

Cannes to screen
Satyajit Ray's
'Aranyer Din Ratri'

A restored 4K version of Oscar-winning filmmaker Satyajit Ray's 1970 classic *Aranyer Din Ratri* will be screened at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival.

The film, featuring Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore, and Rabi Ghosh, was restored by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project in collaboration with Film Heritage Foundation, Janus Films, and The Criterion Collection.

Based on Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel, the film follows the story of four Calcutta men on a forest retreat.

Notably, Sharmila Tagore, Wes Anderson, and producer Purnima Dutta will attend the Cannes screening.

The original film, which earned a nomination at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1970, was followed by its sequel *Abar Aranye*, released in 2003.

The Cannes Film Festival is scheduled to run from May 13 to 24.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**Acclaimed actor
Faizlur Rahim
Babu, a six-time
National Film Award
winner, is set to
bring the inspiring
life of Polan Sarkar
to the silver screen
in the upcoming
government-grant
film 'Solte', directed
by Zahir Raihan.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Known for his dedication to delivering powerful performances across theatre, television, film, and OTT platforms, Babu said this new role deeply moved him.

"Polan Sarkar's philosophy attracted me," said the actor in an interview with The Daily Star. "Despite limited formal education, he became a guiding light for others by distributing books door to door. His commitment to enlightening people through literature is rare and immensely admirable."

The film *Solte* draws inspiration from the life of Polan Sarkar, a widely cherished community figure and social worker who became a household name by voluntarily distributing books to thousands across rural Bangladesh.

"He found joy in reading and spread that joy to others," Babu added. "That's what books do — they bring knowledge and happiness. Polan Sarkar made that

joy accessible."

The actor praised director Zahir Raihan's dedication to the project. "He really immersed himself in Polan Sarkar's life story before writing the script," said Babu.

Parts of the film have already been shot in Kakonkhali, Rajshahi, a location selected for its visual resemblance to the Barind region where Sarkar lived. Additional filming also took place in Dhaka and Bandarban.

Speaking about his broader professional journey, Babu remarked, "I've always looked for characters that are different. That's why I've shaped my journey as an actor."

He is currently in talks for several new films and continues working in television dramas, but emphasised that completing *Solte* is his current focus.

Solte aims to honour the legacy of Polan Sarkar, a man whose love for books became a beacon of light for rural communities across Bangladesh. "I believe this role will resonate deeply with the audience," Babu concluded.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Agunjatra'

Prachyanat will stage *Agunjatra*, an adaptation of Mahesh Dattani's *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, translated by Shahidul Mamun and directed by Azad Abdul Kalam. The play will explore discrimination against transgender people, following Uma Rao's investigation into the death of Kamala, a transgender woman, revealing deep-seated societal injustices.

DATE: SUNDAY | MAY 11, 2025

TIME: 7PM ONWARDS

VENUE: NATIONAL THEATRE HALL,
BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMYRobert De Niro, Jenna
Ortega cast in David O
Russell's 'Shutout'

Hollywood stars Robert De Niro and Jenna Ortega are teaming up for a new film titled *Shutout*. According to Variety, it will be directed by David O Russell, known for *Silver Linings Playbook* and *American Hustle*. The film is scripted by Alejandro Adams.

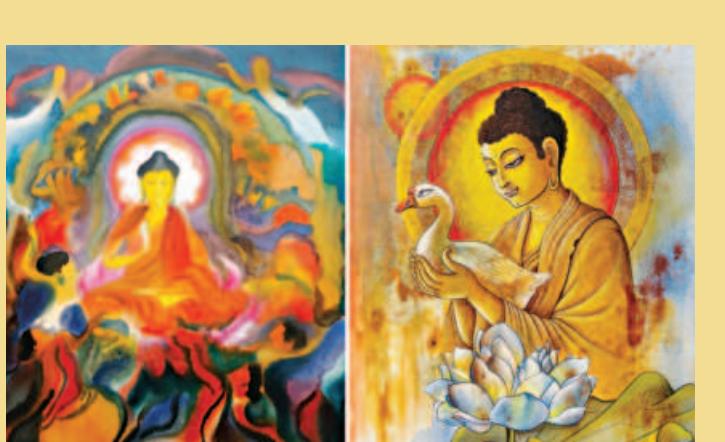
The story follows Jake Kejeune (played by De Niro), a veteran pool hustler holding on to a fading art. After a lifetime of wins and losses in shadowy billiard rooms, Jake crosses paths with Mia (Ortega), a gifted newcomer whose intense, untamed skill reignites a passion in him he believed was long gone. De Niro's recent role was in *The Alto Knights*, while Ortega starred in *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* (2024), reuniting with Tim Burton after *Wednesday*.

