Doha Film Festival 2026 Marks a Powerful Showcase of Global Cinema and Emerging Talent

Event kicks off with the acclaimed film 'The Station' by Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker Sara Ishaq

Doha, Qatar; November 19, 2026: Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026 set the stage for the next nine days honouring the transformative power of cinema and cross-cultural dialogue with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) premiere of ***The Station*** (Yemen, Jordan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, 2026), the debut feature by Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker Sara Ishaq.

During the opening ceremony, H.E. Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatar Fund for Development, presented acclaimed Indian filmmaker and actor Nandita Das and renowned Syrian actor Taim Hassan with the DFF 2026 Creative Excellence Award for their outstanding artistic contribution to storytelling.

Other dignitaries attending the opening night ceremony included H.E. Hassan Abdulla Al Thawadi, H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Chairman of the Film Committee at Media City Qatar; H.E. Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari, Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library; and Mr. Hamad Omar Al-Mannai, Chief Executive Officer of Media City Qatar and Eng. Abdulaziz Ali Al Mawlawi, CEO of Visit Qatar CEO among others. Ambassadors to Qatar from over 18 countries also attended.

Also joining on the red carpet was the team behind ***The Station***, including director Sara Ishaq; co-writer and producer Nadia Eliewat; co-producer Nicolas Leprêtre; and cast members Manal Al-Mulaiki, Abeer Mohammed, Amal Esmail, Shorooq Mohammed, Randa Mohammed and Fatima Muthanna.

Additional special guests in attendance included the International Feature Film Competition Jury, led by Japanese filmmaker Naomi Kawase with Adam Bessa, Dora Bouchoucha, Gianfranco Rosi and Kamal Aljafari; filmmakers and artists including Hwang Dong-hyuk, Elia Suleiman, Rashid Masharawi, Mohamed Hefzy, Sheila Atim, Nomzamo Mbatha, Saja Kilani, Manal Issa, Mohamed Saad, Hani Khalifa, Yasmine Hamdan, Tamer Nafar, Gims and Brigitte Lacombe; and journalists Mehdi Hasan among others.

Addressing the ceremony, **Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director, and CEO of Doha Film Institute,** said: "Doha Film Institute began 16 years ago to support filmmakers from our region and the world, and to create space for important voices to be heard across the world. Even in the most challenging times, we have continued to stand alongside storytellers and champion stories that deserve to be seen and remembered."

“DFI is proud to have supported Sara Ishaq’s debut feature, ***The Station***, which embodies the courage of filmmakers who tell the stories that others try to silence. It slips between bullets and shells, through the corridors of senseless war, and transcends borders to speak to audiences everywhere.”

With prizes totalling over USD $300,000, DFF features four main competition sections are: International Feature Film Competition, International Short Film Competition, Made in Qatar Competition and the Ajyal Film Competition.

Over the course of the festival, audiences can look forward to a lineup of world and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) premieres, alongside DFF Talks, live music performances, Geekdom activations, industry sessions, community screenings and activations across Doha.

For more information and to buy tickets for the screenings, talks and other DFF activations, visit www.dohafilm.com.

Key Partners of Doha Film Festival include Katara, Media City Qatar I Film Committee and Visit Qatar. Taking place from 19–27 November 2026, Doha Film Festival brings together filmmakers, audiences and industry voices from the region and beyond to honour original storytelling and important voices in film.

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