Press Release 5.10.26

Building the Cultural Infrastructure: Avid Learning and FICCI Bring Together Policymakers, Institution-Builders and Industry Leaders to Reimagine the Frameworks for the Growth of India's Creative Economy

Culture has moved decisively from the margins of policy conversation to its centre. Across the world, governments and institutions are increasingly treating culture not as a discretionary pursuit but as a structural component of sustainable development. This shift was given formal expression at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, MONDIACULT 2025, where Member States reaffirmed their commitment to establishing culture as an independent goal within the post-2030 global development agenda. The consensus reflected a broader recognition: that the challenges ahead, from urbanisation to economic transition, cannot be met without treating culture as core infrastructure for collective progress, rather than as an ornament to it.

Taking this vision forward, the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** and **Avid Learning** present ***'Cultural Continuum: Reimagining Infrastructure for India's Creative Economy 2026'***, in collaboration with **Teamwork Arts, Art Links Learning, CRISIL,** and **The Art Outreach Society**.
Under the leadership of CEO Asad Lalljee as a Member of FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee since 2018, Avid Learning has had the privilege of co-convening and participating in eighteen creative economy conferences and symposia across India, including city-wide editions in Bengaluru, Kochi, Kozhikode and Gwalior, and national convenings in New Delhi. All the Mumbai editions of the conference have been hosted by AVID at Essar House, with the 2026 convening marking the seventh edition, a continuity that reflects Avid Learning's sustained commitment to building the institutions, platforms and partnerships that strengthen India's cultural and creative economy.

The **2026 Mumbai edition is centred on infrastructure**, examining how the creative economy is shaped by the spaces, institutions, platforms, networks, policies and financing mechanisms that enable culture to thrive. The discussion moves across scales, from individual buildings and cultural institutions to cities, states and regional ecosystems, while also looking beyond Mumbai and Maharashtra to consider how India's creative economy can develop across diverse geographies. Curated around the Ministry of Culture, Government of India's targeted sectors, the conference brings together government representatives, industry professionals, scholars, corporate leaders and creative practitioners to exchange perspectives, share best practices, document learnings and contribute to policy thinking.

The conference will open with an introduction by *SVP, Essar Group, CEO, Avid Learning, Curator, Royal Opera House, Mumbai and Member, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Asad Lalljee**. Followed by welcome address by *Founder & Chairperson, Avid Learning* **Mrs. Madhu Ruia**. The Context Setting for the symposium will be delivered by the *Managing Director, Teamwork Arts & Co-Chair, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Sanjoy K. Roy**. There would be leading voices from India's cultural and policy landscape, including senior representatives from the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India** and **Government of Maharashtra**. The keynotes speeches would be given by the *Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India*, **Shri. Vivek Agarwal (IAS)**, and *Secretary, Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra*, **Dr. Kiran Kulkarni (IAS)**

The first panel discussion, ***The Impact of Culture on Cities: Heritage, Planning, and Urban Development***, will explore how culture is an active component of urban development, examining how heritage and cultural assets can inform planning priorities, and what physical, institutional and financial infrastructure is required to embed culture into the long-term growth of cities. The speakers include *Founder Director, ECHO – Endurance Centre of Heritage and Origins Museum, Kagazipura, Sambhajinagar and Convenor, INTACH Greater Mumbai Chapter* **Katyayani Agarwal**, *Founder & Heritage Evangelist-in-Chief, Khaki Tours* **Bharat Gothoskar**, *Conservation Architect* **Vikas Dilwari**, *Convenor - Art & Culture Area, Pune International Centre* **Arti Kirloskar**, *Curatorial Director, Ahmedabad Cultural Week* **Shristi Sainani**. The discussion will be moderated by *SVP, Essar Group, CEO, Avid Learning, Curator, Royal Opera House, Mumbai and Member, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Asad Lalljee**.

