



SPARK

ATF SPECIAL

MAGAZINE

Initiative by Animation Xpress.com DEC 2025

ONE UNFORGETTABLE FANDOM FESTIVAL

কলকাতা ANIME !NDIA

アニメ・インディア

2 DAYS. 3 STAGES.

14-15 February 2026

Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan

ANIME !NDIA

アニメ・インディア



ANIME INDIA



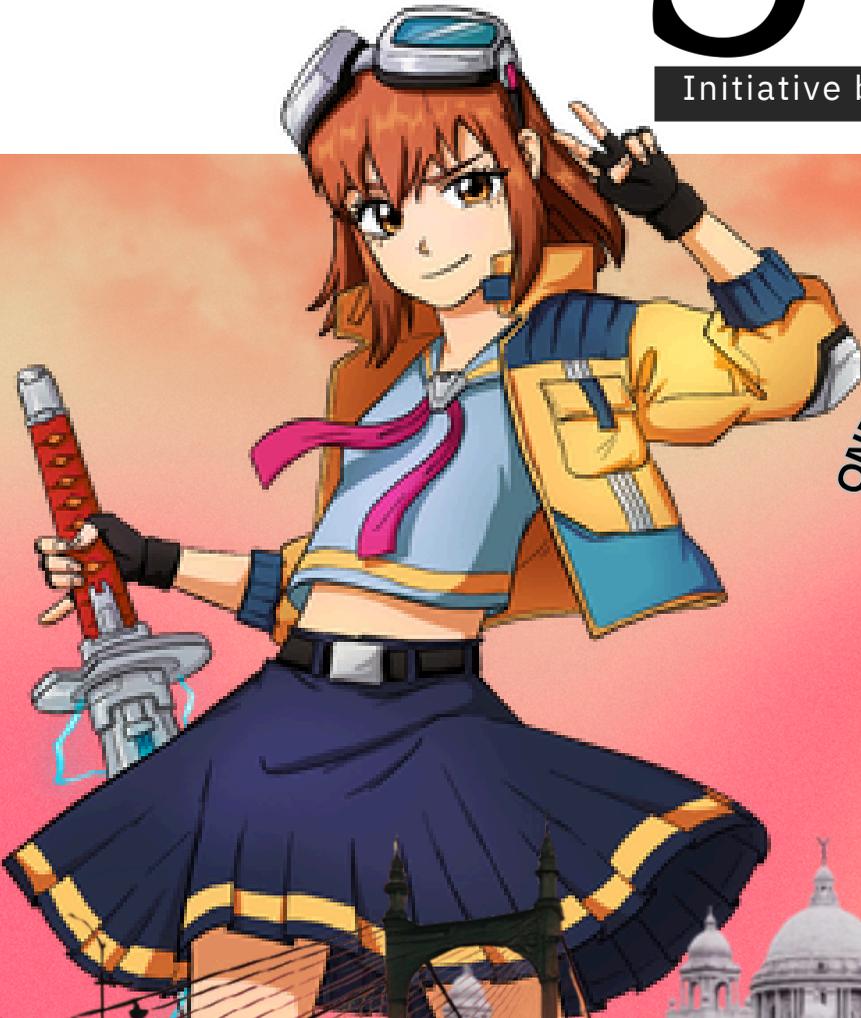
**ANIME
INDIA**
アニメ・インディア

SPARK

ATF SPECIAL

MAGAZINE

Initiative by Animation Xpress.com DEC 2025



ONE UNFORGETTABLE FANDOM FESTIVAL

কলকাতা ANIME !NDIA

アニメ・インディア

2 DAYS. 3 STAGES.

14-15 February 2026

Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan



ANIME INDIA

AN INITIATIVE BY

**Animation
Xpress**



**MUMBAI
INDIA** 

**HAPPENING
AUGUST 2026**

Mumbai transforms into a multiverse of motion. From AI-driven stories to anime-tech crossovers, Animation & More Summit brings the future to life.

The next wave of creative innovation starts here.

Know More:



ANIMATION & MORE SUMMIT 2026

8th EDITION

**MOTION
MEETS
MAGIC**

- PANELS
- MASTERCLASSES
- TECH-ZONES
- COLLABS
- EXPO
- GLOBAL NETWORK
- AI IN ANIMATION



Founder, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief

Anil NM Wanvari

Director

Mishaal Wanvari

Co-founder & COO

Neha Mehta

Sr. Reporter & Copy Editor

Anshita Bhatt

Sr Reporter

Binita Das

Reporter

Jagruti Sardar

Sr. Graphic Designer

Afzal Ahmed Qureshi

**Integrated Marketing & Operations
Manager**

Prapti K

Client Servicing Executive

Sanjana Chavan

Production Director

Sahil Khan

Production Executive

Abhishek Upadhyay

TO ADVERTISE

Phone : +91 9963303555

Email Id: sales@animationxpress.com

Website: www.animationxpress.com

SPARK MAGAZINE © 2025

Prior written approval must be obtained to duplicate any and all contents. The copyrights and trademarks of images featured herein are the property of their respective owners. Animation Magazine acknowledges the creators and copyright holders of the materials mentioned herein, and does not seek to infringe on those rights.

