

# LEVEL FIVE LEVELS UP

When *Utshob* revealed its first song, *Tumi*, it instantly took root in my mind—and that’s how I discovered Level Five. Though the song was originally composed two years ago, it caught the attention of director Tanim Noor, a devoted fan of the band. *Tumi* went on to play a pivotal role in portraying the beautiful love story of Sadia Ayman and Shoumya Joyti.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Hooked by its catchy tune, I found myself diving into the band’s YouTube channel, eager to explore what made the band stand out.

The indie rock band has steadily broken free from its niche label, surging in popularity during the pandemic. Their riveting lyrics, dynamic vocals, punchy guitar riffs, and tight rhythm section struck a chord with audiences—particularly through their breakout hit, *60’s Love*.

Recently, the band stopped by The Daily Star Centre for an acoustic session and a heartfelt conversation about their music. The current lineup includes vocalist Aiedid Rashid, bassist Razin Halim, guitarist Ashiqul Alam Ashiq, keyboardist Asif Ahmed, and manager Shahriar Tahsin Nasif. Two founders of the band, Ehsan Kaizer and Sadmaan Guppu Asif, now reside in North America.

With *Utshob* performing exceptionally well in theatres, the band has also been actively promoting *Tumi*, even accompanying the cast during hall visits. While discussing the song’s unexpected inclusion in the film, Aiedid shared:

“When Tanim *bhai* called us, we were sure he’d want *60’s Love*,” said

Aiedid. “But nope—he wanted *Tumi*! He said it was perfect to capture young romance. At the time, we had no idea the film would be such a big deal. And when we learned it features legends like Zahid Hasan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Afsana Mimi, and Jaya Ahsan, we were stunned. Our song... in that movie?”

The band’s rise started during Covid-19. Stuck at home, people finally had time to scroll, click, and get addicted to their music. “Out of nowhere, views started spiking,” recalled Razin. “We used to play this little game—guessing which song would get how many views that week. One day, *Gholate Megh* was climbing, and we were like ‘Whoa, 50k? That’s crazy!’ Then Ashiq added, ‘Forget *Gholate Megh*—check *60’s Love*!’ Refreshing the page was like watching a rocket launch.”

Some listeners assume Level Five only makes love songs—probably because of *60’s Love* and *Tumi*. “I guess love and heartbreak just work well in Bangladesh,” Razin chuckled.

There’s a touching story behind *60’s Love*. “Apu derived it from a letter his father wrote to his mother back in the 1960s,” Aiedid shared.

Despite their growing success, Level Five has a few music videos—a conscious choice. They prefer listeners to interpret the songs based on their own experiences. Among the select few are *Room 17* and *Beep*. But it was the chilling backstory behind *Room 17* that

truly intrigued me.

“I only learned about the song’s true meaning a few years ago,” shared Aiedid. “When I was composing it, I had no idea what the lyrics meant. So, I asked Ehsan, my friend who wrote it. He told me it was based on a murder-mystery. The lyrics go, ‘She is not there for whom you searched on Wednesday. She is not there who you saw on Tuesday.’”

“The song is written from the perspective of a hotel receptionist,” he explained. “A man is looking for a missing person. The staff tells him he can check Room 17, but he doesn’t find the person. The dark truth? That person was murdered there, and the hotel is covering it up.”

Before the pandemic, their gigs were intimate, sometimes for a single person even. But they never gave up. Immediately after lockdown, they played a late slot at a small Banani café, expecting nothing.

“They announced our name,” said Aiedid, eyes still wide. “And the crowd cheered! We were stunned.”

Not every show ends on a high note, though. With concert security becoming a growing concern, the band has faced dangerous situations. Manager Nasif recounted a harrowing experience, “In December 2024, we played a school rag day event outside

Dhaka. Word got out, and things got chaotic. Some showed up with sticks. The political climate was tense. Thankfully, I had local contacts, so we avoided trouble—at first.”

“The concert went fine. But after the show, it was chaos. Fans were fighting for selfies. I got the guys to safety, but I got caught in the scuffle. Took a few bruises for the team,” he said with a smile.

For Level Five, virality is never the goal.

