

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'TARA UNPLUGGED'

Shuvendu Das Shuvo and Sanzida Mahmood Nandita of Mosey & Co join Animes Roy for an intimate acoustic night, weaving old favourites, reimagined covers, and fresh originals into a warm winter tapestry. Their stripped-down set promises a soulful, slow-burning evening of voice, craft, and quiet magic.

Date: Friday | November 28, 2025
Time: 7pm onwards
Venue: 138 East Gulshan 1



Band members should not release solo songs: PARTHA BARUA

Souls frontman Partha Barua has voiced a firm stance on band culture, saying musicians should avoid releasing solo tracks while actively performing with their groups, as it risks harming unity and diluting a band's collective identity. Speaking on the TV programme *90's Music Story*, which looks back at the era's band scene, Partha reflected on his own journey in Souls – from joining as a keyboardist to becoming its lead vocalist – and on the camaraderie, studio practices and recording environment that shaped the group's legacy.

Partha noted that while every band member contributes equally, audiences tend to recognise the vocalist more easily. When the lead

singer pursues solo fame through mixed albums or individual projects, he argued, the balance within the group inevitably suffers. Although he himself had sung on mixed albums early in his career for financial reasons, the artiste said he intentionally avoided releasing a solo album despite lucrative offers. According to him, any additional visibility gained individually would have come at the expense of his fellow musicians. "I gained recognition because I sang for Souls," he said, adding that seeking more would have felt unfair.

Commenting on the current music landscape, Partha observed that YouTube has blurred traditional roles. Producers increasingly record their own vocals, while artistes who

produce their own tracks are less inclined to collaborate. With fewer production houses remaining, many impose restrictive demands, pushing for replicas of existing hits rather than encouraging new sounds. Partha believes this environment limits creative freedom for emerging artistes. As a result, many musicians are bypassing labels altogether and choosing to release songs independently, which he sees as both a symptom and a consequence of a system resistant to originality.

He emphasised that greater awareness and responsibility across the industry – from producers to performers – is essential to restoring vibrancy and fostering authentic musical expression in Bangladesh.

Animated series on Diego Maradona in the works

Diego Maradona's life and legacy are set to be revisited in a new animated series now in development. India's Reliance Animation has secured rights to produce the scripted show, which will follow the football icon's journey from his childhood in Villa Fiorito to his rise as one of the sport's most influential figures.

Developed in collaboration with SATTVICA SA, managed by Maradona's family, and mediated by Bridge Marketing Group, the series will delve into his greatest on-field triumphs, personal challenges, and enduring cultural impact.

Maradona's sisters hope the animated format will introduce "their brother" to children worldwide. For Reliance Animation, the project marks a significant milestone, while for fans it offers a new way to revisit the story of one of football's most unforgettable icons.

Eva Green joins 'Wednesday' Season 3 as Aunt Ophelia

Eva Green has joined the cast of Season 3 of *Wednesday* as Aunt Ophelia, Netflix confirmed on November 25.

The French actor, known for *Casino Royale*, will play Morticia Addams' reclusive sister, whose face remained hidden during the Season 2 finale.

The reveal followed the scene in which Grandmama Hester found Ophelia isolated in a dark room, writing "Wednesday must die" on the



wall.

Showrunners Alfred Gough and Miles Millar said Green's "elegant, haunting" presence makes her an ideal fit. Green called the series "deliciously dark" and said she is eager to add her "touch of cuckoo-ness" to the role.

Season 3 brings back Jenna Ortega and the series' main cast, though Netflix has not yet announced a release date.

NEWS

Phantom bank account linked

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and Gold Star Trading House – linked to S Alam Group.

Its investigation found that funds were deposited into Top Ten's account on multiple occasions directly from S Alam-linked firms, including S Alam subsidiaries such as S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd, Sonali Traders, S Alam Edible Oil Ltd, and S Alam Sugar Refinery Ltd.

Mahmudul Hasan, an assistant commissioner at ACC's Dhaka office, filed a case over the suspicious account at the commission's Chattogram integrated office on August 18.

