'Pandharpur Wari' documentary named India's national winner at Asian Academy Creative Awards 2026

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News

The 22-minute English documentary 'Pandharpur Wari – In the Footsteps of the Saints', made by Maharashtra's Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) with Warner Bros. Discovery, was named India's national winner in the 'Best Branded Programme' category of the Asian Academy Creative Awards (AACA) 2026. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis praised it.

Key facts

Film	Pandharpur Wari – In the Footsteps of the Saints (22 min, English)
Category	Best Branded Programme – India national winner
Makers	Maharashtra IPRD + Warner Bros. Discovery; aired worldwide on Discovery channels
Next	International round; grand gala – 3 Dec 2026, Capitol Theatre, Singapore
Other Indian winners	Anil Kapoor – Best Actor ('Subedaar'); 'Bison Kaalamaadan' – Best Feature Film

Background

- Pandharpur Wari: a roughly 700-year-old pilgrimage in which Warkari devotees walk about 250 km over 21 days to the Vitthal (Vithoba) temple at Pandharpur for Ashadhi Ekadashi (June–July). Sant Dnyaneshwar's palanquin starts from Alandi and Sant Tukaram's from Dehu.
- Geography: Pandharpur is in Solapur district on the Bhima river (called 'Chandrabhaga' here).
- Bhakti movement in Maharashtra: Dnyaneshwar ('Dnyaneshwari', 13th c.), Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram ('abhangs') – a message of equality across caste.
- Asian Academy Creative Awards (AACA): held in Singapore since 2018 for TV, streaming and film from Asia-Pacific – first country-wise 'national winners', then regional 'grand' winners.

Tamil Nadu link: the Bhakti movement began in Tamil Nadu in the 6th–9th centuries through the Alvars (Vishnu) and Nayanmars (Shiva) and spread north. 'Bison Kaalamaadan', chosen Best Feature Film, is a Tamil film directed by Mari Selvaraj (Neelam Studios).

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