

In fond memory of 'Chotlu bhai'

REMEMBERING ALY ZAKER

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ekushey Padak-winning stage and TV actor, director, Shadhin Bangla Betar activist, Freedom-fighter Aly Zaker was a legendary persona.

The noted thespian passed away at Dhaka's United Hospital at 6:45 am on Friday morning. The legendary actor made a mark on stage with stage plays such as "Acholayatan", "Baki Itihash", "Bidogdho Romonikul", "Kanthal Bagan", "Toil Shongkot", "Ei Nishiddo Pollite", and "Nuruldiner Sharajibon" among many others.

Aly Zaker's powerful presence in television dramas as "Aj Robibar", "Bohubrihi", "Tothapi", "Pathor" and "Deyal" among others, entertained the audience for years on end.

In 1972, Aly Zaker made his theatre debut with Arannyak Natyadal's "Kobor" and later went on to work with Nagorik Natyasampradaya in 1973. The actor's popularity later spread on to television as well.

Born on November 6, 1944 in Chattogram, Zaker's father Muhammad Taher was a government officer. Aly Zaker won the prestigious Ekushey Padak, for his contributions in 1999. He bagged numerous awards and accolades including Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award, Selim Al-Deen Padak, Shaheed Altaf Mahmud Padak, Munier Chowdhury Padak and Meril Prothom Alo Lifetime Achievement Award, among many other accolades.

Several colleagues and well-wishers shared a few words with The Daily Star, mourning this iconic legend.



PHOTO: TAKEN FROM IRESH ZAKER'S FACEBOOK PROFILE

ABUL HAYAT

I lost one of my closest friends. I was to be able to call him that. Aly Zaker's loss has created a never to be filled void for our country. I cannot yet fathom that he has left us all - it has left me speechless and heartbroken. I don't know how to express his loss.

People will forever remember him as Bengali theatre's Dewan Gazi, Nuruldin, Macbeth and Galileo.

TARIQ ANAM KHAN

Aly Zaker and I had a long-lasting

relation for decades, but personally, he was my inspiration. He was also a valuable critique of my life.

I met him a few days before he got sick and we had a discussion on various aspects of culture, theatre and art. Aly Zaker was an ever-smiling presence in our life, he tried his best to keep everyone around him as happy and smiling as him. He used to view art as a holistic experience for everyone.

His death is a huge loss for us all

and I also lost one of my most favorite people.

JAYA AHSAN

Though Aly Zaker left us, he took Bangladeshi theatre onto much greater heights through his acting and directions.

He was a towering presence, not only physically but also by artistic standards. As a freedom fighter, he gave the theatre Liberation War's true essence, also contributing greatly to the establishment of the Liberation War Museum. I express my heartfelt respect to this legendary actor and freedom fighter.

SUBORNA MUSTAFA

I am at a loss for any words or expressions. Aly Zaker, our beloved 'Chotlu Bhai', is no more, he has set out on his eternal journey. I hope Sara Bhabi, Iresh and Sriya gathers the strength to endure this grief.

Farewell to our beloved 'Chotlu Bhai', until we meet again.

SHIMUL YOUSUF

We are now forever deprived of a trusted shade of love,

affection and adoration. His troubled heart gave into peace at long last. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made our lives so complicated, that we cannot even say farewell to our beloved person. How helpless we really are, how painful his loss is!

I hope 'Chotlu Bhai', finds his peace now, he was our pride and God's favorite son. I hope he can forgive us all.

ASADUZZAMAN NOOR

Aly Zaker was such an actor, who enlightened the world of acting with his talent and presence. Be it on stage, on television or in any other medium, he has enlightened every step of his path. He is his own comparison, he is incomparable to others.

He loved the stage more than anything and I lost a colleague and friend of many years.

NAWAZISH ALI KHAN

The news of Aly Zaker's death has left me heartbroken. He was known for his versatility and talent, in theatre, television and also as a person.

As also a leader in the advertising industry, our country has lost an outstanding personality in many incomparable creative fields. May his soul rest in peace forever!



THE THESPIAN

in his element

Aly Zaker was one of the greatest actors to step foot on a stage in Bangladesh. Here is the thespian in some of his most memorable appearances in theatre.



Aly Zaker in 'Galileo'.



Aly Zaker and Abul Hayat in 'Baki Itihash'



In 'Bohubrihi' with Asaduzzaman Noor.



With Humayun Faridee in 'Ekdin Hothath'.



In 'Aj Robibar' as Boro Chacha.

Revisiting Aly Zaker's iconic roles on television

SHARMIN JOYA

We lost one of the most celebrated actors of the country with the demise of Aly Zaker on November 27, 2020. The freedom fighter and Ekushey Padak-winning artiste enthralled the audience with his remarkable performances on the stage, television, radio and big screen over the years, beginning his career in 1972. He shared the screen with renowned actor Salman Shah in the film, "Pathor Shomoy" (1990).

Besides being an actor, he was a writer, director, photographer and columnist. His passion towards his craft was unparalleled. Although his importance in the entertainment arena can be talked about for days on end, here are only a few of Aly Zaker's iconic roles on television.

He acted in numerous television projects, most notably "Aj Robibar", "Bohubrihi", "Ochinbrikkho", "Ekdin Hothath" and "Nokkhotrer Raat".

In the 1988 BTV classic, "Bohubrihi", he played the role of Farid, fondly known as *Chhoto Mama*. Even though *Chhoto Mama* is a nagging man, he is witty and humorous.

Written by Humayun Ahmed and directed



As the village chairman in 'Ochinbrikkho'.

by Nawazish Ali Khan, "Bohubrihi" recently returned to BTV.

In the classic "Aj Robibar" (1999) written by Humayun Ahmed and directed by Monir Hossain Jibon, he played *Boro Chacha* (Dr S Asgar), a role that earned him immense popularity and acclaim.

Dr S Asgar, a PhD holder, thinks everyone at his house is mentally unstable. He tries to read their minds and evaluate their psychological states constantly.

Boro Chacha experimenting with a coffin, playing chess and punishing people who peep through the hole in his door, are some of the funniest and most memorable scenes of the series.

Aly Zaker had a guest appearance in "Nokkhotrer Raat", another masterpiece penned and directed by Humayun Ahmed. The actor was seen in the last few episodes.

In "Ochinbrikkho", another Humayun Ahmed show, Aly Zaker played a dominating village chairman, a role that truly showcased his acting range.

Legendary actor Humayun Faridee played the role of a teacher on the show, and his chemistry with Aly Zaker was remarkable.

"Ekdin Hothath" is another delightful watch directed by Mustafizur Rahman, where Aly Zaker played the role of *Mama*.

Some other notable television projects of Aly Zaker include "Deyal", "Tothapi", "Ghoroawarir Shopno", "Goni Miar Pathor", "Nitu Tomake Bhalobashi", and "Pandulipi" among others.



In the show 'Ekdin Hothath'.

ALY ZAKER

laid to rest

Aly Zaker was laid to rest yesterday at Banani Graveyard after Asr prayers. His Namaz-e-Janaza took place at the Banani Graveyard Mosque, after a special *munazat* session took place in front of Asiatic 3sixty office in Banani. Even amidst the pandemic, the legend's friends, well-wishers, colleagues and fans made their presence felt to bid adieu.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED