

# THE PEACOCK

MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2023





## 54व्या इफ्फीक उर्बेभरीत येवकार

दामोदर मावजो

**भा**रताचो अंतरराष्ट्रीय चलचित्र महोत्सव (इफ्फी) ही गोंयकारां खातीर एक व्हड उमेदीची परब. ह्या महोत्सवा निमतान राष्ट्रीय आनी अंतरराष्ट्रीय मळार नामना जोडिल्लीं वेंचीक चलचित्रां आमकां पळोवंक मेळटात. तेभायर निवड समितीन वेंचिल्लीं नव्यान निर्माण जाल्ल्या कांय उत्तम चलचित्रांची दाखोवणी जाता. विशेश म्हळ्यार चोखंदळ प्रेक्षकांक मानवतलीं पूण सिनेमाघरांनी दाखोवप जायनात अशीं फास्के भायलीं चलचित्रां ह्या महोत्सवांत पळोवंक मेळटात. अंदू अंतरराष्ट्रीय सर्ती खातीर पंचवीस चलचित्रां वेंचून काडल्यांत. पोलंड, इज्राएल, बल्गेरिया, इराण, बॉसनिया अशा विंगड विंगड देशांनी निर्माण जाल्ल्या अप्रूप फिल्मां वांगडाच कन्नड आनी आसामचे करबी हे आदिवासी भाशेंतल्या चलचित्रांची हे प्रतिश्ठेचे सर्ती खातीर निवड जाल्या ही खोशेची गजाल. तरी एक गोंयकार जाल्ल्यान थोडी खंत आसा- इफ्फी सर्तेंत पावपाक कोंकणी सिनेमा खंय आनी कित्याक उणे पडटा? आमचे कडेन कोंकणी चलचित्रां नात अशांतली गजाल निखालस न्हय. इजिदोर दान्तस

हांणी 'कोंकणी चलचित्रां' ह्या पुस्तकांत दिल्ले म्हायती प्रमाण तांणी सोदून काडिल्लीं चलचित्रां आसात सुमार १५०. तेभायर आनिकूय सिनेमा तयार जाल्ले. पूण तांची फावो तितली म्हायती मेळूंक पावली नासुंये. त्या उपरांतच्या काळांत कांय उंचेल्या पावंड्याचीं चलचित्रां प्रदर्शित जाल्यांत तांची वळेरी व्हड जातली. तरी खंत आसाच. अंतरराष्ट्रीय महोत्सवाचें आयोजन भारतांत आनी तेंय बी आमच्या गोंयांत घडून येता हे खबरेक आयज वीस वर्सां जायत आयलीं तरी कोंकणी चलचित्र निर्माणेक फावो तशें सुविधाजनक वातावरण तयार जाल्लें ना.

आयजवेर गोंयान संगीत, कला, साहित्य, खेळ ह्या मळांचेर व्हड नामना जोडल्या. फुटबॉल हो गोंयचो लोकांमोगाळ खेळ. गांवागांवांनी हो खेळ खेळटात. ब्रह्मानंद शंखवाळकार, बुनो कुतिन्यो, रोमिओ फेर्नांडीस सारक्या जायत्या फुटबॉल गड्यांनी राष्ट्रीय मळार नांव केलां. तांचेर व्यक्तिपट वा त्या खेळाचेर चलचित्रां येवंक जाय. 'ग्लोरी' हो एक सिनेमा सोडल्यार आनीक दोव्यां मुखार येनात. संगीताच्या मळार तर आमचे कडेन एका परस एक रत्नां आसात. लोकसंगीत, भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत, अस्तेन्ती शास्त्रीय संगीत, भावगीत अशा संगीताच्या

अनेक प्रकारांनी गोंयकारांनी प्रभुत्व जोडलां. मोगुबाय कुर्डीकार, केसरबाय केरकार, अंजनीबाय मालपेकार हांचेर अभ्यास करून बरीं चलचित्रां करूं येतात. दिनानाथ मंगेशकार, खापरूमाम पर्वतकार सारके अप्रुपांचे कलाकार लोकांचे विसरायेर पडचे पयलीं तांचेर सिनेमा जावंक जाय. आबे फारीय, फ्रान्सिश्कु लुईश गोमिश, कृष्णदास शामा, बाकीबाब बोरकार हांचेर तांच्या जिवीत काळांत जायतो अन्याय जाला. एन्थनी गोन्सालवीस हांचीं निमणी वर्सां एकसुरेपणांत सरलीं आनी तांच्यो वेथा, तांचीं सपनां तांच्या वांगडाच सोंपलीं. ह्या सगल्या कलाकारांच्या जिवितांचेर संशोधन करून चलचित्रां निर्माण जावंक जाय. पूण ते खातीर सरकार दिता तें अनुदान पावचेंना. गैरफयदो घेवपी कांय लोक आसतले. पूण तांकां कुशीक दवरपा खातीर सगल्यांकच भायर दवरपा समा जावचें ना.

