

Cannes Film Festival kicks off amid global uncertainty

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 78th Cannes Film Festival kicked off yesterday and has once again transformed the French Riviera into a global celebration of cinema. The jury panel this year is led by French actress Juliette Binoche, joined by Halle Berry, among others.

Filmmakers and industry professionals gather at Cannes to celebrate global storytelling, but this year's festival faces uncertainty due to President Trump's proposed 100% tariffs on foreign films, raising concerns about US distribution for Cannes selections.

This time around, Wes Anderson's *The Phoenician Scheme* entered the competition alongside indie titles like Joachim Trier's *Sentimental Value* and Julia Ducournau's *Alpha*. Out-of-competition highlights include *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning* and Spike Lee's *Highest 2 Lowest*, starring Denzel Washington.

Robert De Niro was honoured with the Palme d'Or for lifetime achievement at the opening ceremony, with Leonardo DiCaprio presenting it to him. Other notable attendees include Jennifer Lawrence, Joaquin Phoenix, Denzel Washington, and Emma Stone.

Scarlett Johansson, Kristen Stewart, and Harris Dickinson will debut as



directors in *Un Certain Regard* with *Eleanor the Great*, *The Chronology of Water*, and *Urchin*, respectively, bringing fresh visions from familiar faces.

The Gaza conflict will echo at Cannes through films like Sepideh Farsi's *Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk*, which follows slain Gazan photojournalist Fatima Hassouna. Additionally, *Once Upon a Time in Gaza*, directed by Arab and Tarzan Nasser, is set to compete in the *Un Certain Regard* section, highlighting the human cost of the conflict.

This year's competition for the Palme d'Or is fierce, with 22 films vying for the top prize.

Notable entries include *The Young Mothers' Home* by the Dardenne brothers, *The History of Sound* by Oliver Hermanus, and Iranian director Jafar Panahi's *It Was Just an Accident*. Themes range from historical dramas to contemporary social issues, reflecting the festival's diverse selection.

Bangladesh marks a milestone with its first official selection at Cannes this year. Adnan Al Rajeev's short film *Ali*, co-produced by Tanveer Hossain of Bangladesh and Kristine De Leon of the Philippines, is featured in the Short Film section. The 15-minute film's inclusion signifies a growing recognition of Bangladeshi cinema on the international stage.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Blues & Brews'



Coal & Coffee will host *Blues & Brews*, an evening of live music, handcrafted coffee, and interactive experiences where guests can enjoy performances, barista demos, and a relaxed social setting.

The event will take place across three locations in Mohakhali, Uttara, and Banani, promising a night of coffee, music, and community.

DATE: FRIDAY | MAY 16

TIME: 3PM ONWARDS

VENUE: COAL & COFFEE, 46 KAMAL ATATURK AVENUE, BANANI

Yash, Malaika team up for Eid release 'Khotipuron'



Yash Rohan and Malaika Chowdhury have joined forces for the Eid-ul-Azha special drama *Khotipuron*, directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz and written by Siddique Ahmed.

The YouTube project, set to stream on Cinemawala, marks Malaika's return to the screen and her second TV appearance after *Shondhikkhon* (2024).

The story, though not fully revealed, centres on the selfless love of a mother. "A mother's affection is priceless," director Raz noted. Filming took place from May 2 to 7 in Dhaka and the surrounding areas.

The cast includes Nader Chowdhury, Monira Akter Mithu, Rashed Mamun Apu, Sushama Sarker, and others.

Khotipuron includes a new song composed and performed by Arfin Rumeey, with lyrics by Robiul Islam Jibon. Rashed Rabbi handled editing and colour grading, while cinematography was done by Raju Raj.

Nemesis returns with new album 'VIP'



After an eight-year hiatus, iconic Bangladeshi rock band Nemesis is set to release their fourth studio album, *VIP*, on May 23. Featuring 10 tracks, the album explores themes of despair, hope, and resilience—drawing from the band's experiences during the pandemic and broader societal unrest.

The announcement was made on the band's official Facebook page, highlighting their emotional

journey and eagerness to reconnect with listeners.

Previously released singles *Ghour* and *Bhanga Ayna* will be part of the album. All tracks are written and composed by vocalist and guitarist Zohad Reza Chowdhury.