The second panel, ***Taking the Stage: The Changing World of Performing Arts*** will examine the changing landscape of India's performing arts and the infrastructure behind its expansion, venues, rehearsal spaces, ticketing systems and event-friendly civic frameworks. The conversation will bring together *General Manager, India, Fever* **Sheetal Birla**, *Executive Director, India Music Exchange* **Sushil Chhugani**, *President, EEMA and Founder & Managing Director, Eva Live & EVENTFAQS Media* **Deepak Choudhary**, *Founder and Director, The Jeff Goldberg School of Performing Arts* **Jeff Goldberg,** and *Singer and Musician* **Vidya Shah.** The panel will

be moderated by *Co-Founder, Art Links Learning, and Member, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Sadhana Rao**.

The third panel, ***Who Builds Culture: Founders, Curators and Institution-Makers***, will bring together leaders who have built cultural institutions from the ground up, to examine what it takes to turn an idea into a functioning and sustainable institution, and how institutions can contribute to the wider infrastructure of India's creative economy. Speakers include *Artistic Director, G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture* **Ishan Benegal**, *Founding Dean, School of Design Innovation, Mahindra University* **Prof. B. K. Chakravarthy**, *Practice Leader - Urban Infrastructure & Public Finance, Crisil Intelligence* **Suraj Iyengar**, *Curating Director, INT Aditya Birla Centre For Performing Arts* **Dr. Priyanka Pathak**, and *Founder & Chairperson, Avid Learning* **Mrs. Madhu Ruia**. The session will be moderated by *Managing Director, Teamwork Arts & Co-chair, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Sanjoy K. Roy**.

The final session, ***Beyond the Big Screen: Cinema, Streaming & Digital Futures***, will examine the infrastructure underpinning India's evolving screen economy, from theatres and production ecosystems to streaming platforms and the business models connecting creators with audiences. The discussion will feature *Chief, Business Development, BMC and Focal Point, UNESCO Creative City Network for Mumbai Creative City of Film* **Shashi Bala**, *Vice President & Business Head and Chief Technology Officer & Head of Emerging Media, Whistling Woods International* **Chaitanya Chinchlikar**, *Senior Civil Servant and Film Buff* **Nirupama Kotru**, *Head of Hindi Scripted Series, Prime Video* **Sahira Nair**; *Creative Consultant & Past President, Branding & Marcom, Reliance Industries Ltd. and Director, ImaginationWorks* **Kaushik Roy**. The session will be moderated by *Founder, TAOS and Member, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee* **Dr. Tanaya Abraham**.

Join us for a day of policy-steering dialogue, multidisciplinary insights and forward-thinking ideas that reimagine the infrastructure behind India's creative and cultural economy.

When: Saturday, 10th October 2026 | 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Where: Essar House, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai
Request Invite: www.avidlearning.in
Press Enquiries: Ayeshah Dadachanji (ayeshah.avid@gmail.com)

About FICCI:
Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies. A non-government, not-for-profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policymakers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies. FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policymakers and the international business community. You can read more about it here.

About Avid Learning:

Avid Learning is Essar's cultural arm and India's leading arts and cultural programming platform. Founded in 2009, under the esteemed leadership of Mrs. Madhu Ruia as Founder & Chairperson, Avid Learning has presented more than 1900 multiverse and hybrid programs, domestically and internationally. Together with its online platform – AVID Online launched in 2020 – Avid Learning has reached more than 2 million interested learners globally. Our thoughtfully curated and diverse events embrace the spirit of collaboration to bring together the best of Indian and international writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural experts, policymakers, and industry leaders across Visual Art, Literature, Culture and Heritage, Education, Design & Technology and the Performing Arts through engaging and dynamic formats like panel discussions, workshops & master classes, roundtables, lecture demonstrations, festival platforms, symposiums & conferences, multidisciplinary performances, and walkthroughs.

