

# SPARK

MAGAZINE

MIPCOM SPECIAL

Initiative by Animation Xpress.com

OCT2025



52 X 7.5"  
TV || COMEDY

SEASON 1  
IN PRODUCTION

YOUNG ACHIEVERS  
RAIDERS QUEST

26 X 22' | ACTION | ADVENTURE

POWERKIDS

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# SPARK

MAGAZINE

MIPCOM SPECIAL

Initiative by Animation Xpress.com

OCT2025



## AKIRA AND MOWGLI

"THE JUNGLE BOOK ADVENTURES"

52 X 11' | Action | Adventure | Comedy

SEASON 1

IN PRODUCTION

## YOUNG ACHIEVERS

RAIDERS QUEST

26 X 22' | ACTION | ADVENTURE

SEASON 1

IN PRODUCTION

## Little Mowgli

The Rumble in the Jungle

52 X 7.5'  
FUN || COMEDY

## PowerKids

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## The great unravelling: why Mipcom 2025 marks entertainment's point of no return

Mipcom 2025 convenes under a cloud of existential dread. The television and streaming industry faces not one crisis but three simultaneous revolutions, each capable of destroying the old order on its own. Together, they promise a transformation so complete that nostalgia for the pre-2025 era will seem quaint within a decade.

The first shock is familiar but accelerating. Cord-cutting, that slow-motion car crash of the past 15 years, has shifted into top gear. Streaming continues its relentless assault on traditional television, bleeding subscribers and advertising revenue at a pace that makes the music industry's collapse look orderly by comparison. What was once disruption has become annihilation.

The second shock targets the disruptors themselves. Long-form streaming platforms, barely finished celebrating their victory over linear television, now face ambush from an unexpected quarter: micro-dramas. These scrappy, vertical-format upstarts peddle bite-sized stories engineered for attention-deficit consumption. The land grab is ferocious. Everyone from tech giants to no-name startups is stampeding into this space, sensing blood in the water. The platforms that vanquished television may themselves become roadkill.

But the third shock dwarfs both predecessors. Generative AI has arrived, and it threatens to blow up the entire content-creation economy. Tens of thousands of hours of AI-generated video now cascade onto the web daily—a tsunami of synthetic content that grows exponentially. The quality is staggering. Most viewers cannot distinguish human-made from machine-made. The uncanny valley has been crossed.

YouTube insists it will not monetise content created via Veo3, Runway, Sora, Descript or their algorithmic cousins. Noble sentiment. But this Maginot Line looks increasingly absurd. When the flood becomes biblical, when creators discover they can generate professional-grade content from text prompts in minutes rather than months, how long before the platform's resolve crumbles? Economics always wins.

For animation studios, VFX houses and post-production facilities, the implications are brutal and immediate. These businesses built fortunes on labour-intensive craft: human artists rendering frames, composers layering effects, editors cutting sequences. Gen-AI threatens to collapse these processes from months to minutes, from teams to individuals, from six-figure budgets to three-figure subscription fees.

The rational response is obvious: embrace the tools or face obsolescence. Yet much of the industry remains frozen in denial. Prestigious studios worldwide refuse to experiment with AI, clinging to the comforting fiction that human actors and physical sets represent an insurmountable moat. This is fantasy. The moat is evaporating.

What these holdouts fail to grasp is that early adoption confers the only sustainable advantage. Learning to wield gen-AI tools with professional skill—understanding their capabilities, limitations and artistic possibilities—offers a temporary edge. Those who master prompt engineering, AI-assisted animation and synthetic post-production today will dominate tomorrow's landscape. Those who wait will find themselves redundant, outpaced by younger competitors unburdened by nostalgia.

The resistance is understandable. Creative professionals rightly fear that AI will commoditise their expertise, that what took years to learn can now be replicated by algorithms. But history offers no comfort to Luddites. Photographers survived digital cameras by learning new skills. Graphic designers survived desktop publishing by evolving. The question is not whether AI will transform content creation—it already has—but whether today's professionals will transform alongside it.

The micro-drama surge compounds this urgency. These short-form formats are perfect laboratories for AI experimentation. Lower production values, faster turnarounds and audience tolerance for experimentation create ideal conditions for synthetic content. Studios that master AI-assisted micro-drama production will gain invaluable experience whilst the stakes remain manageable. Those that wait for AI to "mature" will wake up to find the game already lost.

Mipcom 2025 thus represents an inflection point disguised as a trade show. The decisions made in the coming months—whether to experiment or resist, to invest in AI capabilities or double down on traditional production—will separate survivors from casualties. The entertainment ecosystem will force this choice on everyone eventually. The only variable is whether participants embrace change proactively or have it thrust upon them by collapsing margins and client demands.

Change is no longer approaching. It has arrived, moved in and redecorated. The longer the industry resists, the more painful the inevitable surrender. Some will learn this lesson through foresight. Most will learn it through bankruptcy.

- ANIL NM WANVARI



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# TAKING STORIES FROM INDIA TO THE WORLD

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# Animation News Capsule

*Here a glimpse of the latest updates from India and Asia*

## MIDCCA's leads the charge in uplifting regional cinema



Maharashtra Immersive Digital Content Creators Association (MIDCCA), the association dedicated to the animation, VFX, gaming, comics, education, and extended reality industries in the state of Maharashtra, recently concluded its event aimed at encouraging the use of VFX in the state's regional cinema. Known as "Reimagining the Future: VFX in the World of Marathi Filmmaking," the event was conducted in collaboration with Akhil Bhartiya Marathi Chitrapat Mahamandal, co-hosted by the Meghraj Raje Bhosale Foundation and organised by AnimationXpress.

The event was graced by Uday Samant, Minister for Industries and Marathi Language, Government of Maharashtra, who attended as the chief guest. Indian film and TV actor Swapnil Joshi, predominantly working in Marathi cinema, graced the event as a special guest.

Renowned film directors, senior executives and VFX supervisors from companies like 88 Pictures, philmCGI, Autodesk, WhiteApple, NYVFXWaala, Nube Cirrus, Wot Studios, Resonance Digital, Phoebus Animation Studios, Envision VFX, Assemblage Entertainment, SM Rolling FX, Yeti Studios, and heads of institutes like Aptech and Srajan College of Design participated as speakers in the event.

## India's first anime and manga school opens in Hyderabad

India's first dedicated school of manga and anime launched on 10 September 2025, in the city of Hyderabad, in the state of Telangana. A collaboration between Hyderabad's IACG Multimedia College and Japan's Kyoto Seika University, this new school aims to give Indian students direct access to authentic Japanese art expertise in manga and anime creation. Indian students will learn the Japanese language and cultural values from the Kyoto Seika faculty, and the IACG

faculty will impart VFX and gaming technical skills to Kyoto Seika students. In addition, the two institutes will introduce a student exchange program.

The manga and anime school will provide an intermediate program, where students can study the core subjects in depth and prepare for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test- N2 level, to pursue graduation at Kyoto Seika. The two institutes signed an MoU in the presence of government officials and executives from JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) India, Young India Skills University (YISU), Green Gold Animation and TVAGA (Telangana VFX, Animation and Gaming Association).

## Malaysia's animated blockbuster Ejen Ali The Movie 2 gets new toy line

Malaysia's Soon Lee Seng Toys launched a new brick product line based on the country's animated blockbuster feature *Ejen Ali The Movie 2*. The 3D animated film is the sequel to the record-breaking *Ejen Ali The Movie*.

Produced by Primeworks Studios and Wau Animation, *Ejen Ali The Movie 2* tells the story of Ali, a young secret agent whose life changes after being selected to pilot an experimental suit enhanced by artificial intelligence. The new toy line, named Matablox, brings the world of Ejen Ali to life through creative building experiences.

The Matablox series features four collectible sets inspired by iconic moments and environments from the movie. With engaging designs, each set allows fans to build and play. The toy line was launched at the Asean Digital Content Summit held in Malaysia from 2 to 4 September 2025.



## Puppetica Media announces Sanskrit sci-fi animated film



India's Puppetica Media has announced *Dhee* – its new animated sci-fi feature film in the Sanskrit language. *Dhee* will feature Indian storytelling and global animation techniques.

After nearly three years of meticulous drafting and development, the film's director Ravishankar Venkateswaran is ready to begin production on *Dhee*. Puppetica Media is now seeking producers, both in India and abroad, to support *Dhee*'s production and distribution. He has already secured the necessary funds for pre-production and is actively assembling a crew for his project. The movie is expected to be completed in approximately two years.

Venkateswaran's previous work *Punyakoti* was India's first Sanskrit-language animated feature. It was picked up by Netflix in 2020 and was available on the streaming platform till 2022.

## Malaysia's cute cat Bichi Mao travels to North America

LA-based entertainment company Visional Pop partnered with Kuala Lumpur-based Niko Studio for the latter's hit animated IP *Bichi Mao*, known for its heart warming cat-themed webcomics. Through this collaboration, Visional Pop will introduce *Bichi Mao* to audiences across North America, marking the character's first major step into international markets.

With 831K followers on Instagram, the IP is a household name in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. It has become a pop culture phenomenon through high-profile collaborations in 2025, including national restaurant chains as well as fashion and beauty lines across Malaysia. With an ever-growing fanbase, the character is now poised to make its mark on the global stage. Visional Pop's plans involving the IP include a dedicated content strategy tailored for regional

audiences and the launch of a new line of consumer products designed specifically for the market.

## Animated series based on Indian epic Mahabharata hits Netflix



Netflix announced a new animated series *Kurukshetra*, that envisions the timeless dilemmas and profound wisdom of the Indian epic Mahabharata, that narrates the events and the aftermath of a war of succession between two groups of princely cousins – the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.

The show premiered on 10 October, and will be launched in two parts of nine episodes each. The series unfolds through the perspectives of 18 key warriors, each navigating their inner dilemmas, personal vendettas, and the devastating cost of a war that pits brother against brother.

Conceptualised and created by JioStar's Anu Sikka, the show is written and directed by Ujaan Ganguly. It is produced by Sikka, Alok Jain, and Viacom18 Studios' Ajit Andhare.

## Silversea Media showcases next-gen XR experiences at ADCS

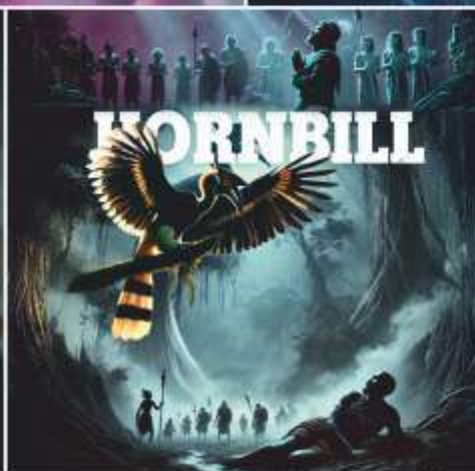
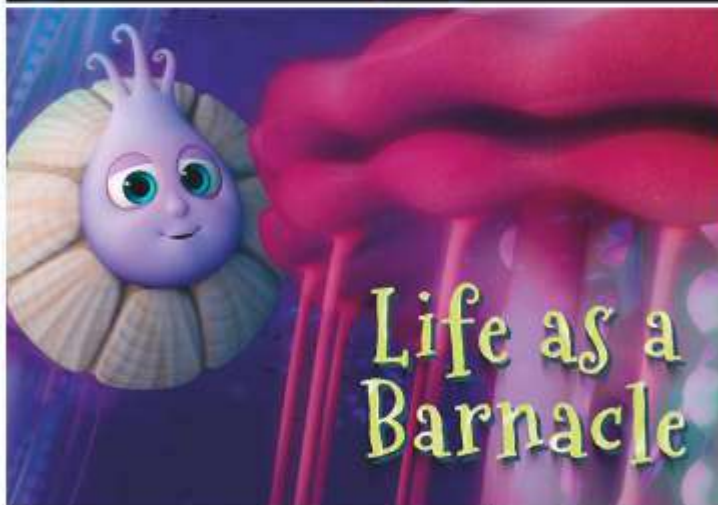
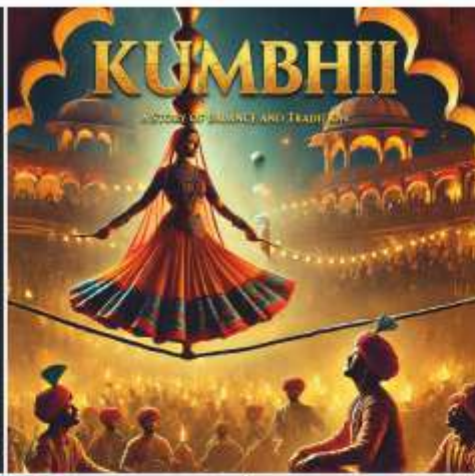
Malaysia's immersive technology company Silversea Media showcased a portfolio of solutions at the Asean Digital Content Summit (ADCS) held in the country from 2 to 4 September 2025. From XR training modules that make learning safer and more interactive, to digital twins that provide real-time visibility for property and industrial operations, to metaverse platforms that transform collaboration and commerce, visitors got a glimpse of how immersive technology is shaping industries today.

With a strong presence across Asia and a growing international footprint, Silversea Media continues to transform digital ecosystems that bridge the physical and virtual worlds.



artho  
entertainment & animation

IP PORTFOLIO





# Shape shifting stories

Know how Assemblage Entertainment animates fantastical, oddly-beautiful and other type of worlds exploring numerous styles

By Binita Das



*Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie*

From gritty medieval fantasies to cozy cat-filled dollhouses, Assemblage Entertainment has carved a reputation as a shape-shifting powerhouse in global animation. Their portfolio spans high-octane features and beloved episodic series, each defined by a visual style as unique as the story it tells.

AnimationXpress reached out to the team behind some of Assemblage Entertainment's most distinctive recent work including *Wolf King*, *Stitch Head*, and *Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie*—to explore how the studio tailors its animation techniques to bring wildly different worlds to life.

Talking about the versatile portfolio with distinct styles of animation, Assemblage Entertainment CEO Arjun Madhavan shares, “At Assemblage, the story dictates the style. Every project has its own heartbeat, and our job is to make the visuals sync with it, in line with its director’s vision.”

## Finding the right beat for every story

“The story is the compass,” says the Assemblage team. “Every narrative sets out with a vision, and our job is to let that vision lead the style, not the other way around.”

This philosophy guides the team’s approach to every project. A fantastical world might demand heightened stylisation, while a grounded, character-driven drama might require nuance and restraint. For Assemblage, style isn’t surface-level, it’s deeply emotional.

A look at its recent slate highlights their method. For instance, the animated show *Wolf King*, based on *Wereworld* by Curtis Jobling, needed grit and weight. The animated feature *Stitch Head* thrived on whimsy and chaos, a playground for creative quirks. While *Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie*, the studio’s collaboration with DreamWorks Animation, sparkled with cozy vibrancy, true to its global fanbase.

“Each project challenges us to build creative pipelines that are flexible,

yet never compromise on artistic integrity,” the team says.

## Wolf King: Bringing grit to fantasy

Set in a dark, high-stakes fantasy world, *Wolf King* reimagines traditional animation aesthetics with a cinematic realism rarely seen in fantasy animation.

“Gritty realism was our north star,” the team explains. “Armor is scuffed, swords feel heavy, and nothing is too pristine. That texture adds real-world weight to high-stakes fantasy. You feel the danger.”

The team leaned to imperfections: subtle lighting choices, tangible surfaces, and character movements that reflect the harsh world they inhabit. The result? A fantasy world that feels raw, grounded, and dangerously alive.

## Marrying mediums: 3D meets 2D in Wolf King

One of *Wolf King*’s most striking choices is its hybrid visual approach. Though animated in 3D, the show incorporates a





Wolf King



Stitch Head

reduced frame rate and hand-drawn 2D effects to give it a unique, stylised punch.

“Animating on 2s and 3s gave it a snappy, traditional feel,” the team mentions. “We layered in hand-drawn FX—smoke, speed lines, energy bursts—on top of the 3D renders. It’s part cinematic, part graphic novel.”

This visual experimentation was supported by collaborators at Netflix, Lime Pictures, and Jellyfish Pictures, and brought a fresh visual energy to the fantasy genre.

### **Stitch Head: Dancing on the edge of chaos and innovating behind the scenes**

Where *Wolf King* is grounded in fantasy, *Stitch Head* revels in the chaotic beauty of imperfection. Directed by Steve Hudson and animation director David Nasser, this darkly whimsical film leans into asymmetry, unpredictability, and charming oddities.

“The world is stitched together—literally,” the team says. “Buildings are crooked, characters move in unexpected ways, shadows stretch where they shouldn’t. It’s beautifully offbeat.”

The characters’ movement became an extension of their design: a wooden puppet-like creature might move stiffly, while a gelatinous monster would wobble with instability. Every detail serves storytelling.

Behind the whimsical world of

*Stitch Head* was a highly sophisticated production pipeline. Built in Maya, the film incorporated custom crowd systems via Golaem – not just for background filler, but to create responsive, emotionally synced crowds.

“These crowds weren’t just moving – they were clapping to rhythm, reacting to plot twists, even drawing weapons on cue. Blending that with groom and cloth sims pushed our tech boundaries,” the team notes.

The collaboration with Gringo Films and support from Aniventure helped preserve the film’s handcrafted aesthetic while delivering it at scale.

### **Gabby’s Dollhouse: The Movie: Cozy goes cinematic while balancing live-action and CG**

The transition of *Gabby’s Dollhouse* from a beloved TV series to a full-length feature film was more than just a format upgrade, it was a creative evolution. Assemblage Entertainment worked closely with DreamWorks Animation to bring the film to life.

“It was a beautiful collaboration,” the team reflects. “DreamWorks ensured the film stayed true to the franchise’s DNA while giving us the space to elevate the animation for the big screen.”

This meant cinematic camera moves, more expressive performances, and deeper world-building—all while

keeping the charm that made *Gabby’s Dollhouse* a global phenomenon.

For the team, one of the film’s most exciting challenges was the seamless integration of live-action and CG elements, something the series had hinted at, but the film fully embraced. “We didn’t want to reinvent the look,” the team explains. “We wanted to elevate it—wider shots, richer detail, more immersive storytelling. The live-action world had to feel like an extension of the animated one.”

Assemblage, working alongside partners in the Cinesite Group, delivered a theatrical experience that stayed faithful to its roots while pushing the envelope.

### **Looking ahead**

While Assemblage Entertainment won’t be attending Mipcom this year, the team remains committed to global collaboration. “We’re deep in production on some major projects,” they mention. “But we truly value platforms like Mipcom – they highlight the best of what the world has to offer and bring storytellers together.”

With a slate as diverse and ambitious as theirs, the studio continues to be one of India’s leading voices in the global animation landscape – proving, once again, that when story leads, everything else falls into place ■

# A divine awakening

*Ashwin Kumar's 'Mahavatar Narsimha' blends devotion, ambition, and innovation to historic success, and ignites a new era for Indian animated storytelling*

*By Jagruti Sardar*



When it comes to box-office fireworks, Ashwin Kumar's *Mahavatar Narsimha* has shattered expectations, crossing Rs 300 crore (around US\$36 million) worldwide to become India's highest-grossing animated film. Now streaming on Netflix, the mythological epic is reaching audiences globally, extending its cultural impact while energising an already passionate fan base.

For Kumar, the film is a deeply personal journey. A former VFX artist, he felt a profound connection to the story of Lord Vishnu's fourth avatar, Narasimha — the half-man, half-lion protector of dharma. "These stories are part of our heritage," he says. "I wanted to bring one to the big screen in a way that felt both

faithful and cinematic."

The team went straight to the source to ensure authenticity. They consulted the Shastric Puranas (Holy Hindu scriptures), including the Srimad Bhagwat, Vishnu, Narasimha, and Varaha Puranas, and visited Leela Sthals — pilgrimage sites associated with Narasimha. The goal was clear: every frame had to feel rooted in the mythology, yet visually spectacular for modern audiences.

Initially, the project began modestly, with a small budget and a simple plan. But as the first 25 minutes of animation took shape, it was clear that this was no ordinary film. To compete with international releases and meet the growing ambitions of the team, the

budget expanded over four and a half years to over Rs 40 crore (around US\$ 4.8 million), including marketing, with the Indian company Apar Group joining as last-mile producers.

"The production journey was a challenge from day one," reflects Kumar. "We built the story pipeline and workflow from scratch. Nothing like this had ever been attempted in India. While international animation performs well here, we lacked homegrown content of this scale. That forced us to innovate at every step."

The timing made the journey even more complex. The Covid-19 pandemic brought global shutdowns, halting production and testing the team's resolve. On top of that, many



industry veterans doubted the viability of a mythological, pan-Indian animated feature. Kumar and his crew, however, pushed forward, believing that animation could be a serious storytelling medium for all audiences, not just children.

One of the film's most distinctive choices was its visual style. Rather than the exaggerated cartoonish look typical of mainstream animation, makers adopted a semi-realistic approach. Characters were designed to convey genuine emotion while avoiding the uncanny valley — a risk that gave the film a spiritual gravitas and set it apart from anything else in Indian animation.

Technologically, the team introduced several enhancements to streamline production. Cross-pipeline systems were refined, complex simulations and visual effects were better managed, and AI-assisted workflows improved efficiency. Chief technical officer Sameer Mahajan and CG supervisor Manish Mandal were pivotal, pushing boundaries and ensuring every frame met the highest standards. "Their dedication reflected a quiet determination and collective strength," shares Kumar. "It mirrored the spirit of the story itself — a group overcoming immense challenges together."