'Buddha
of Bengal'
exhibition
opens at
AFD

Alliance Française de Dhaka is celebrating Buddha Purnima with the exhibition *Awakening of Sacred Peace: The Buddha of Bengal*, opening today at La Galerie.

Organised by the Oriental Art Practice Association and Learning Design Studio, and curated by Mikhail Idris, the exhibition features over 100 artworks by 73 Bangladeshi artists.

The pieces, created using mediums such as oil, watercolour, ink, and ashes from the fire-ravaged Bangabazar, interpret Buddhist philosophy through Oriental art traditions. The programme, running from May 9 to 16, includes seminars, recitations, musical performances, and a cultural evening. Highlights include discussions led by Dr Saymon Zakaria and Professor Dr Rashid Amin.



NEWS

China not involved in 'aid corridor'

FROM PAGE 12
between the Arakan Army and the
Myanmar junta since late 2023.

For that to happen, Bangladesh has put forward some conditions that include a ceasefire in Rakhine, representation of the Rohingya in the Rakhine leadership and creating conditions in the state for the eventual repatriation of the Rohingya.

"China does not interfere in any internal affairs of any country," he said at the event organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies at its auditorium.

He went on to express hope that Bangladesh and Myanmar can properly solve the Rohingya issue through peaceful dialogue and promote the process of repatriation.

There are some 1.4 million Rohingya sheltered in Bangladesh, with more fleeing every day.

China had mediated between Bangladesh and Myanmar for the Rohingya return, but that stopped in late 2023 because of the conflicts in Rakhine State, which still continue, Yao said.

However, China will facilitate

dialogue between the two countries. "We will never give up," he said at the event titled 'Five Decades of Bangladesh China Relations: Towards a New Height'.

Addressing the discussion, Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director for the Centre for Alternatives Executive, proposed a Marshall Plan for Rakhine State, which can facilitate Rohingya repatriation.

Regional countries like China, Japan and India should come forward with "out of the box ideas", he said.

Bangladesh approached China for the Teesta river management project as India had not signed the water sharing treaty, while Bangladesh has been suffering from a lack of irrigation water in the north, said Ahmed, also a former professor of international relations at the University of Dhaka.

"This is an economic project — not a security one," he said, adding that China can alone support this project, or India and China can jointly do it.

There can even be a consortium for the project.

"We are willing to offer our help.

Now it is up to Bangladesh to decide whether it wants to move forward," Yao said in response.

On the India-Pakistan conflict, he said both neighbours should refrain from further escalation.

"China opposes any form of terrorism and wants a neutral investigation into the attack into the terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir. We urge both sides to act in the interest of peace and stability, stay calm, exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation."

The world today is full of turmoil, instability and uncertainty.

"No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China will stand firm on the right side of history and the side of human progress, serving as the most stable, certain and peaceful force in the world."

Yao said China stands ready to work with Bangladesh and all parties to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, jointly resist unilateral protectionism and hegemonic bullying practices, in order to uphold free trade and multilateralism.

"This is a general terms document" which will set out agreements but also lay out a framework where further discussions are needed.

"According to the constitution, women must enjoy equal rights and opportunities. The country should be governed by civil law and uphold the spirit of the Liberation War. There is no room for governance based on any specific religious law."

In her closing remarks, Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and moderator of the event, said that although women are respected in roles as daughters, wives, and mothers, they are often overlooked as individuals in society.

"The realisation of women's human rights and their social respect are not one and the same. To ensure women's rights, we must eliminate discriminations embedded in existing laws, social structures, and customs."

"Religion is sacred and should remain a personal practice. Using it as a political tool is entirely unacceptable."

She called for unity in advancing the women's rights movement, stating that it is a collective responsibility to ensure just and equal status for both women and men, in Bangladesh and across the world.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

Four of family die

FROM PAGE 12
charge of DMCH police outpost.

Billal's expecting wife Rozina Begum, 30; their younger daughter Marium Akhter, 5; Billal's sister-in-law Sharmin Akhter, 24; and brother-in-law Iqtar Hossain, 20, suffered injuries. They were provided with primary treatment, said Miraj.

Later, Rozina was taken to a private hospital in Dhanmondi, where she delivered a baby boy at around 5:30pm.

"She has mentally collapsed. She cannot enjoy the moment," Miraj told The Daily Star.

Police seized the bus and the ambulance, Jilani, the OC of Hasara Highway Police Station.

The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

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