गोंय सरकारान मनरिझवणेच्या मळार उर्बा- उमेद वाडीक लावपाचे नदरेन ईएसजी ही संस्था स्थापन केल्या. हे संस्थेन कांय मोलादीक पावलां उकलल्यांत. गोंयकारां कडल्यान चलचित्र निर्मणी वाडची देखून निर्मिती खातीर धा ते पन्नास लाखांचें अनुदान दिता. पूण सरकारी दप्तरांत लालफिताची

आडखळ त्रास दिता असो अणभव निर्मिती उक्तायतात. ते भायर स्टुडिओचो खर्च, एडिटिंग, डबिंग, आउटडोअर शुटिंग, संगीत, सबिंग बी करून मागीर सेन्सॉरशीप दाखलो घेता म्हणसर निर्मात्याक नाकापुरो जाता. हातुंतल्यान वाट काडपाक जाय. ते नदरेन सरकारान फिल्म सिटी उबारपा खातीर पावलां उकलल्यांत ही आमचे खातीर उमेद वाडोवपी गजाल. हो वावर चालीक लावपा खातीर अशा एखादया योग्य मनशाची निवड जावंक जाय जाका गोंयची आनी गोंयकारांची सारकी वळख आसूंक जाय. सुशेगाद गोंयकार म्हळ्यार आळशी गोंयकार अशें समिकरण करपी नाका. सुशेगाद गोंयकार हो शांत आनी थीर वृत्तीचो सर्जनशील कलाकार आसूं येता हें ताणें मतींत दवरचें पडटलें. गोंयच्या उमेदवार कलाकारांक प्रोत्साहन दितना नीर-क्षीर वृत्तीन निर्णय घेवपाचे नेतृत्वगूण केळोवपी अशा अणभवी मनशाची निवड जाली जाल्यारच हो प्रकल्प फुडें वतलो. तसो तो वचचो अशी आस्त बाळगुंया. इफ्फी गोंयांत येवपाचो रुप्या उत्सव मनयतले तेन्ना म्हणसर संवसारीक चलचित्रां कडेन सर्त करपी कोंकणी चलचित्रां पळोवंक मेळचीं, इतलेंच.

महोत्सवाक उर्बेभरीत हुनहुनीत येवकार.

# First Day, First Show

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

**A**nkita Mishra has been super busy since she joined the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) this August as its CEO, just three months before the 54<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

“Before I came to Goa, I was a normal movie lover. I didn’t know what goes on behind the camera,” says Mishra, whose favourite films include *Sarfarosh* [1999], *Gangs of Wasseypur* [2012], and the American biographical sports drama, *Air* [2023]. “After joining ESG, *dheere dheere* I have realised there’s more to movies and cinema than what we see on the screen.” Her true passion, however, lies in dancing: “It’s too early to call myself a cinephile.”

Mishra says “we have a brilliant team here at the ESG. They are ready to work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Generally, when a team is faced with such a demanding job, there are tussles. Everyone works in their own, ineffective bubbles. Things fall apart; there is confusion and misunderstanding. Here, it’s great to see our team works in the opposite way. When work becomes more challenging, everyone comes together. We are very cohesive that way.”

In conversation with *The Peacock*, Mishra explained how the ESG functions as the nodal agency responsible for executing India’s largest and most prestigious film festival on behalf of the state government. “With Goa being a favourite destination for festivals like these, I think ESG has a very strong role to play. All these events require a number of permissions and interactions with the administration, and the ESG gives you that link.”

Earlier this month, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that ESG will establish a film city in Goa, which would create jobs and encourage the telling of Goan stories. “Once that film city comes up,” Mishra says, “our role will increase. I look forward to that.”

Mishra joined the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) in 2018. Prior to Goa, she was Deputy Commissioner of a zone in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and currently, in addition to her ESG responsibilities, she holds the position of Excise Commissioner. Yet, the IAS was not part of Mishra’s original life plan: “I did my engineering, took the GRE, and was all set to go to the US for a Masters in Artificial Intelligence.” But she is extremely close to her family, and struggled with the idea of moving across the ocean. “I decided to stay in India.”

