

Keeping up with THE DEWANS

Dewans, the enlightened bards, gather wisdom through their songs, connecting humanity with God and the mysteries of nature. Synonymous with the folk song genre pala gaan, the Dewan family, now in its fifth generation, continues to win hearts with their melodious voices and the harmonious blend of violin, mandira, and dhol. Now in their fourth generation, veteran singer Arif Dewan and emerging talent Sagor Dewan carry on this rich tradition, showcasing the magic of mystical songs through their rendition of 'Ma Lo Ma' in Coke Studio Bangla Season 3, which trended at number 1 on YouTube in Bangladesh, and 38 worldwide.

"To those contesting, please provide evidence in support of your claim. This song solely belongs to Khaleque Dewan," he added.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Composed by Pritom Hasan and penned by Khaleque Dewan, *Ma Lo Ma* beautifully blends original and modern influences, leading to its viral success shortly after its release.

In a recent visit to The Daily Star studio, the Dewan brothers shared insights into their forefathers' history, the song's origin, and more.

"Language isn't a barrier when connecting with music lovers worldwide. *Ma Lo Ma*, a song by

my grandfather Khaleque Dewan, recorded during the Pakistan period, gained immense popularity, becoming a staple at weddings and special events. Its recent success proves its [palagaan's] enduring appeal to the audience," noted Arif Dewan, the esteemed singer, over a cup of coffee.

The Coke Studio rendition, featuring the synergy of the Dewan brothers, retains Arif Dewan's original sound while Sagor Dewan adds a modern twist. For Sagor, the song held profound personal significance while growing up.

"Whenever you listen to the tune, a certain groove overtakes your body. Then there's the beat—the *taal*—that truly captivates you and makes you fall in love with the music. The song reflects on life's journey and its cyclical nature. My creations and records will remain, even when I will no longer be there.

Such thoughts kept lingering in my mind and since then, I've held a deep affection for *Ma Lo Ma*," shared Sagor Dewan.

Remaking of a popular song often faces resistance from fans, but Arif Dewan trusted Pritom Hasan entirely. "During recording, I wasn't familiar with the composition; I focused solely on my part, playing the violin. When I heard the song later, I was pleased to find my voice remained raw, untouched. The music video also honoured the song's essence and avoided using elements that didn't complement the song. So, I was confident that everyone would love it," revealed the veteran singer.

So, how did the Coke Studio version come together? That's an interesting story. Sagor had long envisioned reimagining the song, but conflicting schedules delayed the recording. "Pritom *bhai* had this beat ready with the *Chad Petano* team; when he heard the song, he immediately recognised *Ma Lo Ma* would be the perfect fit for his composition," said the singer.

"*Chad Petano Gaan* was quite prominent when I was a young child. People used to sing this song while beating *chuna churki/surki* (lime and mortar) to renovate their houses. This demonstrates how much Pritom values our country's culture."

Regarding the song's origin, a recent controversy arose when Coke Studio Bangla mentioned another version titled *Ma Go Ma*, penned by Baul Rashid Uddin. However, a cultural organisation in Netrokona contested this, asserting Khaleque Dewan as the original writer and their hometown as the origin of the song. In response, Sagor refuted these claims by stating that they have concrete evidence supporting the original recording and literary references crediting Khaleque Dewan as the original writer.

"In 1960, Khaleque Dewan wrote *Ma Lo Ma*, recorded under His Master's Voice (HMV) Music Company (now Saregama). Our family has preserved the song and its history since then. Current disputes emerged only after Coke Studio's viral rendition and a certain group has been targeting us recently," asserted the young singer.

"To those contesting, please provide evidence in support of your claim. This song solely belongs to Khaleque Dewan," he added.

While discussing the Coke Studio song, Arif Dewan lamented about the current state of the music industry and the government's apparent lack of effective measures to promote local music on a global scale.

"In this lifetime, I have everything I could ever want, in terms of love and respect. However, I urge the government to take more effective steps to bridge the gap between generations in the music industry. If we don't nurture talents from all backgrounds, we will fail to preserve our culture," expressed the renowned folk artist.