Indian animation has long been pigeonholed as content "for kids." *Mahavatar Narsimha* shattered that perception. Its cinematic scope, epic battle sequences, and spiritually resonant narrative drew audiences across ages, proving that animation could deliver both spectacle and depth.

"The film was always intended for the big screen," Kumar emphasises. "From a small village to the cosmic universe, every frame was designed as a theatrical experience." After a successful multi-language theatrical release, the film expanded its reach via Netflix, building a global following and inspiring confidence in India's animation community.

The success of the feature has set a new benchmark for the industry. It



demonstrates that homegrown stories, told boldly and authentically, can compete with international animation. With audiences receptive to ambitious content, the Indian animation landscape appears poised for a new era of growth and recognition.

This film also marks the first installment of a seven-part cinematic universe, with the next chapter, *Mahavatar Parshuram*, already in development. With stronger funding, advanced technology, and a larger canvas, the sequel promises to push visual and narrative boundaries further. Each film will explore a distinct tone and style while maintaining a cohesive universe, giving the team room to experiment and innovate with every story.

*Mahavatar Narsimha* proves that Indian animation has evolved from a niche, child-focused medium into a versatile, globally competitive art form. It shows that rich cultural heritage, when paired with technical ambition and narrative daring, can create stories that resonate across borders. For Kumar and his team, the journey has only just begun



— and with this record-breaking debut, there's no slowing down.

The roar of *Narasimha* has awakened an industry. Indian animators now have proof that taking risks, embracing bold ideas, and staying true to local stories can resonate globally — setting the stage for a new era of animated storytelling ■



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# Building universal stories for young minds

*PunToon Kids takes its values-led characters global with new licensing opportunities*



**P**unToon Kids, India's premium kids' YouTube community, believes children's content must go beyond entertainment. It should inspire curiosity, nurture empathy, and help shape responsible global citizens. Over the years, the YouTube channel's homegrown characters and stories have earned the trust of millions of families, making it one of India's most loved kids' content creators. As cultural boundaries continue to fade and global audiences embrace diverse narratives, it's clearer than ever that content is still king.

The company's journey has shown that children's stories travel seamlessly across borders. "When we dubbed our videos into Spanish and launched them on YouTube, we received an overwhelming response," says PunToon Kids founder and CEO Sourabh Kumar. "The videos went viral, reaffirming that good storytelling connects with kids everywhere, no matter their geography or language." This success has cemented PunToon's belief that its content is universal and primed for global audiences.

What sets PunToon Kids apart is its focus on curiosity and curriculum. While rooted in Indian sensibilities, the

channel's content is carefully crafted to be less about local culture and more about values and life lessons that resonate universally. "Our stories explore important themes like anti-bullying, empathy, respect for elders, gender equality, and kindness. These are not just "good-to-have" values but the very foundation of nurturing emotionally intelligent children, values that are relevant in every corner of the world," he reveals.

Beyond short-form animations, PunToon also ventured into long-form storytelling. *Piggy Bank*, its original television show, is a collection of engaging kids' stories that bring together humour, heart, and learning. "The show has been appreciated by families for its ability to weave moral values seamlessly into entertaining narratives," Kumar shares. "With more such formats in development, we are confident of expanding into premium kids' IPs that can live across TV, digital, and even consumer products."

Kumar adds that PunToon Kids is eager to collaborate with partners who share its vision. "Several new concepts are ready for co-production, and we are also inviting animation collaborations

with global companies looking for high-quality content at competitive costs. With India's government subsidy schemes and our in-house animation studio, we offer the right blend of creativity, scale, and efficiency. And now, we are ready to share these stories widely by opening doors for licensing opportunities across OTT platforms, television channels, airlines, telecom networks, and digital distributors worldwide."

Their mission remains simple: create stories children love, parents trust, and partners can proudly take to the world. "Because at the end of the day, stories aren't just told, they're shared. And we can't wait to share ours with you and children around you," he exclaims ■

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# Crafting content ecosystem

*Powerkids Entertainment is charting a bold new course in children's media*

*By Binita Das*



*Adventures of Akira & Mowgli*



*Manoj Mishra*

In an age where nostalgia meets innovation, Powerkids Entertainment has masterfully revitalised Rudyard Kipling's timeless universe, bringing *The Jungle Book* to new generations with flair and imagination. But while Mowgli and Baloo continue to enchant young audiences, the studio isn't resting in the shadows of classic tales. It is boldly charting a future fueled by original IPs, cross-platform storytelling, and global ambitions.

With a strong legacy in reimagining timeless tales, the studio is

now focused on building original IPs that entertain, educate, and inspire children worldwide. As Powerkids prepares for Mipcom 2025, it's not just about showcasing various projects, it's about expanding entire content ecosystems that resonate across screens, shelves, and hearts.

## **Co-production, distribution model, and milestones**

Powerkids' engagement in co-producing and distributing partner content has been strategic and highly rewarding. "We have established strong collaborations with leading international studios, broadcasters, and streaming platforms, enabling the delivery of high-quality content that meets global standards," says Powerkids Entertainment CEO and MD Manoj Mishra. These partnerships have strengthened the company's creative capabilities, optimised production workflows, and enhanced its distribution expertise.

Creatively, the company has

transitioned from adapting established classics to developing original IPs that reflect inclusivity, diversity, and universal storytelling appeal. Technologically, it has invested in advanced animation pipelines, high-end production tracking software, and advanced rendering software which allow its team to deliver high-quality content at scale without compromising artistic integrity.

Apart from the established projects, the team's achievements include: new shows getting green lit, expansion of FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television) channels, digital platforms, and gaming. All these have strengthened its multi-vertical ecosystem. Its YouTube channel, PowerKids TV, has achieved over 60 million subscribers in total and billions of lifetime views, demonstrating the global reach and resonance of their shows.

## **From jungle story to the world stage**

Few children's properties have stood the



test of time like *The Jungle Book*, and Powerkids has embraced that legacy with unmatched passion. Its animated interpretations have found global resonance, especially through a vibrant merchandising program. “IP-based merchandising has been a significant driver of growth,” Mishra mentions. “*The Jungle Book* remains a strong performer through plush, apparel, publishing, and collectibles.”

But the story doesn’t end in the jungle. Powerkids has expanded its slate with exciting new properties, such as *Adventures of Akira & Mowgli*, *Little Mowgli*, and *Young Achievers Academy*. These fresh stories are not only capturing young imaginations but are also gaining traction in the global licensing space. “We consider merchandising a key extension of storytelling,” he adds. “It deepens emotional connection and enhances brand equity.”

The presales for *Adventures of Akira & Mowgli* that began at Annecy have been highly encouraging, with multiple international partners already committing to the show. Production is progressing according to schedule, with trailers, music, and key episodes

completed. Full series delivery is projected for mid-to-late 2026, with phased releases ensuring seamless distribution to global broadcast and streaming partners.

### Strengthening the content ecosystems

At the core of Powerkids’ mission is a forward-thinking approach to children’s entertainment. The company isn’t just creating shows, but building entire content ecosystems that span screens, shelves, and classrooms.

“Our focus is on developing original IPs for multi-platform engagement,” Mishra reveals. “Our objective is to craft content ecosystems that extend beyond the screen, providing children with entertainment, education, and inspiration.”

It’s a strategy that reflects the evolving media landscape, where young audiences interact with characters across digital and physical realms – from binge-worthy series to books, games, toys, and learning experiences.

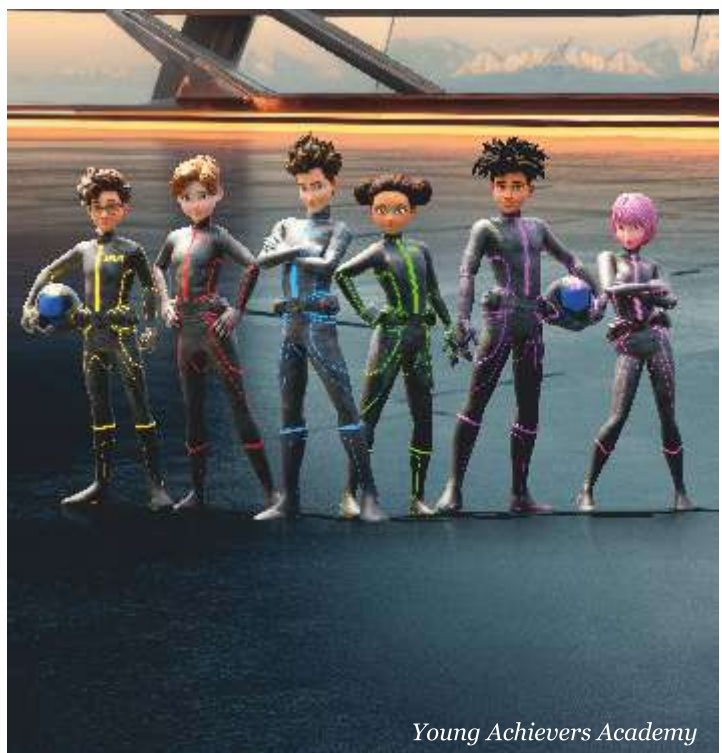
### All eyes on Mipcom 2025 and years ahead

As Powerkids gears up for Mipcom 2025 in Cannes, excitement is building. “We

are exhibiting, like every year, and our booth number is P-1 N 13,” he confirms. On display will be the studio’s signature blend of legacy and innovation, from the ever-charming *Little Mowgli* to the adventurous *Adventures of Akira & Mowgli*, the empowering *Young Achievers Academy*, and the whimsical *King Eggbert*. Powerkids aims to connect with international partners to explore co-production, licensing, and distribution deals.

“Mipcom offers an ideal platform to reinforce Powerkids’ global presence,” Mishra notes. “We look forward to welcoming collaborations and driving strategic growth in children’s entertainment.”

With a proven legacy and an eye firmly on the future, Powerkids Entertainment is well-positioned to redefine children’s media. As they blend nostalgia with fresh narratives and meaningful experiences, one thing is clear: the story is just getting started. Whether you’re a fan, a parent, a partner, or a kid at heart, the world of Powerkids is one worth watching ■



Young Achievers Academy

# Rewriting the anime playbook

*Indian broadcaster Sony YAY! is betting big on anime to capture India's hungry fanbase*

*By Jagruti Sardar*



Photo: X.com/@NARUTO\_info\_en

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**N**aruto Shippuden is back, and this time he's speaking Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Bangla. On 15 August 2025, Indian broadcaster Sony YAY! unleashed the iconic ninja saga across five languages, marking a turning point in how anime reaches the country's masses. No longer confined to English-speaking metros or piracy-riddled corners of the internet, the beloved series is now accessible to millions in their mother tongues. It's a bold wager that anime has evolved from cult curiosity to mainstream cultural force.