Mishra’s next steps were grounded in what her community defined as success. “Coming from a classic UP family, where the UPSC is the ultimate

goal, I decided to follow that mind-set.” According to Mishra, clearing the exam became an obsession. “It challenged me in a manner like no other exam would.”

IFFI is the latest challenge in Mishra’s belt. “I’m confident it’s going to be great, because we are very much in sync with the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC). I’m curious to see what will emerge at the intersections of technology, virtual spaces, and film-making. That will be very interesting for us to watch.”

There are three reasons Mishra believes Goa is an exceptional space to host IFFI. “One, the scenic beauty. You have the Western Ghats, you have the beaches.” This year, IFFI will host screenings at Miramar and Anjuna. “Two, the culture. I always say that Goans have an appreciation for different art forms. There’s a strong consciousness and pride that Goans have for their culture. Three, Goa has ESG, which no other state has. It’s a big thing.”

Although this is Mishra’s first IFFI, she says that “I have heard so much about the festival already, and I am really looking forward to the experience. The opening and closing ceremonies, the screenings, I want to soak it all in. I am eager to see how all the hard work we have put in pans out on D-Day.”



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

## SHORT TAKES



IFFI is a place where you see films from all over the world, and the latest techniques and artistic presentations of different filmmakers.

**Linus Noronha,**  
Film Distributor  
New Delhi



This is my 11<sup>th</sup> IFFI; I really love attending the festival and I make sure to come here every year. You get to watch a lot of movies that you won’t see anywhere else

**Roberta D’Costa,**  
Businesswoman  
South Goa



This is my second year at IFFI. I enjoy the culture, I enjoy the people, and hope to watch some good movies.

**Tenzin Choedak,**  
Tech Admin  
Tibet



This is my 5th year working at IFFI. I look forward to seeing the celebrities. We don’t get to talk to them but even a glance is a special moment.

**Mooskan Khan,**  
DTP Operator  
Betim

# App Advantage

BY AJAY KAMALAKARAN

Anyone older than what is considered a millennial generally gets disturbed with the rapid expansion of technology, but the new IFFI App actually helps users overcome what its developer Pavel Kalenda calls a “psychological wall.” He says tickets are just a click away: “once you go through to the other side of the wall, you discover that it is so easy and simple that you don’t need to worry about paper tickets anymore. All you need is a smartphone and an internet connection, and you are set to use the app for a seamless experience.”

Arjun Navekar, who leads the IT section of the Entertainment Society of Goa, which has been working closely with Kalenda, agrees: “today we can call our app a success given that a majority of older people are seen using it.” He says it has been upgraded further since last year, and looks to be as fool-proof as possible.

## Schedule:

Once you’ve logged on with your delegate credentials, schedule the film you’d like to watch. You can block your screening two days in advance. Once you complete your booking you get an email confirmation as well.

The app stays a step ahead of you as it doesn’t allow any overlaps. So, for instance, if you reserve your place for a film at 9 am at Maquinez Palace, then the app doesn’t let you block a spot at another venue at the same time.

The app also takes into account the distance between venues to avoid overlaps, so it’s literally impossible to book a film that you won’t be able to attend.



IFFI Tech Team photographed by Assavri Kulkarni

These features help make sure that places are not unnecessarily blocked by those who have no intention of going for a film. All slots can be booked two days in advance.

## Timeline:

Here you can see all the films on schedule during the day. Each film link has a synopsis and other details such as cast and credits, while many have trailers. You can also reserve your spot for a screening here.

## My Tickets:

Divided into upcoming and used tickets, this section gives you a chance to rate the films that you have watched.

## My Diary:

This is your personal space to record notes and impressions of films, and the festival as a whole. It has time and date sections to save precise notes at specific moments.

## Other:

Quite a few sub-sections are packed under Other, including venues, where you can see what is being screened where, and also use the map feature to find your way there. This is one more place from where you can reserve your spot.

**Films A-Z:** This is a listing of all the films in alphabetical order and comes under the Other section.

## FAQs:

Answers to anything you want to know whether it’s your registration, badge, events or programs can be found here.

## The Peacock:

Every single edition of *The Peacock* will be available on the app. Stay tuned to the latest news and updates.

## SHORT TAKES



The design theme for this year’s peacock is not that attractive, but I like the LED screens. They did something unique this year.

**Deep Palav,**  
Control Admin  
Panaji



Goa has everything. It has the sea, hotels, greenery, and there are so many places to see. It was my dream to come here and see INOX.

**Gaurangi Kale,**  
Security  
Maharashtra



I’ve come to IFFI for 39 years and there are always beautiful films that are remembered forever.

