

When a boy from Azimpur carries Bangladeshi RAP

In the world of Bangla rap, few names carry as much weight and influence as Black Zang. His journey, intricately entwined with the rise of Bangla rap culture, is a testament to artistic evolution, cultural amalgamation, and the power of storytelling through music. In the vibrant and ever-evolving realm of hip-hop music, Black Zang stands out as a trailblazer, leaving an indelible mark on the industry.

ZARIN TASNIM

Growing up in Azimpur, Black Zang, whose real name is Asiful Islam Sohan, emerged as a prodigious talent and swiftly carved his niche in the music scene with his crew, Uptown Lokolz.

His rise to prominence was swift but not without challenges. "You know about the busses parked near Azimpur Maternity? I would sit inside them, just to get some peace and quiet to write some bars."

When asked about the unexpected journey of his song *No Boundaries* being featured in a Hollywood film, Black Zang expressed his disbelief, stating it was never a part of his aspirations. "I've always wanted to rep Bangla music globally, but didn't think that my music would be featured on Netflix," said Zang. "Shoutout to Wahid Ibn Reza, who had shortlisted the song for the producers."

Reflecting on the origins of his rap career, Black Zang revealed a humble beginning rooted in the streets of Azimpur, Lalbagh. Initially driven by curiosity, he and his crew began experimenting with rhymes, recording demos without any plans of becoming artistes. Fate intervened when one of his crewmates, Taurra Safa, acquainted himself with Bigg Spade from Dhanmondi, illustrating how music has the power to connect people. Bigg Spade, already entrenched in the hip-hop scene, became the driving force behind Uptown Lokolz, merging uptown and local influences. The fusion of minds led to the birth of Uptown Lokolz in 2008, laying the foundation for Bangla rap to flourish. "You can say that Taurra Safa was the philosopher, the innovator in our crew, while Spade was the mastermind. They can never be replaced, and that is why I never continued with Lokolz after the original members were caught up with life," said the artiste.

According to the rapper, Asiful Islam Sohan

and Black Zang are two different people. "There's definitely a split-personality thing going on. Asiful Islam represents my everyday self, but Black Zang embodies my artiste persona." Black Zang is deeply rooted in Azimpur and Dhaka city, a testament to his commitment to his local origins.

Challenging stereotypes, he discussed the misconceptions associating rap with gangs and violence. He stressed that such portrayals are fleeting gimmicks, highlighting the evolution of rap from consciousness to violence over time. "The West's gang-associated rap culture is futile, I like to focus on individuality. The history of rap is a testament to using music as a tool to overcome adversities rather than glorify violence."

Looking ahead, Zang sees a promising future for Bangla rap. With an abundance of talent and a growing youth interest, he envisions the genre becoming a platform for individuals to voice their stories, struggles, and aspirations. He believes Bangla rap has the potential to be a powerful voice in both music and societal conversations.

Black Zang's story is a tribute to the evolution of Bangla rap, from its humble origins to global recognition. Black Zang's journey in the hip-hop universe is not just a testament to his musical genius but also a testament to the power of authenticity, perseverance, and using one's voice to spark change. As he continues to redefine the boundaries of hip-hop, Black Zang's legacy is set to endure, inspiring generations to come in the realms of music and beyond.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

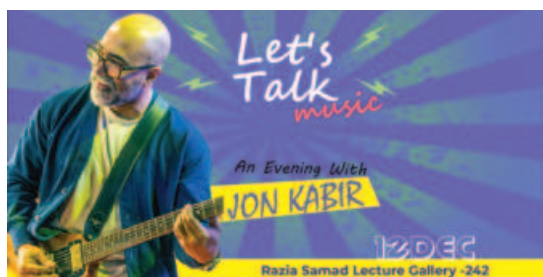
OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Prachyanat's play 'Koinaa'
December 13 I 7 pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Dhaka Regency Bijoy Kids' Art Competition
December 14 I 9 am - 1 pm
Dhaka Regency Hotel



Let's Talk Music: An evening with Jon Kabir
December 12 I 4:50 pm
East West University

TV TALKIES

Blue Eye Samurai

If you typically aren't drawn to animation, the ensemble cast of *Blue Eye Samurai* is likely to capture your attention. With notable figures such as Kenneth Branagh, George Takei, Randall Park, and Disney star Brenda Song, the cast boasts a stellar lineup. However, taking the lead role as Mizu, the blue-eyed samurai seeking vengeance for her mother's death in 17th-century Japan, is Maya Erskine from *Pent15*.

Amber Noizumi and Michael Green, the creators,

have crafted an exhilarating world in *Blue Eye Samurai*, reminiscent of the captivating essence of *Game of Thrones*.

This story unfolds in Edo-era Japan, marked by sealed borders and a perception that outsiders, including their children, are deemed as "less than human" and labeled as "monsters". Identified by her unique blue eyes as the child of a "white devil," Mizu transforms into a formidable warrior.



WHAT'S PLAYING

HUSN Anuv Jain

The beloved songster with the gentle voice, Anuv Jain's, recently released single *Husn* can be said to be a heartfelt poem about unrequited love. The combination of the strumming of his acoustic guitar and his earnest voice creates an overwhelmingly auditory experience. The point at which the flow of the song rises to a crescendo is incredibly beautiful. The song can feel like a comforting hug that can only soothe your soul during a lonely wintry evening. The reverberating instances throughout the song add an extra layer of emotion to the singer's voice.

This song will be a perfect extension to playlists catering to expressions of one-sided love, pensive storytelling, and nuanced wordplay.



TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
The Archies



Hoichoi
Tungkulunge Eken



Amazon Prime
Reacher



HBO Max
Great Photo, Lovely Life



Disney plus Hotstar
Soundtrack 2



STYLE STATEMENT

TRIPTI DIMRI

Tripti Dimri has emerged as India's latest national crush, thanks to her outstanding performance in the Ranbir Kapoor starrer *Animal*, which has already taken social media by storm. Prior to this, she captivated audiences with her roles in Netflix's period films, *Qala* and *Bulbbul*, where she portrayed strong female protagonists.

The stunning actress traded her signature white attire for a daring and bold red satin dress, perfectly accentuating her beautiful curves. Keeping her eyes in a subtle nude shade, she opted for a bold cherry red lipstick, creating a sensuous and captivating look.