Suspects in the case include the nominal owners of three shell companies, along with S Alam Group Chairman Saiful Alam, its former deputy managing director Akiz Uddin, and former executive vice-president Miftah Uddin.

The ACC filed the case after Islami Bank alerted the anti-graft body about the suspicious account.

In a letter to the National Board of Revenue, the bank admitted that it did not follow proper procedures at the time of opening the account.

"A substantial sum was transferred into the account from investments made in the names of various S Alam Group concerns. While the transactions appeared on paper as payments to suppliers of the bank's investment clients, the ultimate beneficiaries were S Alam Group and some former bank officials who facilitated them," reads the letter dated October 18.

"Former Islami Bank deputy managing director Akiz Uddin, along with senior executives of S Alam Group, had opened fake accounts

under the names of Top Ten Trading House and other shell firms to siphon off large sums of money and hide illicit financial dealings," the letter added.

FAKE VOUCHERS, PAY ORDERS
Bank and ACC documents show that on January 17, 2024, Tk 20 crore was transferred from Top Ten's account to Rabeya Enterprise at Southeast Bank. The company is owned by Nasir Uddin, who is married to Akiz Uddin's sister Sharmin Akter.

Bank officials say Akiz exerted significant control over Islami Bank and other banks under S Alam Group's ownership until August 5 last year. He reportedly left for Dubai after the political changeover.

The Daily Star called and texted him on WhatsApp, and the app's notification status indicates he has seen the message, but did not respond.

ACC investigators estimate that at least Tk 600 crore was deposited into Top Ten's account over 18 months since the opening of the account in April 2023 using a network of different bank accounts, fake vouchers, and pay orders.

Direct transfers from S Alam subsidiaries were avoided to mask the origin of the funds. Instead, the money was routed through shell companies before depositing in Top Ten's account.

On July 2, 2024, for example, Tk 523.10 crore was withdrawn in cash from Alam Trading's account at Islami Bank's Agrabad branch. The same amount was then deposited through three pay orders into the account of Gold Star Trading Company at the bank's same branch. Just a month later, on August 6, Tk 544 crore from Gold Star was deposited into Top Ten's account using a voucher, according to

the case documents.

These transactions violated banking rules, as the pay orders should have been deposited into the issuing company's own account. Instead, they were diverted to Top Ten in a pattern the commission identified as embezzlement and money laundering.

Both Alam Trading and Gold Star Trading were found to be shell companies. Bank documents show Alam Trading is owned by Nurul Alam of Chattogram's Patiya upazila and Gold Star is owned by Bedarul Islam of Fatikchhari.

Their mobile numbers provided in bank records were found switched off.

These two accounts, having transactions worth over Tk 2,000 crore, have since been frozen on Bangladesh Bank's instructions, said Syed Mohammad Azim, senior assistant vice-president of Islami Bank's Agrabad branch.

A senior bank official said most of the money had already been withdrawn before the freeze in late August 2024, leaving only around Tk 2 crore.

Multiple Islami Bank officials said that during the 15-year rule of the Awami League, they could not question any transactions linked to S Alam. But after the August 5 changeover, more than 200 suspicious accounts linked to S Alam Group have been seized.

"S Alam-linked concerns embezzled around Tk 52,000 crore from Islami Bank through shell firms disguised as loans. Deposits in Top Ten Trading's account also came from such loans. Steps are underway to adjust the funds against outstanding liabilities," said Muhammad Jamal Uddin, senior vice president of Islami Bank's Khatunganj branch.

832 bhoori gold

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presence of a judicial magistrate, the investigating officer, a Bangladesh Bank-nominated gold expert, two officials from the National Board of Revenue's intelligence unit and the Central Intelligence Cell, and bank representatives.

Akhtar said, "After reviewing bank vault documents, we recovered 832 tola of gold registered under Sheikh Hasina, her daughter and her sister. From one locker at Agrani Bank's principal branch, 5,923.60 grams of gold

ornaments were recovered. Another locker at the same branch, under the names of Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana, contained 4,783.56 grams of gold ornaments. A locker at Pubali Bank in Motijheel, registered under Hasina's name, contained only a small empty jute bag."