DESIGNED BY Prapti K

FROM THE EDITOR



ASIA'S SCREEN REVOLUTION MICRO-DRAMAS RISE AS ANIMATION CRASHES

Asia's entertainment industry is experiencing a dramatic split. Micro-dramas are exploding in popularity while the animation sector struggles significantly.

The micro-drama trend, which started in China, has spread throughout Asia. New platforms continuously emerge, targeting youth with shortened attention spans who prefer bite-sized content that fits between social media consumption. These vertical-format shows require minimal cognitive effort and cater to mobile-first audiences seeking quick entertainment.

Conversely, the animation industry faces severe challenges. Children's broadcasters are cutting budgets for new productions, forcing many producers to abandon traditional TV for digital platforms with limited revenue potential. This shift has particularly impacted Indian animation studios that previously relied on international outsourcing work, which has nearly disappeared.

However, theatrical animation is thriving. Successful animated films have sparked a production rush, with studios developing mythological spectacles for cinema release. The next two years will see numerous animated films as companies chase theatrical success.

The critical question remains whether this cinema boom can offset TV production losses. Theatrical releases require larger budgets and higher risks compared to the steady income from series work that traditionally sustained studios.

This transformation represents a bittersweet revolution: micro-dramas provide instant gratification and speculative opportunities, but the animation industry—once a regional production anchor—faces genuinely challenging times ahead.

Anil NM Wanvari
Editor-in-chief

TABLE OF CONTENTS

09 ANIMATION NEWS CAPSULE

Catch the latest top headlines from India and Asia

11 ANIME INDIA GOES NATIONAL

Anime India announces nationwide expansion and next destination

12 SHAPE SHIFTING STORIES

Assemblage Entertainment explores numerous animation styles in its projects

14 A DIVINE AWAKENING

India's 'Mahavatar Narsimha' becomes a box office hit and ignites a new era for animated storytelling

16 CRAFTING CONTENT ECOSYSTEM

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

18 REWRITING THE ANIME PLAYBOOK

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



22 CHINA'S HERITAGE GETS ANIMATED

Zoland Animation champions Chinese heritage with epic series 'Legend of King Qian'

24 VFX: ART MEETS MADNESS

Rocket Science VFX's CG supervisor speaks about his work on Wednesday S2, creative freedom and curiosity

26 LOCAL STORIES TO GLOBAL SCREENS

JioStar's Anu Sikka discusses the current dynamics of kids' content

29 ANIMATIONXPRESS

Powering the Animation VFX Gaming Comic ecosystem beyond news

31 ANIME INDIA UNPLUGGED

Glimpses of the major highlights from India's largest anime convention

34 SHAPING GLOBAL ANIMATION

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

36 ANIMATION SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

India's Ann Awards 2025 celebrates outstanding talent





ANIMATION NEWS CAPSULE

Here's a glimpse of the latest updates from India and Asia

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).



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.



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



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 in October, and was 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. The animation of the show is done by Hi-Tech Animation.

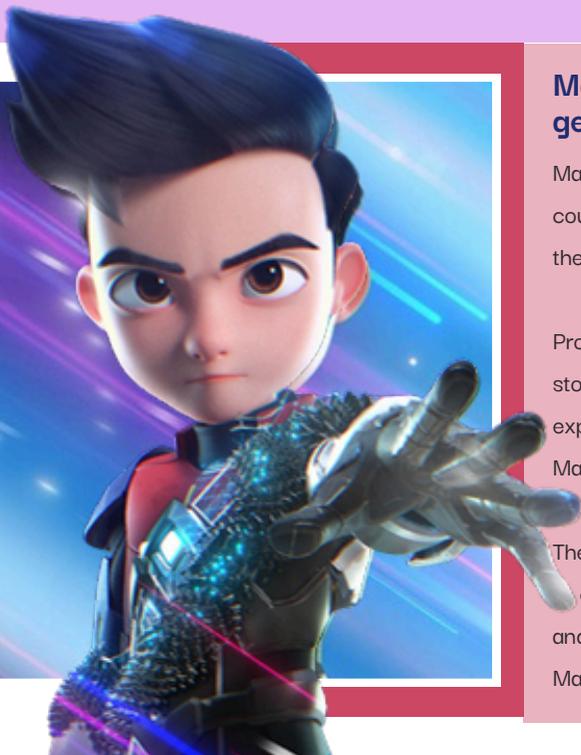


Malaysia's animated blockbuster 'Ejen Ali The Movie 2' gets new toy line

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.



