



GIFF Gandhara
Independent
Film Festival

DIGITAL EDITION 7

Global cinema, streaming straight to your screen

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE
18 SEPT - 30 SEPT '26

***VIRTUAL
EXPERIENCE***

STREAMING PARTNER



STRATEGIC PARTNER



GANDHARA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL 2026 EDITION 7 – ONLINE BRINGS YOU 60 INDEPENDENT FILMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHICH GOES LIVE ON ARY PLUS FROM 18TH & CONTINUE TILL 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2026.

WITH 7 INDIE FEATURE FILMS, 25 FOREIGN LANGUAGE INDIE SHORT FILMS & 28 INDIE SHORT (FICTION & DOCUMENTARY) FILMS FROM PAKISTAN, GIFF GETS UNFORGETTABLY EPIC BY TAKING THE ART OF INDIE CINEMA TO A WHOLE NEW OTT LEVEL.

MAKE YOUR GIFF'S EXCLUSIVE WATCHLIST ON **ARY PLUS!**

**SCREENING STARTS
18 SEPTEMBER 2026
17:00 PM PAKISTAN TIME**

**SCREENING ENDS
30 SEPTEMBER 2026
23:45 PM PAKISTAN TIME**

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THE FATHER

By Pavel Ivanov
Runtime 106 min . Russia

In 1942, Gavriil Sobinov, a Siberian hunter, learns that his son Semyon has gone missing in action. Gavriil volunteers for the front, hoping to find his son alive. Once on the front lines, he takes command of a sniper unit, and now he must teach young soldiers how to fight.



SALMON

By Oscar Faarup
Runtime 108 . Panama

With his best years behind him, a once-celebrated painter attempts to reclaim his former glory. But to do so, he must confront the emotional weight of a past he's spent years trying to suppress. Haunted by bitter memories and unable to face the truths that have shaped him, his creative silence deepens. As his inner turmoil spills into his home, the relationships with his wife and daughter begin to crack under the pressure, revealing how tightly pain and love are intertwined.



SALMON

By Feisal Azizuddin
Runtime 91 . Malaysia

Three brothers with a fractious relationship, set out to bring home the body of their father back to their remote village for his burial. However, 30km from reaching their van breaks down and they are forced to carry his coffin for the remaining journey home.



A PASSENGER FROM CANORA

By Ahmad Alamdar
Runtime 94 . Iran

In 1942, Gavriil Sobinov, a Siberian hunter, learns that his son Semyon has gone missing in action. Gavriil volunteers for the front, hoping to find his son alive. Once on the front lines, he takes command of a sniper unit, and now he must teach young soldiers how to fight.



THE KEY

By Paul Sportiello
Runtime 108 . France

Two broken men rediscover together an unexpected simple happiness... Will they be able to be satisfied? No one is ever sure if they are truly happy, and to ask the question is to spoil the answer.



SALMON

By Feisal Azizuddin
Runtime 91 . Malaysia

Three brothers with a fractious relationship, set out to bring home the body of their father back to their remote village for his burial. However, 30km from reaching their van breaks down and they are forced to carry his coffin for the remaining journey home.



THE MOTHER AGE

By Irene Margrethe Kaltenborn
Runtime 74 . Norway, Sweden

If it is a human thing to do to put something you want, because it's useful, edible, or beautiful, into a bag, or a basket... then I am a human being after all." Ursula K. Le Guin wrote.

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YO YO

By Mohammadreza Mayghani
Runtime 15 min . France, Iran

In a desert at the southernmost point of Iran, a young man's mind is taken over by the whispers in his head, while his friend tries to rescue him from a darkness only he can hear.



BIRTHDAY

By Angela Pavlova
Runtime 30 . Russia

A social teenager Vanya can easily learn to smoke grandfather's cigarettes, to kiss a mysterious girl and to be sarcastic. But can he accept much more unpleasant parts of adulthood such as annoying relatives, responsibilities and his own imperfections? Fortunately the "growing up" part is not due today and Vanya don't have to be seventeen for three more days.



GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS

By Camila Migliore
Runtime 13 . Argentina

Lucía, a teenager weary of living with her grandmother, begins to feel uneasy about the repetitive silences and gestures of their daily routine. One night, a dream draws her into different stages of the elder's life, revealing a story never told. Through this journey, she comes to understand that within those weaving hands lives a deep love, shaped by sacrifice and protection.



