

Kalki 2898 – A.D is an upcoming 2024 Indian epic science-fiction dystopian film, based on Hindu scriptures^{[4][5]} and is set in a post-apocalyptic world in 2898 AD.^{[6][7]} The film is directed by Nag Ashwin and produced by C. Aswani Dutt, under Vyjayanthi Movies.^{[8][9]} The film is produced in the Telugu film industry, and is shot simultaneously in Telugu and Hindi languages.^{[6][10][11]} The film stars Prabhas in the lead role alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Deepika Padukone, Disha Patani and others in prominent roles.^[12]

The film was announced under the working title ***Project K*** in February 2020 coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Vyjayanthi Movies. However, the production was delayed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Filming began in July 2021 in a futuristic set at Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad, occurring sporadically in several schedules for the next three years till March 2024.

Kalki 2898 – A.D is mounted on a budget of ₹600 crore (US\$75 million), making it the most expensive Indian film ever made till date. The film's music is scored by Santhosh Narayanan with cinematography by Djordje Stojiljkovic and production design by Nitin Zihani Choudhary, of *Tumbbad* (2018) fame. It became the first Indian film to be presented at San Diego Comic-Con's prestigious "Hall-H" on 20 July 2023, where the makers unveiled the official title and glimpse of the film.^{[13][14]}

Kalki 2898 – A.D is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on 20 June 2024.^[1]

Premise

Premise and setting

Set against the backdrop of both ancient Indian mythology and a distant futuristic dystopian society in the mystical city of *Kasi* (present-day Varanasi), *Kalki 2898 – A.D* embarks on a journey spanning millennia, from the epic events of the Mahabharata in the year of 3102 BCE to the distant year of 2898 AD.^{[15][16][17]} The core of the narrative revolves around the enigmatic figure of Kalki, the tenth and final incarnation of the revered Hindu deity lord Vishnu.^{[18][19]}

Kalki 2898 – A.D



Theatrical Release Poster

Directed by	<u>Nag Ashwin</u>
Written by	<u>Nag Ashwin</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Nag Ashwin</u> <u>Sai Madhav Burra</u>
Story by	<u>Nag Ashwin</u>
Based on	<u>Hindu mythology</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Vishnu Purana</u>▪ <u>Bhagavata Purana</u>▪ <u>Kalki Purana</u>
Produced by	<u>C. Aswani Dutt</u>
Starring	<u>Prabhas</u> <u>Amitabh Bachchan</u> <u>Kamal Haasan</u> <u>Deepika Padukone</u> <u>Disha Patani</u>

Within Hindu texts, Kalki is prophesied as the harbinger of the end of the Kali Yuga, a pivotal epoch in Vaishnava cosmology.^[20] As the central character in the film, Kalki serves as a catalyst for profound societal and existential shifts that transcend the boundaries of time and space.^[21] Through its fusion of ancient mythology and speculative futurism, *Kalki 2898 – A.D* explores themes of "destiny," "ambition", "redemption", "decay of human values", and "the eternal struggle between light and darkness" across the vast expanse of human existence.^{[22][23][24][25]}

Hybrid genre

Notably, "*Kalki 2898 – A.D*" stands as India's first-of-its-kind experimental cinema, as it contributes to the emergence of a new cinematic movement characterised by its fusion of disparate genres and cultural influences, called hybrid genre or cross-cinema.^{[16][26][27]} The film participates in a revival of mythological and dystopian themes^[28] within contemporary and futuristic artistic expression.^[29] This movement, often termed *mythological revivalism* or *neo-mythology*,^[30] involves reinterpreting ancient myths and legends within modern contexts.^{[23][31]}

Cast

- Prabhas as Bhairava, an alter ego of Kalki^[15]
- Amitabh Bachchan as Ashwatthama^[32]
- Kamal Haasan as Kali
- Deepika Padukone as Padma
- Disha Patani
- Mrunal Thakur (Cameo)^[33]
- Rajendra Prasad^[34]
- Pasupathy
- Saswata Chatterjee
- Anna Ben

Production

Development

Following the 2018 biographical film *Mahanati*, director Nag Ashwin stated in August 2019 that he has been working on an original story and screenplay for a long time which would go on floors soon.^[35] The same month, Vyjayanthi Movies revealed their plans to begin Ashwin's film in September that year and invited visual artists, designers and writers to join the production.^[36]

Cinematography	<u>Djordje Stojiljkovic</u>
Edited by	<u>Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao</u>
Music by	<u>Santhosh Narayanan</u>
Production company	<u>Vyjayanthi Movies</u>
Distributed by	<u>AA Films</u>
Release date	20 June 2024 ^[1]
Country	India
Languages	Telugu Hindi
Budget	₹600 crore ^{[2][3]}

Vyjayanthi Movies officially announced in February 2020 that their next film with Ashwin would star Prabhas.^[37] It is intended to mark 50 years since the establishment of their studio.^[38] The film is produced by Ashwin's father-in-law C. Aswani Dutt.^[39]

