

## 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 Fazlur Rahman 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.**

## Polan Sarkar's philosophy drew me to 'Solte'

FAZLUR RAHMAN BABU

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 Kakonkhat, 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 how 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 Abul 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 ACADEMY



## Robert 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'

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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.

### Flights taking longer due

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A flight between Dhaka and London takes around 10 hours when the planes use Pakistan airspace, said a Biman captain.

But now the flight takes 11 to 12 hours, the captain said, wishing anonymity.

"At the very beginning of the recent India-Pakistan tensions, the flight operation department carried out a thorough risk assessment and finalised the flight plan," a Biman official said.

### US, UK agree on trade deal

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A UK government official likened the deal to a "general terms document" which will set out agreements but also lay out a framework where further discussions are needed.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully-fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

As well as dealing with steel and car tariffs, it would lay out positions for discussions over possible future tariffs in the key pharmaceuticals sector.

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

### Four of family die

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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.

### Bureaucrats loyal

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Fakhrul said fascist loyalists are still present at the Supreme Court Bar Association as well. "You [speakers] have said it yourselves here today."

Also speaking at the event, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said those in the judiciary who acted as collaborators of fascists, who helped prolong fascism, can't simply go into retirement and continue to enjoy properties acquired through corruption.

"I believe they must be brought to justice."

Salahuddin also said collaborators of fascists who still sit in the High Court should be removed.

"Many of them were former presidents or general secretaries of the Chhatra League. They directly implemented the agenda of the fascist Awami League government through their judgements in the High Court."

"I won't mention any names—but you all know who they are."

Saying the BNP wants the interim government to succeed, Fakhrul said, "But don't take any step that goes against the nation."

Referring to the proposed humanitarian corridor to Rakhine, BNP leader Fakhrul said, "If humanity needs help, we will help. But these steps must be taken with the people in mind, with discussions involving

Police arrested the bus supervisor and helper.

A case was yet to be filed when this report was submitted around 10:00pm.

#### 3 KILLED IN TANGAIL

Three people were killed after a small truck rear ended a low-bed trailer truck on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Mirzapur upazila yesterday afternoon.

Two of the deceased were identified as Alamin, driver of the small truck, and Nikail allais Uzzal, who was traveling in the small truck, said police.

Masud Khan, officer-in-charge of Gorai Highway Police Station, said the accident happened around 5:00pm in Gorai Mill Gate area.

The OC said the driver of the trailer truck fled the scene with the vehicle.

[Our correspondents in Munshiganj and Tangail contributed to the report]

### Bill Gates accuses

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to give away almost his entire personal wealth in the next two decades and said the world's poorest would receive some \$200 billion via his foundation at a time when governments worldwide are slashing international aid, reports Reuters.

The 69-year-old billionaire Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist said he was speeding up plans to divest his fortune and close the Gates Foundation on December 31, 2045.

"People will say a lot of things about me when I die, but I am determined that 'he died rich' will not be one of them," Gates wrote.

"There are too many urgent problems to solve for me to hold onto resources that could be used to help people," he said.

### Shrinking foreign aid

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energy, and agrotechnology," he said.

This includes forming public-private partnerships, exploring government-monitored zakat funds, enabling youth-led natural resource monitoring and reinforcing governance frameworks for evidence-based community engagement, he added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, echoed the urgency for reform.

With LDC graduation, civil society organisations will face new challenges.

"To continue their work, we must explore South-South cooperation, implement a national CSR policy — possibly under the finance ministry — and introduce structural and digital reforms in both government and civil society organisations."

He also recommended ensuring democratic leadership transitions and advocating for a dedicated Tk 1,000 crore budget to support rights-based development in the face of shifting political priorities.

Sharmin Neelormi, a professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, cautioned against weak implementation.

"Planning is not enough. We must scale up implementation efforts, improve monitoring of tax expenditure rebates and redirect untapped private sector tax benefits into seed funding for grassroots civil society organisations."

Local organisations also need to upskill in emerging technologies and their applications, she added.

### Govt must act to curb

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addressing the urgent need to improve law and order nationwide.

Speakers noted that systematic attempts to suppress women's rights remain unabated.

Shamsun Nahar Koli, programme manager at the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), in a keynote address, stressed that while women continue to overcome numerous barriers and contribute to national, economic, and social progress, there remains a deliberate effort to undermine their dignity, rights, and advancement.

"Opponents of gender equality are relentlessly spreading misogynistic, disrespectful, and demeaning rhetoric — not only at political gatherings but also across public forums and social media platforms. Such statements and behaviour stand in direct conflict with the state's commitment to gender equality and the constitutional principle of non-discrimination for all citizens, regardless of religion, caste, gender, ethnicity, or identity," she said.

Fauzia Khondaker Eva, executive director of Pragroshor (a feminist training and resource centre), said misogynistic propaganda is being deliberately and systematically spread through the media, creating divisions not only between men and women but also among men themselves.