

FIPRESCI-INDIA NEWSLETTER-63

March 2026

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

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

ANNA VETTICAD WON OUTSTANDING WOMAN MEDIA PERSON AWARD



FIPRESCI member Anna M. M. Veticad won the prestigious Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Woman Media Person of 2025, presented by The Media Foundation. The award was conferred by P. Sainath on 20 March 2026 at the India International Centre, New Delhi (in pic). Named after the freedom fighter and community reformer Chameli Devi Jain, the award has been given since 1982 to some of the best known and respected figures in Indian journalism. The award, which is endowed by the Jain family and carries a cash prize of Rs 50,000, a citation and a trophy, honours women media persons who have made a difference with their writings on subjects such as social development, politics, gender justice, human rights, conflict,

health, environment, and so on. This is the first time the award is presented to a journalist working in the field of entertainment, culture, arts, and cinema.

2ND EDITION OF FIPRESCI-INDIA FILM FESTIVAL: CINEMAS OF INDIA

1st edition of FIPRESCI-India Film Festival: CINEMAS OF INDIA was presented at NFAI Pune in February 2024 in collaboration with the Pune International Centre and NFDC (in pic), at NANDAN Kolkata in August 2024 in collaboration with the Federation of Film Societies of India Eastern Region, and at India International Centre New Delhi in November 2024 in collaboration



with the IIC New Delhi. 2nd edition of the festival will be presented very soon in Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore, Pune, and some other cities in collaboration with the India International Centre New Delhi, Bangalore International Centre, Pune International Centre, Federation of Film Societies of India, and similar other reputed organizations. Films selected for the festival include: (1) *Adamyā*, Bengali, 2026, 110 min, by Ranjan Ghosh, (2) *Feminist Fathima*, Malayalam, 2024, 100 min, by Fasil Muhammed, (3) *Gondhal*, Marathi, 2025, 116 min, by Santosh Davakhar, (4) *If on a Winter's Night*, Malayalam, Hindi, 2025, 100 min, by Sanju Surendran, (5) *In The Name of Fire*, Magadhi, 2024, 99 min, by Abhilash Sharma, (6) *Magazine*, Marathi, 2025, 110 min, by Shubham Sanjay Shevade, (7) *The Lost Path*, Karbi, 2025, 108 min, by Khanjan Kishore Nath, (8) *Victoria*, Malayalam, 2024, 85 min, by Sivaranjini, (9) *Whispers of the Mountains*, Rajasthani, 2025, 90 min, by Jigar Nagda, and (10) *Yakasi's Daughter*, Mising, 2025, 74 min, by Jayanta Madhab Dutta.



FIPRESCI PLATINUM AWARD TO JAFAR PANAHI

The FIPRESCI Platinum Award, instituted a decade ago, recognises outstanding artists whose work has left a profound and lasting imprint on the history and language of cinema. Over the years, the honour has been conferred upon some of the most significant figures in world cinema, including Alan Parker, Nanni Moretti, Andrzej Wajda, Margarethe von Trotta, Costa-Gavras, Ettore Scola, Béla Tarr, Sally Potter, Arturo Ripstein, Goran Paskaljević, Ildikó Enyedi, Lucrecia Martel, Agnieszka Holland, and Ken Loach. FIPRESCI has long followed the work of Jafar Panahi with deep admiration, acknowledging his singular artistic voice, distinctive cinematic language, and steadfast commitment to freedom of expression. His films have been honoured by the Federation on several occasions, notably *The White Balloon* (1995), *The Circle* (2000), and *Taxi* (2015). The FIPRESCI Platinum Award 2026 was presented to Jafar Panahi during the Sofia International Film Festival, held in Bulgaria from 12 to 22

March 2026, in collaboration with the festival's director, Stefan Kitanov. With this recognition, FIPRESCI celebrates not only an exceptional body of work but also a filmmaker whose voice continues to stand as a powerful testament to cinema's role in confronting reality and defending artistic freedom. (PC: Kuba Dabrowski/FIPRESCI).

SOFIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 30th Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgaria, 12-22 March 2026 awarded to the film *Broken Voices* by Ondřej Provozník (Czech Republic, Slovakia, 2025, 106 min). The jury composed of Mo Abdi (UK), Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva (Bulgaria), and Ariel Schweitzer (France) in their motivation said, '*Broken Voices*, directed by Ondřej Provozník, takes on a highly sensitive subject and moves beyond controversy, side issues, and passing trends to delve deeply into characters who fluctuate between being seen as victims or heroes. In a tense yet precise and carefully controlled atmosphere, the filmmaker succeeds in connecting the world of his young protagonists with a choir, beautifully blending the subject with music. With remarkable performances from all the actors and meticulous direction, the film earned the unanimous agreement of all of us on the FIPRESCI jury.'



LUXEMBOURG CITY FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 16th Luxembourg City Film Festival, 5-15 March 2026 awarded to the film *Blue Heron* by Sophy Romvari (Canada, Hungary, 2025, 90 min). The jury composed of Jeff Schinker (Luxembourg), Michela Manente (Italy), and Constant Carbonnelle (Belgium) (in pic. PC: FIPRESCI) in their motivation said, 'We, the FIPRESCI jury, award the FIPRESCI prize to *Blue Heron* by Sophy Romvari, a film that deals with mental health issues through an astonishing cinematography that deconstructs chronology in a very subtle, painful, and emotional way. We particularly liked the way it shows how an undiagnosed teenage pathology affects a family as a whole – and how cinema allows to handle grief.'



