

## Film 'Mandali' competes for ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi medal at IFFI 54 "Mandali is the story of Ramlila artists, their life and challenges:" Director Rakesh Chaturvedi

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The Hindi Film 'Mandali' explores moral and social values of the times through the life of a Ramlila artist. The film is competing for the prestigious ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal at 54<sup>th</sup> IFFI in Goa. The filmmaker Rakesh Chaturvedi Om and Producer, Prashant Kumar Gupta of the feature film interacted with the media in Goa today. Explaining the creative processes that have gone into the making of the film, Mr. Chaturvedi Om said that the film is inspired by Munshi Premchand's story *Ramleela*. He further said that the film has carefully attempted to convey the message in an entertaining way.



When asked about the issue of low income opportunities and struggles of traditional folk artists, the director added that he tried to cast real artists in the movie and added entertainment elements in such a way that it appeals to the youth. This he said will improve the appealing factor, confidence of actors and also lead to better remuneration for the actors. He further said that he has done extensive research on the theme of the film and tried to explore various layers of the art form Ramlila.



Producer, Prashant Kumar Gupta said that through their film, they intend to take forward the culture of Ramlila, in its original form. The director and producer of the film thanked IFFI for providing a great platform for showcasing their film, and that it was dream come true for them to have been nominated for the ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal at IFFI 54.

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**Synopsis:** Mandali mirrors the journey of a man and his struggle to uphold righteousness in times of diminishing social conscience and the downfall of cultural and traditional values through the protagonist. Purshottam Chaubey aka Puru is a peon in an intermediate college in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. He plays the role of Lord Laxmana along with his cousin Sitaram Chaubey who plays the role of Lord Rama in the Ramlila Mandali, run by his uncle Ramsevak Chaubey. Their life takes a blow when during a performance they have to leave midway because of Sitaram's indulgence and addiction to drugs. Not being able to withstand the humiliation, and guilty of ruining God's name, Ramsevak leaves performing in

the Ramleela forever. Puru confronts Ramsevak on his escapist approach and condemns his decision to withdraw while beginning a journey of struggle to bring back his family on stage with dignity.

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