BUY YOUR ORIGINAL ANIME MERCH IN INDIA



Nezuko Kamado
Round Keychain



Zenitsu Agatsuma
Metal Tassels Badge



Zenitsu Agatsuma
Round Keychain



Demon Slayer T-Shirt
collections



Tanjiro Acrylic
Standees



Demon Slayer
Ensemble Plate Stand



Satoru Gojo
abajaba



Attack on Titan
Badges



Attack on Titan
Acrylic Standees

Jujutsu Kaisen | Tokyo Revengers
Spy X Family | Dan Da Dan | Demon Slayer | Haikyuu!!
& many more



SCAN HERE
SHOP NOW





Anime India goes National

Anime India announces nationwide expansion; Kolkata to host first edition of 2026 tour with expected footfall of 40,000+

After a blockbuster debut in Mumbai, Anime India is stepping into its next, much bigger chapter. One of the country's fastest-growing pop culture platforms, the convention is set to go nationwide in 2026 with a multi-city expansion that will take anime and Japanese pop culture to fans across the country. The journey begins in the East, with Anime India Kolkata scheduled for 14-15 February 2026, marking the first stop in a year-long celebration spanning four major regions of India.

The announcement follows the runaway success of Anime India 2025, held from 22 to 24 August at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. Drawing over 29,000 attendees, the inaugural edition firmly established Anime India as a serious force in India's live entertainment and fandom space. The event featured internationally renowned guests such as Tetsuro Araki, director of *Attack on Titan* and *Death Note*, Susumu Fukunaga from The Pokémon Company, and Japanese creator-performer Tsunko. Fans were immersed in a packed lineup of cosplay championships, cultural workshops, gaming zones, panel discussions, and live concerts that brought the anime universe to life.



Building on that momentum, Anime India Kolkata 2026 is poised to set the tone for the convention's nationwide rollout, which will extend to Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad over the course of the year. The Kolkata edition is expected to attract more than 40,000 fans across two days, making it one of the largest anime and Japanese pop culture gatherings the region has ever hosted.

Attendees can look forward to a diverse and fan-focused programme, including high-energy cosplay competitions, anime karaoke, an expansive Artist Alley, a themed maid café, hands-on cultural experiences, gaming tournaments, and in-depth panel sessions. Adding to the excitement, organisers have hinted at a very special guest from Japan, with an official announcement slated for the coming weeks.

Speaking about the expansion, co-founder and director Mishaal Wanvari noted that the Mumbai success confirmed the demand for world-class anime conventions in India.

He described Kolkata as the perfect starting point, citing the city's deep-rooted artistic culture and highly engaged fan base. Co-founder and director Neha Mehta echoed the sentiment, calling the Kolkata edition a pivotal moment in Anime India's evolution into a truly national platform.

With its 2026 multi-city expansion, Anime India aims to unite fans across regions, nurture creators and artists, and firmly position India on the global anime map. Tickets are available on District by Zomato, with more details at animeindia.live.

Meet the Legend

Susumu Mitsunaka
the animation director

of hit anime series "Haikyuu", who also worked on theatrical releases such as Makoto Shinkai's "Weathering With You" and Studio Ghibli's "The Boy and The Heron"





Wolf King

SHAPE SHIFTING STORIES

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

BY BINITA DAS

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.

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,



Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie



Arjun Madhavan



Stitch Head

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.

- Arjun Madhavan



Wolf King



Stitch Head



Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie

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 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. "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.

The team remains committed to global collaboration. "We're deep in production on some major projects," they mention. 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, 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.



Adventures of Akira & Mowgli

CRAFTING CONTENT ECOSYSTEM

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

BY BINITA DAS

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," 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



Young Achievers Academy



PowerKids ENTERTAINMENT



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.”

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.

Powerkids aims to connect with international partners to explore co-production, licensing, and distribution deals.

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.

We look forward to welcoming collaborations and driving strategic growth in children’s entertainment.



Manoj Mishra

Photo: X.com/@NARUTO_info_en



Rewriting the anime playbook

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

BY JAGRUTI SARDAR

Naruto 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-



-Ambesh Tiwari

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. This is driving broader acceptance and booming demand for animated storytelling.

—Ambesh Tiwari

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.

