PRESS RELEASE

ORGANIZATION OF THE INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2024 BY THE EMBASSY OF INDIA IN GUATEMALA

The Embassy of India in Guatemala organized the Indian Film Festival 2024, a month-long initiative to promote Indian cinema across Guatemala. This event brought together communities in urban and rural areas, highlighting the cultural richness of India and its ability to connect with audiences worldwide. Through Bollywood and regional films dubbed in Spanish, the festival established a strong cultural bridge between India and Guatemala.

2. The Indian Film Festival 2024 was not merely a cinematic showcase but a comprehensive cultural diplomacy initiative aimed at fostering deeper ties between India and Guatemala. By bringing Indian cinema to diverse regions of Guatemala, the festival sought to introduce the audience to the richness of Indian storytelling, while also creating a platform to explore opportunities for collaboration with the Indian film industry. Beyond the entertainment value of the screenings, the festival served as a platform for discussions on technology-sharing agreements. India, with its advanced cinematic technology and expertise, offers a wealth of opportunities for collaboration, ranging from post-production techniques to cutting-edge special effects that could significantly enhance the Guatemalan film industry's capabilities. The Film Festival has broader implications for India's influence in Latin America. It positions India as a leader in cultural diplomacy, using the universal language of cinema to connect with audiences across linguistic and geographical boundaries.

3. As part of its mission to share India's rich cultural heritage, the Embassy of India in Guatemala has been at the forefront of showcasing Bollywood and regional Indian films dubbed into Spanish. Recognizing the power of cinema as a medium of cultural exchange, the Embassy extended its efforts to not only bring these films to Guatemalan audiences but to actively involve local talent in this journey. Building on the success of earlier film festivals and screenings, the Embassy identified an opportunity to expand this cultural outreach by proposing the dubbing of 100 popular Bollywood films into Spanish. The Embassy partnered with Shemaroo Entertainment, a leading name in entertainment industry, known for its extensive catalog of Bollywood classics and contemporary hits. The collaboration also involved local partners in Guatemala, including talented artists who lent their voices to bring these films to life in Spanish. The involvement of local artists and studios provided them with valuable exposure to Indian cinematic traditions, enhancing their skills and opening up avenues for further collaborations.

4. The festival began on 11 October 2024 on a grand note in Chiquimula, where the first film screening drew an audience of 500 people. The Embassy of India also organized a seminar on 12 October 2024 on Digital era of Indian Film

industry, cultural significance and Opportunities for Collaboration and Research the Bollywood industry at Chiquimula on 11 October 2024. The event attracted by Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, mayors and representatives from nearby municipalities, as well as local dignitaries from the media and film sectors, and enthusiastic students. A primary goal of the seminar was to disseminate valuable information about opportunities for collaboration with the Indian film industry including exploring technology-sharing agreements, utilizing India's diverse landscapes for filming, and co-producing content. The seminar also focused on engaging with local students, providing them with insights into the evolution of Indian cinema, particularly in the context of the digital era. Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra led the seminar, offering insights into the Bollywood film industry, which is not only a major cultural phenomenon but also one of the largest film industries in the world. Ambassador highlighted Bollywood's contribution to spreading India's cultural values globally, while showcasing how cinema serves as a bridge between diverse cultures. In addition to discussing the Bollywood industry, the seminar served as an avenue for the Embassy to disseminate information on other flagship initiatives of the Government of India. Given the strong involvement of artists and studios from Chiquimula in its endevour to dub Indian movies in Spanish, it was seen as fitting to launch the film festival and seminar there, further attracting local talent and studios from Chiquimula.