**Geetha Krishna,**  
Film Director  
Hyderabad



I like my duty here; there’s no tension or problems. When I’m in Goa I feel like this state is better than my home, but when I go home I feel like my village is better than Goa.

**Reshma Patel,**  
Security  
Bihar

# Catching Dust



BY SUDIPTO MULLICK

**G**eena finally decides to leave her criminal husband Clyde and their isolated Texas hideout, but a couple from NY suddenly arrives. Ignoring the risks, she convinces Clyde to let them stay, a decision with dangerous consequences. This is the gist of *Catching Dust* (2023), which opens the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival of India today, 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm on all four screens of the festival multiplex.

*Catching Dust* is the feature debut of Stuart Gatt, an award-winning British filmmaker of mixed Asian heritage whose stories are often influenced by topical social themes. He began with the quirky short *Oh, Simone* (2008) about a young woman who probes her life purposes beyond tending to an orchid. It won the Live Action Short Gold Award at WorldFest Houston. He next addressed the skin-lightening obsession amongst British Asians with *My Beautiful White Skin* (2015), tracking the talented Parita (Ritu Arya), in her desperate bid to 'whiten-up' for a Bollywood audition. It won the 2016 Jury Prize and Best Narrative Short award at the Socially Relevant Film Festival in New York.

Gatt's most recent film before *Catching Dust*, starring the BAFTA-nominated Sope Dirisu, was *The Dead Sea* (2016), which dealt with the tribulations of two Libyan refugees during their arduous escape into Europe, only to be turned back and locked up. It won the Audience Choice Award at the 2016 TriForce Short Film Festival.

In an interview with screendaily.com, Gatt said "as someone who is half Indian, I'd be keen to bring more Desi representation to screen, particularly from the south of India, where my mother is from, as well as more Native American representation on screen." About his feature debut, he said that "I became interested with the idea of a character desperately trying to understand their place in the world while being completely isolated from it. It felt like a poignant allegory for modern society, where we feel so connected via technology but, paradoxically, are more isolated than any time in human history. The key themes of the story, female liberation and toxic masculinity, are ones that are very close to me and very often feature in my films, likely due to my childhood. In many ways, exploring them artistically offers a cathartic outlet that is incredibly motivating."

## AN IFFY GHAZAL

by Maaz Bin Bilal

We're the prancing *Peacock*, it's IFFI at Goa  
The world is a screen when its spiffy at Goa

Welcome to Miramar, here's a river of stars  
Sallu's driving the fest, it's cliffy at Goa

Casuarinas are Christmas trees here at the beach  
The coconut tree was once grass, cut free at Goa

There's film 'n' fun, come hang with us, don't be a bum  
That cinema bunch might get riff-y at Goa

Bring your date and yourself, they will show, they will tell  
You question, critique, don't get tiff-y at Goa

It's not "Only Jatt", there's also Sethupathi  
Rare *Snow Leopard's* on show, anaglyphy at Goa

Maaz says khushaamadeed, bem-vindo, and yevkaar  
Catch it before it's gone in a jiffy at Goa

Maaz Bin Bilal is an Anglophone poet, professor, translator, and critic from Delhi. He is the author of *Ghazalnama: Poems from Delhi, Belfast, and Urdu*.

### SHORT TAKES



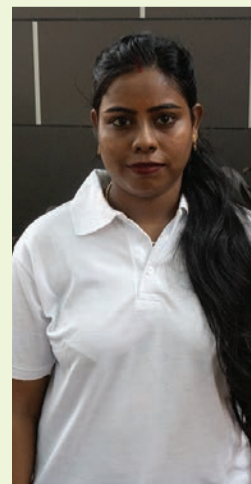
This is my first time here and I'm looking forward to the next 10 days. I don't like movies so much, but watch a lot of Indian television dramas like *Naagin* and *Bhabi*.

Shajidi Khtun,  
Security  
Bihar



After looking at the schedule, I think the festival has gradually started to become more mainstream. I feel IFFI should focus on maintaining its global value.