The band's current lineup includes Zohad, Sultan Rafsan Khan, Ifaz Abrar Reza, Raquibun Nabi Ratul, and Jeffrey Ovjit Ghosh.

VIP will be available on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and other digital platforms.

NEWS

7-year-old found dead

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owner Humayun Matobbar and Johura Begum. They live in Raipur upazila.

Sanim's relative Bakshi Mohammad Shahid Hossain said, "A few days ago, the madrasa informed us that Sanim wasn't obeying his teacher Mahmudur Rahman. The teacher seemed angry about it. Now we are told that Sanim had hanged himself in a toilet. But when we went there, we found his body not in the toilet but on a bed in a room on the madrasa's ground floor. He was

killed. We want justice." Several of Sanim's classmates confirmed that he had been beaten by the teacher that morning, though they couldn't say what exactly happened at the time of his death.

Additional Superintendent of Police Rezaul Haque said, "After receiving the report of the suicide, I visited the spot. The child was beaten earlier in the day. He had been subjected to psychological abuse and threats. There were black marks on his neck and other parts of the

body. We have detained one person for questioning. The actual cause of death will be confirmed after the autopsy. A case is being prepared."

Principal Maulana Bashir Ahmed said, "After class, the students were given a break for prayers and lunch. CCTV footage shows Sanim entering the toilet with a towel. That's where the body was found."

Police have detained Mahmudur Rahman for questioning.

The body was sent to Lakshimpur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Committed to truce

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Islamabad categorically rejects the "provocative and inflammatory assertions" made by Modi on Monday.

"At a time when international efforts are being made for regional peace and stability, this statement represents a dangerous escalation," it said in a statement.

"Pakistan remains committed to the recent ceasefire understanding and taking necessary steps towards de-escalation and regional stability," it said, adding that any future aggression will also be met with full resolve.

Meanwhile, three suspected rebels were killed in Indian-administered Kashmir yesterday in a gun battle with soldiers, the Indian army said.

The clashes happened after the army's special counter-insurgency force received information that militants were in Keller forest in the southern Kashmir valley, reports AFP.

A "search and destroy Operation" was launched leading to a clash, the army said on X. "During the operation, terrorists opened heavy fire and fierce firefight ensued, which resulted in elimination of three hardcore terrorists," it said.

Earlier yesterday, Modi visited the Adampur air base near the border and repeated his warning to Pakistan as he addressed Indian Air Force personnel, posing with them for photographs.

"We will not differentiate between

the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism," Modi said, referring to India's response in the event of another attack.

"We will enter their dens and hit them without giving them an opportunity to survive," he said.

Separately, the Indian foreign ministry said that the issue of trade did not come up in discussions with Washington during their conversations on the tensions with Pakistan.

On Monday, US President Donald Trump said the leaders of India and Pakistan were "unwilling," and the US "helped a lot" to secure the ceasefire, adding that trade was a "big reason" why the countries stopped fighting.

Cops sans lethal weapons

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practical challenges."

Also speaking to this newspaper yesterday, Nazmul Haque, a former additional inspector general of police, said the decision is unlikely to succeed and warned that, without means of self-defence, it may increase the death rate among officers.

"Such a decision might be suitable for a more civilised society than ours. I believe the decision will need to be revised later."

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury on Monday announced that police officers would no longer be allowed to carry lethal weapons.

"These weapons must be surrendered. No lethal arms will remain in the hands of the regular police," he said, following the ninth meeting of the Law and Order Advisory Committee.

According to the adviser, such weapons would now only be used by the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), which performs duties different from those of the regular force.

The issue of police armament came to the forefront following the deadly crackdown during the July uprising, where security forces – including armed party activists of the then-ruling Awami League – were seen firing live ammunition on demonstrators.

Investigations confirmed the use of shotguns, pistols, rifles, and in some areas, even AK-47s and M-16s. The government has so far released a list of 834 martyrs from the uprising, most of whom died from gunshot wounds.

In the wake of the violence, public outcry and expert recommendations – such as those in the Police Reform Commission's report – have called for limiting the use of lethal force. The report emphasised that orders to fire on civilians must be considered an extreme last resort.

Even at the Deputy Commissioners' (DC) Conference in February, similar recommendations were made to discourage arming the regular police with deadly firearms.

