

ENTERTAINMENT'S RISING STARS

# MEET DEBOSRIE ANTARA

## The female voice of 'Lage Ura Dhura'

**Born and brought up in a family that practices and appreciates the art of music, Debosrie Antara officially debuted in Dhallywood with 'Laage Ura Dhura' from the upcoming Shakib Khan starrer 'Toofan'. The song, composed by Pritom Hasan, has now become the party anthem of the season.**

ZAREEN NAWAR

The singer, as of late, has been assumed to be from West Bengal simply based on her name, but she has been in the limelight since amassing two duets with the famed Habib Wahid.

*It's been a few months since we last spoke. How're you feeling now that 'Laage Ura Dhura' is storming through the charts and social media?*

I, myself, am feeling Ura Dhura (laughs). However, I have to admit, they got the right song for me, at the

right time. It feels like a step forward for my career, as my name is still not 'out there' in the industry, in that sense.

**How did this opportunity come about?**

Pritom bhai called me one day and said that he had a work for me. It'll suffice to say, I was stunned, as it would mean working with a musician like him for the first time. When I was told that I would be lending my voice to an item song, I wanted to know more about the lyrics, considering item songs ought to have a standard.

When all the related decisions were made, funnily enough, I still had no idea that I would be singing for a song in *Toofan*. That was mostly because I am obviously not a part of the film industry, and when I was told that Mimi Chakraborty would be lip-syncing to my voice, I still did not know enough to connect the dots.

A personally significant aspect of the song that I discovered—once the trailer was released—was that it is penned by Rasel Mahmud and Shorif Uddin. Now, Rasel Mahmud is the man who wrote the first-ever jingle I voiced. It was a full-circle moment for me.

**Many claim that your name has largely been disregarded throughout most of 'Toofan's' promotional campaigns. What is your take on this?**

I have come to learn and understand that there can be several reasons behind that. There are certain regulations that the team must adhere to for maximising promotional content, including which names to push and

publish. They could have also been confused regarding which name of mine to use, since my stage name was written inside a bracket beside my actual name, Antara Roy Chowdhury, in my NDA. Having said that, *Toofan* in and of itself is a massive project to helm, so I'm sure they have more pressing matters to attend to. Besides, the film is about Shakib Khan, so the male singer having most of the limelight is natural.

**What was your experience working with Pritom Hasan like?**

He is a very humble, nice, and genuine individual, who was transparent from his end, from the get-go. He is also very knowledgeable, so when it comes down to sound mixing—he is extremely meticulous.

When we were discussing the required texture of *Laage Ura Dhura*, Pritom bhai further elaborated on the analyses of female singers with deeper voices being preferred worldwide nowadays. His explanation boosted my morale and made me realise that the texture of my voice is an asset that I have.

**Has further work been knocking on your door since 'Laage Ura Dhura's' release?**

I am working on several projects, including works related to my profession outside the musical world. I will be releasing my self-made song this year, followed by more originals. I have returned to dance and music classes to hone my skills. As an artiste, I believe I must work on myself so heavily so that I can, at the very least, be solid in my work.



## PORI MONI looks to resume Eid sacrifice at FDC

Consecutively for six years, Pori Moni upheld a tradition of offering her sacrifice at the BFDC, during Eid-ul-Azha. She has been earning high praise for her commitment to this act, by her colleagues, as she pledged to distribute the meat among the needy co-artists.

The actress also stated that she would continue to make sacrifices at FDC as long as she lives. However, due to a ban on sacrifices inside the FDC after 2021, she performed the rituals outside.

Regarding this year's plan, Pori remarked, "I want to sacrifice again. If someone from the FDC can ensure that the Kurban is performed together in a joyful atmosphere, then I will participate."

## 'Toofan' sees record advance ticket sales



Shakib Khan starrer *Toofan* is set to premiere this Eid-ul-Azha. The advance ticket sales for the film began 10 days prior to the release. Remarkably, 40 percent of tickets for the initial days have already been sold as per the hall associates of Roots Cineclub, Sirajganj.

