

## Steven Soderbergh's 'The Informant' to open Mumbai film fest

Academy Award winning director Steven Soderbergh's 'The Informant', a dark political comedy based on true events, will open 11th [Mumbai](#) Film Festival (MFF) starting Oct 29, the festival committee members announced here.

Unveiling the line-up of releases for the festival, the committee led by Chairman Shyam Benegal and trustees Jaya Bachchan, Amit Khanna, Shabana Azmi, Amol Palekar and Ashutosh Gowariker said 200 films from 56 countries will be screened this year.

Based on journalist Kurt Eichenwald's book of the same name, 'The Informant' stars Matt Damon, Scott Bakula, Joel McHale and Melanie Lynskey. It tells the story of Mark Whitacre (Damon), a rising star at a Decatur, Illinois, in the early 1990s whose wife forces him to blow the whistle on the company's price-fixing tactics.

The festival will honour five outstanding film personalities this year.

Yesteryears actor Shashi Kapoor, who enthralled cinegoers with his performances in blockbusters like 'Deewar' and 'Namak Halal', will be honoured with the lifetime achievement award along with Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos who will be bestowed the international lifetime achievement award at the film festival, which is an initiative by Reliance Big Entertainment and is being organised by Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI).

Amitabh Bachchan's 40-year film career will be celebrated during the closing festivities on Nov 5 as well as screenwriter-director Paul Schrader.

The festival will also pay tribute to the late legendary filmmaker B.R. Chopra with a screening his film 'Naya Daur', which will be presented by his son Ravi Chopra.

Veteran Indian director-producer Yash Chopra who will also be felicitated by FIAPF, the international federation of film producers association.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ambika Soni will be the chief guest at the opening ceremony of the MFF.

The festival will have a five-member international jury and include the likes of celebrated Hollywood scriptwriter-director Paul Schrader, who penned 'Taxi Driver', Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, Philippine filmmaker Brillante Mendoza, Indian filmmaker Shaji N. Karun and former Director of Locarno Film Festival Irene Bignardi.

The MFF carries some of the biggest cash awards for its International Competition of First Feature Films of Directors category. These debut features will compete for the cash award of about \$100,000 (Rs.5 million) and the Golden Gateway India trophy for the best film and the Silver Gateway India and cash prize of about \$50,000 (Rs.2.5 million) for the Jury Grand Prize.

The best talent from these films will be given Silver Gateway India. This year MAMI is introducing a \$20,000 Audience Choice Award (about Rs.1 million). Films from all sections except retrospective and tributes will compete for this award.

Angelopoulos's 'The Dust of Time' that covers the eve of Stalin's death, Nixon's resignation in the US and the fall of the Greek junta, will close the festival on Nov 5.

The festival is divided in five sections, featuring the best and latest world cinema offering in the last 10 months - it includes 13 feature films of first time directors from across the world that will compete for the cash awards of \$150,000.

Indian Frame will showcase the best 15 Indian films made during last one year; Reel Real will be dedicated to feature length documentary films; Above the Cut will present 14 first feature films of extraordinary cinematic merit; World Cinema section will showcase the most anticipated films from festivals all over the world.

Films in competition will be screened at eight at Fun Cinemas (Andheri), Metro BIG Cinemas (Marine Lines) and amp; BIG Cinemas R City (Ghatkopar).

Brand alliances for the festival include BIG FM 92.7, bollywoodhungama.com, Bigoye.com, Bigflix.com, BIG Cinemas, Fun Cinemas, BIG Events, BIGAdda.com, Reliance MediaWorks, Kingfisher Premium, Block Dog, Reliance Tech Services, Reliance Broadband, Jet Airways, Sun-N-Sand Hotel, Carzonrent, Bright Outdoor.

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