Commenting on the current policy direction, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Baharul Alam said yesterday that the force must move away from lethal weapons, such as rifles that fire lethal rounds, except in extreme situations.

"We have agreed in principle with the home ministry that we will avoid firearms that discharge bullets that can cause death. We will make a final decision after discussions with all relevant stakeholders," he said at an event at Police Staff College Bangladesh in the capital's Mirpur.

However, the IGP noted that in areas with high insurgency risks, exceptions may apply.

"Under normal circumstances, in law and order situations, we will try to ensure there are no lethal weapons involved. Non-lethal methods are actually accepted all over the world." Sources within the Bangladesh Police say the force currently possesses 7.62mm and 9mm firearms, with 9mm pistols being the most common. Other weapons include 7.62mm Chinese rifles, submachine guns (SMGs), and light machine guns

(LMGs), although .303 rifles—once standard—are now virtually obsolete.

Under Section 153 of the Police Regulations of Bangladesh (PRB), police may use firearms only in three circumstances: to protect life and property in self-defence, to disperse unlawful assemblies, and to carry out arrests.

Section 155 further mandates minimal harm and prohibits firing over crowds or at distant targets to prevent harm to innocents. Officers must also cease firing if a crowd begins to disperse.

A committee, led by Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser on home affairs, has been formed to examine police use of firearms and guide implementation of the policy change.

Speaking on the matter, Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Social Welfare and Research, told this newspaper, "We may be able to welcome the move if none of the civilians in Bangladesh have weapons in their hands."

"Police have to conduct drives against criminals and the drug network. When criminals had firearms and police did not have any, then the criminals would gain confidence to commit crimes, and police would not be able to perform their duty properly," he warned.

He said that the decisions may lead police to vulnerability.

Tawohidul said, "We need to ensure accountability so that the firearms cannot be harmful to civilians, which needs to be ensured through effective reform."

Magura child rape, murder case verdict

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Speaking to The Daily Star, victim's mother said, "I hope my daughter's rapists receive the death penalty and that all those involved face the highest punishment. My daughter suffered until her last breath; they deserve the same kind of physical punishment."

PP Monirul said the prosecution presented 29 witnesses during the trial.

The accused were identified and questioned under section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

According to court sources, the recording of witness testimonies

commenced on April 27.

The victim's sister's father-in-law has been charged under section 9/2 of the Women and Children's Violence Prevention Act (rape resulting in death). Her sister's husband and brother-in-law face charges under section 506 Part 2 of the Penal Code (criminal intimidation). Her sister's mother-in-law has been charged under section 201 of the Penal Code (tampering with evidence).

According to the charges, the rape took place in the early hours of March 6 this year.

On March 1, the child went to visit

her elder sister's house. On March 6, she was taken to the Magura 250-bed District Hospital in an unconscious state around 11:30am.

Her mother filed a case with Magura Sadar Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on charges of rape and causing injury through rape on March 8.

Her sister's husband, brother-in-law, father-in-law, and mother-in-law were named as accused.

She died while undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka on March 13.

Trump admin revokes temporary protections for Afghans

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump's administration moved Monday to end legal protections that temporarily shielded Afghans from being deported, citing an improved security situation in the Taliban-ruled country.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said the temporary protected status (TPS) designation for Afghanistan would expire on May 20 and the termination would take effect on July 12.

the activities of the AL is necessary to protect national security and sovereignty, ensure the safety of July uprising activists and safeguard plaintiffs and witnesses of the International Crimes Tribunal.

"As for elections, we recall how the Awami League repeatedly resorted to grossly farcical elections and caused irreparable damages to our electoral processes and institutions," the press secretary said.

The interim government, he said, is engaged in a reform process to rebuild the country's democratic system.

"Elections are entirely our internal matter. We urge all to respect the sovereign will of our people in matters relating to elections," Shafiqul said.

Ban on AL

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at the curtailment of democratic freedom and of shrinking political space in Bangladesh. We strongly support the early holding of free, fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh," Jaiswal said.

BSS reports: Reacting to India's remarks, Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to chief adviser, said, "The wounds caused by the crimes against humanity perpetrated by this party are still fresh.

"We have witnessed how Awami League completely destroyed our democratic fabric, severely squeezed our political space and compromised our sovereignty during its 15-year tyrannical and kleptocratic rule." Shafiqul reiterated that the ban on