THESSALONIKI DOCU FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 28th Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival, Greece, 5-15 March 2026 awarded to the films *Birds of War* by Janay Boulos Abd Alkader Habak (Syria, Lebanon, UK, 2026, 85 min) and *Exile(s), Tales From an Island* by Yorgos Iliopoulos (Greece, 2026, 119 min). The jury composed of Ruggero Calich (Turkey), Stefanie Diekmann (Germany), and Stefanos Ntalasis (Greece) (in pic. PC: FIPRESCI) in their motivation for the International Competition said, ‘A



testament to extraordinary courage, dedication, and strength, *Birds of War* is a film which is exceptional in both content and form. Integrating voice, video, and text messages, video diaries, TV footage, screenshots, documentary material from war zones, and rushes from the day-to-day struggle of a citizen filmmaker, this film tells the story of two people brought together by their steadfast belief in the power of the image and their shared conviction in the responsibility of documentary filmmaking and independent journalism....’

BUFF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 43rd BUFF Malmö Film Festival, Sweden, 7-13 March 2026 awarded to the film *Beef* by Ingrid Santos (Spain, Mexico, 2025, 85 min). The jury composed of Annika Gustafsson (Sweden), Axel Timo Purr (Germany), and Madelyn Most (France) (in pic. PC: FIPRESCI) in their motivation said, ‘Our choice is a story in which freestyle rap erupts as a form of therapy, a means of protest and a display of raw energy. It is a fierce coming-of-age story in which rhythm becomes the language of survival. Beneath its pounding verses lies the legacy of a Muslim mother from Mali living in Barcelona,



whose strength and traditions resonate in every line spoken by the protagonist. Words are bullets here — tools of self-empowerment that evolve into a quest for identity on migrant, linguistic, and musical levels....’

REGARD SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 30th REGARD - Saguenay International Short Film Festival, Quebec, Canada, 18-22 March 2026 awarded to the film *A Wolf in the Suburbs* by Amélie Hardy (Canada, 2026, 18 min). The jury composed of Kalash Nanda Kumar (Malaysia), Marco Lombardi (Italy), and Bruno Dequen (Canada) (in pic. with the awardee. PC: FIPRESCI) in their motivation said, ‘Inspired works of art can sometimes have the most improbable origins. From what could have remained a local news item, this film uses a



creative and fun *mise en scene* to brilliantly mix archival footage and contemporary scenes that feel like they’re transfigured by the filmmaking. As a memorable portrayal of one man who refuses society’s status quo with calm and method, this film invites us to rethink our missed connection with nature, while paying homage to all those who do the revolution at one’s own level. In this specific case, an experience in Olympic competition doesn’t harm the cause. It is therefore with great admiration that the FIPRESCI jury decided to unanimously award *A Wolf in the Suburbs* from Amélie Hardy.”

SUNNY JOSEPH JOINED AS DIRECTOR OF K.R. NARAYANAN FILM SCHOOL



Sunny Joseph assumed charge as Director of the K. R. Narayanan National Institute of Visual Science and Arts in Kottayam, Kerala on 11 March 2026 (in pic). A graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India, he has worked as a cinematographer on 65 feature films in 12 Indian languages, apart from numerous short films and documentaries, over a career spanning more than four decades. He has also directed around a dozen short films and two television serials, with *Salt of the Earth* marking his debut feature as a director. He has won multiple honours for both cinematography and direction. His cinematography credits include films like *Piravi*, *Nizhalkuthu*, *Train to Pakistan*, *Janala*, and several

others. R. Bindu, Kerala's Minister for Higher Education, said the appointment is expected to develop the institute into an international centre for film studies.

BENGAL INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

11th Bengal International Short Film Festival organised by the Bengal Film & Television Chamber of Commerce (BFTCC) at NANDAN, Kolkata from 24 to 27 March 2026

showcasing 57 short fiction and documentary films from all over the world. Awards were given to the winners at the Annual Award Ceremony of the BFTCC on 27 March 2026 at The Park Hotel, Kolkata. Best Short Fiction Award was given to a single take Bengali film *Suddenly One Day* by Rayati



Bhattacharya. Best Documentary Award was given to an Assamese film *The Battle of Kamrup* by Padmapani Bora. 2nd Best Awards in short fiction and documentary category went to *The Alter Echo* by Santanu Biswas, and *Chhaya O Smriti* by Patdeep Chaudhuri. Debalina Majumder's documentary *Friends of Jilipibala* won the Jury Award. Jury was composed of Dr Reshmi Naskar, Indrani Chakrabarti, and Nurullah Mohammad.

DR BHUPEN HAZARIKA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Premendra Mazumder, a member of FIPRESCI, was honoured with the 1st Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Lifetime Achievement Award by the Assam Film Society for his contributions to the film society movement. The award was presented at a function organised by Assam Film Society in collaboration with JB University Campus



Film Society in Jorhat on 10 March 2026 (in pic). The event marked the anniversary of the release of *Joymoti*, the first Assamese film made by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala on 10 March 1935. The award carries a trophy, a citation, and a cash prize of Rupees One Lakh.

Published by FIPRESCI-India from the Regd. Office in Trivandrum, Kerala, India