Since 2023, Avid Learning’s tech- forward programming has explored the transformative intersection of generative artificial intelligence and the arts, decoding its influence on visual arts, literature, design,

music, cinema, and the written word. This series is the latest installment in understanding how artistic expression is changing through the lens of artificial intelligence. All the previous AI programs are available for viewing here.
AVID continues to give truth to its belief that **#LearningNeverStops!**

To keep updated on our programs, check us out on social media:
Facebook | Instagram | Twitter | YouTube | LinkedIn

Asad Lalljee is SVP, Essar Group, CEO of Avid Learning, a public programming initiative and creative platform under the Essar Group, and Curator of the Royal Opera House, Mumbai. Asad brings several years of advertising, publishing, marketing, and business development experience, both in international and domestic markets. Prior to relocating to India, Asad worked for 14 years as one of the 'Mad Men' advertising executives on New York's Madison Avenue. He was with McCann-Erickson, and earlier with Hill Holiday, a subsidiary of advertising giant IPG. Under Asad's leadership, Avid Learning has distinguished itself with a wide variety of arts and cultural programming and is currently India's leading cultural hub. In 2016, Asad was appointed curator of the newly restored Royal Opera House, Mumbai for which he has successfully designed an avant-garde series of programs. With Asad's guidance, the Royal Opera House, Mumbai has re-established itself as a performance space of international quality, a cultural venue par excellence, and a prime example of restored and renewed city heritage. In 2018, Asad was inducted into the prestigious FICCI Art and Culture Committee as a distinguished member. FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organization in Indian business with a glorious history of nine decades. He has been appointed as a member of the advisory board of the Mumbai Urban Art Festival for the year 2022-2023.

Mrs. Madhu Ruia, wife of Mr. Ravi Ruia (Vice Chairman of the Essar Group), is a passionate advocate of lifelong learning and the Founder & Chairperson of Avid Learning. Established in 2009, the platform was created to provide opportunities for learners to engage with leading voices across arts, culture, humanities, and emerging fields. Over the years, Mrs. Ruia has also been a strong proponent of FICCI's Cultural Continuum initiative, supporting and promoting its efforts through the Essar Group and Avid Learning and contributing to the larger dialogue around India's cultural and creative ecosystem. Her commitment to education led her to pursue courses at The New School, New York, and the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS), where she subsequently joined the Board and now holds an honorary position. An accomplished sitar exponent, self-taught artist, and sculptor, Mrs. Ruia has received a prestigious award from the Lalit Kala Academy. She is also a founding member of the Sahachari Foundation, supporting cultural initiatives and emerging creative talent through the Design One exhibitions in Mumbai and Delhi while raising funds for deserving NGOs. Driven by her pioneering vision to foster cross-cultural dialogue and promote diverse artists, Mrs. Ruia expanded her cultural footprint by establishing Avid Learning Middle East (ME). In May 2026, she opened the dedicated Avid Learning Centre for Culture and Creative Expressions at Al Khayat Avenue, Dubai, anchoring a permanent space for cultural exchange and lifelong learning in the region. Under her leadership, Avid Learning ME has actively integrated into the region's premier cultural calendar. The platform champions artists and creative minds through significant participation in major regional forums—including Art Dubai, Dubai Design Week, Sikka Art & Design Festival, Quoz Arts Fest, and COP28—establishing a vital creative bridge between India and the UAE.

Sanjoy K. Roy, an entrepreneur of the arts, is Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, which produces over 25 highly acclaimed performing arts, visual arts and literary festivals across 40 cities including the world's largest free literary gathering — the annual ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival. Roy, a National Award awardee for the film Shahjahanabad: The Twilight Years, is a founder trustee of Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) working to provide support services for street and working children in the inner city of Delhi. In 2011 the White House presented SBT the US President's Committee of Arts and Humanities Award for an International Organisation.

Sadhana Rao is a research-led writer and curator in the Arts & Culture spaces. She has written on Arts, Film festivals, Music, Crafts, Travel, Literature, & Socio-Economics for leading publications. As a curator, Sadhana works with artists and conservatories across genres to weave narrative-backed lecture demonstrations and performances. Amalgamating pedagogy, artistic diversity and inclusivity, her endeavours find home among myriad platforms, from academic conclaves to the community at large. Sadhana has been a Contributor, Curator, Speaker and Moderator for music, literature, art and film segments at festivals and platforms including Mahindra Kabira Festival, Cannes Film Festival, AVID Learning, Royal Opera House Mumbai, Think Fest, Bangalore Literature Festival, Bangalore International Centre, Jaipur Literature Festival, FICCI - Creative Industries as well as corporate summits. With her sustained interest in Arts' pedagogies, she founded Art Links Learning to create age-appropriate curriculum for imparting Music and Arts Intelligence.