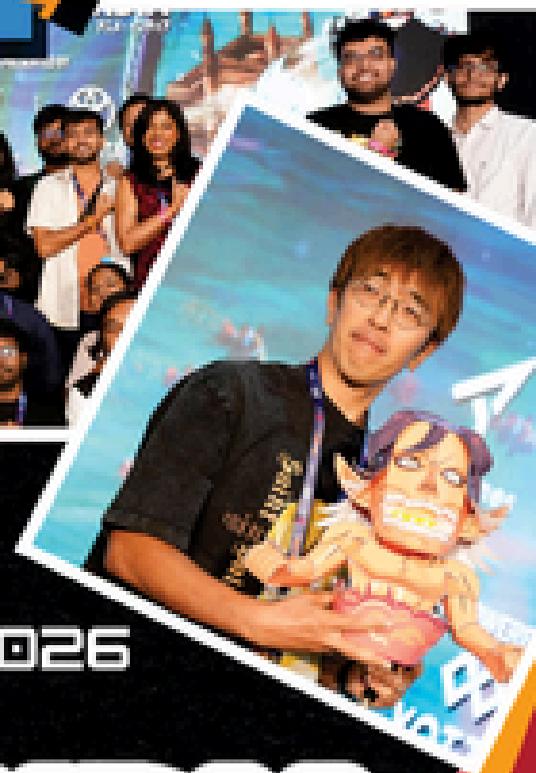
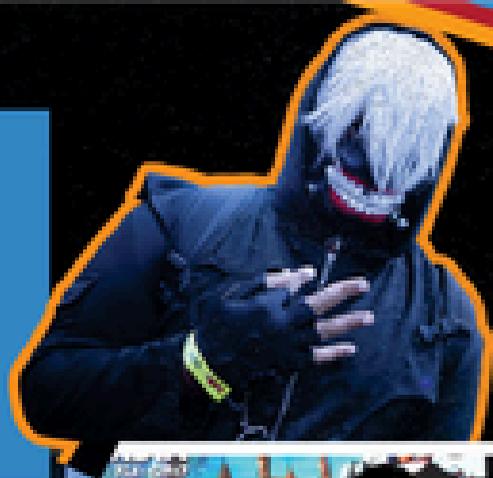
India's anime ecosystem is shifting from passive consumption to active participation, with fans driving demand and brands scrambling to keep pace. Alongside airing *Naruto Shippuden*, Sony YAY! plans to produce *Karna*, an original series rooted in Indian mythology but rendered in high-quality anime 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.



INDIA'S BIGGEST JAPANESE ANIME



CELEBRATION OF TIME RETURNS



WE ARE BACK

FEBRUARY 2026

ANIME!INDIA

アニメ・インディア

BIGGER, LOUDER, AND MORE COLORFUL THAN EVER!

STEP INTO A WORLD OF EPIC COSPLAYS, EXCLUSIVE MERCH, GLOBAL GUESTS, FAN MEETS, SCREENINGS, AND NONSTOP ANIME ACTION.

WWW.THEANIMEINDIA.COM



China's heritage gets animated

Zoland Animation champions Chinese heritage with epic series 'Legend of King Qian' at Mipcom 2025

BY BINITA DAS



Legend of King Qian

With a creative legacy spanning more than two decades, Zoland Animation, the animation division of Zoland Group, has become one of China's most prolific content producers. Boasting over 170,000 minutes of animated programming and a presence in broadcast systems across more than 100 countries and regions, Zoland continues to be a vital player in the global animation landscape.

At Mipcom 2025, AnimationXpress caught up with Zoland Distribution global business unit head Samantha Wong. A seasoned specialist in content distribution and co-productions, Wong reflected on Zoland's long-standing participation at Mipcom and the company's current flagship project, the historical animated epic Legend of King Qian.

Bringing history to life through animation

Set during the Song Dynasty, Legend of King Qian dramatises the extraordinary life of Qian Liu, the founder of the Kingdom of Wuyue. The series captures his journey from quelling the Dong Chang rebellion to establishing a peaceful and prosperous realm under the guiding principle of 'Protecting the Land, Bringing Peace to the People.'

"Legend of King Qian is a 52-episode historical epic, with each episode running about 20 minutes," Wong explained. "It explores Qian Liu's life from his childhood, when he was nearly abandoned, to the choices that defined him as a leader who valued justice and righteousness."

The production of the series is now complete, and Zoland is preparing for its official launch by the end of this year.

Expanding a legacy of original content

Zoland Animation's impressive portfolio goes far beyond its latest project. Over the years, the studio has created a diverse library of original titles such as Magic Eye, Magic Wonderland, Rubi Yoyo, and Zheng He's Voyage to the West, etc. Its content has reached audiences across 130 countries and regions, underscoring the studio's commitment to global storytelling.

One of its popular titles, Magic Eye is Back, is currently airing on ETV Bal Bharath in India, a testament to the studio's growing footprint in international markets.

"While Legend of King Qian is our current focus, we also have a strong lineup of original IPs that we're actively looking to distribute across new territories," Wong noted.

Two decades at Mipcom

Zoland Animation has been a fixture at Mipcom Cannes for nearly 20 years, a testament to its dedication to building relationships and staying at the forefront of global content trade. Over that time, the market has evolved significantly, and not always for the better, Wong observed.

"I think it is shrinking every year, the number of participants, buyers, and even the venue itself. The market isn't as dynamic and vibrant as before," she said. She attributes these changes to shifting geo-political

and economic conditions, as well as technological fragmentation that has reshaped how audiences consume content. Still, for Zoland, Mipcom remains an invaluable platform for connection and collaboration.