Sony Pictures Networks India's Sony kids and animation business head Ambesh Tiwari, reckons the demand was

always there—it just needed the right content delivered the right way. Animation, he argues, has long shed its "only for kids" tag.

Animated films routinely claim 30 to 40 per cent of top-grossing spots in Indian cinema and Hollywood. Recent hits like Mahavatar Narsimha prove Indian audiences will show up for stories told through animation, provided they resonate. Add to this the Cartoon Network generation—adults who grew up glued to animated shows and now wield serious spending power—and you've got a recipe for explosive growth.

"For them, animation isn't a treat anymore; it's a staple," Tiwari says. "This is driving broader acceptance and

booming demand for animated storytelling."

But picking winners isn't simple. Tiwari's team applies a trifecta of tests: broad appeal (does it work for someone 12 or 24 years old?), emotional heft (can it inspire more viewers?), and appropriateness (is it too violent or crude for younger audiences?). Get those right, and you've got a shot at breaking through India's notoriously fragmented media landscape.

The path forward, however, is littered with obstacles. Original Japanese creators guard their properties fiercely, demanding meticulous reviews of localised versions—a process that can drag on for months, as Sony YAY!



discovered with *Naruto*. Worse still is piracy, which bleeds the industry dry, ensuring creators earn far less than they should. Meanwhile, the shift from linear television to digital platforms has upended traditional advertising models, leaving the market in limbo. “Despite these hurdles, there is optimism that the ecosystem will eventually stabilise and evolve into a more equitable and sustainable space,” he believes.

Rather than slugging it out with anime streaming giants, Sony YAY! is playing the long game: building the ecosystem from the ground up. The broadcaster is airing select shows, forging partnerships, launching new channels and engaging fans at gatherings like Anime India. “Our goal is to grow the market collaboratively,” Tiwari explains. “Once it matures, competition will naturally follow.”

The strategy is already bearing fruit. Sony YAY! recently revived *Obocchama-kun*, a Japanese anime that had been gathering dust for three decades, in partnership with Japan's TV Tokyo and India's Green Gold Animation. The show premiered in India and is set to air in Japan—a rare reversal that signals India's growing clout in the global animation market. “As India's animation sector becomes more lucrative, such cross-cultural tie-ups are likely to multiply, blending local storytelling with global formats,” he highlights.

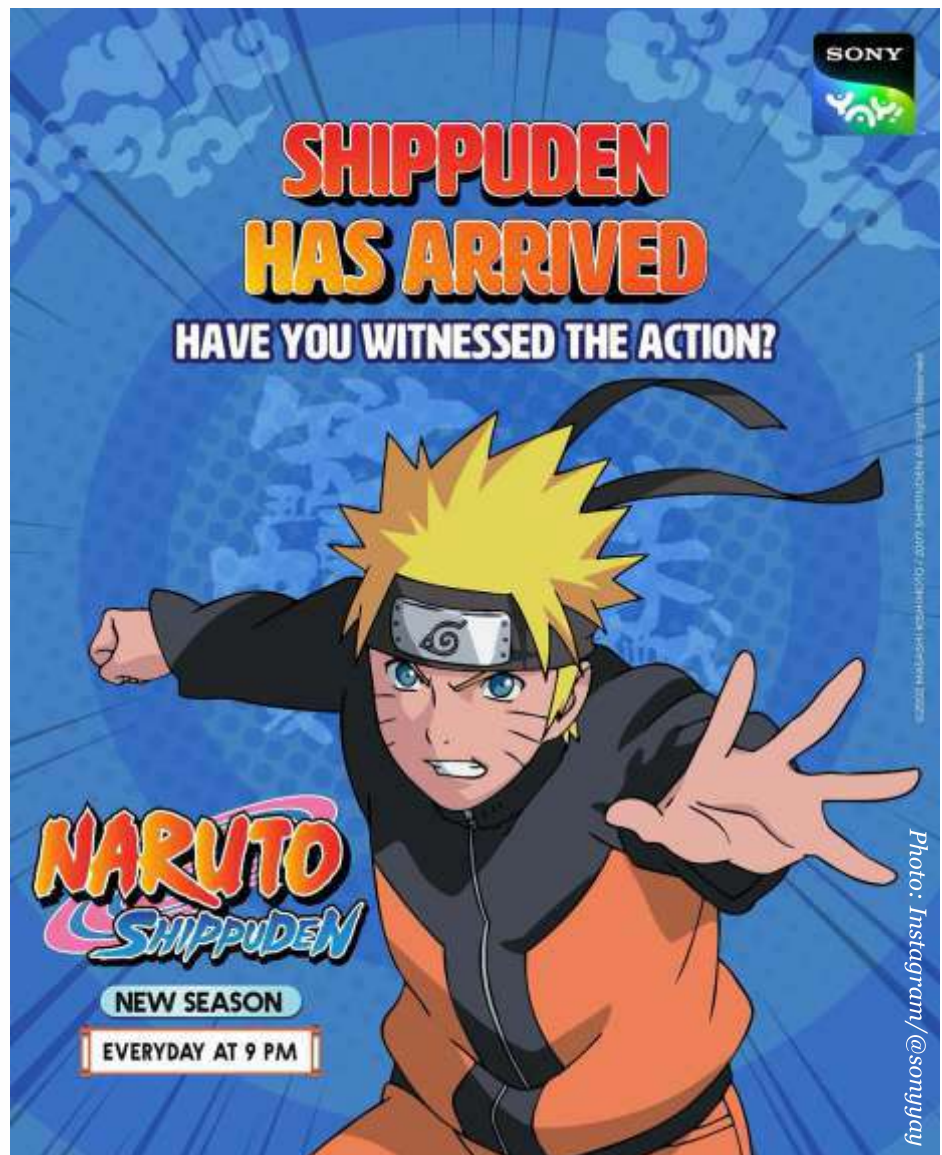
Anime has unmistakably graduated from niche to phenomenon. Major streaming platforms now boast sprawling anime libraries. Events like Anime India are mushrooming. Lifestyle brands such as Boat and Mokobara are launching anime-themed collections—*Naruto* headphones, anyone?—blurring the line between fandom and fashion. It's a content-to-commerce pipeline in overdrive: viewers start with *Naruto* on Sony YAY!, move on to *Solo Leveling* on Crunchyroll, snap up merchandise, dive into games and turn up at fan conventions. Every touchpoint feeds a thriving anime economy.

India's anime ecosystem is shifting from passive consumption to active participation, with fans driving

demand and brands scrambling to keep pace. Alongside airing *Naruto Shippuden*, Sony YAY! plans to produce *Karna*, an original series deeply rooted in India, but rendered in high-quality anime visuals. If it works, it could redefine what Indian animation looks like—and prove that the country isn't just importing anime culture, but reshaping it ■



Ambesh Tiwari





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# Creativity meets clarity

*Kayra Animation co-founder Arpit Dubey on blending artistry with strategy and positioning India as a trusted global animation partner*



Arpit Dubey and Nilesh Patel

**B**orn from a shared dream between childhood friends Arpit Dubey and Nilesh Patel, Kayra Animation represents the perfect fusion of business strategy and creative vision. What began as a small, passionate team has grown into a full-service studio offering end-to-end 2D and 3D animation production for global clients. With Dubey's business acumen complementing Patel's artistic sensibilities, Kayra has built a reputation for efficiency, artistry, and storytelling depth. As the studio expands its international footprint, Dubey believes the time has come for India to be recognised not just as a service destination, but as a creative force shaping the future of animation. In an interview with AnimationXpress, Dubey shares Kayra's vision and plans for the road ahead.

## **What makes you stand out as a partner for international clients?**

At Kayra, our pipeline is flexible and adaptable, allowing us to collaborate with studios and producers around the world — whether its full-service production or specific parts of the workflow.

For our international clients, we're known for being a reliable, transparent, and quality-driven partner — one that understands both creative vision and commercial realities, making the collaboration smooth, effective, and rewarding.

## **How have collaborations with global partners shaped your expertise?**

We've had the privilege of working with a wide range of global partners on projects including episodic series, TV specials,

and feature-length productions, allowing us to engage with different storytelling cultures and creative processes from Europe, North America, and Asia.

Every collaboration has been a learning experience — not just in terms of production technique, but in understanding how stories resonate differently across regions. Working closely with international creators has refined our expertise in building efficient production pipelines and adapting our workflow flexibility to suit diverse creative expectations.

These experiences have strengthened our ability to manage large-scale productions — balancing creative vision with the realities of budget and schedule. Many of our clients return to us season after season because



they value the transparency, reliability, and creative alignment that Kayra brings to every project.

**Beyond service work, are you looking at co-production opportunities? What kind of partners or projects would you like to align with at Mipcom?**

Absolutely. While service work continues to be an important part of our studio's foundation, we're now moving into co-production and original IP partnerships. At Mipcom, we're looking to align with partners who believe in meaningful storytelling and sustainable production models. Our focus is on 2D and 3D animated content for children, families, and young adults, with themes rooted in emotion, imagination, and cultural universality. We're interested in projects that have both global resonance and regional authenticity.

With India's growing animation ecosystem and government support for international collaborations, this is an exciting time to build mutually beneficial partnerships.

**How does your team balance technical expertise with creative input, especially when working with diverse international styles?**

Since we work with partners across different regions, we make it a point to understand the cultural nuances and narrative rhythms that define each storytelling style. Our team regularly engages with clients' creative teams during early stages, ensuring that our interpretation of performance, timing, and emotion matches their creative intent.

On the technical side, we've invested in developing robust, adaptable pipelines in both 2D and 3D, allowing us to meet varied stylistic demands — whether it's a classic hand-drawn look, a stylised 3D world, or hybrid production.

**What is your long-term vision for the studio?**

Over the next five years, we aim to build stronger co-production alliances,

particularly with partners in Europe and North America, and develop stories that are culturally rooted in India yet universally relatable.

As for my personal role, I see myself as a bridge between creativity and business. Having a background in both trade and animation, I aim to help position India as a reliable co-production destination — not just a service base.

**What tools are you adopting to stay competitive and efficient?**

Our team works across Adobe Animate, Toon Boom Harmony, Moho and Blender, Maya, Unreal Engine depending on the project's visual and technical requirements.

We've developed customised production trackers and review systems to streamline communication between departments and clients. This maintains transparency in delivery timelines, asset management, and quality control — especially crucial when handling multi-episode international projects.

On the innovation front, we're researching the use of AI-assisted tools in certain production stages and have set up a team to explore these advancements responsibly. Additionally, we're expanding our focus on virtual production and cloud-based collaboration, enabling real-time creative feedback from clients across continents.