Arif Dewan and Sagor Dewan.
PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
A Man in Full



HBO Max
Hacks



Disney +
Tales of the Empire



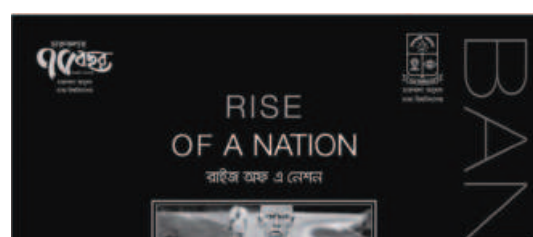
Apple TV+
Dark Matter



Bioscope
Makal



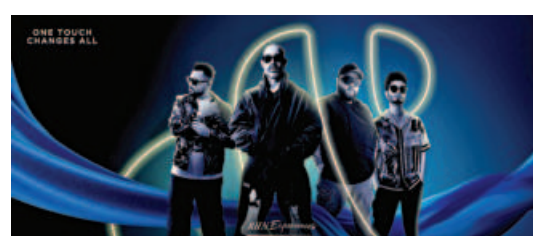
OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Exhibition 'Rise of A Nation'
May 5-19 | 11am-8pm
Zainul Gallery, Charukala, DU



Louder Together
May 11 | 5pm-10pm
KIB Auditorium



Leading The Times: Midas Touch
May 24 | 6pm
Aloki



WHAT'S PLAYING
Whiskey

Arooj Aftab dropped her latest single, *Whiskey*, from her upcoming album *Night Reign*, following *Raat Ki Rani*. The track is a soulful journey through a night of unforeseen twists and turns.

Atmospheric and playful, *Whiskey* transports listeners to a melancholic display of intoxicated infatuation as Arooj sings in English: "Your head gets heavy and rests on my shoulder 'cause you drink too much whiskey when you're with me."

Featuring a dreamy electric piano solo, the track's freeform structure, jazz elements, and touches of '90s R&B showcase the range of Aftab's musical adventurousness. Collaborators on *Whiskey* include Kaki King and Gyan Riley on guitars, Maeve Gilchrist on harp, Linda May Han Oh on bass and Jamey Haddad on percussion.

1-MINUTE REVIEW

'LAAPATAA LADIES'
serves as an accessible feminist manifesto for rural women

Nuanced director Kiran Rao took the directorial seat after 13 years for the recently talked about *Laapataa Ladies*. The producer-turned-director established herself as a reliable filmmaker to watch out for, with *Dhobi Ghat*, back in 2010. Today she has also come to be known as a producer who is sure to back poignant films.

Through the narrative of *Laapataa Ladies*, Rao presents the tale of two young brides, Phool Kumari (played by Nitanshi Goel) and Jaya (played by Pratibha Ratna), in the rural regions of India via chaos that erupts when they are accidentally swapped during a train journey.

Deepak Kumar (played by Sparsh Shrivastav), Phool's bewildered husband, seeks assistance from a corrupt cop named Shyam



Manohar (played by Ravi Kishan), further complicating the situation.

On the route to detangling the confusion, the film imparts to viewers several feminist philosophies imbued intrinsically throughout powerful moments. However, the highlight of the film is that the indisputable perspectives come from individuals belonging to the rural inhabitants themselves.

STYLE STATEMENT

ELLE FANNING

This year's Met Gala, which transpired on the first Monday of May, brought on an onslaught of celebrities from around the globe decked out in nines for its designated theme — to unveil the Costume Institute's new exhibition "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion".

The theme for this year's fundraiser was *The Garden of Time*, drawing inspiration from a 1962 short story by English writer J G Ballard. This theme provided the costume ball attendees ample inspiration with *Maleficent*-flamed Elle Fanning standing out, in particular, for her attire.

The actress turned up in an iridescent Balmain column dress adorned with sculpted birds at the shoulders, complemented by Cartier jewelry. The actress firmly attributed the inspiration for the dress to the character she is known for today — Sleeping Beauty.