"Despite the shrinking effect, it's still a crucial marketplace," Wong affirmed. "We come here to reconnect with our long-term partners and customers, and to forge new relationships and deals. It continues to be

an important space for us."

As Zoland Animation gears up for the release of Legend of King Qian, the studio remains steadfast in its mission: to tell compelling stories rooted in Chinese culture while appealing to audiences worldwide. With its mix of heritage, artistry, and ambition, Zoland stands as a bridge between tradition and modern storytelling, carrying the spirit of Chinese animation onto the global stage.

#VFX&MORE



Trends Unveiled

Elite Industry Connect

Showcasing VFX Work

Global VFX Excellence

INDIA'S MOST
COMPREHENSIVE
VFX SUMMIT & AWARDS

MAY 2026



www.animationxpress.com

VFX: ART MEETS MADNESS

Rocket Science VFX's CG supervisor Jethro Au speaks about his work on Wednesday S2, creative freedom and curiosity

BY ANSHITA BHATT

CG supervisor Jethro Au has always been drawn to visuals and storytelling. He pursued art history before getting a diploma in visual effects. While studying art history gave him a strong foundation in composition and aesthetics, he eventually realised he wanted to create images rather than analyse them. That curiosity led him to visual effects, where he mixes both art and technology.

His journey in the VFX industry began as a modeler on Sony's *Men in Black: International* starring Chris Hemsworth. Since then, he has delivered high-profile features including *Top Gun: Maverick* starring Tom Cruise and Warner Bros.' *Birds Of Prey* starring Margot Robbie, as well as streaming titles like Prime Video's *The Boys* and *Gen V*, and Peacock's *Poker Face*.

Currently as a CG supervisor at Canada's Rocket Science VFX, Au oversees all CG aspects of shows – from assets to layout and lighting. He makes sure everything looks cohesive across departments and that the creative intent carries through from start to finish. A big part of his job is balancing artistic quality with technical efficiency and keeping the team aligned on both.

In this email interview with Animation Xpress, Au discussed his journey in the VFX industry, his work on the second season of Tim Burton's *Wednesday*, his experience on the project, working on *The Boys* and *Gen V*, challenges and learnings, and his advice to aspiring CG supervisors.

From beginning your career in comics and graphic design to now VFX, can you take us through your journey?

My early interests were always in drawing. I used to doodle constantly in

Jethro Au



school, which naturally led into making comics. I did webcomics and drew for the school newspaper. After graduation, I went into graphic design because it was the most employable creative path at the time – but deep down, my real passion was always film. Eventually, I decided to take the leap and pursue VFX full time, and that's when everything clicked.

At View Conference, you and Kevin Buessecker spoke about Wednesday S2 – building a complex creature rig for One-Eye and the crows in Maya. What were some of the creative and technical challenges involved in creating these creatures? And how did you bring the murdering of the crows scene to life?

It was a complex project. Creatures are already challenging, but adding feathers made it even more so. Getting smooth wing tucks and natural motion while keeping the rig animator-friendly required a lot of testing. We

A shot from *Top Gun: Maverick*



were also early adopters of Houdini 20's feather system, so there weren't many tutorials or examples to follow – we had to learn as we went. For the “murder of crows” scene, we created a wide range of animation cycles to add variation and realism to the crowd agents.

The crowd and flocking system for the crows sounds like a major achievement. How did you design and optimise the Houdini-based system to manage large-scale coordination while maintaining natural variation in behaviour?

We started by studying real crows – looking closely at flight cycles, landings, and social behaviour. The production [team] also provided hours of real footage from the set, which became our main reference. Once we were happy with the animation, we exported it as FBX into Houdini to use as crowd agents. From there, we built a custom system to apply these animation cycles procedurally – for example, having some crows attack while others idle or take off. It was all about creating controlled chaos that still felt organic.

Wednesday is known for its gothic tone and dark humour. How did your visual effects work – from One-Eye's introduction to the smaller moments like animating Thing – contribute to enhancing the show's atmosphere and storytelling?

We looked at a lot of Tim Burton's past work for reference – the tone, the rhythm, the slightly exaggerated personality in his creatures. One-Eye was one of the main villains, so we wanted him to feel menacing but still fit within Wednesday's gothic world. During the asset stage, we emphasised asymmetry and texture, and in animation we carried that through with small, eerie movements to give him presence and weight.

Rocket Science VFX has animated Thing in the show's first season as well. Was there anything different or innovative that your team executed in the second season?

In the first season, our main task was to replace the stump for Thing. In S2, we had a few shots where Thing was fully CG, which was a different kind of challenge. It was about matching the tactile feel of Victor's performance, especially capturing the weight, while also giving it more flexibility in movement.

Which are some important skills that you brought to Wednesday S2?

