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# Chalamet goes unto the breach with Henry V role

Hollywood A-lister Timothee Chalamet admits he was intimidated by the prospect of playing the title role in a new film version of Shakespeare's Henry V, but then he also likes a challenge. "To do Shakespeare and be an American playing an English king is properly intimidating," said Chalamet, in Korea to promote "The King" at the 24th Busan International Film Festival. "But I try to work on things that are challenging, things that are scary," he said.

The 23-year-old American was Oscar-nominated for his breakout turn in "Call Me by Your Name" (2017) and said in some ways he could relate to the tale of the English king who was thrown into the adult world at an early age. "Even right now there's a room full of adults and I'm the

young person here," said Chalamet. "It can feel some version of not normal to be young and to deal with adults in a professional manner."

Chalamet was joined on stage yesterday by "The King" director David Michod and fellow Australian and co-star Joel Edgerton. Also making the trip to South Korea were producers Dede Gardner and Jeremy Kleiner from the Oscar-winning production house Plan B, which is co-owned by Brad Pitt. "I have so far worked on material that is very different to this," Chalamet said, "but I leapt at this opportunity. "Travelling around the world with a film like this is the kind of thing that when you are a kid you dream about. It's a wild ride."

The visit has brought a touch of Tinseltown to Asia's largest film festival, with hundreds of fans camping outside the Busan Cinema Centre in preparation for a red carpet walk from the stars before an evening outdoor screening. "I did not expect this kind of welcome in Korea," said Chalamet. "It's deeply gratifying." Among those to have played King Henry V in the past are acclaimed British actors Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh, while more recently Tom Hiddleston tackled the role in the BBC's award-winning "The Hollow Crown" series in 2012.

The New York-raised Chalamet said he had called up the services of an English speech coach in order to nail the accent, but had been more concerned with working "through the lens of the 15th century". "I went to a drama high school and one of the things the teachers there wanted us to learn was to choose the roles that are daunting rather than the roles that are in your wheelhouse, or that you are more comfortable with," said Chalamet.

He said Henry was "universally relatable" for youngsters who "don't have the skill set, mentally or socially, to deal with the circumstances". "I am excited that a new



(L-R) Producer Dede Gardner, producer Jeremy Kleiner, director David Michod, actor Timothee Chalamet and actor Joel Edgerton pose during a press conference of Gala Presentation "The King" for the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan yesterday. — AFP photos

generation can see his kind of material," he said. "It's just a great opportunity and I had to jump at it." Australian Michod, previously acclaimed for his gritty crime world drama "Animal Kingdom" (2010), said when writing the screenplay with Edgerton they had turned to the work of Shakespeare as a "starting point", but then had created a story of their own.

"Very early we decided to build a story of our own,

taking some pieces from Shakespeare, taking stuff from the deep research that we did, but also just making stuff up," said Michod. "But it is testament to the power of his writing that even though it is so old it still feels relevant today." — AFP



US actor Timothee Chalamet speaks during a press conference of Gala Presentation "The King" for the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan.



This picture taken on October 4, 2019 shows South Korean actress Kim Ji-mee (C) speaking during an open talk at the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan. — AFP photos

## Film fest highlights tumultuous life of 'South Korea's Liz Taylor'

One of the most prolific actresses of all time, Kim Ji-mee has been dubbed South Korea's Elizabeth Taylor for her looks, popularity, and a string of high-profile marriages which challenged social taboos. As an actress and producer she featured in more than 700 films before retiring in the 1990s, but her personal life was equally groundbreaking at a time when divorce in South Korea carried enormous stigma for women.

Now 79, her extraordinary life has been highlighted at this year's Busan film festival, Asia's largest, where six of her movies were shown and she gave a series of talks. In a sleek grey suit matching her silver pixie cut, Kim oozed elegance and poise in an interview with AFP. "I had to be strong... in order not to be suppressed," she said. "I had to be active in every aspect in my life. When I was busiest, I worked for 30 films all at the same time. I had my own children but I didn't have the time to raise them."

