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French film director Agnes Varda, left, collects her honorary Oscar onstage as presenter Angelina Jolie applauds at the 2017 Governors Awards.



Actress Jennifer Lawrence attends the 2017 Governors Awards yesterday in Hollywood. — AFP/AP



Actor Donald Sutherland accepts his honorary Oscar at the 2017 Governors Awards.

## Hollywood welcomes allegations shining light on abuse

Filmmakers on Saturday welcomed the sexual misconduct scandal engulfing Hollywood as a "positive" moment that could end decades of abuse and serve as an example to other industries. Several directors told AFP at the annual Governors Awards the flood of allegations against Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and others might finally force reform and protect future aspiring stars.

James Gunn, the director of Marvel's "Guardians of the Galaxy" movies, said it was "a really positive thing for the industry." "It's been something that has existed for a long time. It's something that stopped workflow, harmed creativity, harmed making money and it's just not good for us," he told AFP. The acclaimed director repeated previous allegations that a priest at his Catholic school in Manchester, Missouri, had been a pedophile.

"For me this is a light being shone upon a lot of things.... And at the same time a lot of people

in Hollywood are really terrible people and that's coming to light," he added. Gunn spoke out ahead of veteran movie star Donald Sutherland accepting an honorary Oscar at Hollywood's Ray Dolby Ballroom "for a lifetime of indelible characters, rendered with unwavering truthfulness."

Stars at the glitzy ceremony included Jennifer Lawrence, Jake Gyllenhaal, Tom Hanks, Chadwick Boseman and Emma Stone, who was deep in conversation for much of the evening with ex-boyfriend and "Spiderman" co-star Andrew Garfield. Denis Villeneuve, the Oscar-nominated director of "Arrival" and "Blade Runner 2049," told AFP there was "something very positive" about victims of abuse finally breaking their silence.

"Hollywood is a mirror of society and I think that what's happening here, I hope, will spread in society because those things cannot be," he

said. "We are in 2017. I cannot believe it is still happening today. What I'm hearing is that people are sad and there's a feeling of relief at the same time that it's out."

“ It's been something that has existed for a long time ”

Andy Serkis, best known as the award-winning motion capture artist in Peter Jackson's "King Kong" and "Lord of the Rings" movies,

said he hoped the scandal would lead to abusers in the political sphere being exposed. "Hopefully some great will come from it which is people who are in positions of power will not be able to feel that they can get away with being bigots or bullies, or predatory and misusing power," the actor, who made his directorial debut this year with "Breathe," told AFP.

Canadian national Sutherland, a two-time Golden Globe winner, got his big break in "The Dirty Dozen" (1967) and has more than 140 film credits spanning six decades. The 82-year-old has had starring roles in numerous iconic movies, including "M\*A\*S\*H," "Don't Look Now," "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," "The Italian Job," "Pride and Prejudice" and "The Hunger Games" series.

Married three times, he has five children, including actor Kiefer Sutherland ("The Lost

Boys," "24"). Quoting vaudeville comedian Jack Benny, he said: "I don't deserve this. But I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either." Writer-director Charles Burnett, cinematographer Owen Roizman and filmmakers Agnes Varda and Alejandro G. Inarritu were also awarded honorary Oscars. Belgian-born Varda, sometimes described as the "mother of the French New Wave," was introduced by A-listers Jessica Chastain and Angelina Jolie.

She jokingly expressed disappointment that no man had been willing to get up on stage and sing her praises, before bringing the house to its feet by dancing onstage with Jolie. The Governors Awards were created as a separate event in 2009 to allow more space for the honorees to accept their statuettes and to unclutter the main show's packed schedule. Previous winners of honorary Oscars include Jackie Chan, Lauren Bacall, Francis Ford Coppola, Oprah Winfrey, Angelina Jolie and Spike Lee. — AFP

## Fashion rental offers top labels for price of pizza

Fancy hitting the town in the latest Dior dress with an outrageously expensive Louis Vuitton bag on your arm—but haven't the cash to afford even the clasp? The fantasy is no longer a pipedream for thousands of women in Paris, the world's fashion capital, where hiring luxury clothes and handbags is beginning to catch on.