LES DIEUX [الالهة]

By Anas Sareen
Runtime 15 . Iraq, Switzerland, UAE

Under a burning sun, Adel and Moïse try to come to terms with the loss of their father. But as their grief turns into an obsession, a rift grows between the two teenage brothers and threatens to separate them.



UMBU TREE

By Emílio Soares Ribeiro
Runtime 19 min 03 sec . Brazil

"Umbu Tree" (Umbuzeiro) follows the story of an elderly woman whose life has been marked by a violent past, and who lives secluded in an old mansion, surrounded by memories, silences, and traumas that weaken her mental health. A survivor of an existence permeated by fear, she sees time blurring between memories and delusions, while living with her son, teacher Elias. In a dark and oppressive atmosphere, her intimate pain inspires her son to write a book and sustains the mysteries of the narrative, gradually revealing the invisible marks of violence against women and leading the viewer through twists and turns that give new meaning to the story and its relationships.



DOG BITES

By Eva Vázquez de Reoyo
Runtime 14 min . Spain

Our protagonist's life is not exactly going well, but things start looking up when she crosses paths with a stray dog that appears to be the perfect canine companion. Sadly, the initial attraction soon wears off, and after a period of intense love bombing the dog reveals himself to be an egocentric control freak and a genuine son of a bitch. Dogs Bites is a black comedy about emotional dependency, psychomagic, narcissism and a saw.



THE SILENT LAKE

By Varo López
Runtime 14 min . Spain

A group of travelers is trying to cross a lake to survive, but to do so they must face a hermit who lives in a cabin, the only one who can help them.



THE UNSENT DEPTH

By Muhammad Labib Pratama
Runtime 13 min 36 sec . Indonesia

Saiful is a 32-year-old man and a widower with one child. For the past two years, Saiful has been doing odd jobs, but he finally got a permanent job as the caretaker of the tomb of Mbah Wolong, the founder of Saiful's village, Wolong. Saiful earns money from the registration fees paid by pilgrims.



LITTLE TREASURE

By Yangxi Chen
Runtime 12 . Hongkong, Spain

Hong lives with her 8-year-old daughter, Tian-Tian, in a run-down hostel, where she also works at the bar. She barely makes ends meet, but things take a turn for the worse when her boss announces he's selling the place, leaving them out on the street. Just when it seems fate is pushing her over the edge, she finds a bag full of money. What to do with a treasure fallen from the sky? What begins as a possible salvation soon turns into a web of desperate choices, secrets, and unexpected dangers. Amid debts, unbearable customers, and misunderstandings, this dark comedy explores what it truly means to be a mother in a foreign land.



EIGHT WALLS TWO DOORS

By Miao Chun Zhang
Runtime 23 . China, United States

As protests erupt back home, a Chinese woman living in a New York hospital travels between her past and present; meanwhile, a leaky radiator sparks a romance between her husband and an older neighbor. The film examines personal and political grief at the intersection of memory and reality.



COMMON PEAR

By Gregor Božič
Runtime 15 min . Slovenia

In a not-too-distant future ravaged by climate crisis, a team of scientists analyse the archival footage of farmers from the past, in an attempt to understand their connection to the land.



AKI

By David Buitrón Fernández
Runtime 21 . Mexico

Aki finds it difficult to work as a stage director. While she finds an opportunity to put on a play, at the same time she takes care of her father, Mr. Iida, who is 90 years old.



ALONE

By Mona Daoud
Runtime 21 min 30 sec . Egypt

Over the course of a few days, Alone offers an intimate glimpse into the strained relationship between Mady, an older woman slipping into dementia, and her live-in caregiver.



WELCOME HOME

By Filip Jembrih Jandras
Runtime 18 min 56 sec . Croatia, Slovenia

After many years away, Vera returns to her childhood village with her young son for her father's funeral. In the house where she grew up, she is met by her brother, his wife, and her mother the people she left behind in an attempt to escape pain and unspoken memories. In the shadow of mourning, old resentments and long-buried secrets begin to surface, stirring the guilt and bitterness that once tore the family apart. Vera tries to keep the peace, but her arrival reawakens everything she tried so hard to forget. Surrounded by memories steeped in the past and her mother's quiet reproaches, Vera must confront whether one can ever truly escape their roots.