Dr. B. K. Chakravarty, the distinguished founding dean of Mahindra University, is a visionary educator and innovator with a rich legacy of accomplishments. Before his role at Mahindra University, Dr. Chakravarty established the Shenoy Innovation Studio at IIT Bombay, a pioneering initiative aimed at cultivating a culture of innovation and design thinking among students and faculty. With a profound commitment to fostering creativity and excellence in education, and his leadership and dedication in driving innovation have left an indelible mark on the field of education and continue to inspire the next generation of innovators at Mahindra University. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Chakravarthy's initiatives extend to the establishment of the Design Innovation Center at IIT Bombay in 2014, funded by the Ministry of Education. Dr. Chakravarthy's main areas of interest are product design, innovation, creativity, and design management. He holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Management Studies at IIT Delhi. His experience and passion for education have shaped the next generation of design pioneers at the IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay, where he has taught subjects including design basics, product design, and innovation by design.

Katyayani Agarwal is a museum curator, cultural heritage specialist and craft revivalist, with leadership roles as Convenor, INTACH Greater Mumbai, and member of INTACH's National Executive Committee and Governing Council. She also serves on the boards of several cultural institutions and foundations. Her work spans museum curation, cultural interpretation and the design of meditation and experiential spaces. She has curated and advised the Vipassana Museum, Maharaja Agrasen Museum, VRI's Braj Heritage Museum and the Shekhawati Museum. A champion of India's living traditions, she has worked with Sanjhi and Phad artists on craft revival and is currently working towards the revival of 700-year-old Kagazipura village and its handmade paper tradition, alongside the establishment of India's first Paper Museum in Sambhajinagar, near the Ellora Caves.

Shashi Bala is the Chief - Business Development at BMC and Director - SMILE Council (BMC's Civic-Tech Business Incubator). With 29+ years of experience in business operations, marketing, and urban governance. Have contributed to the BMC's Ease of Doing Business initiatives and regulatory reforms in Mumbai. Have been awarded a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the World Bank for her contribution. The initiative of online combined Business Application has won the "Digital India Awards 2018", for BMC, under the category of "Outstanding Digital Initiative by Urban Local Body". She has been pivotal in establishing the SMILE Council, the civic-tech incubation center at BMC and Mumbai's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Film. She is the Focal Point for Mumbai at UNESCO Creative City Network and actively represents Mumbai @UCCN forums.As part of UCCN local initiative, she is working on the Culture led Sustainable Local Economic Development framework for Mumbai.

Ishan Benegal is a writer, photographer, and chef. He is the Artistic Director at the G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture where he's at the helm of G5A's creative strategy, and drives the curatorial and producing practice. He is the founder and chef at PORT Kitchen & Bar, a modern Italian and Mediterranean restaurant.

Sheetal Birla is General Manager, India at Live Your City by Fever, a leading technology platform for live entertainment and culture with a presence in more than 55 countries. Her career has taken her from AI and mobile to entertainment and consumer businesses. Having lived and worked across six countries, she brings a global perspective to India's experience economy. Today, she works with creators and partners to make culture and live experiences more accessible to audiences across the country.

Dr. Tanaya Abraham is a writer, author and curator whose work bridges art, culture and social change. She is the founder of the award-winning non-profit organisation The Art Outreach Society (TAOS), which uses art to advance education, emotional well-being and social engagement among underserved communities in Kerala. Her curatorial practice includes projects associated with the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, including Red Crown–Green Project and A Place at the Table, exploring memory, identity and community through art. She is the curator and founder of Kulam, a festival of food in cultural discourse, which examines food as a medium for exploring history, identity, community and cultural exchange. She is the author of Fort Cochin: History and Untold Stories, featured by The New York Times in 2023, and Eating with History, which explores Kerala's rich culinary and cultural heritage. Tanya was responsible for initiating the Creative Sector as a dedicated section at the Kerala Startup Mission under the Government of Kerala. She continues to work closely with the state government on creative economy initiatives. She holds a PhD in Curating from the University of Reading, UK, and a Master's in Arts Administration from the University of Kentucky, USA.