Billu Patel,  
Film-maker  
Haryana



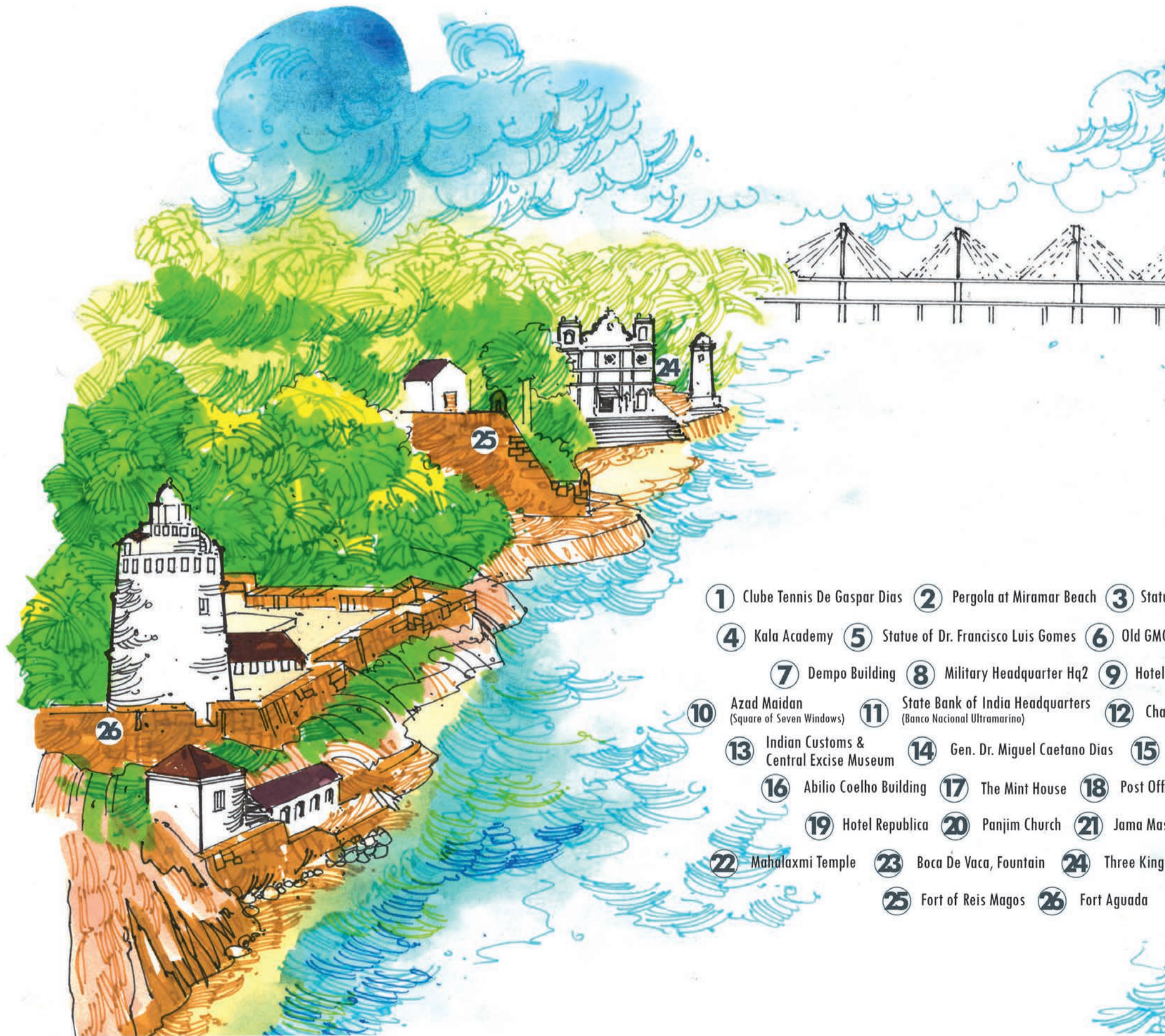
I'm looking forward to my work here. There are a lot of places to see in any state or city, but what's unique about Goa is that the sites are surrounded by greenery.

Jyoti Kumari,  
Security  
Bihar



This is my 21<sup>st</sup> year and I'm looking forward to seeing the young, new generation of filmmakers that has come up.

Ajit Rai,  
Jury Member  
Mumbai



- ① Clube Tennis De Gaspar Dias   ② Pergola at Miramar Beach   ③ Statue of Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes  
 ④ Kala Academy   ⑤ Statue of Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes   ⑥ Old GM Building  
 ⑦ Dempo Building   ⑧ Military Headquarter Hq2   ⑨ Hotel Republica  
 ⑩ Azad Maidan (Square of Seven Windows)   ⑪ State Bank of India Headquarters (Banco Nacional Ultramarino)   ⑫ Church of the Holy Spirit  
 ⑬ Indian Customs & Central Excise Museum   ⑭ Gen. Dr. Miguel Caetano Dias   ⑮ Panjim Church  
 ⑯ Abilio Coelho Building   ⑰ The Mint House   ⑱ Post Office  
 ⑲ Hotel Republica   ⑳ Panjim Church   ㉑ Jama Masjid  
 ㉒ Mahalaxmi Temple   ㉓ Boca De Vaca, Fountain   ㉔ Three Kings Fountain  
 ㉕ Fort of Reis Magos   ㉖ Fort Aguada



e of Unity, Miramar  
 Heritage Building  
 Mandovi  
 pel of Dom Lourenco  
 Adil Shah Palace  
 ce Building  
 sjid  
 s Church, Reis Magos