Advance ticket sales have also begun at the air-conditioned miniplex, Cinescope, in Narayanganj. Cineplex, Blockbuster,

Lion, and other theatres are also expected to begin advance ticket sales within a day or two, which should alleviate the rush to watch *Toofan* starting from Eid day.

# NEWS

## ACC not doing

FROM PAGE 12  
he said, adding, "As soon as we received the information, we froze the accounts and seized the properties."

Moinuddin further said, "The ACC does not have the authority to issue travel bans. We need to convince the court that he is attempting to leave the country, and for that, we need concrete evidence. We cannot approach the court with just newspaper cuttings."

On the interrogation of Benazir, he said, "... We want to hear the statement of the accused. Therefore, we often give a second chance for the initial interrogation."

About former army chief Gen Aziz Ahmed, he said a lawyer asked them to probe corruption allegations against Aziz and the allegation involves false information provided by his brothers to obtain passports.

"We are working to verify this information."

He said the ACC has written to two departments regarding the forgery of national identity cards by Aziz's brothers Haris Ahmed and Tofail Ahmed alias Joseph.

Moinuddin said that proving corruption was extremely difficult. The ACC alone could not eliminate all forms of corruption, while ministries were not taking action.

"Had they done so, many complaints would not come before the ACC."

ACC Commissioner (investigation) Md Jahurul Haque said, "Those in power in society are the ones who commit corruption. The CIP and VIP individuals, whom you try to honour, are involved in corruption."

At the event, 12 journalists from print, online, and electronic media were awarded the ACC Media Award for 2020-2021.

ACC's Commissioner (enquiry) Asia Khatoon, ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmeen and other top officials were present.

## Blinken in Middle

FROM PAGE 12  
Around half of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million people had been sheltering in Rafah before last month's assault, and a million have had to flee again. Since last week, Israel has also launched a large-scale assault in the central Gaza Strip, around the small city of Deir al-Balah, the last population centre yet to be stormed. Yesterday, residents said the Israelis had pulled back from some areas there but were keeping up air strikes and shelling.

## Finance, telecom ministers slated in JS for 'failure'

FROM PAGE 12  
the financial sector, Chunnu said he submitted the cut motion against the minister's demand for increasing budget of his ministry.

He said the major task of the finance ministry is to supervise the banking sector and check graft.

"Is the Finance Division or Bangladesh Bank supervising or taking any actions against the looting of people's money and irregularities in banks?" he questioned.

Chunnu said PK Halder laundered around Tk 3,000 crore and left the country. Different large companies take loans and then their interest is waived. "Can the finance ministry answer these questions?"

Criticising the finance minister, the JP MP said Tk 2,200 crore of interest has been waived while farmers are being arrested for Tk 50,000 loan.

"Why should the ministry spend money if you can't regulate the financial sector?"

The opposition chief whip said the major reason for the dollar crisis is money laundering.

Lambasting former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, the JP MP said the previous finance minister did not listen to him.

"Stop corruption and irregularities. Businesspeople, politicians, bureaucrats who have laundered money abroad and have homes and hotels in Canada, Europe and America should be investigated and identified. Identify them even if you can't bring back the laundered money," Chunnu said.

Independent MP Pankaj Nath said money is being laundered. Be strict about this. Action should be taken against willful loan defaulters. The restriction on opening LCs needs withdrawal.

Another independent MP Hamidul Haque Khandker said there is no clear explanation as to why the Finance Division has demanded additional money.

"The money laundered by Arafat Rahman Koko [late son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia] in the past has been brought back," he said.

In reply to the criticism of MPs, Finance Minister Hasan said MPs have made general allegations regarding

corruption and irregularities.

He, however, said they were trying their best to combat corruption.

Speaking on the cut motion on the ICT Division, Chunnu wanted to know whether its "learning and earning projects" were running properly.

He highlighted media reports on the irregularities in the Sheikh Hasina ICT Park in Jashore.

He added that the park has been named after the prime minister. "How can wedding ceremonies and social events take place there?"

Pankaj Nath said if you open the box of Doel laptop, you will find a Chinese computer. "Is it not corruption?"

He wanted to know what action was taken.