A new service has started which allows fashionistas to rent Dior, Gucci, Saint Laurent and other luxury brand handbags for as little as 10 euros (\$11) a day. A 4,500-euro classic Chanel black shoulder bag can be hired for 25 euros a day, although customers have also to cough up 20 euros in insurance and pay for a courier to deliver the

bag to their door. Yann Le Floch, founder of the Instant Luxe website, which already sells secondhand designer clothes and bags to its one million members, said the site was responding to a new "pattern of consumption" where women see no shame in renting their wardrobe.

In his view, many women would rather use than own a luxury bag, which is why his company has begun renting out about "20 classic handbags styles for a minimum of four nights," he told AFP. "Uber has changed transport, Airbnb accommodation and habits are changing in the luxury goods market too," Le Floch said. "We are changing our consumption habits from ownership to use. And people are not renting just for special occasions but to treat themselves," he added. While France has long had a thriving market in secondhand designer clothes and bags, fans of luxury labels have been much more reluctant about renting until quite recently, even as "the market has exploded in the US", she said.

### 'Cinderella syndrome'

Fashion expert Julie El Ghouzzi, who heads France's Luxury Goods and Creation Centre, calls the new rental trend the "Cinderella syndrome". "There is a real change in society. We have less need to possess things and greater need for appearances. This Cinderella effect means that even if we become a pumpkin at midnight we can still be the most beautiful princess at the ball, and have all the pleasure of luxury without having to own it."

El Ghouzzi described this as the "quintessence of consumption—we consume the object which then disappears." Emmanuelle Brizay, co-founder of the Panoply City fashion rental site, said a whole new market was opening up. "More than 90 percent of our clients have never rented clothes before. We are in a period of education, not to say evangelisation." Since January the site has rented out 4,000 items from the latest women's collections from Marc Jacobs, Kenzo, Courreges and Sonia Rykiel. For 60 euros a month customers can hire a different piece every week, while a 350-euro-a-month subscription gives them access to 10 outfits.

### Clothes 'clouds'

"Renting changes the relationship with clothes," said Brizay. "One continues to buy them but you also can have more fun. Instead of buying an umpteenth black coat for the winter, with the same money you can change the color every week." Even though the rental market for top-end luxury brands is still in its infancy, Brizay said the signs were very encouraging.

The attitude of the brands themselves has changed, she said. "At the beginning we had to convince them and now some of them are coming to us to make sure they feature in the selection." The big question is how long can rental pieces, even high quality ones, be hired as "new". "The idea is certainly not to wear them out," Brizay said, while at Instant Luxe used bags can be sold on the site as secondhand. The millennials of "Generation Y (those born during the 1980s and 1990s) are completely ready for the fashion rental market," according to El Ghouzzi. "They already have all their lives stored in clouds, so not 'possessing' something by having it in their hands all the time is not a problem for them." — AFP



This file photo taken on September 26, 2017 shows a model presenting a creation for Christian Dior during the women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

## Mozambique war-time Western wins at Tunisia film festival

The story of an epic train journey across war-torn Mozambique by a Brazilian director has been awarded the top prize at Tunisia's Carthage Film Festival. "The Train of Salt and Sugar" by Licinio Azevedo, a Brazilian who lives in the African country, received the Tanit d'Or as the festival wrapped up on Saturday.

Like a Western, the film follows the perilous journey of a train that sets off across

rebel-held areas to exchange salt for sugar in 1989 during Mozambique's civil war. The Tanit d'Argent went to South Africa's John Trengove for his first feature "The Wound", which has sparked controversy at home over its portrayal of homosexual love and an ancestral initiation rite. Veteran Moroccan director Faouzi Bensaidi received the Tanit de Bronze for "Volubilis", a social critique of extreme liberalism. Among the documen-

taries, the jury awarded Palestinian director Raed Andoni's "Ghost Hunting", which recreates a notorious Israeli interrogation centre and has former prisoners re-enact experiences in a bid to free them of their demons.

