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Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

# From Regional Roots to National Spotlight

## WAM! to Crown India's Best Creators at WAVES 2025

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After months of regional contests and thousands of entries, finalists from 11 cities across India have been selected to take part in the WAVES Anime & Manga Contest (WAM!) national finale. The prestigious event will take place at WAVES 2025, India's first-of-its-kind media and entertainment summit, from May 1-4 at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.



WAM! is organized by the Media & Entertainment Association of India (MEAI) and supported by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India as part of WAVES (World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit). WAVES is India's biggest platform for the AVGC-XR sector-Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality. At the center of WAVES is the Create in India Challenges (CIC). Season 1 of CIC has made history with around **1 lakh registrations**, including **1,100 international participants**. After a detailed selection process, **750+ finalists** have been chosen from **32 unique challenges**.

Among the standout segments under CIC is WAM!. Over the last decade, anime and manga have grown rapidly in India. What started as a niche interest is now a major cultural wave. India has around 180 million anime fans, making it the second-largest anime market after China. The growth is not just in fans, but also in numbers. In 2023, the Indian anime market was worth \$1,642.5 million. It is expected to reach \$5,036 million by 2032.



WAM! tapped into this growing creative energy by offering structured opportunities for Indian creators to develop and pitch original IPs (Intellectual Property). It fills a gap in India's media industry by promoting original, culturally-rooted IPs. With the rise of global anime and growing digital literacy, WAM! gives students and professionals a platform to showcase ideas. It provides a clear path to develop pitch-ready IPs, access to industry mentorship and support from the government.



To bring this vision to life, the competition was held across multiple verticals: Manga (Student & Professional), Anime (Student & Professional), Webtoon (Student & Professional), Voice Acting, and Cosplay. The participants—carefully chosen **across student and professional categories**. WAM! followed a **ground-up approach with contests held across 11 cities: Guwahati, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Delhi, Mumbai, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bengaluru**. The winners from each city were selected by a distinguished jury comprising industry experts from animation, comics, media and entertainment sectors. Their expertise ensured the selection of high-potential talent representing a diversity of voices and storytelling traditions. The regional rounds highlighted India's rich linguistic and artistic diversity, proving that creative talent knows no boundaries.

Building on this strong foundation, the national finale is not just about celebration—it's a launchpad. Designed to help participants become industry-ready professionals, it will feature live pitching sessions, networking with production studios, and showcase opportunities with international media giants.

The shortlisted creators now head to Mumbai for the WAM! National Finale at WAVES 2025, where they will present their work to an international jury and live audience. The finale promises high-stakes excitement, with winners receiving:

- All-expense-paid trip to **Anime Japan 2026 in Tokyo**
- Anime dubbing in **Hindi, English, and Japanese** by Gulmohar Media
- Webtoon publishing by **Toonsutra**

WAM! is more than a competition, it is a cultural movement aiming to address a key gap in India's media landscape: the lack of globally scalable, original content rooted in Indian stories. As WAVES 2025 approaches, the excitement builds. It's a celebration of talent, originality and the transformative power of storytelling.

## References

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