WILD FIRE

By Guo Kai
Runtime 20 min 03 sec . China

In the biting winter of a desolate northern town, a woman lures a man fresh out of prison into a trap to save herself. Within this perilous bond, the lines begin to blur until neither can tell who is the drowning soul and who is the piece of driftwood.



ROSHNI

By Rakesh Narwani
Runtime 19 min . Spain

After a fight during football class, Roshni tells her mother that the kids at school say she "smells like India." She also struggles to sleep—her grandmother, recently arrived, now shares her room. In music class, she chooses the double bass, even though she can barely hold it.



HEDGEHOG DILEMMA

By Joel Hukki
Runtime 12 min . Finland, Czech Republic

In a remote village, Šimon stumbles into an awkward encounter with his estranged friend, Ida. After missing the last bus and with no way out of the situation, he accepts her invitation to go for a beer together. Against the strange backdrop of the village, we follow Šimon and Ida as they try to get along. In reality, it is a slow and slightly uneasy process of finding their way back to each other. Trapped in an inescapable encounter, both are forced to confront unresolved grievances and adjust the fragile distance that still defines their quietly unconventional relationship.



THE RETURN OF MAX CROCODILE

By John Luke Bagtas Miraflor
Runtime 19 min 59 sec . Philippines

In 1989, Rody ruled the wrestling ring as Max Buwaya—a fierce heel who captivated the Pinoy wrestling scene. Decades later, he drifts through obscurity, his daily ritual of donning the mask offering fleeting comfort against a world quietly closing in. Wrestling with a fading sense of purpose, he prepares for a triumphant return: a final match that could earn him the belt he's longed for his entire life. But as past and present blur, questions arise—about who he is, and what's real.



BROKEN MAGIC

By Platon Ogarev, Marcjanna Lelek
Runtime 14 min 04 sec . Poland

Magda and Szczepan are going through a difficult phase in their relationship. When Magda says that their relationship lacks magic, Szczepan decides to surprise her by hiring a magician for their anniversary dinner. However, this joke doesn't go as planned.



TIGER GOD

By By YU-CHI HE
Runtime 28 min 02 sec . Taiwan

The Tiger God project was launched during the artist's residence at Hualien's Cien Art Village in 2021, when he heard from a Sikawasay (an Amis priest) that a concrete tiger figure in the institute was possessed by a soul. This experience has inspired her to explore the intersection of the Han people's folk beliefs and the Amis people's spiritual worldview, from which he further investigates the suppressed history of indigenous beliefs in Eastern Taiwan under colonial and religious persecution.



DARSHAN

By By Alberto Allica
Runtime 18 . Spain

Abhinav feels trapped by his tight-knit Hindu community in Madrid, but craves to go out raving with his friends in search of a different kind of ecstasy. When his guru announces a visit to bless his devotees on the same night as the most important party of the year, a strange series of events augurs the collision between his two worlds.



STUCK IN 2019

By Phyu Thae Khin
Runtime 24 min . Myanmar, South Korea

After 2019, Hyunjae's time no longer moves forward. A job seeker, he drifts through his days as if enduring them—caught between repeated interviews, waiting rooms, and postponed outcomes. While the city rushes ahead, Hyunjae's life circles the same point, unable to advance.



BROKEN CLAY RAINBOW

By Arturo M. Merelo
Runtime 15 min . Spain, Mexico

After a devastating loss, a woman wanders through the mountains of California in search of something she cannot name. Moving between borrowed homes, lonely roads, and memories that refuse to fade, she embarks on a quiet journey through the ruins of an interrupted life. In a landscape marked by fire and solitude, she must find a way to inhabit the world again.



KALPAVRIKSHA

By Diwash Paudel
Runtime 41 min 37 sec . Nepal

In a quiet Nepali village, Chakra discovers the mystical powers of the Kalpavriksha — a tree that serves as a portal through time. His innocence and brilliance draw Chahana's affection, while his friend Atit's obsession with her slowly turns into jealousy and madness.



HAWR

By Robert Minassian
Runtime 41 min 37 sec . Lebanon

In his journey through the depths of his past, a man finds himself submerged in a flood of nostalgic memories shared with his grandmother. As he searches for an answer, he ponders the fate of his deceased poplar tree, yearning to know if it still breathes with life.

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DESI FICTION

By Rayyan Shahid
Runtime 27 min 04 sec . Pakistan

To live another day in Karachi is to lose another piece of yourself.