**Could you share a glimpse into your ongoing projects?**

At present, we're working on two major international animation projects. The first is a 52-episode children's series that blends humour and heart, where our team is handling end-to-end 2D production. The second is an 87-episode international web series designed for both children and adults, centered around emotional intelligence, confidence, and self-awareness. For this one, we're collaborating closely with the client's creative team on character design adaptation, rigging, animation, and

background production.

In August, we delivered two CGI feature films, each produced using different animation tools and pipelines. Our partners were extremely happy with the collaboration, and our team found it creatively rewarding.

**What are you excited to showcase at Mipcom?**

We're developing a few original IPs that are in the early stages of development, each reflecting our focus on strong storytelling, cultural authenticity, and emotional resonance. At the same time, we're in active discussions with international partners for co-productions and service collaborations that align with our creative and production strengths.

**What can potential international collaborators expect when working with your studio in terms of process, communication, and reliability?**

We place strong emphasis on clear communication, structured workflows, and reliable delivery timelines — values that have helped us build long-term relationships with global clients. Our process integrates detailed pre-production planning, milestone-based reviews, and collaborative feedback loops, ensuring every project stays creatively aligned and technically sound. We also maintain dedicated project managers and bilingual coordinators to bridge any cultural or time zone gaps.

**Finally, what would you like to say to potential partners and producers meeting you at Mipcom this year?**

I'd say — let's connect with curiosity and openness. Mipcom is all about discovering synergies, and we're always excited to meet partners who share a passion for great storytelling and meaningful collaborations. I look forward to conversations that spark long-term possibilities ■

## Building a creator's universe

*Siddharth Kumar Tewary's Swastik Stories is reshaping Indian storytelling for a borderless creator economy*



Siddharth Kumar Tewary



We're not just producing shows — we're building IPs, nurturing creators, and ensuring they have platforms to own and monetise their stories. Our focus is clear — to empower creators and build stories that travel. We're creating an ecosystem where creators own their stories — and their future.



For nearly two decades, Swastik Stories has been at the heart of India's storytelling tradition — creating, reimagining, and sharing narratives that have inspired millions. As the global entertainment landscape pivots toward the creator economy, few studios embody that evolution as vividly as Swastik Stories.

The company has produced over 10,000 hours of content that has redefined Indian television and digital storytelling. Iconic titles like *Mahabharat*, *RadhaKrishn*, and *Porus*, have not only achieved record-breaking success but have also created a new visual language for mythological and historical storytelling. Each production reflects the company's belief that stories rooted in culture can travel across borders and resonate everywhere.

Founded by Siddharth Kumar Tewary (also the founder of One Life Studios), the visionary behind some of India's most ambitious mythological and historical dramas, Swastik has transformed from a powerhouse television producer into a multi-platform storytelling ecosystem.

Today, under its new identity, Swastik stands at the crossroads of creativity, technology, and ownership — nurturing creators, building IPs, and taking Indian stories to global audiences through initiatives like Swastik Fast and its production hub, Bhoomi. Located in Umargam, the Bhoomi studio stands as one of India's largest and most advanced production facilities, spread across 23 acres. It is the creative home where many of Swastik's landmark shows are brought to life — from grand set designs and immersive worlds to state-of-the-art production infrastructure.

Swastik's syndication division continues to take its stories to the world, with content licensed and localised across Asia, MENA (Middle East and North Africa), Europe, and Africa, in more than 20 languages. This growing global footprint underlines its mission — to make Indian storytelling a universal experience.

In an interview with AnimationXpress, Tewary shares how Swastik's next chapter is all about empowering storytellers in a world where content knows no borders.

**Mipcom's theme this year revolves around the creator economy. How does that align with Swastik's journey?**

The creator economy represents a shift we've always believed in — from production to creation, from syndication to ownership. Storytelling is no longer limited to studios or broadcasters; it now thrives wherever creators bring their imagination to life. At Swastik, we've embraced this transition fully. We're not just producing shows anymore — we're building IPs, nurturing creators, and ensuring they have platforms to own and monetise their stories.

**YouTube is participating at Mipcom for the first time this year — a milestone for creators. What does that signal for the industry?**

It's symbolic of a new world order. YouTube's presence proves that creators now sit at the heart of the global content marketplace. The traditional barriers between film, television, and digital have dissolved. For us, that's a validation of what Swastik has been working toward — empowering storytellers who can connect directly with audiences, regardless of platform or format.

**Swastik Stories has recently undergone a rebrand. What does this new identity represent?**

Swastik Stories represents our evolution — from being one of India's leading television production houses to becoming a complete storytelling universe. It brings together all our creative arms — long-form premium dramas, digital-first content, our FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television) channels, and co-productions with global partners. We're moving toward an ecosystem where we don't just make shows — we create worlds, characters, and IPs that travel

across languages and platforms.

**Tell us about Swastik Fast — it's being described as a major milestone in your digital journey.**

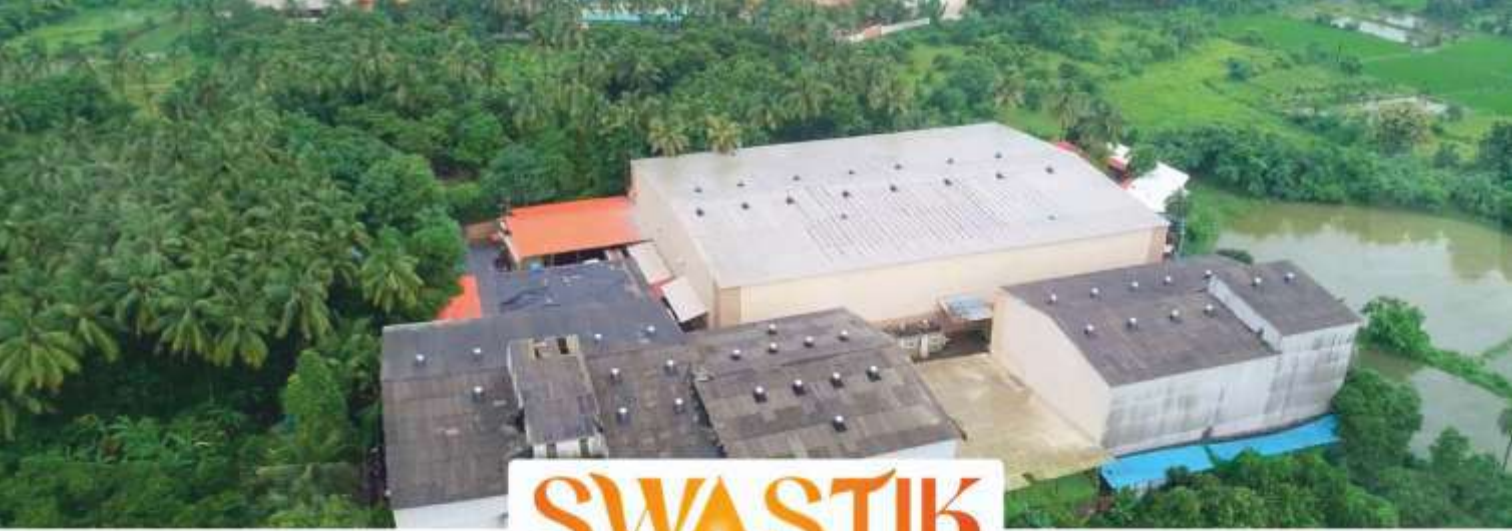
Absolutely. Swastik Fast is our independent Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television platform. But for us, it's more than a window — it's a discovery engine and monetisation lane for creators and cultural IP. It lets us take Indian stories to a global audience without depending on traditional broadcasters. Together, Swastik Fast and our digital assets now reach over 40 million users worldwide. That scale allows us to give both audiences and creators more freedom — to discover, create, and connect.

**Bhoomi has been getting attention as one of India's most advanced production hubs. How does it fit into the Swastik ecosystem?**

Bhoomi is the heart of our creative ecosystem — a full-fledged studio designed for the modern creator. It's not just infrastructure; it's an end-to-end creative environment. From large-scale set design and on-site production to VFX, post-production, and sound — Bhoomi brings everything under one roof. It's built sustainably, with technology and storytelling in perfect sync. Bhoomi empowers both large productions and independent creators to bring their visions to life.

**Finally, what's next for Swastik in this creator-driven world?**

Our focus is clear — to empower creators and build stories that travel. Whether through Fast, Bhoomi, or global co-productions, we're creating an ecosystem where creators own their stories — and their future. Swastik Stories is where heritage meets innovation, and storytelling becomes limitless ■



# SWASTIK BHOOMI

**A BREATHING  
CANVAS OF  
IMAGINATION**

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FROM  
MUMBAI**

**25  
ACRES OF  
FILM STUDIO**



**17 INDOOR  
SHOOTING  
FLOORS**



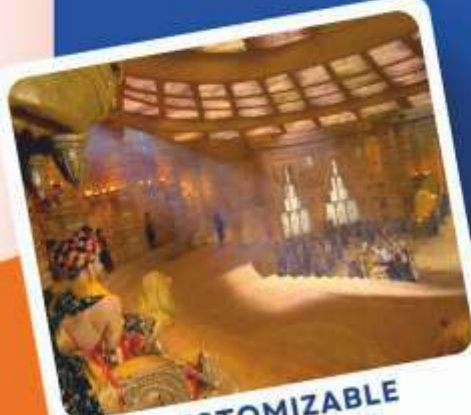
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# Local stories to global screens

*JioStar's Anu Sikka discusses the current dynamics of kids' content, the importance of taking risks, and stories with worldwide appeal in the animation industry*



Anu Sikka and Manoj Mishra at AM Summit 2025

According to Anu Sikka, business head of kids & infotainment at JioStar, animation studios cannot expect broadcasters to shoulder both costs and profits. “Instead, studios must explore stronger business models — ones that involve more stakeholders and investors, thereby multiplying the collective effort,” she said.

Sikka was speaking to Powerkids Entertainment CEO and MD Manoj Mishra during a fireside chat at the recently held Animation & More (AM) Summit, organised by AnimationXpress. The event took place on 22 and 23 August in Mumbai, bringing together leading industry voices who shared insights on navigating and thriving in the Indian animation landscape while reaching wider audiences.

One of the summit's highlights

was the session with Sikka, who has been instrumental in creating India's beloved homegrown IPs such as *Motu Patlu*, *Chikoo Aur Bunty*, *Shiva* and *Rudra*, along with the global Nickelodeon property *Sammy & Raj*.

The discussion opened with a look at the long-standing challenge of studio sustainability — a conversation ongoing since 2010 — and the importance of calculated risk-taking for established studios.

Sikka emphasised the need to clearly identify the target audience before developing any animated project. She explained that content for preschoolers is vastly different from that for children aged nine to 14, and understanding these distinctions is essential for effective storytelling. Reflecting on the evolution of the

medium, she noted how animation has opened up new avenues for creative engagement.

