

Film Festivals like PIFF strengthen the collective viewing of Films

24th Pune International Film Festival is inaugurated in a grand ceremony

Pune, January 15, 2026:

"In the era of technological advancement, it is important to protect the culture of the collective viewing of cinema. Government of Maharashtra is committed to preserve this culture by supporting Film Festivals like PIFF," expressed Kiran Kulkarni, Chief Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra. He was speaking as a chief guest of the inauguration of 24th Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) at the E-Square Theatre on University Road.

The Festival is organized jointly by the Pune Film Foundation, the Department of Cultural Affairs (Government of Maharashtra), and Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari (Mumbai), the 24th Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) 2026 is being held from January 15 to January 22, 2026, across 10 screens in Pune. 130 films from 103 countries will be screened at the Festival.

Prominent figures present at the event included Swati Mhase Patil, Managing Director of Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari, Prakash Makdum, Managing Director, NFDC, Dr Shivajirao Kadam, VC, Bharati Vidyapeeth, Dr Suresh Gosavi, VC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Hemant Panchmiya, Director, E-Square and Dr Jabbar Patel, Director of PIFF. They inaugurated the Festival by lighting the lamp.

Swati Mhase Patil, MD, Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari, expressed that PIFF has been an important cultural platform for young people. She said, "PIFF has helped strengthen and extend the image of Pune as a cultural capital of Maharashtra."

She further informed that a Film Appreciation Initiative and a dedicated Marathi Film Festival titled Chitrapataka has been started by Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari and Government of Maharashtra.

Prakash Makdum, MD, NFDC informed that the government of India has started digital platforms such as Waves and India Cinehub to support young independent filmmakers.

In his key note address at the inauguration, Dr Jabbar Patel, director of PIFF emphasized the importance of the Festival and its support to the Marathi cinema. "Through PIFF's Marathi Competition several rural filmmakers have found a platform and recognition," said Dr Patel. He further added that it has helped shape today's Marathi cinema.

The ceremony also saw the unveiling of the festival's theme and catalogue.

The theme is celebrating the legendary film maker Guru Dutt and Ritwik Ghatak as it is their centenary year. The theme also celebrates legendary film maker V Shantaram to mark his 125th birth anniversary.

The festival also paid tribute to Late Suresh Kalmadi, the founding chairman of Pune Film Foundation.

As part of the ceremony the international jury was introduced and felicitated. International jury members included B. Jayamohan (India), Peter Kerekes (Slovakia), Riita Aalto (Finland), Seenu Ramasamy (India), Sergi Casamitjana (Spain), and Yesim Ustaoglu (Turkey).

International dignitaries were also felicitated at the inauguration. They included Markus Biechele, Director, Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune, Nicolas Lasnibat, Director, La F  mis, Mathieu Bejot, Audiovisual Attach  , French Institute in India, Am  lie Weigel, Director, Alliance Fran  aise de Pune, Dan Wolman, Eminent Director from Israel, Goran Radnovic, Eminent Director from Serbia Stage Reset

Pune Film Foundation Secretary General Ravi Gupta, Trustees Dr. Mohan Agashe, Satish Alekar, Sabina Sanghvi, Senior Film Critic and Chairman of the Film Selection Committee Samar Nakhate, Film Selection Committee member Abhijeet Randive, Deputy Director Vishal Shinde (Program & Film), and Deputy Director Aditi Akkalkotkar (International Relations & Coordination).

Following the inauguration ceremony, the Italian film 'La Grazia', directed by Paolo Sorrentino, was screened. Compering was done by Kshitij Date and Shreya Bugde.

A dance performance featuring Hindi film songs, directed by Nikita Moghe, was presented during the event.

Online registration for the festival is available at www.piffindia.com, and spot registration is currently open at all participating theatres.