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CHAND PE CHARKHA KAAT'TI BUDHIYA

By Yaseen Khatri
Runtime 45 min . Pakistan

On a planet close to extermination, a lone boy develops a bond with an unexpected friend.



THE SHADOWS LEFT BEHIND

By Aun Ul Haider
Runtime 13 min . Pakistan

Two twelve-year-old friends, Ali and Noor, share an unbreakable bond. Noor, an Afghan refugee, faces sudden deportation. Torn between loyalty and fear, Ali promises to see him off. But what remains is a farewell that echoes in silence, and a friendship lost to the shadows left behind.



RED SAMOSAS

By Saif Malick
Runtime 20 min 19 sec . Pakistan

Rattay Samosay follows Noni, a mute samosa vendor in a small Pakistani neighbourhood 'Ratta' in 2004, who lives a quiet routine life — frying, serving, and surviving the cruelty of those around him. But beneath his silence lies a dark, inherited trauma.



A HEART SO GENTLE

By Ayesham Haseeb
Runtime 27 min 51 sec . Pakistan

Mavi, a hypersensitive girl going through an empath fatigue uses dissociation as a coping mechanism until a letter from a dear one helps her befriend her emotions.



A PLACE CALLED HOME

By Vikash Karera
Runtime 18 min 30 sec . Pakistan

During a citywide strike, a frustrated taxi driver reluctantly helps an amnesiac old man retrace his lost memories, uncovering shared clues and grief that might lead him home.



PORTRAIT OF LIFE

By Syed Asad Raza Abidi
Runtime 11 min 34 sec . Pakistan

Portrait of Life tells the story of Ayan, a painter who can no longer paint his wife the way he once did. As he struggles to finish her portrait, their distance quietly grows. Through old memories and unfinished art, he begins to see what his paintings were truly about.



ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS

By Scheherzade Mirza
Runtime 12 min 15 sec . Pakistan

An old man and young woman's life mysteriously intersect, when he goes on a journey in the dead of the night, that unravels a disturbing secret.



BHOOT FOR RENT

By Seerat Fatima
Runtime 18 min 40 sec . Pakistan

A struggling social media manager rents a cheap house, unaware that it's already occupied by a non-verbal ghost. What begins as fear slowly turns into an unusual bond, revealing humor, warmth, and companionship beyond life and death.



SUBKDOSHI KI CHANTY

By Abdul Wasay Bashir
Runtime 30 min 40 sec . Pakistan

Azhar Malik, a senior Urdu literature teacher, finds himself in an emotional and existential crossroad following the death of his beloved wife, Mehar. With retirement looming and his extension rejected, he is asked to oversee a new recruit Prakash, a passionate and modern young teacher, initially dismissive of Prakash, Azhar's quiet grief surfaces through his rigid demeanour, until shared moments in classrooms.



LAHOOT E LAMAKAAN

By Ayesham Haseeb
Runtime 26 min 41 sec . Pakistan

After running away from her family, Bano, a blind young woman, finds refuge in the mysterious village of Lahoot e Lamakaan, where reality and the unseen exist side by side. Accompanied by two enigmatic companions, who convince her of the coming of the end. As time passes, the boundaries between the real and the unseen world begin to dissolve and Bano's past comes knocking at her door, bringing the news of her future. Lahoot e Lamakaan is a poetic exploration of trauma, faith, and feminine resilience.



WABA

By Adeel Shaikh
Runtime 16 min 30 sec . Pakistan

Waba is a thriller drama on the life of Wahab who is a jobless father during covid-19, searching for an oxygen cylinder with his wife's savings to save his asthmatic son.



GUMAAN

By Usama Akbar
Runtime 08 min 15 sec . Pakistan

Haunted by unsettling dreams, a struggling man is forced to confront the buried fears and painful regrets that silently consume his everyday existence.



VISARA- THE TALE OF SELF-OBIVION

By Kinza Waqar-Un-Nisa Zainab
Runtime 45 min . Pakistan

VISARA, the tale of self-oblivion follows Shams, a young shepherd from Uch Sharif who dreams of finding a hidden treasure near in the desert of Cholistan.



QOQRI

By Nimra Malik
Runtime 15 min 24 sec . Pakistan

In a small village in Khanpur, Hanifa, a childless woman, lives with her beloved donkey, Gulzar, who is both her companion and family. When the animal is brutally killed by Aslam, a young man whose lifelong humiliation has left him consumed by anger, Hanifa rejects compensation and demands justice before the village council



MISMATCHED

By Nabihah Aamir
Runtime 14 min 45 sec . Pakistan

A daughter's request to explore the potential proposal she has gotten becomes a flashpoint in a deeper conflict—not about romance, but about recognition. In a household ruled by tradition and legacy, she doesn't seek permission, but understanding.