Speaking about the risks that shaped some of India's biggest animation successes, Sikka recalled, “When we created *Motu Patlu*, there were no kids as protagonists. People questioned us, but we believed in the characters. Another big decision was producing 78 episodes a year when the norm was only 13. We knew kids loved repeat viewing, but their habits were changing. Taking those risks made all the difference.”

Reflecting further on the show's success, she said, “We understood the strength of the characters we were creating — the cultural nuances and aspects that children could relate to through local stories. These nuances



Motu Patlu

shaped our storytelling, and the rest is history. *Motu Patlu* premiered in 2012, and since then, we've never looked back." Her team has since launched new shows every year, producing as many as three in a single year recently.

Commenting on Indian animation's growth, she pointed to *The Legend of Hanuman* as a landmark series. "*The Legend of Hanuman* was the first to take that bold step — and it truly set the benchmark," she pointed out.

Discussing the current dynamics of the Indian animation industry, Sikka stressed the importance of experimentation. "Experimentation has to happen. Risks must be taken. The tried-and-tested formula will only take you so far. We believed in our characters and developed them in ways we felt would truly work," she remarked.

As the conversation turned towards technology, Sikka reflected on the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in animation. "AI is technology — and technology will eventually become part of our lives. It cannot be ignored," she stated. "Right now, it's in its early stages. It should be used to facilitate what we do and help us, not just in creating

animation but in various other ways. There's a lot of ambiguity around it; let things settle, and we'll take a call when the time is right."

Turning to the box office success of Indian animated feature *Mahavatar Narsimha*, she highlighted how it broke the long-held notion that animation is only for children. "This movie achieved something truly significant for the Indian animation industry. People often equate cartoons with kids, but that barrier has now been broken," she highlighted.

The session underscored that it's compelling stories and relatable characters that truly captivate audiences, while animation serves as a limitless canvas for imagination. "Animation is just another way of telling a story. If you have a strong, compelling narrative, people will watch and forget that it's animated," Sikka affirmed.

In conclusion, the panel celebrated the power of animation as a storytelling medium and its vast potential for the future. The discussion reinforced that continuous innovation and experimentation are vital to keeping the industry fresh, relevant, and



Shiva

engaging across generations.

The takeaway was clear — the Indian animation industry is no longer confined to a specific age group or genre. It has evolved into a versatile art form capable of addressing diverse themes, experimenting with new technologies, and captivating audiences both in India and across the globe ■



# India at Mipcom

*A list of companies and offices from India attending Mipcom 2025*

Amazon Prime Video	AnimationXpress	Audio Bridge
Bhasinsoft India	BOL	CLA Global Indus Value Consulting
Digitoonz Media & Entertainment	DocuBay Media	Encore Films
Enter10 Television	GoQuest Media Ventures	Gracenote
Green Gold Animation	Hoichoi	IN10 Media & DocuBay
Jiostar India	Kaascom Media	Karman Unlimited
Kayra Animation	Lifetime Entertainment	Lionsgate Play
Lotpot Comics (Mayapuri Group)	Magiclume Technologies	Mugshot Studios
Narendra Hirawat & Co.	NE Media Syndication	One Life Studios
One Take Media Co	Prayan Animation Studio	Puppeteer Films
Rajshri Entertainment	Reeloid Media	Rusk Media
Shemaroo Entertainment	Star India	Studio V Sync
Sutra Digital	Trilokana Marketing	Ultra Media and Entertainment
Ved Events & Entertainment	Indywood Distribution Network	Bharat Pavilion - WAVES Bazaar
Yoboho New Media	Dangal TV	Zee Entertainment UK
Walnut Media	Fire Light Films	LoglineAI
Pickle Media	VawWorld Media Innovation	WordSword Creations
Hungama Digital Media Entertainment	Broadvision Perspectives x Studio56 Animation	Powerkids Entertainment (Singapore)
Mav N Rick Studio	Diment Spectra Studios	

# AnimationXpress: Powering the AVGC ecosystem beyond news



Anime India 2025 – the B2C event organised by AnimationXpress in Mumbai

When it comes to animation, visual effects, gaming and comics (AVGC), AnimationXpress is a name that hardly needs an introduction. For years, the portal has been the go-to destination for breaking news, industry insights and community stories. Beyond its role as a leading portal for industry updates, the platform is a one-stop hub of services designed to connect brands, studios and creators with their audiences in meaningful ways.

## A global platform with strong community reach

Every month, AnimationXpress draws in 1.25 million page views and over 250,000 unique visitors, engaging professionals and enthusiasts across more than 140 countries. Its digital footprint extends to an email database of over 100,000 subscribers and a thriving social media community of more than 200,000 followers.

While India forms the heart of its audience—accounting for half of the readership—the platform enjoys strong traction across the US, UK, Canada, Germany, France, Japan and Australia. From students and indie creators to studio heads and industry veterans, AnimationXpress has built a rare ecosystem where diverse voices converge.

## Events that light the way

AnimationXpress curates annual on-ground B2B events, initiatives and awards promoting the AVGC industry. Its flagship event IPs include:

- **Animation & More (AM) Summit:** A conference with thought-provoking sessions on the animation industry.
- **ANN Awards:** A spectacular celebration of talent, creativity, and innovation in the animation industry.
- **Visual & Media (VAM) Summit:** A media & entertainment event featuring panels, in-depth making-of sessions, VFX breakdowns, and discussions led by acclaimed producers, directors and supervisors.
- **VAM Awards:** A prestigious recognition of innovation and excellence in the Indian VFX industry.
- **GEM (Gaming, Esports, Metaverse) Awards:** The awards celebrate excellence in game development, competitive esports, emerging technologies, and Web3 innovations, including NFTs and the metaverse.
- **AVGC 40 Under 40:** Awards recognising 40



luminous individuals, under the age of 40, who have made a mark in the Indian AVGC ecosystem.

- **Animation Creators Pitch (ACP):** A platform providing creators, both students and professionals, an opportunity to pitch their innovative ideas to industry veterans and turn them into short films, features and shows.

This year, AnimationXpress made its B2C debut with Anime India.

### Bringing fandom under one roof: Anime India

One of AnimationXpress' most vibrant ventures, Anime India, celebrates the growing wave of Japanese pop culture in the subcontinent. The debut edition, held in Mumbai, attracted more than 29,000 anime fans over three days, making it one of India's fastest-growing pop-culture events. Visitors immersed themselves in lively discussions, concerts, cosplay, gaming, quizzes, art, merchandise, food and original locally developed anime characters—all under one roof. Anime India has not only united fans and creators but has also established a new benchmark for experiential events in the region.

Anime India is set for a four-city tour next year, with the city of Kolkata being the first stop in February 2026, and Mumbai being the last stop in September 2026.

### Beyond headlines: Services that deliver

- **Advertising with impact:** AnimationXpress provides businesses with multiple avenues for visibility. Options include banner ads; email marketing campaigns; social media promotions across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube; native articles crafted by the client or the portal's editorial team, ensuring long-term value through homepage placement, newsletters, and archival access.

- **Engagement and activations:** The company organises both online and on-ground activations to create deeper audience connections. These include recruitment campaigns, competitions, anime launches, cosplay events, roundtables, and webinars. Schools and colleges campaigns also

allow brands to reach the next generation of talent and consumers.

- **Strategic partnerships:** For those looking to go further, AnimationXpress also provides research and analysis, video case studies, content syndication, market representation, and media partnerships. Its summits and awards act as flagship gatherings for the AVGC ecosystem, offering brands unmatched opportunities to connect with global leaders and trendsetters.

### Bridging technology and creativity

Recognising the importance of innovation and cross-industry collaboration, AnimationXpress also curates technology-focused industry events that bring together global tech promoters, distributors and creative professionals. These gatherings provide valuable insights into animation and VFX pipelines, workflow advancements and cutting-edge production tools—fostering dialogue between technology innovators and creative visionaries.

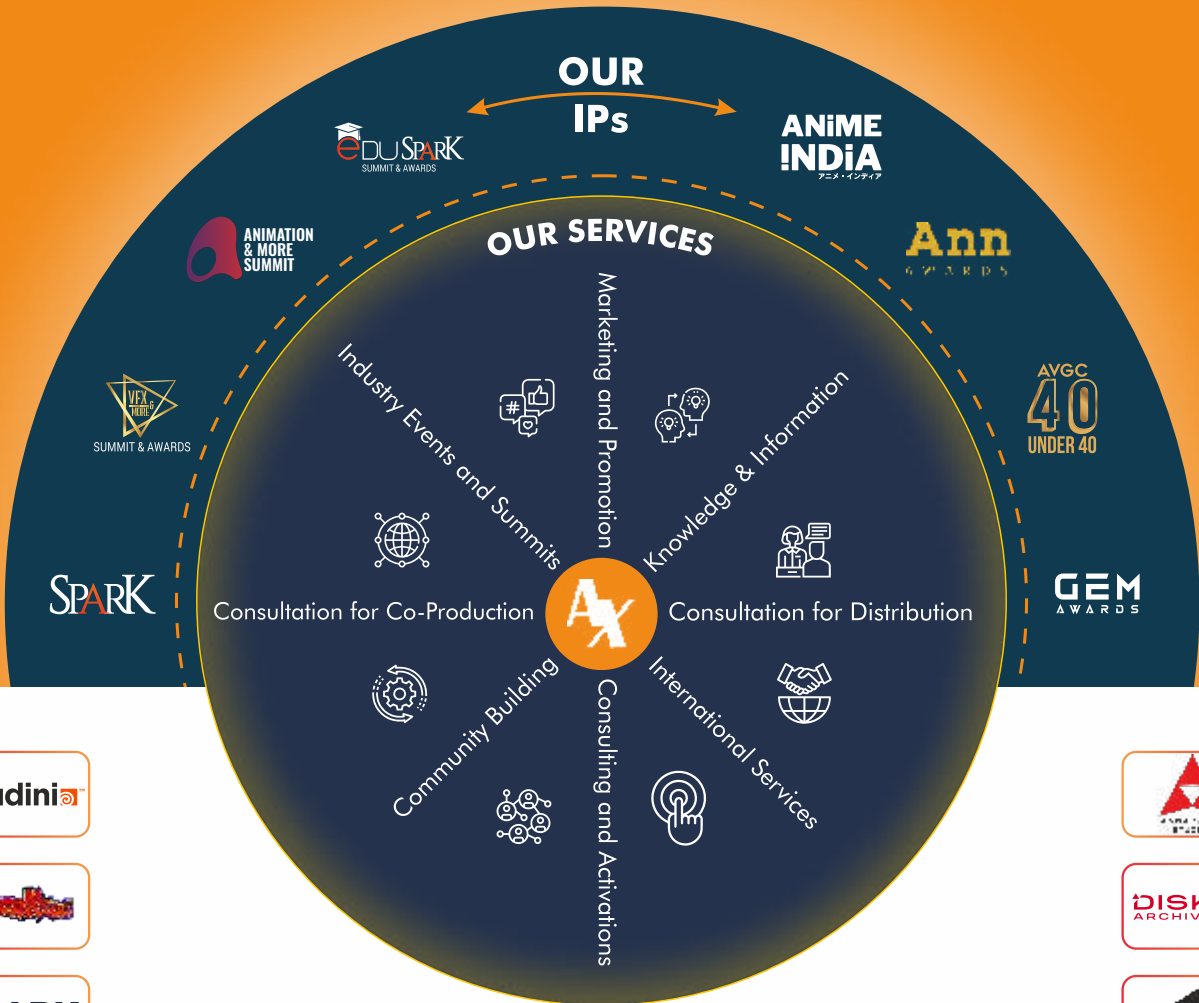
### Driving value for industry partners

Whether it is through digital advertising, curated editorial content, or experiential events, AnimationXpress provides a full spectrum of services that go far beyond its role as a news portal.