When I started on this project, I spent a lot of time researching crows – visiting museums, studying anatomy references, and watching tons of videos. That research helped me understand their behaviour and movement, which made a big difference when giving feedback to the team. Beyond that, I think what I bring is curiosity and persistence – I like digging into problems until I really understand them.

Can you tell us about your favourite bits of working on the shows The Boys and Gen V?

Working on gory scenes is always fun. Both The Boys and Gen V are over the top, but they also have a satirical edge, so the trick was finding that sweet spot where it's shocking but still funny. It's a rare mix of creative freedom and technical precision – we could push things further while keeping them grounded in the story's tone.

What was the most memorable part of working on Top Gun: Maverick?

Modeling the planes on Top Gun: Maverick was probably the most memorable part. The level of realism required was intense

– every material, every rivet had to hold up in close-up shots. It was a great lesson in precision and discipline, and it was surreal to contribute even a small part to such an iconic film.

From Men in Black: International to Wednesday S2, you have worked on a variety of projects, each with a distinct visual style. What have been your learnings?

Each project has its own challenges. Men in Black was all about stylised sci-fi, while Wednesday leans into gothic realism. What I've learned is that adaptability is key – being able to adjust your eye and workflow depending on the tone of the show. Every project adds a new layer of experience that shapes how I approach the next one.

As a CG Supervisor, what part of your job is the most complicated, and how do you simplify it?

The most complicated part of my job is finding creative and efficient approaches to shots. There's always a tension between artistry and practicality. I try to simplify by breaking complex problems down and staying communicative with my leads – it's about keeping everyone clear on the goal rather than getting lost in details.

From your experience in the VFX and filmmaking industry, what would be your advice to those who aspire to be CG supervisors?

Keep learning and stay adaptable. The tools and workflows in VFX change constantly, so curiosity is one of the most valuable traits you can have. Also, don't underestimate communication – being able to guide a team clearly and calmly is just as important as knowing the technical side.

The crows scene in Wednesday S2



The crows scene in Wednesday S2



Animating Thing in Wednesday S2



A shot from Top Gun: Maverick



FROM LOCAL STORIES TO GLOBAL SCREENS

THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF KIDS' ANIMATION

AM Summit 2025 staged an important discussion featuring JioStar business head - kids & infotainment Anu Sikka, who discussed the current dynamics of kids' content, importance of taking risks, and stories with worldwide appeal in the animation industry. changing dynamics of kids' animation



Anu Sikka and Manoj Mishra at AM Summit 2025

AM Summit 2025 along with the debut edition of Anime India organised by AnimationXpress staged a line up of industry experts who shared their professional insights on navigating and thriving in the Indian animation landscape while reaching wider audiences.

Held from 22 to 24 August 2025, the three-day extravaganza summit gathered industry leaders, creative visionaries, and passionate fans for a dynamic celebration of animation.

From panels offering insights into the Indian animation landscape and its growing global footprint to interactive showcases and fan experiences, the event highlighted both the industry's professional opportunities and its vibrant cultural impact.

One of the spotlight sessions featured insights from Anu Sikka, who leads one of India's largest kids' entertainment portfolios at Jio. The business head who manages close to 10 kids' channels, with six of the top 10 shows in the category coming from her network, she has been

instrumental in shaping original programming for young audiences since 2010.

The panel began by addressing the long-standing issue of studio sustainability, a discussion ongoing since 2010, and emphasised the importance of calculated risk-taking for established studios. She noted that studios cannot expect broadcasters to shoulder both costs and profits, and instead must explore stronger business models, ones that involve more stakeholders and investors, thereby multiplying the collective effort.

Bringing an expert eye to the panel, the discussion brought it to the audience's attention that animation is no longer just limited to kids and reaches the adults as well. She pointed out that from a creative standpoint, nearly 95 per cent of the pitches they receive are for adaptations of shows that already exist in other countries.

Sikka highlighted the need to clearly identify the target audience before starting an animated project. She explained that content for preschoolers is very different from content for children aged 9 to 14, and other age groups. Thus understanding these differences is crucial



Motu Patlu

for effective storytelling. Reflecting on the scope of animation she noted that animation has opened new opportunities to engage. Acknowledging the ongoing struggles of Indian animation studios, she said, "Studios in India at this moment are struggling. They are having a bad time. They are looking up to the broadcasters at this moment. Neither the digital part of it is working out, nor the linear part of it working out."

Reflecting on the risks that fueled success in the animation industry, she shared, "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."

Talking about the second project in their portfolio Motu patlu and how it was welcomed by the audience she added, "We totally got the strength of the characters that we are creating, all the cultural nuances, all the aspects with which the children were able to relate the character to the local stories. The cultural nuances are something that we incorporate in our storytelling. And as I said, rest is history. We never look back from there. I think this was when Motu Patlu came out in 2012. Since then, her team has consistently launched new shows every year, producing as many

as three in a single year recently."