TARAIR

By Mohsin Asghar
Runtime 13 min 11 sec . Pakistan

In working-class Lahore, a gentle Christian laborer becomes entangled in workplace violence and blasphemy accusations after a minor dispute spirals out of control while he searches for his master's missing cigarette lighter.



MESSAGE OF HEART

By Faizan Ahmed
Runtime 26 min 36 sec . Pakistan

Payam-e-Dil is a social drama about two widowed neighbors living in the same apartment building each carrying their own loneliness and life struggles.



TO BURY A BIRD

By Zargham Ali Khokhar
Runtime 20 min 12 sec . Pakistan

A buried bird in childhood becomes a haunting echo in Ahmed and Hamza's friendship as they come of age in a village bound by silence. When a girl's assault at a wedding shatters their bond and exposes the community's quiet complicity, both boys wrestle with guilt, desire, and denial. As grief consumes them, one must face the loss of innocence, friendship, and the courage to break the silence.



WHEN THE TEA GOES COLD

By Khatijah Tul Kubra
Runtime 20 min 20 sec . Pakistan

VISARA, the tale of self-oblivion follows Shams, a young shepherd from Uch Sharif who dreams of finding a hidden treasure near in the desert of Cholistan.



HI ROOF

By Ali Raza
Runtime 06 min 30 sec . Pakistan

On a daily university van ride, two strangers exchange nothing but silent glances and louder thoughts. As days pass, their unspoken bond grows – until the silence becomes the story.



MUNTAZIR

By Sana Hussain, Mehrosh Alam
Runtime 09 min 29 sec . Pakistan

In the Old City of Lahore, Sundari Khan, a transwoman, devotes her life to Nohakhwani (poetic lamenting of grief and longing), guiding communities through grief with her powerful voice. While celebrated for her religious contribution, she is simultaneously shunned for her identity and the way that she chooses to live.



PINKY

By Zainab Younas
Runtime 21 min 15 sec . Pakistan

Pinky follows Abishay, the first transgender officer in Balochistan's police force, as she overcomes societal barriers. From a humble background in Quetta to earning a BS in Fine Arts and participating in the IVLP in the US, her journey reflects resilience, activism, and the fight for transgender inclusion.



BODY

By Husain Qaizar, Saad Zuberi
Runtime 12 min 58 sec . Pakistan

In Pakistan, a group of aspiring male models step before the camera and quietly push against the boundaries of gender, masculinity, and taboo. As they pursue visibility in an industry that both celebrates and stigmatizes them, their photo shoots become acts of negotiation with a society that would rather keep them unseen. The film opens a rare window into a hidden world where performance, ambition, and survival collide.



EK PYAAR HA TAPPA

By Marya Khozema Darukhanawalla
Runtime 13 min 13 sec . Pakistan

Marya, a filmmaker and tabla student, sets out to get a custom tabla set made. Her journey takes her to Aftab Hussain, a skilled tabla maker in Karachi, whose small yet vibrant shop, Sufi Music Palace, has kept the tradition of tabla-making alive for decades.



THE FADING MELODY OF HAZARA

By Safar Ali Danish
Runtime 05 min 07 sec . Pakistan

Dambora: The embodiment of suffering, resistance and identities of Hazaras of Quetta. Through this documentary we attempt to cast light on the social relationship Hazaras of Quetta have established with the musical instrument called "Dambora".



THE BLEAK YIELD

By Sardar Salar Ahmed Sandhu
Runtime 16 min 38 sec . Pakistan

The Bleak Yield is a documentary made on how state policies only empower the big fishes and disregard small-scale farmers, which reinforces a never-ending economic and social gap in the agriculture sector of Pakistan.



SPARE THE ROD

By Ramsha Tariq
Runtime 08 min 53 sec . Pakistan

Spare the Rod follows nine-year-old Qasim and his family in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the year after Qasim is beaten by his headmaster for missing a day of school. As his parents pursue justice through the courts, they face mounting costs, stalled hearings, and a village that quietly cuts them off for speaking up, while the headmaster refuses to admit wrongdoing and defends corporal punishment as necessary.