Despite its economic advances, South Korea remains a conservative society where until 2015 anyone indulging in extramarital sex risked a prison sentence. Kim married four times at a time when divorced women often faced enduring stigma and isolation. Her spouses include a famed filmmaker, a star singer, and top actor Choi Moo-ryong, who was married to another woman when he started dating Kim.



This picture taken on October 4, 2019 shows South Korean actress Kim Ji-mee posing during an interview with AFP as part of the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan.

The two superstars were the highest-profile couple to be jailed for breaking the adultery law, spending about a week in prison in the early 1960s. They eventually married, but the union ended six years later. "Human beings have feelings, and therefore their minds can change," Kim told AFP. "And when things are bad and you know you can't bear it, I don't think you should simply endure. You should get out and better yourself. "At the time I caused an unprecedented social scandal, but I think I've taken responsibility for all of my actions," she added. "I've lived my life with a sense of dignity."

### 'Anything men can do...'

Kim was spotted aged 17 by late director Kim Ki-young, whose works continue to inspire many South Korean cineastes and their movies, including "Parasite" by Palme D'or winner Bong Joon-ho. "He was a bit of an oddball," the actress said of Kim. "He would often give no direction and guidance on acting. When he didn't like something, he would just walk away and scratch his head from afar."

"There were many instances where I didn't understand what was going on. But I understand things differently now. I think he was a genius." She moved into production to make more socially critical movies, starting with 1986's "Ticket" — in which she also starred as the madam of a coffee delivery service staffed by women made to provide sex services.

For the movie — one of those screened at the festival — Kim and renowned director Im Kwon-taek interviewed several women working in so-called "ticket cafes" in the port of Sokcho. "We would pay for their coffee delivery service so they can come to our hotel, and listen to their stories for days in tears," she told AFP.

"This was a period when the whole country was beyond excited because we were going to hold the Seoul Olympics (1988), but in reality impoverished women were being forced into such work in order to make ends meet. "I was shocked and as a woman I was extremely infuriated." Before the screening the film faced censorship from the then military government — which claimed the movie "couldn't possibly be based on true stories" — and a number of scenes had to be cut from the original version before it hit theatres.

A previous project, a tale about a traditional courtesan becoming a nun, was never completed because of strong opposition from the nation's Buddhist orders who thought the film's theme too provocative. "Kim reigned as the most beautiful woman in South Korea for the longest possible time," BIFF programmer Jung Mi told AFP. "But Kim also has been a self-reliant woman and a strong human being. "In the field of cinema — where sexism can be at its worst within South Korea's male-dominated society — Kim has always remained in the mainstream and never been an outsider." The actress headed a Korean cineastes' rights group in the 1990s, and her wide network of friends and acquaintances included the South's late president and Nobel laureate Kim Dae-jung. "I've been ambitious," she said. "Anything men can do, women can do too." — AFP

## Sony's PlayStation 5 launch set for late 2020

Sony said yesterday its next-generation PlayStation 5 console, with new immersive features giving players the tactile experience of virtual worlds, would launch for the 2020 holiday season. The Japanese electronics firm, which had teased its new console earlier this year, said a major new feature of the updated console would be its immersive controller.

"One of our goals with the next generation is to deepen the feeling of immersion when you play games, and we had the opportunity with our new controller to re-imagine how the sense of touch can add to that immersion," said Jim Ryan, president and chief executive of Sony Interactive Entertainment. The new controller will offer "haptic feedback" that brings players closer to the action of games.

"With haptics, you truly feel a broader range of feedback, so crashing into a wall in a race car feels much different than making a tackle on the football field," Ryan said. "You can even get a sense for a variety of textures when running through fields of grass or plodding through mud." Another feature will be "adaptive triggers" incorporated into controls "so that you feel the tactile sensation of drawing a bow and arrow or accelerating an off-road vehicle through rocky terrain," he added.