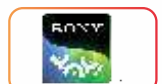
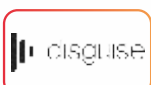
### Arrange of clients

AnimationXpress has a wide range of clients spanning across the AVGC sector. Some major companies include 88 Pictures, Absen, Acer, Adobe, AMD, Anime Times, Assemblage Entertainment, Autodesk, BenQ, ElevenLabs, Foundry, Maxon, MSI, NYVFXWaala, PhantomFX, PlayStation, Powerkids Entertainment, Reliance Animation, SideFX, Sony YAY!, Toonz Media Group, Toyota, TV Paint, Unreal Engine, Yotta, Zebu Animation Studios, and many more.

By combining reach, expertise, and industry authority, it continues to strengthen its position as both a storyteller and a strategic partner for the animation, VFX, gaming, and comics ecosystem ■



## OUR CLIENTS





# ANIME INDIA UNPLUGGED

India's anime revolution kicked off this August as Animation Xpress unveiled the inaugural edition of Anime India, a landmark celebration of Japanese pop culture held in Mumbai. Over the course of three electrifying days (22, 23, 24), more than 29,000 anime enthusiasts converged to revel in all things anime, manga, cosplay, and more.

A true cultural spectacle, the event brought some of Japan's biggest industry heavyweights to Indian shores. Among the honoured guests were legendary anime director Tetsurō Araki (*Attack on Titan* and *Death Note*), The Pokémon Company corporate officer Susumu Fukunaga and Avex Pictures and The Anime Times Company president Hideo Katsumata. Their presence underscored the event's significance as a powerful cultural exchange, bridging fans from across continents through a shared love of storytelling, artistry, and imagination.

Renowned studios, brands, institutes and other retail outlets who participated as exhibitors were 88 Pictures, ARK Infosolutions, Autodesk India, Celio, Chennai Anime Club, Colorful, Cosmics Entertainment, Cosmos Creative Academy,, Eizo India, EliteHubs, Entertainment Store,, Fat Cat Collectibles, Frameboxx Animation and Visual Effects, Instax Fujifilm India, IDM, Imagica Infos, India Book Distributors (Bombay), India-39, Indo Nissin Foods, Fujifilm India, ITM Skills University, Kikkoman India, Toyota, Maverick Dreams, Maya Toys & Sports, Medialink Entertainment, Mizuchi, Moes Art, Muse, Nerd Arena, Omiyaage India, Pentel Stationery India, Red Bull, Redington India, Ritual, Sony India, Studio Jatayu, Superhero Toy

Store, The Souled Store, Toonsutra, TV Tokyo, Weekend Blockbusters, Whistling Woods International, XPPen, Yakult Danone India, Zee Learn and others.

Anime India was presented by Anime Times and Toyota. The event was co-powered by Yotta. The gold partners were 88 Pictures, ARK Infosolutions, Maxon, Epic Games, and Unreal Engine. Silver partners included Redington, Autodesk, and Zebu Animation Studios. Datsi joined as the talent development partner. The associate partners were Fuji Film and Sony YAY!. PlayStation was the official gaming partner, with Powerkids Entertainment as the lanyards and badges partner.

*Shinchan: Spicy Kasukabe Dancers in India* was the delegate bag partner, Bright Outdoor Media was outdoor partner. JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) and MDEC (Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation) were country partners. Industry partners included *Captain Raaj*, Huion, IICT, Toonz Media Group, Toonsutra, XP Pen and MIDCCA (Maharashtra Immersive Digital Content Creators Association). The festival partner was DigiCon6 Asia and education partners were Atlas (ISDI), Arena FC College, Cosmos Creative Academy, Dr DY Patil School of Design, Frameboxx 2.0, ITM Skills University, Incube 8, KES College, MAAC, RJ College, Prime Focus Academy, Thakur College, MIT Art Design & Technology University, Mithibai College, Tron Education, Srajan College of Design, Veda Institute, Whistling Woods International and Zica.

Here is a pictorial representation of the major highlights of this year's event:



Enthusiasts posing with Avex Pictures (*Black Clover*, *Gachiakuta*) president Hideo Katsumata (2nd from right) post his session



Fans engaging in games at the booth of gaming partner Sony PlayStation



Attendees making the best of Onigiri-making battle (seen above) traditional Japanese tea ceremony, chopstick painting and keychain painting experiences



Stunning cosplay showcase where fans brought their favourite characters to life



A voice-acting fireside chat featuring artists best known for the Hindi voices in *Pokémon* and *One Piece Film: Red*



A quiz at the Nissin booth gave attendees a chance to grab a free cup of noodles



Indian standup comic Rohan Joshi (fifth from left) set the stage on fire with a hilarious round of anime dumb charades



Participants battling it out at the singing competition Aidol





Live House: Concert featuring Nakamura Touko



Japanese pop culture experience at the Maid Cafe with themed decor, costumed servers, and playful performances



A thrilling performance by cosplayer, DJ, and Japanese voice artist Tsunko



Tetsuro Araki – the creative mind behind the iconic anime titles *Attack on Titan* and *Death Note* – during a session with fans



The event witnessed the largest number of official licensed retail booths



# Shaping global animation

*AM Summit 2025, India's premier animation conference, brings global voices together and sparks collaborations*

India's premier celebration of animation excellence, the Animation & More (AM) Summit and Ann Awards, brought the creative community together for an unforgettable showcase on 22 and 23 August in Mumbai. This year's summit was co-hosted with Anime India, India's first anime convention.

Organised by AnimationXpress, the AM Summit unfolded as a dynamic confluence of knowledge and artistry, and combined thought-provoking sessions on the animation industry with a celebration of industry leaders, innovators, and animation enthusiasts.

Under the theme "Creativity Beyond Borders," the summit celebrated animation as both a storytelling medium and cultural force. Global creative minds gathered to share ideas, spotlight new talent, and explore the medium's growing influence of animation and anime that traverses boundaries.

This year, the summit hosted international organisations like Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), bringing companies from both the countries to India, along with diverse and global perspectives.

The opening address "Creativity Beyond Borders: India's Next Leap in Global Animation" was delivered by Warner Bros. Discovery South Asia MD, Arjun Nohwar, who highlighted India's growing role in the global animation arena, emphasising how the medium transcends boundaries, reaches diverse audiences, and has rapidly evolved from a niche genre to mainstream global consumption.

Over the two days, the audience witnessed sessions on the anime industry in Japan and India, and cross-border collaborations to create content. In his keynote session, The Pokémon Company corporate officer Susumu Fukunaga spoke about his company's mission to enrich the real and virtual worlds with the Pokémon characters. Avex Pictures and The Anime Times

Company president Hideo Katsumata offered rare insights into Japan's animation industry and its growing global influence. Highlighting the current trend of animation, he noted that India and other Asian countries are key markets for the expanding animation industry. In its anime IP showcase, Muse Asia discussed trends, licensing strategies, and global distribution opportunities. In another session by TMS Entertainment, its licensing director Shintaro Kato unpacked industry dynamics and shared his expertise on licensing trends and the unique dynamics that make the anime sector distinctive. Sony Pictures Networks India business head – kids & animation Ambesh Tiwari and Green Gold Animation COO Srinivas Chilakalapudi spoke about the collaboration and innovation behind reimagining TV Asahi's classic show *Obocchama-kun* for today's audiences.



Hideo Katsumata



Susumu Fukunaga



Abraham Joel Victor



An attendee at AM Summit



Legendary anime director Tetsurō Araki (*Death Note*, *Attack on Titan*) had flown to India for the first time to attend the event as a speaker. With a packed hall, he shared rare insights into his vision, storytelling mastery, and the journey behind some of the most iconic anime titles, igniting a sense of nostalgia among the fans.

Jetro India chief director general Takashi Suzuki spoke about the increasing popularity of anime in India, collaboration between the two countries for content and merchandise, and cross cultural activities.

Malaysia's Nymey (pronounced: "Nee-may") International founder Abraham Joel Victor spoke about the animation landscape in his country, and how his anime streaming platform is proving to be a game changer.

In a panel discussion, brands like Kikkoman India, Black White Orange, Indo Nissin Foods, Kidzania India, The Souled Store and White Rivers Media discussed animation and IP in storytelling, fan engagement, and brand strategy.

The second day opened with Assemblage Entertainment CEO Arjun Madhavan presenting a special address titled "The Future in Motion: New-Gen Animation from India." Followed by the address, the studio executives showcased their work on the Netflix series *Wolf King* and the animated feature *Sneaks*.

In a fireside chat, Paperboat Design Studios co-founder & chief creative director Soumitra Ranade and Plexus Motion director & motion designer Yashoda Parthasarthy spotlighted how independent animated shorts in India have explored mature storytelling, bringing to life emotional depth and complexity. Another enriching discussion, "Animating Asean's Soul" highlighted how deeply rooted narratives from Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries enrich the global animation landscape. Led by Malaysian animation pioneer Hassan Muthalib, the session celebrated Southeast Asia's storytelling traditions and cultural authenticity.

The summit spotlighted technological innovation with industry leaders Yotta, Autodesk, and Maxon, who demonstrated how cutting-edge solutions are transforming content creation. The Yotta session explored hybrid renderfarm workflows, Unreal integration, and AI-driven pipelines. Maxon's training manager Jonas Pilz demonstrated how advanced VFX workflows can be made easy using the Maxon One suite, while the Autodesk session highlighted AI's role in art, animation and storytelling.

Apart from these, companies like JioStar, Powerkids Entertainment (Singapore), Zebu Animation Studios,



Tetsurō Araki



Arjun Nohwar

Studio56 Animation, 88 Pictures, Toonz Media Group, Saffronc India, Reliance Animation, Astra Studios, WhiteApple, Graphiti Studios, PunToon Kids, ChuChu TV, Cosmos Maya, Charuvi Design Labs, Carmond Infinity and Ghost Note Media participated as speakers.

