

Syed Haq no more

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writer and playwright, died at a city hospital last evening at the age of 81.

His *Nurulidiner Sara Jibon* (The Entire Life of Nurulidiner) captured the rise of the peasants of Bengal in rebellion against the tyranny of the British Raj at around the end of eighteenth century in Rangpur, the district Haq himself was born in about 200-years later. Through the voice of an unsung leader Nurul Uddin, he uttered the magical words of uprising -- *Jago Bahe, Konthe Shobai*.

1971, the nation's most glorious year in modern history, reemerges as a truthful flashback each time Haq's famous play -- *Payer Awaj Paoa Jay* -- (We Hear the Footsteps) is staged at theatres.

Years later, in the '90s, Haq delivered yet another of his legendary poetic creation - *Amar Porichoy* (My Identity). It has it all -- from the anthropological history to cultural heredities, from remote ancestry to Bangali nationhood.

In his own words, Syed Haq says about -- *Amar Porichoy* -- "I wrote 'Amar Porichoy' at a point when I was inspired to write a short history of Bangladesh for young readers. It was to enable them to learn the history and backdrop of our identity. Later, I changed my mind to express my feelings through the most antique form of literature -- poetry. Thus an interesting and well-received poem emerged in 1993."

"I am very happy that it gives you a patriotic passion revisiting the roots of our identity. I have tried to include the four pillars -- nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy -- the essence of the Liberation War. I have tried to assimilate that through my poetic effort...say for example, excerpts like, 'Ami To Eshchhi Barendrabhum-e Sona Masjid Theke, Ami To Eshchhi Matir Deul Aaul Baul Theke' or 'Ami To Eshchhi Zainul Ar Aban Thakur Theke, Ami To Eshchhi Geetanjali O Agniveena'r Theke' evokes that essence."

Born in Kurigram on 27 December, 1935 to father Syed Siddique Husain and mother Halima Khatun, Syed Shamsul Haq, commanded contemporary Bangla literature for over six decades as a literary giant.

Starting from Pakistan days, Haq's fountain of literary creations flowed ceaselessly for decades, inspiring hundreds of thousands of poetry lovers, and connoisseurs of literature



Poet and playwright Syed Shamsul Haq shares a moment with his wife Anwara Syed Haq at their Gulshan residence in the city in 2013.

FILE PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

at home and abroad.

Haq married Anwara Syed Haq. Together they were blessed with a daughter, Bidita Sadiq, and a son, Ditio Syed Haq.

Syed Shamsul Haq, popularly known as Syed Haq, wrote innumerable poetry, fiction, plays (mostly in verse), and essays. He wrote several film scripts and penned many patriotic songs of incomparable beauty. His literary works were included in the curriculum of junior school, secondary, higher secondary, and graduate level Bangla literature.

A recipient of the Bangla Academy Award (1966) and Ekushey Padak (1984), Haq had been suffering from lung cancer lately and went to the United Kingdom for treatment in April this year. He returned home on September 2 and was admitted at the United Hospital.

Haq has written prolifically about love and honour, pity and pride, compassion and sacrifice and peace and war. Bangla literature has not seen a polymath of his equal in ages. His work is studied at schools, colleges and

universities.

Despite all the accolades Syed Haq had been quite unmoved by the fanfare. What motivated him to keep on writing? "If I don't write, I don't feel well," he once said. "I write poetry, stories, novels, plays and essays. I do not consider them separate mediums. They all accomplish the same thing--expression through language. They all stem from the same source--language which is the only material I have, just like a painter with his colour."

The treasure trove of Haq's literary work is very rich. His poetry collections include, among others, *Ekoda Ek Rajje* (Once Upon a Time in a Kingdom, 1961), *Boisheke Rochito Ponktimala* (Verses of Boishakh, 1969), *Birothin Utsob* (The Ceaseless Festival, 1969), *Protidhonigon* (The Echos, 1976), *Opor Purush* (The Other Man, 1978), and *Kobita Samagra* (Collected Poems) in 3 Volumes published in 2007.