He said according to descriptions on notes found inside the lockers, the gold appears to belong to Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, Rehana, and Rehana's son Radwan Mujib.

36 killed

FROM PAGE 12
wife was trapped inside.

A firefighter was among the 36 killed, and 29 people were in hospital, Hong Kong leader John Lee told reporters. Some 900 people were in eight shelters.

"The priority is to extinguish the fire and rescue the residents who are trapped. Then, we'll launch a thorough investigation," Lee told reporters.

Frames of scaffolding were seen tumbling to the ground as firefighters battled the blaze, while scores of fire engines and ambulances lined the road below the development.

Verdicts in 3 cases

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did not appear before the court.

The verdicts are expected to be delivered at 11:00am, said the PP.

The PP said 28 people testified in a case filed against 12 people, including Hasina; 22 people in another case lodged against 18 people, including Hasina and Putul; and 27 people in the other case filed against 17 people, including Hasina and Joy.

Most of the witnesses are common in the cases, added the PP.

Besides the three cases, the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka is set to deliver judgement on December 1 in another corruption case filed over the plot scam against 17 people, including Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq.

The trials of two other graft cases lodged against 21 people, including Hasina, her nieces Azmina Siddiq, Tulip, and nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, are now ongoing at the same court, said the prosecution.

Tulip, who stands accused in the three cases, used her power to get plots for Rehana, Bobby, and Azmina, say officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

According to the records of the

cases, 53 people testified in six cases as prosecution witnesses.

Of them, six are ACC officials, four Rajuk employees, and seven officials and staffers of the housing and public works ministry.

The anti-graft body, between January 12 and 14, lodged the six cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

The ACC alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots – each measuring 10 kathas, in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the Purbachal New Town project for herself, Joy, Putul, Rehana, her son Bobby and daughter Azmina despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

On March 25, the graft watchdog filed six charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka where Hasina was named as a common accused in all six cases.

Charges were framed against 29 people on July 31, including Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, Bobby, Tulip, and Azmina.

In the six cases, the ACC brought charges of criminal misconduct

under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, along with several other charges, including criminal breach of trust and cheating, in the Penal Code.

Apart from Hasina and her six family members, the accused include former housing and public works minister Sharif Ahmed, former secretaries Shahid Ullah Khandaker and Kazi Washi Uddin, former additional secretary Md, former administrative officer Saiful Islam Sarkar, and ex-senior assistant secretary Purobi Goldar.

The other accused are former Rajuk chairman Anisur Rahman Miah, former members Khurshid Alam, Kabir Al Asad, Tanmoy Das, Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Shamsuddin Ahmod Chowdhury, Nurul Islam, and Nayeab Ali Sharif; incumbent director Kamrul Islam; former deputy directors Hafizur Rahman, Habibur Rahman Sobui, Sheikh Shahinul Islam, and Nayeab Ali Sharif; and former assistant directors Mazharul Islam and Faria Sultana.

According to the documents, Sharif, Saiful, Purobi, Washi, Anisur, Khurshid, Nasir, and Shamsuddin are accused in all six cases along with Hasina.

Only Khurshid is now in jail among the 29 accused, according to the documents.

Delhi examining request, Dhaka expects response

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According to UNB, the note verbale was sent after National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman returned from New Delhi, where he had attended the Colombo Security Conclave at the invitation of Indian NSA Ajit Doval.

Bangladesh had not received a reply to its first extradition request last year.

On November 17, ICT-1 sentenced Hasina and former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death. Former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, a state witness in the case, was sentenced to five years in prison.

Following the verdict, Bangladesh urged India to immediately hand over Hasina and Kamal, citing the existing bilateral extradition treaty.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, "It would be a grave act of unfriendly conduct and a travesty of justice for any other country to grant shelter to these individuals convicted of crimes against humanity."