Sushil Chhugani is a music industry professional, entrepreneur and strategist with over two decades of experience across music, live entertainment, artist development and communications. He is the Co-Founder and Director of India International Music Week (IIMW), India's global music conference and showcase festival, connecting Indian artists and industry with international markets. He is also the Executive Director of India Music Exchange and Founder of Stubborn Company, . His career includes senior roles at Sony Music, Rolling Stone India and Viacom, and has had a remarkable contribution to the Indian independent music segment. His work

continues to influence not only the careers of creative entrepreneurs and artists, but also the perception and global ambition of the Indian independent music industry.

Chaitanya Chinchlikar has had a 25-yr career in the Media & Entertainment industry. He is currently the Vice President, Business Head, Chief Technology Officer & Emerging Media Head at Whistling Woods International – India's premier Film & Creative Arts institute in addition to being the Business Head for SGM Studios – Mukta Arts' Animation & Video Games division. Over the past 2 decades, he has greatly strengthened India's education landscape, leading many pioneering efforts in M&E education and Emerging Tech workflow development in M&E, at Whistling Woods International. Chaitanya is a member of The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences since 2025 & currently serves on the Oscars jury. He is the only Indian film educator to win the SMPTE Excellence in Education Medal.

Bharat Gothoskar studied mechanical engineering and has a postgraduate degree in Business Administration. He worked with Indian multinational companies like Godrej, Pidilite, and Mahindra before giving up his corporate career to devote time to evangelizing heritage in Mumbai. He has founded two institutions in this space: the experiential heritage travel company, Khaki Tours, and its not-for-profit counterpart, the Khaki Heritage Foundation, which focuses on heritage awareness, archiving, and conservation. Under the aegis of the Foundation, he has started the cultural space KHAKI Lab, where he hopes to incubate the heritage bug and infect future generations with it. His mission is to make Mumbaikars proud of their city's heritage. He is also the Curator for Heritage Walks at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival.

Deepak Choudhary is a pioneering force in India's events, experiential, and live entertainment industry, with over two decades of experience. He founded the Premier Event Management School (EMDI) in 2002, co-founded the International Institute of Sports Management (IISM), and in 2007 co-founded EVENTFAQS Media, India's first B2B publication dedicated to the experiential industry. Under his leadership, EVENTFAQS developed landmark IPs including WOW Awards Asia and Shows of India, and expanded into the Middle East. As Founder & Director of Eva Live, Deepak has produced concerts featuring artists including Bryan Adams, Atif Aslam, Prateek Kuhad and Snarky Puppy. He also leads Management School of Events, Entertainment & Design (MSEED), nurturing future talent across events, entertainment and design.

Rashmi Dhanwani is a leading voice working at the intersection of arts, research, and the creative industries in India. As Founder of The Art X Company and Festivals From India, she builds organisations and platforms that map, mobilize, and make visible the infrastructure of India's creative economy. She leads multidisciplinary teams to design and deliver strategic, research, and curation projects for the arts — spanning cultural policy, creative entrepreneurship, and audience engagement. Prior to founding Art X, Rashmi worked with the NCPA Mumbai, Breakthrough in Delhi, DNA newspaper, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, and The Goa Project. She holds a Master's in Cultural and Creative Industries from King's College London, and is an ARThink South Asia Fellow (2011–12), an ISPA Global Fellow (2017–18) and the Australia Council Arts Leadership Fellow (2022-23).

Vikas Dilawari is a practicing conservation architect with nearly 3 decades of experience exclusively in the conservation field, ranging from urban to architecture. He has done his double Masters in Conservation from School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi) and from the University of York. He was the Head of Department of Conservation Department at Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute of Architecture (KRVIA) Mumbai from its inception in 2007 till Aug 2014. His practice has successfully executed several conservation projects ranging from prime landmarks to unloved buildings of Mumbai. He was instrumental with INTACH Mumbai chapter to list the CST station as a World Heritage Site in 2004. Several of his projects have received national and international recognition. A total of 15 of his projects have won UNESCO ASIA PACIFIC Awards for Cultural Preservation in SE Asia.