Talking of the Indian animation she pointed to The Legend of Hanuman as a landmark show. "Legend of Hanuman was the first one to take that step, which came on hot stock, and today."

Further reflecting upon the current dynamics of the animation industry in India, the panel stressed on the need for experimentation in the industry and said, "Experiment has to happen. Risk has to be taken. The tried and tested formula will only take you till that point when we created it. We believed in these characters. We got the characters, we developed the characters to what we felt will work very well."

Escalating the panel into a broader discussion on evolving technology of artificial intelligence (AI), Sikka reflected on the use of AI in animation from a broadcasters view saying, "It's technology and will be part of human lives eventually and cannot be ignored."

"Right now it's at an early stage, technology needs to be used to facilitate what we are doing and help us out not just in creating animation, it can probably be useful in various other ways. It takes some time for it to take shape. There's a lot of ambiguity with regard to Artificial Intelligence. Let things settle down and we will start taking a call when the right comes," she added further.

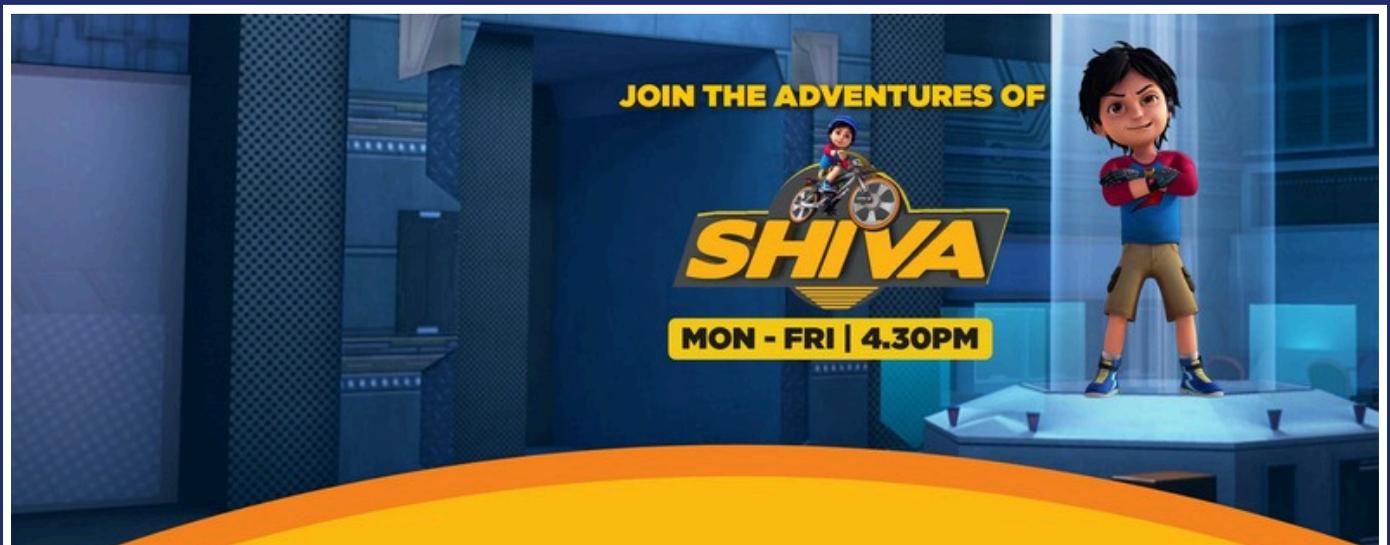
Next, referring to the box office success of Narsimha the panel highlighted how it broke the barrier of animation being seen as exclusively for kids. She said, "This movie has done something truly a big milestone for the

animation industry in this country. Why? Because what this movie, or the success has done is that animation, which very clearly, or you talk, you talk to anyone, the first response the moment you would mention the word animation, they would say, cartoon is equal to kids. That barrier has been broken."

Panelists unpacked the secret of audience appeal, showing that it's compelling narratives and characters that connect, while animation itself becomes a canvas for imagination, limitless in its possibilities." Animation is just another way of telling a story. If you have a good, compelling story, people will come and watch and forget the fact that they are. It's in the form of animation."

Overall, the panel highlighted the power of animation as a storytelling medium and underscored its vast potential for the future. Speakers discussed how continuous innovation and experimentation are key to keeping the industry fresh, relevant, and appealing to audiences across generations.

It came to a conclusion on a high note that the animation industry is no longer confined to a particular age group or genre but has evolved into a versatile form capable of addressing diverse themes, experimenting with new technologies, and reaching wider audiences both in India and globally for all age groups.





OUR CLIENTS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

AnimationXpress

www.animationxpress.com

POWERING THE AVGC ECOSYSTEM BEYOND NEWS

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.



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.

ANIME
INDIA



Ann
AWARDS



GEM
AWARDS



SPARK

- **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.