5. The festival reached its third milestone on October 18, 2024, in the Municipality of Zacapa, one of the remotest parts of Central America. The screening attracted 200 attendees, including Vice Mayor César Fernando Orellana Paiz and local defense personnel. The movie captivated the audience, fostering cultural curiosity and dialogue in a region often distant from mainstream international events. The screening was a testament to the Embassy's dedication to promoting cultural exchange in areas with limited exposure to global cinema. The fourth screening took place in Santa Cruz Naranjo on 24 October, in the department of Santa Rosa. This event featured the Bollywood film Manjhi and was attended by Mayor Evan Morales, alongside an audience of 100, including school students. The inspiring story of Manjhi, a tale of determination and perseverance, struck a chord with the attendees, especially the youth, and added an educational dimension to the festival.

6. Following the immense success of the initial film screening and seminar organized as part of the Indian Film Festival 2024, the Embassy of India in Guatemala responded to popular demand by hosting yet another film screening on October 25, 2024, in Chiquimula. The screening attracted an audience of 100 guests, reflecting the growing appeal of Indian films in even the remotest parts of Guatemala. In Chiquimula, the festival took on a uniquely community-oriented dimension, as the screening became a gathering point for locals to come together and share in a cross-cultural celebration. The attendees expressed their appreciation for the screening, highlighting how the film not only entertained but also inspired them to pursue their own goals with renewed vigor.

7. On October 26, 2024, the festival arrived at the prestigious University of San Carlos, Guatemala, where the sixth film was screened to an enthusiastic audience of 200, including faculty members and students. The event was graced by notable figures such as Mr. Marco Tulio Rodas, Director of the Department of Art, and Ms. Ana Lucía Estrada, Academic Secretary of the Faculty of Humanities. Their recognition of the Embassy's efforts highlighted the festival's role in strengthening academic and cultural ties between India and Guatemala. The inclusion of sign language experts made the event accessible to differently-abled students, further emphasizing the Embassy's commitment to inclusivity and cultural outreach. became a gathering point for locals to come together and share in a cross-cultural celebration.

8. The seventh screening of the Indian Film Festival 2024 was held in Quetzaltenango (Xela) on 29 October 2024 and featured the blockbuster RRR, drawing an enthusiastic audience of over 100 college students. The gripping storyline, coupled with the vibrant portrayal of Indian culture, captivated the young viewers, igniting their interest in Indian cinema. Themes of friendship and resistance, central to the film, resonated deeply with the audience, showcasing cinema's unique ability to bridge cultural divides. The event was inaugurated with opening remarks by David Armando García, Cultural Counselor of Quetzaltenango. The students actively engaged with the film, expressing their admiration through cheers and applause at key moments. Their enthusiasm underscored the growing appreciation for Indian cinema in Guatemala and demonstrated the universal appeal of its storytelling and cultural values.

9. As part of the Indian Film Festival 2024, the Embassy of India in Guatemala organized the screening of the 8th Bollywood movie, Mary Kom, on November 8, 2024, in Zone 2 of Guatemala City. The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Jorge Palacios, Superintendent of Transport, who delivered heartfelt opening remarks. In his address, he commended the Embassy for bringing such impactful films to Guatemala, emphasizing the importance of showcasing stories that inspire and promote cultural exchange. The screening was attended by approximately 75 guests, including a group of enthusiastic sportsmen, who found the story particularly relatable and motivating. The ninth and final screening took place at the Auxiliary Municipality of Zone 1 in Guatemala City on 14 November 2024, in the presence of Mayor Alberto Antoniotti and 75 guests. This screening marked the culmination of the festival, leaving attendees mesmerized by the storytelling and visuals that Bollywood is renowned for. The event was a fitting conclusion to a month of cultural exchange, fostering goodwill and mutual appreciation between India and Guatemala.

10. The Indian Film Festival 2024 was more than just a cinematic event; it was a celebration of cultural unity and mutual respect. The festival's success underscored the growing influence of Indian cinema in Latin America, demonstrating its ability to connect with diverse audiences and promote India's

rich heritage. By reaching cities and rural areas alike, the Embassy of India showcased its commitment to creating lasting cultural bridges, laying the foundation for deeper collaboration between the two nations. The Film Festival was well-received, with participants appreciating the opportunity to learn about India's cultural and economic strengths.