Jeff Goldberg is an award winning writer, director and actor. His two feature films as a director have both received several selections and Best Film accolades at international film festivals. Jeff has acted in major Bollywood Hits including "Pathan" and "Sam Bahadur.' His documentary about heroin users in Delhi, premiered on CNN. His screenplays and short films have also garnered official selections and awards at some of the finest film festivals in the world. He works as a theatre maker and has been staged all over the world from New York to India. He has staged hundreds of shows and dozens of productions.In addition to his theatre work he also runs the leading Method Acting Institute in India, The Jeff Goldberg School of Performing Arts that has trained some of the leading actors in India and beyond.

Suraj Iyengar leads Crisil's portfolio covering urban planning, mobility, social inclusion, arts and culture. He has advised more than 10 cities across Asia on economic growth and urban regeneration, and worked with agencies such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Niti Ayog on policy matters. More recently, he has been advising city governments on arts & culture as an urbanization strategy and institutional models to deliver it.

Arti Kirloskar is an artist and a dedicated advocate for environmental conservation and heritage in Pune, India. Driven by a passion for sustainability—deepened through her studies in Ecology and Sustainable Farming—she founded the Parijat Foundation and E+ART+H. This centre serves as a hub for art, ecology, and traditional knowledge, featuring an organic farm and a native nursery. The foundation primarily supports Art and Art practice. She is the Convenor of the Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival and has spearheaded environmental restoration by rewilding Kirloskar company premises and establishing native nurseries across various factory sites. Currently, she is the Convenor for Arts and Culture at the Pune International Centre, a think tank involved in national policy. She also holds roles as a Director of the S.L. Kirloskar CSR Foundation and a Trustee of the India Foundation for the Arts.

Nirupama Kotru is an avid film buff who is also a senior civil servant, Nirupama Kotru found her vocation in 2012 when she was posted as Director (Films) in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She spent more than three years managing film units such as the NFDC and the Films Division, handling challenging policy matters such as censorship and archiving, driving initiatives such single-window clearance for film shootings, besides promoting Indian cinema at film festivals abroad and at home, through initiatives such as National Film awards and IFFI, Goa. After this stint, she kept her passion alive by writing articles on films and film music.Until recently, as Joint Secretary, Culture, she nurtured the national academies of music, dance, theatre and art, and helped reinvent leading national museums. She actively participates in cultural and literary festivals where she promotes film, theatre and literature.

Sahira Nair's relationship with storytelling began before she fully understood what it meant. At age eight, she played the role of young Mina in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* — her first time in front of a camera. That early exposure stayed with her. She went on to act in *Monsoon Wedding*, *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna*, and *The Namesake*, but even then, her true calling was behind the lens — shaping stories, not just inhabiting them. After earning her BFA in Producing and Directing for Film and Television from The School of Visual Arts in New York, Sahira spent four years working in production across some of the most acclaimed shows and films in American television and cinema — *The Sopranos* (Season 6), *Rescue Me*, *Gossip Girl*, *CSI: NY*, and films including *Enchanted*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, *The Good Shepherd*, and *Tenderness*. Those years on set with some of the best talent in the industry gave her a foundational understanding of what premium, world-class content looks and feels like.She returned to India with a clear ambition: to help build a similar culture of premium long-form storytelling for Indian audiences. She cut her teeth creating and launching some of India's early original content ventures — starting with *The Dewarists* on Star World, followed by being part of the core creative teams that launched Epic Television Network, Discovery Jeet, and MX Player. Nearly eight years ago, Sahira joined Amazon as one of the first members of the creative team to build the Hindi scripted originals slate from the ground up. What started as a blank canvas has become one of the most defining chapters of Indian streaming. Under this slate, the team has developed and launched some of Prime Video India's most iconic series — *Mirzapur*, *The Family Man*, *Four More Shots Please!*, *Panchayat*, *Paatal Lok*, *Made in Heaven*, *Farzi*, *Bandish Bandits*, *Dahaad*, *Aspirants*, and *Call Me Bae*, among many others — shows that haven't just found audiences in India but have traveled to over 240 countries and territories worldwide.Today, as Head of Hindi Scripted Series, Sahira oversees the development and production of Prime Video's Hindi original slate — from greenlight to global launch. The upcoming alone reflects the ambition and creative depth of the team she has helped build. For Sahira, every day at Prime Video remains a learning experience. Collaborating with creators, writers, and talent from every corner of the country — developing new worlds, telling stories full of exciting and relatable characters — has been nothing short of creatively fulfilling. She remains deeply committed to championing bold, culturally rooted storytelling that resonates both locally and globally.