“We don’t chase numbers,” said Aiedid. “We just make music that makes us happy. If people connect with it, that’s amazing. But we’re not going to be upset if a song doesn’t go viral.”

“Our last release wasn’t *Tumi*—it was *Semicolon*,” Razin added. “Not many listened to it, but it means a lot to us. It’s about mental health. The semicolon is a symbol for survivors—people who choose to keep going. We launched the song in collaboration with Mindspace, who offer 24/7 mental health support. We even hosted an event with a mental health session.”

Nasif added, “Post-Covid, so many people were struggling. Some even tried to harm themselves. After we released *Semicolon*, Mindspace told us they saw a spike in people reaching out. Knowing our song helped someone—that’s what truly matters!”



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



DATE: 12 JULY 2025  
TIME: 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM  
VENUE: BANGLADESH FILM ARCHIVE, AGARGAON, DHAKA

### ‘Films for Future’

Today (July 12) | 3pm-6pm  
Bangladesh Film Archive



### Exhibition: ‘Aesthete’

July 8-15 | 3 pm-9pm  
Alliance Française de Dhaka,  
Dhanmondi



### ‘Shrotar Asor: Shrabon 1432’

July 18 | 7pm- 8:45pm  
Chhayana Shongshkriti Bhobon

## TRENDY STREAMS

### Netflix The Sandman



### Prime Video The Summer I Turned Pretty



### Hulu Such Brave Girls



### Apple TV+ Foundation



### HBO Max Opus



## STYLE STATEMENT

### David Corenswet & Rachel Brosnahan

James Gunn’s *Superman* premiered with classic flair at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood last Monday, with the cast strikingly channeling their on-screen personas.

David Corenswet, who plays the role of the Man of Steel, channeled Clark Kent in a dark blue pinstriped three-piece suit—sharp, timeless, and confident.

Rachel Brosnahan lit up the carpet as a modern Lois Lane, dazzling in a sparkling purple sequin gown, silver starburst earrings, and a sleek ponytail.

Their looks balanced old-Hollywood charm with contemporary polish, setting the tone perfectly for Gunn’s fresh take on the iconic superhero saga, which was officially released worldwide yesterday.



## ‘Squid Game’ bows out with a brutal farewell

*Squid Game* Season 3 concludes the series with a chilling, emotional, and thought-provoking finale. At its heart is Gi-hun, whose raw grief and moral struggle ground the chaos around him, making his journey deeply human.

The season raises the stakes with a suspenseful hide-and-seek game that strips players of choice, delivering heartbreak and sharp commentary on survival and morality. Performances by Lee Jung-jae and Kang Ha-neul are electric, especially as their characters clash in devastating ways.

Fan-favourite Hyun-Ju adds strength and depth, while a shocking twist involving a newborn contestant poignantly explores inherited trauma. Though the VIPs’ scenes occasionally stumble with awkward dialogue and excess, the overall storytelling remains gripping and visually stunning.



The finale avoids false hope, instead offering a sobering but powerful reminder of the real-world parallels that *Squid Game* has always hinted at. Even with a few missteps, this final chapter reaffirms why the show became a global sensation—through bold ideas, unforgettable characters, and a relentless gaze at the cost of a broken system.

## WHAT’S PLAYING

### ‘OJOS TRISTES’ by Selena Gomez, Benny Blanco & The Marías

Selena Gomez slips into a melancholic daze with *Ojos Tristes*, a hazy, heart-aching ballad that feels like velvet at dusk. Teaming up with Benny Blanco and The Marías, she revives Jeanette’s 1981 classic “El muchacho de los ojos tristes” with a bilingual flair—gliding between English and Spanish vocals as effortlessly as silk on skin.

Gomez’s voice floats—at once fragile and assured—over a lush soundscape of soft synths and dreamy



strings. While fans may speculate about its muse, Gomez has made it clear: this one isn’t about just one person. It’s about all of them. Lovers. Friends. Ghosts of who we used to be.

With over 120 million Spotify streams and a peak at No 54 on the platform’s Global Chart, *Ojos Tristes* has become the emotional undercurrent of playlists worldwide. It also made history, debuting at the top on Billboard’s Hot Latin Pop Songs chart.