# Tech Destination God

BY NILANKUR DAS & SAACHI D'SOUZA

A new tech revolution is afoot right here among the greens of Goa. After Mumbai and Gurugram, the current administration has faith that India's smallest state will become the new startup hub, and many believe that has already happened. With over 400 registered startups along with even larger informal numbers, a broad tech migration is building fast amongst creative professionals who are moving here. That is why the state Department of Information Technology is hosting Goa Media Tech Expo 2023: Unveiling the Future of Media and Cinema Tech Innovation in India right alongside IFFI.

"If you ask startup founders why they choose Goa, they don't have the language to describe why. That in itself is a statement," says D.S. Prashant, CEO of the government Startup and IT Promotion Cell, who told *The Peacock* "there is an ambience in this state that invites and motivates creative professionals and we want to build on it." He believes IFFI serves as an ideal catalyst, providing the government with the opportunity to create a platform to bring together burgeoning startups in the media and cinema sector in order to foster networking opportunities and provide space for learning and interaction.

Goa's status as the home for digital nomads has grown over the last few

years, with thousands of young professionals flocking to India's most renowned resort destination for its vaunted quality of life. To help nurture and showcase this development, the government has established a co-working and networking centre at the Yog Setu promenade in Campal during the IFFI dates. Prashant hopes the expo will organically transform into a hub for vibrant convergence.

Goa Media Tech Expo 2023 presents a diverse array of technological innovations and solutions within the media and cinema realm, including Bantagram, a B2B managed marketplace enabling filmmakers to showcase their content to a community of buyers; Cinedubs, a technology allowing audiences to select their preferred language while watching any movie; MetaShot, a gaming device aimed at making sports more accessible; and Mugafi, a decentralized content creation model designed to encourage a diverse range of content creators. These are just a few examples of the various enterprises actively experimenting with new technologies and engaging audiences.

“Startups are disrupting,” says Prashant, “that’s why they are important. They are creating technologies and solutions that are futuristic, which many have not even recognized as yet. That’s why we want to focus on them.”



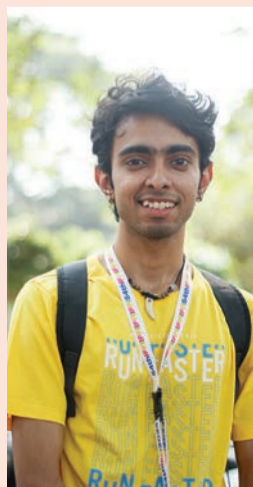
Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

## SHORT TAKES



I've heard of it and I've read about it, but I've never actually witnessed a film festival. I'm really looking forward to seeing what exactly it's all about.

**Shubhangi Dubey,**  
Journalism Student  
Madhya Pradesh



I look forward to seeing all the celebrities and I want to watch the film *Kantara* again. I'm a film sound student and the sound effects and ambience of that film are mesmerising.

**Anshul Rohilla,**  
Film Student  
Haryana



I'm a media research scholar and I've been doing research on IFFI for nine years. I try to understand how delegates respond and till now they have been unanimously positive.

**Nandha Kumar,**  
Research scholar  
Madurai



I've been coming to IFFI for more than a decade. It's an annual pilgrimage for me.

**Ajay KR,**  
Cinephile  
Bangalore

Fields of Dreams

BY MIGUEL BRAGANZA

Every film has a story to tell, with a background and setting that are not left to chance but carefully planned and selected. Location hunting is an important role of any film production house and the ‘scenery’, as it is popularly called in India, is an important consideration. The trees, flowers, birds, animals and natural state of the site, like water bodies, seashore, hills and other features are all painstakingly taken into account while deciding on the ‘location’ for outdoor shooting. Yet, this vital aspect is often ignored while discussing cinema, whether by viewers or critics. It deserves a second glance. So, let us take a look.

A field full of sunflowers in full bloom has an effect like ‘a host of golden daffodils’ did on the English poet William Wordsworth: it moves and arouses the poet within. Film producers have used almost endless sunflower fields, especially in Ukraine and Russia, as the backdrop for many song and dance interludes in love stories like *Dilwale* (2015). Debut filmmaker Gabriel Carruba’s *Sunflower* (2023), which uses the flower as an analogy for a teenager coming to understand his own sexuality and identity, made it to the Sydney Film Festival this June, which is summer for us but winter Down Under. The International Film Festival of India (IFFI) has just gone through its teenage years and this is the twentieth edition in Goa. From a

state without much film culture to speak about, Goa has grown to catch the attention of viewers with homegrown films like bright sunflowers.