His poems reveal a deep inspiration, and in a mysterious way appeal to the readers' own feelings and stimulate their imagination. He believes that poetry gives shape to our experience

and unformulated words. It gives us wings to fly--we understand ourselves and the world a little better. Or, we get another perspective of looking at things.

He is known for his lyrical flow of voices and counter-voices in novels and plays that force entry into oppression's closed rooms. His plays and novels about the Liberation War delve into the psychological state of the people and their inner conflicts in a war-torn country. *Payer Awaj Paoa Jay* (1976) which aptly articulates ignorance and misuse of religion is even more relevant today.

His plays - *Payer Awaj Paoa Jay* (We Hear the Footsteps), *Nurulidiner Sara Jibon* (The Entire Life of Nurulidiner), *Ekhane Ekhon* (Here, now), *Ganonayaka* (The public hero), *Eersha* (Envy), *Narigon* (The Women), *Khatta Tamasha* (Bitter Jokes), *Judhha ebong Judhha* (War and War), and novels *Neel Dangshon* (The Blue Sting), *Smritimedh* (Massacre of Memory), *Ek Mutho Janmabhumi* (A Fistful of Motherland), *Ayna Bibir Pala* (The Ballad of Ayna Bibi), *Megh O Machine*

(Cloud and Machine) and *Khelaram Khele Ja* (Play on Khelaram), among others have inspired generations.

Syed Shamsul Haq is also credited for introducing the Bangali audience to some of the great plays of world literature with his translation work, which include, among others, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Tempest*, *Troilus and Cressida* and Ibsen's *Pyr Gynt*.

His *Ganonayaka* is adapted from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. As the play garnered accolades from critics, Syed Haq once said, "When you are translating something in a language, it has to be like that language. When I translate Hafiz or European poetry in Bangla, it has to reflect nuances of the Bangla language so that it completely becomes Bangla poetry, instead of reflecting nuances of that country's language."

A voracious reader of linguistics and colonial history of Bengal, he used to read detective stories to let off steam when he felt his brain was clogged up with the complexity of his plots. He loved to paint when he was not writing or thinking about writing. He liked to listen to western classical music, Nazrul Geeti and Rabindra Sangeet.

He had won every major award there was in the field of literature in the country including Independence Award (2000), Ekushey Padak (1984), Bangla Academy Award (1966), Adamjee Literary Award (1969), Alakta Gold Medal (1982), Alaol Literary Award (1983), Kabitalap Award (1983), Literary Award of the Association of Women Writers, Jebunnessa-Mahbubullah Gold Medal (1985), Padabali Kabita Award (1987), Nasiruddin Gold Medal (1990), National Poetry Award (1997), National Poetry Honour (2001), and TENAS Medal (1990).

The poet's body will be taken to Channel-i premises at 10:00am today and then to Bangla Academy at 10:30am. From there it will be taken to the Central Shahid Minar at 11am for people from all walks of life to pay their last respect.

His first namaj-e-janaza will be held at the Dhaka University Central Mosque after Zohr prayers and then his body would be flown to Kurigram by a helicopter. After another namaj-e-janaza there the poet would be buried next to the Kurigram

Government College as per his last wish.

CONDOLENCES POUR IN

Syed Shamsul Haq's death drew condolences from home and abroad. President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ministers, different socio-cultural and political organisations and individuals expressed condolences.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and many cultural activists, litterateurs, academics, students, and fans rushed to the hospital on the news of the poet's death.

In a condolence message, the president said, "Syed Shamsul Haq is a bright star of Bangla literature. His undertaking in all sections of literature will make him immortal."

The prime minister, now in Washington, said the country lost a writer who was devoted to truth while she personally lost one of her well-wishers at his death.

"Syed Shamsul Haq viewed Bangalee, Bangladesh and Bangabandhu as inseparable entities and through his powerful writings he showed the nation the dream of a secular country," Hasina added.

Asaduzzaman Noor was cast in some of Syed Shamsul Haq's famous plays. Noor recalled the days he used to play in *Nurulidiner Sara Jibon* (The Entire Life of Nurulidiner). "Poetic values of Haq's plays are very significant. He was at a time popular and had been always able to connect with audience in disseminating messages, reflecting history and contemporary society through his plays."

