Marathi Cinema Takes Centre Stage at 57th IFFI

Diverse film selections accompany special tributes to Legends Suryakant Mandhare and Nana Patekar

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Mumbai, the heart of India's mainstream Hindi film industry, is also home to a vibrant Marathi cinema tradition that has evolved alongside Bollywood, carving out a distinct identity through its rich content driven storytelling, grounded realism, and deep literary roots. Celebrating this enduring cinematic legacy, the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) brings the diversity of Marathi cinema into focus through a selection of contemporary feature and non-feature films, alongside tributes to its celebrated personalities and cinematic heritage.

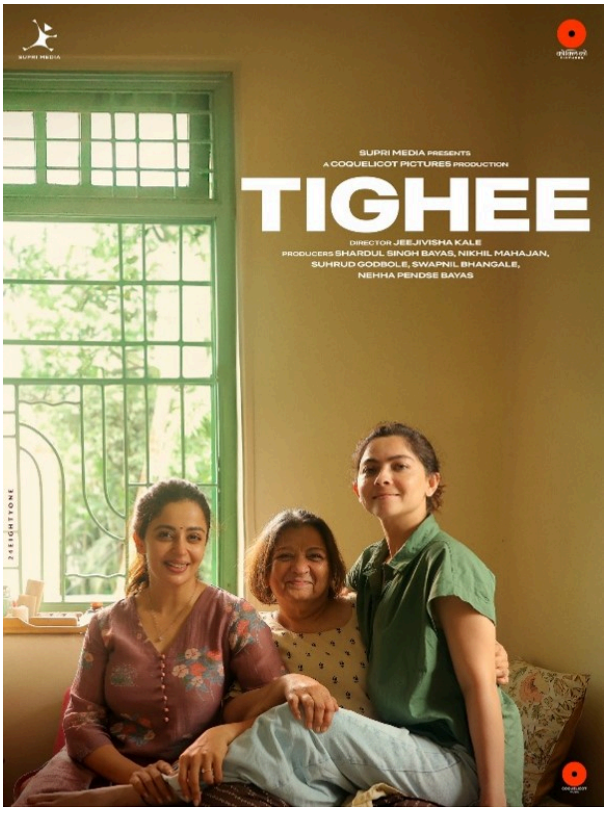
This year at IFFI, seven Marathi films have been selected for the Indian Panorama, while a celebrated classic will be presented in its restored version under the Centenary Tributes section. Another Marathi film will be showcased under the Gala Premieres section.



Among the feature-film selections, *Aadi Anant*, directed by Mahesh Limaye, explores the emotional bond between an aspiring actor and his grandfather. The film which highlights the challenges of caregiving, family responsibilities and the meaning of success, features Ashok Saraf, Sankarshan Karhade, Sakhi Gokhale and Yogesh Shirsat.

The Mainstream Cinema section of Indian Panorama brings together *Deool Band 2 (Temple Closed 2)*, written and directed by Pravin Vitthal Tarde, which portrays agrarian distress through the story of a woman who loses her farmer husband and *Baapya (The Man)*, directed by Samir Tewari, that follows a transgender protagonist returning to their hometown, weaving together themes of family and gender identity.

Another notable selection is *Tighee*, directed by Jeejivisha Kale, which is among the films featured in the Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film category at IFFI. This poignant family drama delves into relationships, sacrifice and the pain of unspoken emotions.



The Indian Panorama non-feature section further showcases three Marathi films, each offering a distinct narrative. Amyth Patkar's *Punishment (Shiksha)* examines guilt and its consequences through two seemingly unrelated thefts. Santosh Davakhar's *Sky Tree (Abhal-Vriksh)* portrays a villager's hopes amid drought, while Nipun Dharmadhikari's *The Moon (Chandoba)* captures a teenager's struggle with vitiligo and the social judgement surrounding the condition.

Beyond the Indian Panorama selections, *Tu Aahes Na (You Are There, Right?)*, directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Deepak Gawade, will be presented under the Gala Premieres section. The film touches upon grief, loneliness and identity, highlighting the unexpected human connections that bring meaning to life.

Marathi storytelling also finds a place in IFFI's Best Web Series Award category through *Devkhel*, directed by Chandrakanth Lata Gaikwad. This gripping crime thriller is set in a coastal village where a series of mysterious ritual-linked murders unfold, with superstition concealing a chilling truth.





The festival also celebrates Marathi cinema's rich legacy through the Centenary Tributes section, commemorating legendary actor Suryakant Mandhare on his birth centenary. As part of the tribute, his 1965 Marathi film *Sadhi Manase* will be presented in its restored version by the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) under the National Film Heritage Mission. A Homage section dedicated to the late Nana Patekar, renowned for his intense and memorable performances in Hindi and Marathi cinema, is also part of the 57th IFFI. The screening of his Hindi film *Diksha* and open air screening of his iconic Marathi film *Natsamrat* at Miramar Beach will offer audiences an opportunity to celebrate the legendary actor's enduring contribution to Indian cinema.

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