Lively yellow hues of the mustard flowers in fields across the Indo-Gangetic Plains from Punjab to West Bengal are the symbol of youthfulness and enthusiasm. We have similar looking but botanically different flowers on the hillsides of Goa during the monsoons, specifically around the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi, when nature bursts into flowers of all colours and hues. The film *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) uses the mustard field in full bloom to emphasize the emotion, the feeling of love and happiness. On the other hand, *Rang De Basanti* (2006) uses mustard fields to heighten the contrast with death due to airplane crashes and the loss of human lives.

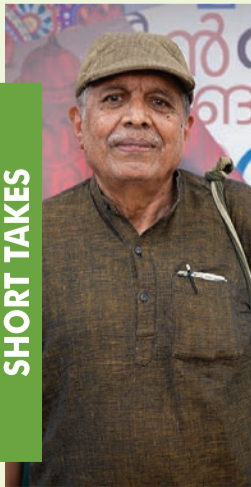
The biggest Goa-connect of a recent film has been that of *Dear Zindagi* (2016) which was almost entirely shot in Goa and Mumbai. The popular locale is the sleepy village of Parra, between Calangute beach and Mapusa town that is popular for its Friday Market. The coconut tree, *Cocos nucifera*, shot into focus at a time its classification was embroiled in controversies. Through IFFI and short film making competitions,

people had the skills to make short films and videos, even using mobile phone apps. This inspired Goans to make videos and compose songs on the coconut tree, and it drew international attention through social media. Just over a year after the release of this film, the coconut tree was officially notified as the ‘State Tree of Goa’. The avenue lined with coconut trees on either side is popularly known as ‘Maddani’ (or *Maddamni* meaning ‘among coconut trees’ in the local Konkani language) or simply as ‘Dear Zindagi Road’ by the Indian tourists who have made it a pilgrimage site to make reels and post on the social media.

Indian languages are rich in metaphors and analogies. One common expression is “*Ghar ka murgha, dal barabar*”, literally meaning ‘the (curry of a) homegrown cockerel is like split-pea (gravy)’ but actually an indigenous equivalent of ‘a prophet is not recognized in his hometown.’ The analogy uses a bird and a plant product to indicate human perspective. *Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela* (2013) creatively uses India’s national bird and a symbol of national pride, the peacock (*Mor* in most Indian languages). From being a complete rarity, a peacock strutting around in the afternoon is a sight that is now becoming familiar in Goa. Their population has increased manifold over the years. It is our hope that the demand for *The Peacock* will also increase and the readers will ask for MORE!



SHORT TAKES



This is where the future of cinema lies. My only complaint is that the open forum, where delegates could freely interact with directors, has stopped.

**Shashi Dhara,**  
Federation of Film Societies of India  
Bangalore



My wife and I have been coming to IFFI since its inception in Goa. It's always a treat to enjoy films from all around the world and in different languages.

**Vaman Gaikonde,**  
Consultant  
Goa



I'm looking forward to watching more of the Goan movies being showcased this year. It's exhausting to watch four or five movies a day, but I still enjoy it.

**Shubhalaxmi Kudaskar,**  
Art Student  
Goa



We've already visited MAMI, and, after IFFI, we're going for the film festival in Kerala. Among all the festivals, however, I think IFFI has the most beautiful ambience.

**Piyush Upadhyay,**  
Sea Captain,  
Mumbai



“

My first glimpse of the festival was of the beautiful people who were preparing the decorations and installations. IFFI began for them way before the rest of us. These wonderful hard-working people are the best inspiration I can get from fellow humans, so here is my self portrait, where I am trying to get in the shoes of these artisans and workers, as inspiration for many more artworks for the days ahead.

BY VIVEK MENEZES

**M**aie-mogacho yevkar! Welcome to Goa, and the 54<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) – the oldest and most prestigious annual banquet of cinema in the country. Ever since this grand bonanza for cinephiles relocated permanently to Panjim in 2004, it has been acclaimed for its unbeatably pleasant heritage location, and outstanding digital user interface, which add up to a peerless festival experience for film-makers and delegates. This is the *raison d'être*, the main purpose of the Entertainment Society of Goa, which also publishes *The Peacock*. On behalf of our entire team, we would like to greet you with the cherished Konkani phrase that is often exchanged at both meeting and departure: Mog Asundi. Let there be love between us.