Noor rated Haq as the most versatile literary mind in post-Tagore Bangla literature.

Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Finance Minister AMA Muhih, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu expressed deep shock at Haq's death.

Talking to The Daily Star, eminent litterateur of West Bengal Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay said Haq was one of those who worked as a bridge between the two Banglas.

Poet Joy Goswami said the demise of Haq was an irreparable loss to Bangla literature.

Famed author Samareh Majumder expressed his condolences over the poet's death.

His footsteps to echo

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a great man of our family of art, culture and literature. I can only pay my tribute and bow down my head to this great son of the soil as well as the entire universes. I pay my tribute to this great writer by quoting from Rabindranath Tagore. "Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptyest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life".

Yes, indeed Syed Haq will keep on filling up our empty vessels for ages to come with his creative spirit and love for the country and humanity. He was born with a golden pen. He was a poet, novelist, essayist and above all a playwright of rare quality. He is a writer of unique genre who can be compared with only himself. His five verse plays namely 'Paer Awaj Paowa Jay', 'Nurulidiner Sarajiban', 'Ekhane

Ekhon', 'Gana Nayak' and last but not the least 'Eersha' will transcend the barrier of time. He has to his credit other plays also in prose dialogues. Following the great playwrights of Greek Golden Age, William Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore (only the verse plays), Haq Bhai was impeccable in writing verse plays which are equally a matter of great pleasure for both reading and staging. He was

extraordinary in the use of metaphors, allegories, similes and symbolism. He was incomparable in translating Shakespeare's play keeping the original text and the poetic value almost intact. He even made a cohesion of phonetically sound of English language with Bangla. I have a long text message exchanges with him when he was translating 'Hamlet', when I found out he has been engulfed with creative

flare only forgetting his severe ailments. In his case, his ailments were defeated by creative spirit. He was a man with iron nerve. The posterity will remember him for all time to come for his creative genius in the field of literature (plays, poems, novels, short stories, music composition and essays).

Syed Shamsul Haq will remain a North Star in our sky in the field of creativity and a true son of mother Bengal, especially

Bangladesh. His soul was deep rooted in the soil of Bangladesh and he will always be remembered for his undaunted spirit of creative writings of varied colours. I kneel down to this great man's immortal soul. He did not surrender to death till the end and kept on hoisting the flag of life.

(Moncho Sarothi Aatur Rahman)

Actor-Director-Writer

Recipient of Ekushey Padak

Clinton 'leads 1-0'

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very well for him, took to Twitter yesterday to claim he had won every poll from the debate "except for the little watched @CNN poll."

That was a snap survey of 521 voters that said 62 percent found Clinton the winner against 27 percent for Trump.

But a CNBC online poll had it the other way round: 35 percent for Clinton compared to 65 percent for Trump.

Trump, making his first run for public office, praised himself for not attacking Clinton about the marital infidelity of her husband, former President Bill Clinton, during the debate at Hofstra University

but said in a morning interview yesterday with Fox News that he may take up the attack line going forward.

"I may hit her harder in certain ways," Trump said in a telephone interview with "Fox & Friends." Trump added that when Clinton criticized him for his treatment of women, he resisted. "I was going to hit her with her husband's women. And I decided I shouldn't do it because her daughter was in the room."

Clinton brushed off Trump's vow, saying, "He can run his campaign however he chooses."

Trump himself had a high-profile affair with Marla Maples, the woman who would be his second wife while he was still married to his first wife, Ivanka Trump. He eventually divorced Maples and married his third and current wife, Melania Trump.

Trump also sought to deflect criticism of his debate performance, saying the debate moderator, Lester Holt of NBC News, asked him "very unfair questions" and that he was given a "very bad"

microphone.

"Clearly Clinton was by far the most informed and skilled debater," said Steffen Schmidt, a professor of political science at Iowa State University.

"Trump did not blow up and crash and burn and he acted more presidential than expected, except at the end when he was told that he supported the war in Iraq, when he began to harangue and bluster," Schmidt added.