He also alleged that widespread irregularities are taking place in the Directorate of Posts.

The cut motions of the MPs were rejected by voice votes.

Later, the supplementary budget of around Tk 37,817 crore for fiscal year 2023-24 was passed by parliament.

## Flooding, landslides kill 3 in Vietnam

AFP, Hanoi

Flooding and landslides in northern Vietnam have killed three people, state media said yesterday, after days of heavy rain that partially submerged thousands of homes.

Images on state media showed water gushing down the steep roads of mountainous Ha Giang province, a popular spot for motorcycle tours, with vehicles overturned and abandoned in the floodwater.

Residents in Ha Giang city stood on rooftops waiting for rescue.

Around 400 foreign tourists were evacuated from the flooded area.

It has been raining heavily and continuously in the province since Saturday. Thousands of homes have been partially submerged and many roads damaged, state media said.



**Cigarette promotional materials of British American Tobacco Company found in open display at four Dhaka restaurants in Dhanmondi and Gulshan and two five-star hotels in Cox's Bazar. All kinds of tobacco promotions are illegal under tobacco control law, although BAT has found a way to do it anyway.**

PHOTO: STAR



## BAT violating tobacco control law

FROM PAGE 12  
Chattoogram and Cox's Bazar, the study found BAT invested in these restaurants to sell its products and display its promotional materials.

The study also found all these restaurants received one-time cash benefits from BAT for displaying their promotional materials. The payment, made by cheque or transfer intended to cover rent or utility bill, ranged from Tk 120,000 to Tk 5,400,000.

The Daily Star shared its findings with BAT via repeated phone calls, multiple text messages and emails over the last 10 days, but the company did not make any comment.

Separate smoking zones in hotels and multi-room restaurants are legal, but Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 (amended in 2013), prohibits advertising tobacco products in any manner, including through leaflets, posters, billboards and signboards.

The Act also bans offering free samples or low-cost to entice buyers.

Violation of the rules carries three months' jail sentence or Tk 1 lakh in fine or both for first-time offenders. Repeat offenders will face twice as much the punishment for breaking the rules each subsequent occasion.

Despite the restrictions and provisions for punishment, BAT has managed to infiltrate many popular restaurants and hotels in different

parts of the country.

Over the last two weeks, The Daily Star visited 18 restaurants in the capital's Dhanmondi, Banani and Gulshan and found 15 have separate designated smoking zones, where only BAT brands are available.

BAT products, including cigarettes and lighters with BAT logo painted in them, were found in open display in three restaurants—two in Gulshan and one in Dhanmondi.

In the smoking zones of these three restaurants, smoking areas featured eye-catching displays and illuminated advertisements. Each table had a display case, and large showcases advertised cigarettes.

One Gulshan restaurant even included a "Tobacco" section in its menu, listing four BAT cigarette brands priced at Tk 325, although most retail shops charge higher.

"We only sell BAT products. And we don't sell single sticks, you have to buy a pack," said an employee, indicating a deliberate marketing strategy to boost sales.

One restaurant owner said BAT's promotional activities are financially gainful for him.

"It's a good deal because almost every month, BAT arranges a function at my restaurant. I make good profit from increased sales," he said. He said BAT officials regularly pay

visits to ensure their promotional materials are prominently displayed, something Voice Bangladesh also found in its study last year.

A Gulshan coffee shop manager admitted having a "very confidential" financial agreement with BAT, allowing them to run promotional campaigns at the café since 2021.

According to the restaurant owners in Gulshan and Banani, BAT has agreements with at least 20 restaurants for promotional purposes in these two upscale areas.

Two restaurant owners in Chattoogram said they had a verbal agreement with BAT to display its brands and that they received some money every month as part of the deal. However, they are not receiving any money from BAT for about a year now.

At least two five-star hotels in Cox's Bazar also have BAT products display areas in their lobbies.

An official of one of these two hotels acknowledged that BAT provides them with cigarettes and promotional materials, but said he is not aware of any financial agreement with the tobacco company.

An official of the other five-star hotel did not respond to our calls and texts.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen did not respond to our questions sent to the senior information officer of the health ministry on WhatsApp.