Third place went to Nada Mezni Hafaiedh's "Upon the shadow", a frank documentary about the lives of gay Tunisians in a country where homosexuality is a crime. Hafaiedh said she was "surprised there were so few complaints" after her documentary's screening in its home country on Friday. She said she was astonished her film had been selected for the festival at all, enabling Tunisians to see it, "because I know that sadly in Tunisia being gay is an abomination". — AFP



Guru Indradyumna Swami (L) and Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni (C) with Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra (R) attend the announcement of 'The Mumbai Fest' in Mumbai. — AFP

## In the wake of Weinstein, women say Bollywood ignores harassment

When Indian actress Divya Unny flew into the southern state of Kerala in 2015, she thought it was for a business meeting with an award-winning director about a role in his upcoming film. Instead, she was called to the director's hotel room at 9 pm, where the man propositioned her for sex and told her she would have to make compromises if she wanted to succeed in the film industry. "You always hear of actresses getting called by directors to hotel rooms at night, but I didn't think twice because I was going in with a reference," she told Reuters.

Unny said she rejected the advances of the director, whom she declined to name, and left without a role in the movie. Reuters was unable to confirm her accusations. Three other women involved in India's film industry, the world's largest, told Reuters that Unny's experience isn't unique. But even after allegations of sexual assault and harassment leveled at Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein prompted a wave of similar complaints, Bollywood has been reluctant to name and shame perpetrators.

"The way men are being called out in Hollywood right now, I don't know if it can happen in India," said Ankrita Shrivastava, a director whose last film, "Lipstick Under my Burkha" was acclaimed for its examination of women and sexuality. "In terms of how our psychology is, how patriarchy functions, it is much more entrenched," she said. The vast majority of Bollywood's biggest producers and film-makers are men, many from prominent film families who until recently controlled most of the industry.

Mukesh Bhatt, who co-heads production house Vishesh Films, said India's film industry should not be singled out and was limited in what more it could do to prevent harassment. "What can we do? We cannot do any moral policing," Bhatt, told Reuters in a telephone interview. "We cannot keep moral cops outside every film office to see that no girl is being exploited." The industry also had to be cautious about false allegations, said Bhatt, who was previously the chairman of apex industry body, the Film and Television Producers Guild of India.

"I am not saying men have not been exploitative. They have been for centuries. But today's woman is also not as simple as she pretends to be," he said. "But just as there are good men and bad men, so also there are women who are exploitative and very cunning. Also blatantly

shameless to offer themselves." He declined to provide any examples.

### Few complaints

Despite laws requiring Indian companies to form internal committees to investigate sexual harassment at the workplace, very few of cases are reported to the police, said women's rights activist and lawyer, Flavia Agnes. "They (companies) may have a committee or they may not have one. They may do an investigation or they may not do one. And they may or may not file a complaint. It could go wrong at every stage," she said. Reports of sexual assault, while rare, are not unheard of in India's film industry.

Earlier this year, Gopalakrishnan Padmanabhan Pillai, a popular actor in the Malayalam film industry best known by his stage name Dileep, was arrested by police who accused him and several others of kidnapping and molesting an actress. Dileep denies the accusations. "He says it is a completely false case. He was framed by the police and some enemies," B Raman Pillai, a lawyer for Dileep, told Reuters. Fans cheered and distributed sweets as he walked out on bail last month after more than 80 days in prison. The police haven't filed formal charges in court, after which a date for the trial would be set. "We will file a charge sheet in the next two weeks. Maybe next week," Biju Paulose, an inspector of police in charge of the case, told Reuters by phone.

### Harassment depicted as love

Kangana Ranaut is one of the few Bollywood actresses who has publicly spoken out about the sexual assault and harassment. Ranaut, who has appeared in 30 films in the past decade, told Reuters she had faced "severe sexual exploitation and harassment at the work place," without elaborating. "I've read some stories (about harassment) shared by few prominent people, but most people find it hard to open up about such experiences," she said. "Victim shaming is very common in our society, it's done brutally and openly." According to a survey conducted by The Indian National Bar Association this year, around 70 percent of Indian women said they would not report sexual harassment at the workplace because they weren't confident about the complaint mechanism and because of the stigma attached to victims. — Reuters