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New York Indian Film Festival 2026 Unveils an Extraordinary Lineup of Special Nights

A luminous celebration of cinema, legacy, and global storytelling | May 28–31, 2026



NEW YORK — The Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC) has unveiled the **Special Nights slate for the 2026 edition of the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF)**, which runs **May 28–31 in New York City**. The lineup blends a high-profile restoration, an awards-season breakout, and a slate of filmmaker appearances aimed at reinforcing the festival's position as North America's leading showcase for Indian independent cinema.

The festival will kick off with a **Gala Preview Night on May 28** featuring a 4K restored presentation of **Sholay**, the 51-years old landmark Bollywood classic. A **defining work in Indian cinematic history**, this special presentation celebrates the film's enduring influence with a newly restored print which includes the original ending of the film, setting a grand, nostalgic, and cinematic tone for the festival.

Opening night on May 29 will spotlight Boong, the Manipuri-language feature that recently won a **BAFTA award**, underscoring the growing global visibility of regional Indian cinema. Director Laksmipriya Devi will attend the premiere and participate in a post-screening discussion.

A coming of age story set in Manipur, **Boong** follows a young boy's deeply personal quest to reunite with his absent father, driven by the belief that bringing him home would be the greatest gift for his mother. Anchored in the emotional landscape of childhood, the film explores themes of longing, identity and fractured families against the backdrop of a border town shaped by distance and memory.

"With **Boong**, we are opening the festival with a lovely film that blends humor and struggle in a rarely visited part of India." said Aseem Chhabra, Festival Director of NYIFF. "It is authentic, rooted, and internationally recognized - exactly the kind of cinema NYIFF champions. The film won a BAFTA award beating two major contenders produced by Disney"

The festival's Centerpiece selection - a World Premiere, **Flowers of Acacia**, is directed by

Anmol Sidhu (Jaggi) and presented by Shonali Bose. The film will screen on May 30 and it represents the next wave of globally relevant Indian independent cinema. The powerful sophomore Punjabi-language film by the Chandigarh-based filmmaker exposes the entrenched patriarchy in parts of India.

Also in the lineup is a 25th anniversary screening of **Dil Chahta Hai**, Directed by Farhan Akhtar, the film is widely credited with redefining contemporary urban Hindi cinema.

The festival will **close May 31 with the New York premiere of the critically acclaimed Marathi-language film Tighee (Motherhood)**, starring Nehha Pendse and Sonalee Kulkarni, both of whom are expected to attend.

Directed by first-time filmmaker Jeejivisha Kale and produced by National-Award winning director Nikhil Mahajan (Godavari, Raavsaheb), Tighee is a sensitive and layered exploration of family, following two estranged sisters who reunite to care for their terminally ill mother - unearthing buried tensions, sacrifice, and reconciliation along the way. The film delves into themes of caregiving, gendered expectations, and emotional inheritance, offering what critics describe as a “mature and balanced family drama.”

“Closing the festival with **Tighee** is incredibly special,” added Suman Gollamudi, IAAC Executive Director. “It is a film of rare emotional intelligence - intimate, powerful, and deeply human - leaving audiences with a sense of reflection and connection.”

The evening culminates in the NYIFF Awards Ceremony, honoring outstanding achievements across this year’s festival slate.

Founded in 2001, NYIFF is presented annually by IAAC and remains the longest-running North American festival dedicated to Indian independent film, with a focus on regional voices, diasporic narratives and emerging talent.

For press materials [Click HERE](#)

Tickets will be available soon at www.nyiff.us

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