to select the winner. Out of more than hundred films received annually, the Top-10 are carefully chosen by the 1st phase of secret voting and published on FIPRESCI-India's IMDB page. From these Top-10, the Best One is selected again by the 2nd phase of secret voting by the members. The award is given every year in a colourful program (in Pic: Joint winners of FIPRESCI-India Grand Prix 2024 receiving the award in IFFI-Goa-2025).



## **FIPRESCI INTRODUCES DOCUMENTARY GRAND PRIX**

FIPRESCI has launched the Documentary Grand Prix. This new award will be given to the best documentary film of the year. The winner will be selected through a vote by the members of this prestigious federation, representing over 50 national sections and 30 more countries with individual members. The award will be presented annually starting in 2026 at Millennium Docs Against Gravity (MDAG). The first winner will be announced at the Opening Ceremony of the 23rd MDAG in May 2026. Members of FIPRESCI from around the world will vote for the best documentary film of the past year, making this award one of the most important distinctions in global documentary cinema. It is a great honour for MDAG and for the Polish film industry that, among all festivals worldwide, Millennium Docs Against Gravity has been chosen as the place where this exceptional award will be presented.



## **UPCOMING FESTIVALS IN 2026**

**Göteborg Film Festival**, Sweden, January 23–February 1; **International Film Festival Rotterdam** (IFFR), The Netherlands, January 29–February 8; **Bengaluru International Film Festival**, India, 29 January–6 February; **Berlinale**, Germany, February 12–22; **Luxembourg City Film Festival**, Luxembourg, March 5–15; **Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival**, Greece March 5 – 15; **BUFF International Film Festival**, Malmö, Sweden, March 7–13; **Sofia International Film Festival**, Bulgaria, March 12–22; **CPH:DOX, Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival**, Denmark, March 15–21; **REGARD – Saguenay International Short Film Festival**, Quebec, Canada, March 18–22; **D'A Festival Cinema Barcelona (Spain)**, March 19–29; **Hong Kong International Film Festival**, April 1–12; **Istanbul Film Festival**, Turkey, 9–19 April; **Malmö Arab Film Festival**, Sweden, April 10 – 16; **Guadalajara International Film Festival**, Mexico, April 17–25; **Visions du Réel**, Nyon, Switzerland, April 17–26; .....