Sony, which leads the console segment, announced the move as more gamers move away from these boxes to streaming games powered by the internet cloud on a variety of devices. Google, Apple and others have launched game subscriptions which compete with Sony's PlayStation Now cloud video game service. According to NPD Group, a market research firm, 73 percent of Americans ages two and older play video games, an increase of six percentage points since June 2018. Mobile remains the most popular gaming platform, with mobile gaming appealing to gamers across all consumer segments, the NPD survey showed. — AFP



In this file photo taken on September 12, 2019 the Sony Playstation logo is seen during the Tokyo Game Show in Makuuhari, Chiba Prefecture. — AFP



In this file photo taken on March 19, 2017 French director Luc Besson poses on arrival for the Three Empire awards in London. — AFP

## 'I've never raped a woman,' says French director Besson

French film director Luc Besson on Monday denied raping or drugging a young actress — the first time the maker of "The Fifth Element" has spoken publicly about the sex allegations against him. A judge reopened a rape investigation into the movie mogul on Friday, eight months after Paris prosecutors had dropped a case brought by the Dutch-Belgian actress Sand Van Roy, who claimed that Besson had repeatedly raped her over a two-year period.

She is one of nine women who have said they were assaulted or harassed by the powerful director and producer. Van Roy, 28, had minor roles in his "Taxi 5" and "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets". Besson has admitted having a relationship with Van Roy but dismissed her as a "fantasist". "This case is a lie from A to Z. I did not rape that woman, I have never raped a woman in my life," he told BFM TV. "I have never lifted a hand to a woman, I have never threatened a woman... I never drugged this woman as has been said. That is a lie," he said in extracts from the interview, which will be broadcast in full on Tuesday.

### 'I made some mistakes'

The maker of hits such as "Nikita", whose legal problems have coincided with a run of box office failures, also denied ever harassing women or holding them against their will. However, Besson, 60, said that he had a relationship with Van Roy and had made "some mistakes". "I betrayed my wife and my children. It did not only happen once, it happened several times during our 20 years of marriage," he added. Van Roy first went to the police in May 2018 after spending the night with Besson in a luxury Paris hotel. — AFP

## 'South Park' creators issue mock apology over China censorship

The creators of "South Park" have issued a mock apology to China after censors scrubbed their popular animation from the Chinese web. The tongue-in-cheek statement, skewering Beijing's demands that western brands conform to its world view, came with officials apparently annoyed about an episode that crossed several of the Communist Party's red lines.

The episode — called "Band in China" — depicted forced labor at a Chinese prison, and parodied companies that cave-in to censorship for commercial gain. "I can't sell my soul like this," says one character, who was under pressure from Chinese censors to rewrite his music. "It's not worth living in a world where China controls my country's art," he added.

The incident comes as the NBA and its Houston Rockets franchise are facing fierce criticism and financial punishment in China over a tweet supporting Hong Kong's democracy protesters. Both the league and the team have scrambled to apologise over the tweet by Rockets' general manager Daryl Morey, as calls for a boycott gather steam in one of the NBA's most lucrative markets. But the apologies have sparked derision in the United States, where critics said the league was sacrificing morals for money.

Writing on Twitter, "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone offered spoof contrition over any offence

they had caused in China with their satirical show. "Like the NBA, we welcome the Chinese censors into our homes and into our hearts," they wrote. "We too love money more than freedom and democracy. Xi doesn't look just like Winnie the Pooh at all," the statement added, a reference to banned memes comparing Chinese President Xi Jinping with AA Milne's portly bear. "Long live the Great Communist Party of China! May this autumn's sorghum harvest be bountiful! We good now China?" the statement read.

On Tuesday, searches for "South Park" on China's Twitter-like social media platform Weibo and popular film review site Douban did not return any results. And while information on South Park was still available on a few video streaming sites, episodes could not be played. Parker and Stone's response to China stands in stark contrast to that of major Western brands who have quickly beaten a retreat when faced with potential losses in China's huge — and fiercely nationalistic — consumer market. Companies ranging from airlines to fashion houses have issued fulsome apologies, often after being charged with "hurting the feelings of the Chinese people". — AFP