

# Herald Cafe

## Cinema, celebrities & a surge of resistance: Cannes so far

This year's Cannes Film Festival blends its signature glitz and glamour with a sharp political edge. As the countdown to the Palme d'Or on May 24 continues, Week One has already delivered standout films, bold fashion, and powerful statements



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Cannes Film Festival 2025 has all the usual glitz and glamour but is also heavy on politics. The festival wraps up on May 24, when the winner of the prestigious Palme d'Or for best film will be announced.

### THE TRUMP ERA'S IMPRINT ON FILM

Donald Trump has been one of the main talking points in Cannes after announcing on May 5 that he wanted 100-percent tariffs on movies "produced in foreign lands". Actors, directors and producers have lined up to denounce the idea as bad and self-defeating. Chilean-American actor Pedro Pascal sharply criticised Donald Trump's attacks against artists. "F\*\*k the people that try to make you scared, and fight back. And don't let them win. Keep telling the stories, keep expressing yourself and keep fighting for it" he said at a press conference at the Cannes Film Festival, promoting Ari Aster's new film 'Eddington'.

### ROBERT DE NIRO CRITICISES TRUMP IN FIERY CANNES SPEECH



Leonardo DiCaprio handed over the honorary Palme d'Or to his friend and colleague, Robert De Niro, during the opening ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival. Robert De Niro, the 81-year-old actor accepted a lifetime achievement award and used the moment to take

a strong swipe at US President Donald Trump. "Trump has cut funding and support to the arts, humanities and education. And now he has announced the 100 percent tariff on films produced outside the US," he said. He further added, "You can't put a price on creativity, but apparently, you can put a tariff on it. Everyone who cares about liberty should protest against Trump's decisions."

### NEW #METOO RULES

After years of scandals in the film industry and pressure to take a stand, the festival announced it had barred an actor in

a prominent French film from the red carpet because of rape allegations. Theo Navarro-Mussy, who plays a police officer in a supporting role in the film 'Dossier 137',

became the first person affected by the new policy. He denies the allegations and an initial police investigation was closed last month without charges.



### TOM CRUISE BRINGS HIGH-OCTANE ENERGY TO CANNES WITH 'MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE'

Tom Cruise swept into Cannes on a steamroller of hype around 'Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning'. Director Christopher McQuarrie revealed that Cruise, who does his own stunts, took his risk-taking a little far during a shoot in South Africa and could have died. Cruise pushed himself to the point of exhaustion after climbing out on the wing of a stunt biplane that he was piloting alone. "He was laying on the wing of the plane. His arms were hanging over the front of the wing. We could not tell if he was conscious or not," said the US filmmaker. The movie received a 7.5-minute standing ovation after it screened out of competition, with Cruise and McQuarrie expressing their gratitude to audiences after the film.

### EYES ON THE GAZA WAR



The war in Gaza has been a constant topic of conversation after nearly 400 top film figures signed an open letter on the eve of festival condemning Israel for committing "genocide" in Gaza and the film industry for its "passivity". The head of the Cannes jury Juliette Binoche added her signature this week to that of at least four Palme d'Or-winning directors in Cannes as well as actors Ralph Fiennes and Richard Gere. A gut wrenching documentary about Palestinian photojournalist Fatima Hassouna, killed in an Israeli air strike on her home in Gaza, left its audience in stunned silence when it premiered and its director Sepideh Farsi in tears.



MUSIC STUDENTS DISPLAY THEIR TALENT AT ANNUAL CONCERT AT SANQUELIM

### SWIPE RIGHT

#### Kim Kardashian graduates from law school



Kim Kardashian has officially graduated from law school, marking the end of a six-year journey. The reality TV star and entrepreneur shared glimpses of a surprise private commencement ceremony, organised by family and friends, on her Instagram. Kardashian reflected on the challenging road she undertook, noting that all her followers had been part of her journey. Her decision to pursue law stemmed from feeling "dumbfounded" after watching a video on X, which sparked a desire to fight for justice. One of her mentors highlighted the extraordinary effort behind her achievement, explaining that Kardashian committed 18 hours a week, 48 weeks a year, over six years, amounting to 5,184 hours of legal study. This was done alongside raising four children, managing multiple businesses, filming television shows, and advocating for criminal justice reform. Her graduation marks a significant milestone in her transition from celebrity to serious legal advocate.

#### Dhanush to play APJ Abdul Kalam in new biopic

Actor Dhanush is set to portray Bharat Ratna Dr APJ Abdul Kalam in an upcoming biopic titled 'Kalam', directed by Om Raut. The film was officially launched at the 78th Cannes Film Festival and is being backed by producers Abhishek Agarwal and Bhushan Kumar of T-Series. Directed by Raut who is known for films like 'Tanhaji' and 'Adipurush', this film promises to go beyond politics to explore the many dimensions of Kalam's life, from his humble beginnings in Rameswaram to his presidency at Rashtrapati Bhavan. It will highlight not only his achievements as the 'Missile Man of India' but also his identity as a poet, teacher, and visionary. The screenplay is penned by Saiwyn Quadras. While Dhanush has been confirmed in the lead role, the rest of the cast remains under wraps.