Dr. Priyanka Pathak works on performance practices in the contemporary context of urban waste and the ecology of cityscapes. She holds a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. She is currently the Curating Director at the INT Aditya Birla Performing Arts Academy, where she leads the curation of artistic programmes. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed international journals, including Studies in Theatre and Performance (STP) and Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance (RiDE). She has been awarded the 'EXC 2020 Temporal Communities' Fellowship, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. Priyanka is also an awardee of the Charles Wallace India Trust Research Grant (2020) to pursue research at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London. She holds a Diploma from the New Delhi-based National School of Drama, with a specialization in theatre technique and design.

Kaushik Roy is a branding and marketing communication leader with over four decades of experience building some of India's most memorable brands and campaigns. He began his career in the Creative Department at HTA—now VML—before moving into Account Management, where he worked on Tata Steel's landmark "We Also Make Steel" campaign. At Mudra Communications, now DDB Mudra, he served as Executive Director, Mumbai, and subsequently as Chief Creative Officer. During this period, he led the launch of Max Touch—now Vodafone (Vi)—with the acclaimed "Citizen of the World" campaign. Kaushik later joined Philips as Head of

Brand Strategy, South Asia, contributing to the global “Let’s Make Things Better” campaign. As Head of Branding and Marketing Communication at Reliance Infocomm, he spearheaded the launch of Reliance Mobile with the iconic “Karlo Duniya Mutthi Mein” campaign. In his leadership role as President – Brand Strategy & Marketing Communication at Reliance Industries Limited, he played a key role in launching and building major brands and properties, including Mumbai Indians, Reliance Foundation and Reliance Jio. Kaushik has held several distinguished industry positions. He has served as President of the Advertising Club Bombay; Executive Committee Member of the Advertising Agencies Association of India; Steering Committee Member of AdAsia 2003; and President of the India Chapter of the International Advertising Association. As IAA Area Director – Asia Pacific, he also served as Vice Chairman of the IAA World Congress 2019. Beyond the world of brands, Kaushik is an artist, author and filmmaker. He has held several successful art exhibitions and has written and directed short films, as well as the highly acclaimed feature film Apna Asmaan, which won the Best Film Award at the Stuttgart Film Festival in 2007. More recently, he has been actively associated with Jio MAMI – the Mumbai Film Festival. Kaushik continues to play an altruistic role in building awareness about autism. Kaushik is married to Nina, and they have two sons, Rajeev and Roshan.

Shristi Sainani is a curator, designer, researcher, and writer based in India. She currently functions as the Curatorial Director for Ahmedabad Cultural Week while also being situated as a member at the international forum, Curatorial Ethics Network. Her interest lies in dismantling and assessing core concepts of exhibition making, specifically focusing on Contemporary Art churned through the diaspora of the Global South. As an independent practitioner, Shristi has worked on a number of exhibitions in commercial galleries, public art spaces, museums and independent organisations across the world. Her research focuses on collections and architecture of private art museums in addition to looking closely at the art of Africa and Asia, from a modernist and contemporary perspective. Her paper on inclusivity in the realm of museum spaces won the INSC Researchers Award in 2021.

Vidya Shah is a singer, musician and writer from New Delhi, India. She is an artist and cultural thinker who brings music, women's histories, archives and contemporary questions into conversation. An award winning musician, she writes and speaks on music and is the Author of Jalsa: Indian Women's Journey from the Salon to the Studio (Tulika Books). She was the Nana Shirgaokar Chair Professor for Indian Music at Goa University for 2016-20. Vidya made her Bollywood debut in the film Manto with the Nazm Bol ke lab Azad hain tere. She is the Director of Bhooma trust, set up to preserve and promote the intangible heritage of India.