A range 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, NYVFXWala, PhantomFX, PlayStation, Powerkids Entertainment, Reliance Animation, SideFX, Sony YAY!, Toonz Media Group, Toyota, TV Paint, Unreal Engine, Yotta, Zebu Animation Studios, and many more.

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.



Attendees engaging in games and arcade at Gaming Zone



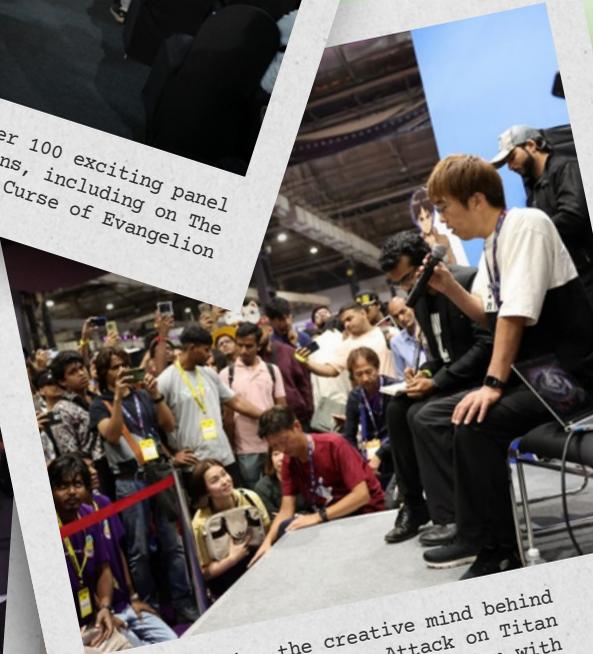
Over 100 exciting panel discussions, including on The Curse of Evangelion



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



The event witnessed the largest number of official licensed retail booths



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



The Artist Alley buzzed with creative pieces



Attendees making the best of traditional Japanese tea ceremony, chopstick painting, keychain painting experiences, Onigiri-making battle

ANiME!NDiA
アニメ・インディア

SHAPING GLOBAL ANIMATION

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

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, 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 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



L to R: Milind D. Shinde, Tetsurō Araki and Araki's Japanese-English interpreter



Shintaro Kato

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.

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 in 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, Studio56 Animation, 88 Pictures, Toonz Media Group, Saffronic 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.

Malhar Kalantre
from Muse Asia

Srinivas Chilakalapudi and Siddhie Mhambre



Suresh Eriyat wins Ram Moha Award



India Animation Spotlight

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, 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.

Shinchan: Spicy Kasukabe Dancers in India was the delegate bag partner, Bright Outdoor Media was outdoor partner, Jetro and MDEC were country partners. Industry partners included Captain Raj, Huion, IICT, Toonz Media Group, Toonsutra and XP Pen. 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's a full list of the award winners

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

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

Technology

Best use of AI

The Ayodhya Kanda (Event) – Wowtoons Media

Media Advertising & Marketing

Best Brand Collaboration

Ishqa (Pratilipi x Wild Stone) – Pratilipi Films

Best Animated Brand Film

ThumsUp – 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

Partners-Service

Best Title Song

Chhota Bheem in Samay Chakra – Gaurav Malani and Seema Malani

Best Preschool Show

- Morphe 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 (Saffronic)

Best Storyboard Artist

Wackytoon Studio – Chhota-Startup Daadi's Kitchen Episode

Best Layout Artist – Animation

Ankit Kumar Shrivastava – Trolls: Dance Battle (Saffronic)

Best Composer

Syed Rahim – Trolls: Dance Battle (Saffronic)

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 (Saffronic)

Best Animator – Male

Haresh Ravindra Talekar – The Super Elfkins (philmCGI)

Best Partnered Animation Work

- Trolls – Stronger – Saffronic
- 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 (JVD 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

ThumsUp – 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

Special Awards

Best Anime Original

The Vrindavan Chronicles Anime – Jazyl Homavazir

Best Indian Cinema-Inspired Animated IP

- Scene Kya Hai: If Bollywood Was Real – The Happy Slate
- 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



YOU'RE INVITED

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN ANIMATION

Ann

AWARDS

INDIA'S PREMIUM
ANIMATION AWARDS
NOW EXPANDS TO ASIA!

ENTRIES ARE OPEN

MUMBAI, INDIA

SEPTEMBER 2026



ELEVATE YOUR CONTENT WITH



AUDIOSPARK

Localisation And Dubbing



LOST IN TRANSLATION?

Not Anymore.
Affordable
Localization,
Global
Excellence.

Our Services



High-Quality Localization
Delivered from India



Skilled Experts Utilizing
Cutting-Edge Technology



Swift Turnaround Times
to Meet Your Deadlines



Most importantly, we offer
Cost-Effective Solutions
without Compromising Quality

Mob : +91 98338 44682

mail: contactus@audiospark.in

web: www.audiospark.in

