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7th Asian film fest to showcase movies from 28 nations

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Pune: More than 80 films from 28 countries across Asia will enthral cinema buffs at the 7th Asian Film Festival to be held in the city from December 23 to 29.

Organised by the Aashay Film Club, the film festival is being held after a gap of two years. Films from India, China, Japan, Iran, Korea, Israel, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Taiwan, among others, are in the offing and will be screened at venues like Inox multiplex, the National Film Archive of India (NFAI), the main theatre at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and the MES auditorium at Bal Shikshan Mandir in Mayur Colony.

Some of the festival highlights include 'Spectrum Asia,' that will feature exclusives from Japan, China, Israel, Iran, Bangladesh, Egypt, Tibet, Sri Lanka and Korea, 'Indian Vista' on Indian cinema in various regional languages, special focus on cinema from Turkey, off-beat cinema from Bollywood.

It will also showcase 'My Marathi' featuring the best of last year's Marathi films along with premieres of new films this year; 'Best of Asia' on Asian cinema discussed in the last seven years, retrospectives on and tributes to the late Dev Anand, Shammi Kapoor, Mani Kaul and Bhupen Hazarika, 'Tagore Week' comprising seven films based on the literary works by Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore.

A separate section devoted to screening of debut films of filmmakers from different Asian countries will be held and 'In Honour' that will offer screenings of films by K Balachander, winner of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2010.

The festival will be held simultaneously in Pune, Mumbai and Kolhapur. "The event has been organised in association with Aashay in Pune, Third Eye Asian Film Foundation, Mumbai and the Dadasaheb Phalke Film Society, Kolhapur. The Pune itinerary will not have the competition section," Virendra Chitrav, co-founder of Aashay and co-director of the film festival, at a press conference on Tuesday.

The previous and the sixth edition of the festival was held in 2008. "We had to discontinue thereafter due to lack of funds and sponsorship. But now that we have revived it, we hope to make an annual feature this year onwards," Chitrav added.

The festival's scale, too, has been widened. "We hope to have over 8,000 delegates at the festival. Late night screenings have also been scheduled at the venues for those who get off work late. We are also inviting the expat community as well as students in Pune to be a part of the audience," said Govind Thakker, director of Kensho Events and Entertainment that is co-organising the film festival.

The week-long event will conclude with the screening of a new Marathi film. Registration for delegate passes will start from December at Pathfinder bookstore, near Neelayam Theatre.