### ACTORS-TURNED-DIRECTORS

This year's festival features a trio of highly anticipated directorial debuts from actors. Harris Dickinson, the 28-year-old 'Babygirl' actor, drew praise for his first film 'Urchin', while 'Twilight' star Kristen Stewart, 35, demonstrated her talent behind the camera in 'The Chronology of Water'. American A-lister Scarlett Johansson unveiled her debut film 'Eleanor the Great' competing in the Un Certain Regard competition. The film landed a 5-minute Cannes ovation.

### RED CARPET DRESS CODE

Hollywood star Halle Berry was the most high-profile victim of the festival's dress code, which bans extravagantly large dresses and "total nudity" on the red carpet. The 'Monster's Ball' star, who is on the jury this year, was forced into a last-minute wardrobe change on opening night after she judged her dress by Indian designer Gaurav Gupta to be too long. Others appeared to flout the rules, including German model Heidi Klum, who turned up in a frilly pink evening gown with a train that was at least three metres (10 feet) long.



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan stunned Cannes 2025 in a white Manish Malhotra saree, adorned with opulent ruby jewellery and a touch of sindoor, blending tradition with elegance.

## CELEBRATING DECADES OF SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION

May 23 marks World Turtle Day, a global celebration of one of the ocean's most enduring inhabitants. Today, they serve as powerful reminders that with patience and perseverance, one can still turn the tide for endangered species



Hawksbill sea turtle

challenges such as rising sand temperatures, shifting coastlines, and evolving human pressures remains critical. Sea turtles are ecologically significant, long-lived keystone species that perform diverse roles across marine ecosystems. Their life cycle spans both terrestrial and marine environments, contributing to nutrient transfer and ecosystem connectivity. Nesting females deposit eggs on beaches, and unhatched eggs or eggshells provide organic enrichment to otherwise nutrient-poor coastal dune ecosystems, promoting vegetation growth and stabilising shorelines.

### Nester Brian Fernandes

Over the past few decades, scientists, volunteers, government agencies, NGOs, and local communities have worked in concert to restore sea turtle populations along India's coastline. Their combined efforts are finally yielding encouraging results. Nesting beaches once believed lost to development have begun to replenish, and hatchling survival rates have improved. However, understanding



Male Loggerhead Sea Turtle

### INDIA'S FIVE SEA TURTLE SPECIES

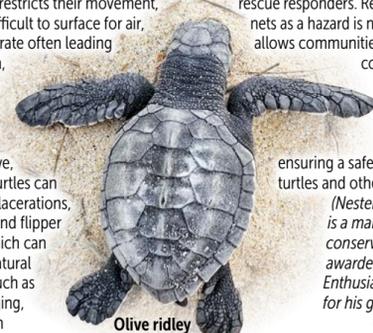
- Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)
- Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
- Leatherback (*Dermodochelys coriacea*)
- Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)
- Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)

which compete with corals for space. Their foraging maintains coral diversity and resilience, supporting reef biodiversity. Loggerhead turtles consume hard-shelled benthic organisms, contributing to prey population control and sediment turnover. Leatherback turtles (*Dermodochelys coriacea*) specialise in gelatinous zooplankton, particularly jellyfish, mitigating the risk of jellyfish blooms that could otherwise disrupt fish

recruitment and marine food webs. Olive Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), through mass nesting events, support trophic dynamics by provisioning food to numerous scavengers. The loss of sea turtles would have cascading effects, including seagrass degradation, coral reef imbalance, uncontrolled jellyfish populations, and diminished coastal resilience. Thus, sea turtles serve as ecological engineers and indicators of ocean health, reinforcing the need for sustained conservation efforts across their migratory ranges. In Goa, the Olive Ridley turtle is the most frequently observed nester, arriving quietly under the cover of night each year to lay eggs along the sandy shores. These annual nesting events are part of a delicate cycle that has persisted for generations, yet

that cycle is under increasing pressure. Further complicating their survival is the growing presence of abandoned fishing gear, commonly known as ghost nets. Though not laid with harmful intent, ghost nets are among the most dangerous forms of marine debris. Once entangled, sea turtles like the Olive Ridley can become trapped for days or even weeks. This restricts their movement, making it difficult to surface for air, feed, or migrate often leading to starvation, exhaustion, or drowning. Even if they survive, entangled turtles can suffer deep lacerations, infections, and flipper damage, which can alter their natural behaviors such as diving, foraging, or nesting. In

Goa, turtles are brought in by local fishermen and beachgoers that are some so tightly bound in netting that flippers swell or begin to rot, requiring weeks of treatment. Ghost nets are a shared challenge that calls for shared solutions, ranging from improved fishing gear management and reporting lost nets, to regular beach clean-ups and training rescue responders. Recognising these nets as a hazard is not a mistake that allows communities, fishers, and conservationists to work together to reduce their impact, ensuring a safer future for sea turtles and other marine life. (Nester Brian Fernandes is a marine biologist and conservationist who was awarded the Biodiversity Enthusiast Award in 2024 for his grassroots work in Goa and beyond)



Olive ridley sea turtle