India's smallest state has many unique attributes, as does our beloved mother tongue. Konkani's undisputed homeland is Goa, but four times as many native speakers live outside its borders. It is the only language in the world in daily use in five different scripts – Devanagari, Kannada, Malayalam, Perso-Arabic and Romi – which represents an historic triumph over its 17<sup>th</sup> century colonial banning, and another bitter existential struggle to define itself differently from Marathi in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in hard-fought recognition as an official Indian language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 1992. *The Peacock* is proud to feature one of the heroes of that long battle, the distinguished litterateur and Jnanpith Award winner Damodar Mauzo as our colleague and columnist.

Bhai – as Mr. Mauzo is lovingly referred to by everyone who

knows him – embodies what the great laureate Balakrishna Bhagwant “Bakibab” Borkar called *vegllench munisponn*, the profound native humanism which has evolved over millennia in this blessed little slice of the Konkan, as its “scenic beauty has a supernatural quality of refining the human mind, and of turning it inward into the depths of creativity and spirituality. Tribals, Dravidians, Aryans, Assyrians and Sumerians settled in this territory but Goa's scenic beauty humanised them all so insistently and efficiently that they amalgamated into a single society, with one common language and one cultural heritage. The kinship and co-operation forged unto them by the aesthetic impact of Goa's rich scenery taught them the art of living in peace and friendship, and inspired them to strive for nobler ideals.”

In the decades after 1947, and Goa's late decolonisation in 1961, we have become used to regarding this tiny state as an almost insignificant entity on the periphery of the world's largest democracy. Yet, for much of the past two thousand years, this was one of the most important crucibles of what we now call globalisation, with profound impact on the rest of India and the world, across centuries when direct sea traffic connected to Manila and Mexico in one direction, and the African continent, Brazil and Europe on the other side.

The world has changed because of what happened here, in this extraordinary global crossroads, and – per Bakibab – the most important lessons have come from mutual respect, equal exchange, and love, actually.

Take a look at the Konkani texts spelling out our greeting to you, which is also our heartfelt plea for the world at this juncture. There are five scripts, but the language is one, and the meaning is exactly the same. Here is the world, but unified together in a single identity. Team Peacock wishes each and every delegate and reader the very best fun in this exciting edition of the International Film Festival of India, which we are confident will be the best yet. Mog Asundi.

मोग आसुंदी

موگ اسوندى

മോഗ് അസുന്ദി

ಮೋಗ್ ಆಸುಂದಿ

Mog Asundi

Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

## PRAGYVERSE

Poem of the Day by Pragya Bhagat

## first day, first show

in the beginning, there is light  
scattered by dust, projected on a screen  
i hold my breath, stifle a scream  
tingle

there are many reasons  
why stories must be told  
in rooms wider than what we know  
love is one of them

let's take a moment to admire the lens  
stencilled with wonder  
sit alongside friend or stranger  
build communion through convergent beam

make no mistake  
make believe is faith  
in the fault of our flesh  
to watch is to worship



This year's exclusive cover artworks for The Peacock are by Govit Morajkar, one of our team mainstays who is amongst the most powerful and profound artists from Goa. To celebrate the inauguration of this year's International Film Festival of India, he has depicted the unique peacock folk dance that is performed during Shigmo at Sarvan village in Bicholim taluka where participants dress up in peacock-blue and adorn their heads with feathers. They go in procession to each house, and dance in its open courtyard. On the last day of the festival, the dance is performed at an open place in the village accompanied by traditional instruments like the Peti (harmonium), Mridanga (a drum with two faces), Kansalem (gong), and Jhanj (cymbals).



## Opening Film उद्घाटन फ़िल्म

You are cordially invited to the screening of the Opening Film

### “CATCHING DUST”

English | 116 min.

Directed by Stuart Gatt

उद्घाटन फ़िल्म की स्क्रीनिंग के लिए  
आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं

### “कैचिंग डस्ट”

अंग्रेजी | 116 मिनट.

स्टुअर्ट गैट द्वारा निर्देशित



54<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival of India, Goa

On 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 at 02:30 pm.

Venue: Auditorium 1, INOX Multiplex.

Panjim, Goa

भारत का 54 वाँ अंतरराष्ट्रीय फ़िल्म समारोह, गोवा

20 नवंबर, 2023 को दोपहर 02.30 बजे

स्थान : ऑडिटोरियम 1, आईनॉक्स मल्टीप्लेक्स

पणजी, गोवा

