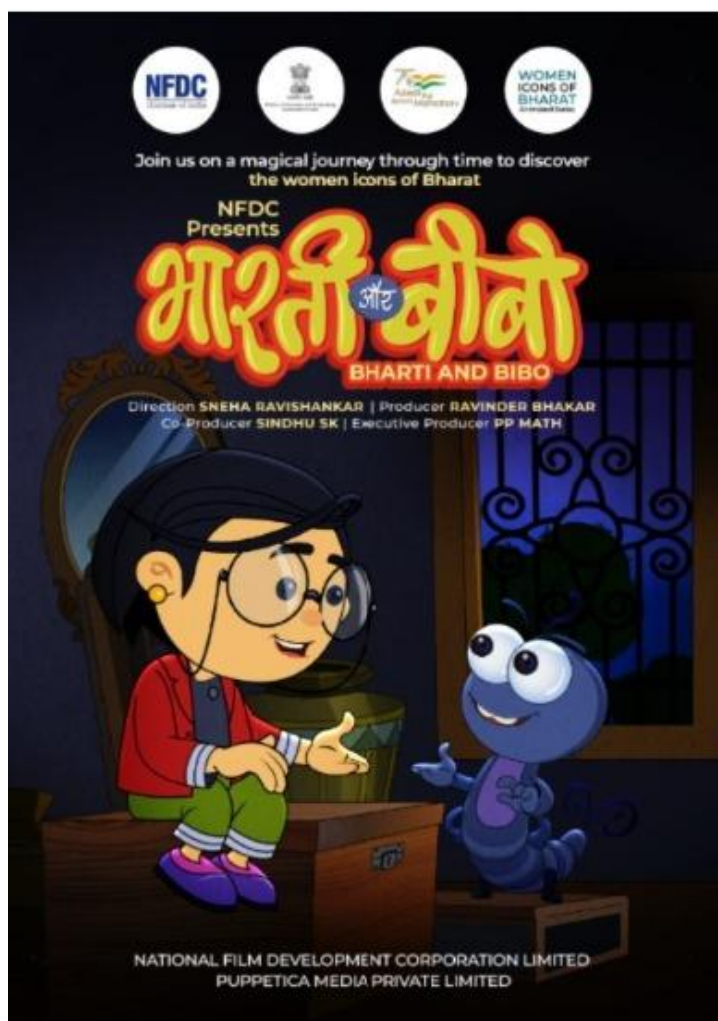




MIFF 2026 Hosts World Premiere of *Bharati Aur Bibo*, Animated Tribute to Bharat's Women Icons

Mumbai, 21 June 2026

The 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF 2026) hosted the World Premiere of *Bharati Aur Bibo*, a Hindi animation series produced by NFDC and Puppetica Media, directed by Sneha Ravishankar. Introducing the series, Ravishankar called it a huge milestone, noting NFDC's collaboration on the project. The series begins with a disclaimer that the women's stories are presented in their unedited form, as a tribute to these great women of Bharat.



Told through young Bharati and her magical companion Bibo — her name representing the female version of Bharat — each episode opens with a chorus celebrating women in everyday roles as drivers, caregivers, Kathak dancers, farmers, gymnasts, and artists, carrying the universal refrain: “*Nari mein Devi mein, mujhse hai sab kuch, mujhme hai sab kuch*”. This diverse presentation refuses to stereotype the image of great women.

The series profiles four real-life women icons of India. **Ahilyabai Holkar** depicts the Maratha queen’s rise from the royal household of Indore to one of administrative wisdom and diplomacy, with women as nourishers reflected through her mother-in-law, who taught her the lessons of strong leadership.



Rani Durgavati traces the Gondwana queen’s reign and her defiance of the Mughal Empire under Akbar — dismissed by his men with the words “*Wo to mehaj ek aurat hai,*” before her resolve forced their recognition of her power. The episode closes on her choosing death over surrender, a legacy honoured through Jabalpur’s Rani Durgavati University. The animator subverts the colour pink, usually tied to fragile femininity, recasting it as a fierce army of courage.

Rani Rashmoni follows the Kolkata social reformer who challenged the East India Company, built public welfare infrastructure, and pushed reform alongside Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, including a law banning polygamy. The episode also challenges religious patriarchy through priests’ refusal to perform puja at the Dakshineswar temple because it was built by a woman.

Saalumarada Thimmakka, distinct in tone from the royal narratives, portrays the Karnataka environmentalist who, denied formal education and married off young, went on to plant and nurture hundreds of trees as her own children, later honoured with the Padma Shri.

Across episodes, the series weaves in honest portrayals of widowhood, marriage, and the quiet emotional costs borne by these women. A subtle nuance of the storytelling is its gender balance, resisting a purely matriarchal framing in favour of a feminist approach.

The edutainment format makes history both accessible and engaging for young minds. At a time when the legacies of such heroic women of Bharat risk fading from memory, *Bharati Aur Bibo* serves as a reminder for children to know, value, and carry forward their contributions.



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