The event concluded on a high note, reaffirming animation's role as a global storytelling powerhouse. It sparked conversations on cultural exchange, storytelling innovation, and the future of international collaboration. It fostered a platform for the budding artists to interact with the industry professionals and take a deeper look into the current dynamics of the animation industry.

The AM Summit, Ann Awards and Anime India were presented by Anime Times and Toyota. The event was co-powered by Yotta. The gold partners were 88 Pictures, ARK Infosolutions, Maxon, Epic Games, and Unreal Engine. Silver partners included Redington, Autodesk, and Zebu Animation Studios. Datsi joined as the talent development partner. The associate partners were Fuji Film and Sony YAY!. PlayStation was the official gaming partner, with Powerkids Entertainment as the lanyards and badges partner.

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# Animation Spotlight: India

*India's Ann Awards 2025 celebrates outstanding talent*

India's prestigious Ann Awards concluded with a grand celebration of talent. Held on 22 and 23 August in the city of Mumbai, the event was a resounding tribute to the relentless passion driving the world of animation. Hosted annually by AnimationXpress along with the AM Summit, the Ann Awards is the most respected recognition in the Indian animation industry.

This year, the awards were extended to Asia with the International category. The move proved to be a huge success as it received participation from countries like Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and more.

The awards, entry-driven, were adjudicated by an esteemed jury of national and international experts which included Anil NM Wanvari | Founder, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief, AnimationXpress; Ashish Kulkarni | Founding Director- IICT; A.S. Krishnaswamy | Professor of Practice, Field of Animation; Chaitanya Chinchlikar | VP & Business Head, CTO & Head of Emerging Media, Whistling Woods International; Daisy Wall | VP of Content, WildBrain; Jack Liang | Executive Producer & VP - International Business Development, Polygon Pictures; Javier González Alonso | CG Supervisor, Jellyfish Pictures; Jeffrey Scott | Motion Picture/TV Writer-Producer; Pradipto Sengupta | Character Effects Supervisor - DreamWorks Animation Studio; and Sekhar Mukherjee |

Professor/Programme Lead - Centre for Moving Image, Anant National University.

Ann Awards' special segment pays tribute to two stalwarts: the late Ram Mohan - the father of Indian animation, and the late Arnab Chaudhuri - a visionary whose work placed Indian animation on the global stage.

AnimationXpress instituted the **Ram Mohan Award for Excellence in Animation** to recognise creators who embody Mohan's pioneering spirit. This year, the prestigious honour was conferred upon Suresh Eriyat, the founder of Studio Eeksaurus. He was presented with the award by Mohan's wife Dr Sheila Rao, their son Kartik, Graphiti Studios co-founders Munjal Shroff and Tilak Shetty, and Wanvari.

The **Arnab Chaudhuri Director's Award** was instituted in two categories - the Young Ace Award for students, and the Animation Ace Award for directors and professionals. The **Young Ace Award** was presented to Govinda Sao and the **Animation Ace Award** was presented to Anirban Paul. Both the winners received cash prizes and a Huion tablet.

The Arnab Chaudhuri Director's Award is judged by distinguished names who worked closely with Chaudhuri. These include professor Nina Sabnani, filmmaker Pete Bishop, creative director Rob Middleton, Disney executive Orion Ross, academic Prakash Moorthy, along with Wanvari and Chaudhuri's wife Ashima

Avasthi Chaudhuri. The cash prizes in both the awards are supported by Avasthi, Vaibhav Studios and AnimationXpress.

The AM Summit and Ann Awards were presented by Anime Times and Toyota. The event was co-powered by Yotta. The gold partners were 88 Pictures, ARK Infosolutions, Maxon, Epic Games, and Unreal Engine, while silver partners included Redington, Autodesk, and Zebu Animation Studios. Datsi joined as the talent development partner and the associate partners were Fuji Film and Sony YAY!. PlayStation was the official gaming partner, with Powerkids Entertainment as the lanyards and badges partner.

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# HERE'S THE COMPLETE LIST OF THE WINNERS OF ANN AWARDS 2025:

## INTERNATIONAL

### Best Use of AI in Animation

Supersub – *The Magic Chalk*

### Best Animated Licensed Character

*Shin Chan* – Shin-Ei Animation, TV Asahi, ADK Emotions, Futabasha

### Best Animated Brand Film

Dettol (Bangladesh) – Famous Digital Studios

### Best Animated Short Film

*Look Back* – Avex Pictures

### Best Animated Feature Film

*Shin Chan: Our Dinosaur Diary* – Shin-Ei Animation, TV Asahi, ADK Emotions, Futabasha

## LICENSING & MERCHANDISING

### Best Animated Series Merchandise

*The Jungle Book*, Season 4 – Powerkids Entertainment

## MEDIA ADVERTISING & MARKETING

### Best Brand Collaboration

*Ishqa* (Pratilipi x Wild Stone) – Pratilipi Films

### Best Animated Brand Film

ThumbsUp – Famous Digital Studios

### Best Experiential Marketing

Jungle Book Mall Promotion – Powerkids Entertainment

### Best Innovative Campaign

Kotak Mahindra Bank Campaign – Famous Digital Studios

### Best Promo

Tata IPL 2025 Opening Graphics – Fairycows Animation Studio

## STUDENT

### Best 2D Short Film

• *Kaala Dora* – Shruti Gajraj Ravidas, Whistling Woods International

• *तहानलेली हाक* – Apurv Anil Gautam, MIT Institute of Design

### Best 3D Short Film

*Parampara* – Maya Academy Of Advanced Creativity (MAAC)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Best Reel with the use of Animation

Gym Injuries Final Boss – Studio LKY

### Best social media presence by an Animation platform/studio

Powerkids TV – Powerkids Entertainment

### Best Animated social media content

The Happy Slate

## DIGITAL & OTT

### Best Use of Animation in a Music Video

*Captain Raaj* (Title Song) – Carmond Infinity

### Best Pre-School Series

*Little Mowgli (The Rumble in the Jungle)* – Powerkids Entertainment

### Best 2D Animated Digital Series

• *Creepy Candy* – Toonz Media Group

• *Kiya & Kayaan* – Applause Entertainment

### Best 3D Animated Digital Series

*Legend of Hanuman* – Graphic India

### Best Animated Short Film

*A Secret Playground* – Wackytoon Studio

## PROGRAMMING

### Best 3D Animated Series

• *Adventures of Akira & Mowgli* – Powerkids Entertainment

• *Little Singham: Amrit K Rakhwale* – Reliance Animation Studios & Warner Bros Discovery

### Best 2D Animated Series

*CID Squad* – Sony Yay!

### Best Animated Full-Length Feature Film

*Chhota Bheem: Dholakpur to Hawa Hawaii* – Warner Bros. Discovery | Pogo

## PARTNERS-SERVICE

### Best Title Song

*Chhota Bheem in Samay Chakra* – Gaurav Malani and Seema Malani

### Best Preschool Show

• *Morphle Electro Robofreeze* – Green Gold Animation  
• *Press Start!* – Assemblage Entertainment

### Best Animated Digital Series

*Folktales Of India* – Prateek Sethi

### Best Animated Series

*Wolf King* – Assemblage Entertainment

### Best Animated TVC

Medimix Onam 2024 – Eunoians Studio

### Best Lighting Artist

Arun Sundar Murugan – *Mary Margaret Road Grader* (Saffronicon)

### Best Storyboard Artist

Wackytoon Studio – *Chhota-Startup Daadi's Kitchen* Episode

### Best Layout Artist – Animation

Ankit Kumar Shrivastava – *Trolls: Dance Battle* (Saffronicon)

### Best Composer

Syed Rahim – *Trolls: Dance Battle* (Saffronicon)

### Best Animated Short Film

*An Almost Christmas Story* – 88 Pictures

### Best Animated Full Length Feature Film

*Sneaks* – Assemblage Entertainment

### Best Animator – Female

Gunisetty Mani Deepika – *Trolls Dance Battle* (Saffronicon)

### Best Animator – Male

Haresh Ravindra Talekar – *The Super Elfkins* (philmCGI)

### Best Partnered Animation Work

• *Trolls – Stronger* – Saffronicon  
• *Wolf King* – Assemblage Entertainment

## TECHNICAL

### Best Title Design

*Bhool Chuk Maaf* title sequence – Ghost Note Media

### Best Title Song

*Legend of Hanuman* – Graphic India

### Best Screenplay Writer

• Christabelle D'Souza – *CID Squad* (Sony Yay!)



• Dimple Dugar / Deepak SV – *Rani Gaidinliu: The Iconic Woman North East India* (JV Films)

#### Best Dialogue Writer

Gaurav Malani & Seema Malani – *Bittu Bahanebaaz*

#### Best Character Design

Ravan in *Legend of Hanuman* – Graphic India

#### Best Lighting Artist

Omkar Basavaraj Kshirsagar – *The Wonderful Adventures Of Suppandi* (Zebu Animation Studios)

#### Best Voice Over Artist for a Series

Sharad Kelkar for Ravan – *Legend of Hanuman* (Graphic India)

#### Best Effects

ThumbsUp – Famous Digital Studios

#### Best Director of a Digital Series

Prashanth Chennoji – *Captain Kidd and Friends* (Paper Boat Apps)

#### Best Director of an Animated TV Series

Jeevan J. Kang & Navin John – *Legend of Hanuman* (Graphic India)

#### Best Director of an Animated Film:

Nandini Godara for *House Arrest* – Ghost Note Media

#### Best Animator – Male

Suvi Vijay – *The Wonderful Adventures Of Suppandi* (Zebu Animation Studios)

#### Best Producer

Manoj Mishra for *Little Mowgli (The Rumble In The Jungle)* – Powerkids Entertainment

### TECHNOLOGY

#### Best use of AI

*The Ayodhya Kanda* (Event) – Wowtoons Media

#### Best Technical Innovation

*Piece By Piece* – Zebu Animation Studios

### SPECIAL AWARDS

#### Best Anime Original

*The Vrindavan Chronicles Anime* – Jazyl Homavazir

#### Best Indian Cinema-Inspired Animated IP

• *Scene Kya Hai: If Bollywood Was Real* –

TheHappySlate

• *Little Singham: Amrit K Rakhwale* – Reliance Animation Studios & Warner Bros Discovery

#### Best Syndicated Content

*Dragonero: Tales of Paladins* (Season One) – Powerkids Entertainment

#### Best Use of Animation in a Public Service Message

HPV Vaccine Awareness Campaign – Ghost Note Media & MAG Films

#### Best Showrunner

Atisha Penjore Bhutia – *CID Squad* (Sony Yay!)

#### Animation Personality of the Year

Anu Sikka

#### Young Animator of the Year

Debopom Chakraborty – Rasmalai

#### Best Indie Studio

Cartoonly Studios

#### Studio of the Year

Assemblage Entertainment



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