Casting

In July 2020, Hindi film actress Deepika Padukone was signed to play the lead role opposite Prabhas. Padukone felt that she was "beyond thrilled" to join the production while Ashwin stated that her character would be a "surprise" as it was something which "no mainstream lead has [ever] done before".^[41] The film marks Padukone's debut in Telugu cinema.^[40] Bollywood Hungama reported that her role was initially "not substantial" but was improved to suit her stardom.^[42] In October, Amitabh Bachchan was cast in a full-length role in the film.^[43] Ashwin stated that his role was "so important that his character's name was the working title of an early draft".^[44] The film would be Bachchan's first full-length role in a Telugu film, following his cameo appearances in Manam (2014) and Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy (2019).^[45]



Kalki 2898 AD marks
Hindi film actress
Deepika Padukone's
debut in Telugu
cinema.^[40]

In May 2022, Disha Patani joined the cast, marking her return to Telugu cinema after Loafer (2015).^[46] In June 2023, Kamal Haasan joined the cast, marking his return to Telugu cinema after Cheekati Rajyam (2015).^[47] He described his role as a cameo.^[48] In August 2023, Dulquer Salmaan revealed to the media that he visited the sets of the film although the actor never confirmed or denied his role in the film.^[49] In February 2024, Anna Ben joined the cast, marking her debut in Telugu and Hindi cinema.^[50]

Pre-production

The film was recognised as "Project K" which served as the working title of the film.^[51] Ashwin stated that the film needed high-end technology and futuristic vehicles to be developed for the film. While they can be recreated using computer-generated imagery (CGI), Ashwin wanted them to feel "authentic and genuine", therefore opted to build these vehicles from scratch with a dedicated team of engineers.^[52] In March 2022, Ashwin requested businessman Anand Mahindra to provide technical support to build such type of vehicles.^[53]

A few days later, Mahindra responded that their company Mahindra & Mahindra would assist the production team from their Mahindra Research Valley campus in Chennai.^[54] In July 2021, the makers have erected a futuristic set at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad where a significant portion of filming is expected to take place.^[55]

In August 2020, A. R. Rahman was initially approached to compose music for the film. Rahman did not sign the film,^[56] and Ashwin retained technicians from his earlier film Mahanati (2018), namely, composer Mickey J. Meyer and cinematographer Dani Sanchez-Lopez.^[57] But later, Serbian cinematographer, Djordje Stojiljkovic, replaced Dani Sanchez-Lopez as the official cinematographer of the film. In February 2023, Dutt stated in an interview that Santhosh Narayanan replaced Meyer as the composer, along with a female Bollywood composer composing a song for the film.^[58] Singeetam Srinivasa Rao joined the project to serve as a mentor.^[59]

Kalki 2898 AD is estimated to be mounted at a budget of ₹600 crore (US\$75 million), making it the most expensive Indian film ever made.^[2]

Filming



Ramoji Film City, where parts of the film were shot

Initially, the film was planned to begin its regular shoot in November 2020. However, it was postponed to the following year due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.^[60] Principal photography commenced in Hyderabad in July 2021 on the occasion of Guru Purnima, following a muhurtam shot featuring Bachchan.^[61] Prabhas and Padukone joined the production in December 2021 and scenes featuring Bachchan, Prabhas and Padukone were shot.^{[62][63]} Second schedule of the shoot took place in February 2022.^[64]

Instead of shooting the entire film in a single stretch, the team divided its 80–90 days of shoot into 7–8 days every month.

This would allow the production team to take time and prepare the gadgets and property to be used in this science fiction film. Therefore, the production of the film is expected to take longer than usual.^[65] DIY Arri Alexa 65 camera is being used to shoot the film, thus making it the first Indian film to use this technology.^[66]

Prabhas was expected to start filming his solo portions in April 2022,^[67] however, his knee surgery led to a delay of his upcoming projects including Salaar and *Kalki 2898 AD*.^[68] 90% of the shoot is being done in Ramoji Film City.^[69] In June, Bachchan shot for a scene at Raidurg metro station.^[70] In July, Padukone and Prabhas shot for a car chase sequence in Hyderabad.^[71] Prabhas completed shooting majority of his portions by the end of this schedule.^[72]

Principal photography of the film was expected to be completed by January 2023, following which post-production and visual effects works would take around 8 months.^[73] However the film was still being shot in March 2023 when Bachchan injured his ribs and took rest in Mumbai.^[74] Around 70% of the filming was completed by June 2023.^[75] A romantic track featuring Prabhas and Disha Patani was filmed in Italy in March 2024.^[76]

Marketing

On 19 July 2023, the film's first look was released.^[77] ^{[78][79]} *Kalki 2898 – A.D* became the first Indian film to be presented at San Diego Comic-Con's prestigious "Hall-H" on 20 July 2023, where the makers unveiled the official title & glimpse of the highly anticipated film.^{[14][80]}

On the auspicious day of Maha Shivaratri, makers released a poster revealing Prabhas's character name as *Bhairava*.^{[81][82]}

Release

Theatrical

Kalki 2898 – A.D is scheduled to release on 20 June 2024 theatrically.^{[1][83]} Initially aimed for a 2022 release and then scheduled to January 2024, it was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and production works.^[39] The film is again postponed from 9 May 2024 due to post-production works. The film is planned to be released in Telugu and Hindi while also being dubbed in Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and English.^[84]



Kalki 2898 AD team at the 2023 San Diego Comic-Con

See also

- Science fiction films in India
- List of science fiction films of the 2020s

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