



Actor Vin Diesel arrives by helicopter for the premiere of the film 'xXx Return of Xander Cage' in London. — AP photos



This image released by Universal Studios shows Charlize Theron, left, and Vin Diesel in a scene from 'The Fate of the Furious,' expected in theaters on April 14.



Hollywood actor Vin Diesel, left, and co-star Deepika Padukone attend a news conference to promote their film xXx: Return of Xander Cage in Mumbai, India.



Hollywood actor Vin Diesel, center, speaks with co-star Deepika Padukone, right, and director D. J. Caruso seated beside him during a press conference to promote their film xXx: Return of Xander Cage.

Vin Diesel gets traditional Indian welcome for 'xXx'

Women dressed in red saris and yellow turbans gave a traditional Indian welcome to action star Vin Diesel on Thursday as the American arrived to promote his new movie "xXx: Return of Zander Cage." Diesel was accompanied by Bollywood star Deepika Padukone, who is making her Hollywood debut in the film which began its international rollout yesterday. Dozens of women applied red vermilion dots - regarded as an auspicious symbol in India - to the foreheads of Diesel, Padukone and director D.J. Caruso

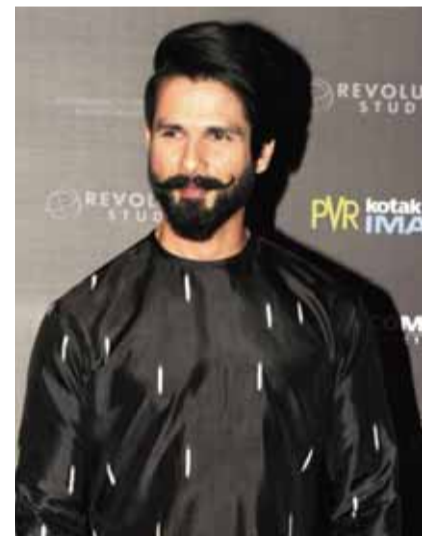
The film sees Diesel's return to the Zander Cage film franchise after starring in the first movie in 2002 but missing the sequel in 2005. Although thought to be long-dead, the athlete turned government operative in "xXx: Return of Zander Cage" comes out of exile and races to recover a sinister weapon. — Reuters



Indian Bollywood actor Irrfan Khan poses as he attends the premiere of Hollywood action thriller film - xXx: Return of Xander Cage.



Indian Bollywood actress Kalki Koechlin.



Indian Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor.

Directors Guild announces nominees for film achievement

It was another sunny day Thursday for Damien Chazelle's Los Angeles musical "La La Land" and Barry Jenkins' coming-of-age tale "Moonlight" on the long journey to the Oscars.

After winning the top film awards at the Golden Globes, Chazelle and Jenkins both scored their first nomination for a Directors Guild Award, further enhancing the likelihood of an Oscar nod. The guild's nominees for outstanding directorial achievement for a feature film also included "Manchester by the Sea" director Kenneth Lonergan, "Lion" director Garth Davis and Denis Villeneuve of "Arrival."

Davis is also nominated for best first feature along with Nate Parker for "Birth of a Nation." Publicity about a 17-year-old rape allegation against Parker had seemed to sink his chances for

awards. Parker was acquitted. Other first feature nominees include Dan Trachtenberg for "10 Cloverfield Lane," Tim Miller for "Deadpool" and Kelly Fremon Craig for "The Edge of Seventeen."

While the DGA nominees for feature film achievement rarely match up exactly with nods for the Academy Award, the guild choices can be a formidable predictor of the eventual Oscar winner. With nearly 16,000 members, including television and commercial directors, the guild often selects a more populist lineup when compared with the selections of the nearly 400 members of the directors' branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Last year, Alejandro G. Inarritu picked up the feature film award for "The Revenant" before going on to win best director at the Oscars.

Voting for Oscar nominations closes today, and nominees will be announced on Jan 24. With nominations from the Producers Guild this week, "La La Land," "Moonlight" and "Manchester by the Sea" appear to be the front runners. Notably absent from the guild nominations were Martin Scorsese for "Silence," Denzel Washington for "Fences" and Mel Gibson for "Hacksaw Ridge," a film that left the Golden Globes empty-handed. Winners of the 69th annual Directors Guild awards will be announced at a dinner in Los Angeles on Feb 4. — AP