Michael Heaney of the University of Michigan called Clinton's performance excellent.

"She stayed focused, and on message," he said.

Clinton also had more to say than Trump, who was on the defensive, not as well prepared, addressed issues only superficially and aimed a lot of personal attacks at Clinton.

In the debate's final stretch, Trump charged that "she doesn't have the stamina. To be president of this country, you need tremendous stamina."

In doing so, Trump laid himself open to a stringing retort from the former secretary of state who drew applause from the audience with her response.

"As soon as he travels to 112 countries and negotiates a peace deal, a cease fire, a release of dissidents, an opening of new opportunities in nations around the world, or even spends 11 hours testifying in front of a congressional committee, he can talk to me about stamina," she said.

This first of three presidential debates was watched by more than 80 million people, US media reported citing an early Nielsen tally, in a very close race for the November 8 election.

Tahrir 'chief' indicted

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Towhidul fled after getting bail from the High Court, court sources said.

A defence counsel for Tanvir yesterday sought time but the court rejected his prayer and issued arrest warrant against the accused.

Before framing charges, the court also rejected the discharge petitions of Mohiuddin, Morshedul and Yusuf.

CASE BACKGROUND

According to the charge sheet, a group of Tahrir men gathered at sector-3 in Uttara on April 18, 2010 to distribute anti-government and anti-state leaflets. They were also planning to create panic among the public by using petrol bombs and other explosives.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Tanvir, Saidur and Towhidul from the spot with leaflets and two petrol bombs. Six to seven other members of the outfit managed to escape.

They were committing the offences at the "instruction and instigation" of Mohiuddin, the charge sheet reads.

Mahmudur Rahman, detained acting editor of the Amar Desh, was shown arrested in the case and taken on remand after Mohiuddin and Morshedul during interrogation said he was involved in the Uttara incident.

On February 9, 2013, DB Inspector Nurul Amin, who is the investigation officer of the case, submitted charges against the six and dropped Mahmudur's name as his involvement was not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

The IO also dropped the names of three accused -- Shahjalal Bulbul, Mustafizur Rahman alias Rony and Engineer Iqbal -- as he could not collect their full addresses.

REASON BEHIND THE DELAY

After receiving the charge sheet, the prosecutor of the case sent a letter to the home ministry for its permission, so that the court can take the

charge sheet into cognisance and proceed with the case.

"We could not proceed with the case due to the delay in getting government approval," Taposh Kumar Pal, additional public prosecutor of the court, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Court sources said the prosecution sent three letters to the home ministry to get the approval. The last one was sent in March this year.

This newspaper tried to contact the home minister for his comment but could not reach him.

Police arrested Mohiuddin, an associate professor at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University, on April 20, 2010 from his Green Road residence in the capital. He had virtually been placed under house arrest for six months before his arrest.

He obtained bail on May 3, 2011 and was released from jail in February the next year. The other five accused were also released on bail. The home ministry gave its approval on July 26 this year and the court took the case into cognisance on September 6.

The prosecutor cited 16 people as the witnesses.

M Amzad Ali, acting proctor of the DU, told The Daily Star yesterday that Mohiuddin was sent on forced leave in 2009 and the leave still continues. "The university will take final action after the final verdict in the case," he added.

In a press statement on July 14 this year, Mohiuddin claimed he had no links with Tahrir. He claimed he was not even a member of the organisation.

Hizb-ut Tahrir, a global and pan-Islamic political organisation, which describes its aim as the re-establishment of "the Islamic Caliphate", was founded by Islami thinker Tokiuddin Al Nakhani in 1953 in Jerusalem, five years after Israel captured Palestine.

Syed Golam Mowla, then a lecturer of management at the DU, went to the UK in late 80s to do PhD and he was there introduced to two Bangladeshis -- Nasimul Gani and Kawsar Shahnewaz.

The three went to several open discussions on Hizb ut-Tahrir in London, according sources in the outfit as well as law enforcement agencies.

After returning to Bangladesh in 2000, Nasimul and Shahnewaz set up an office on Elephant Road in the capital for the organisation's Bangladesh chapter and launched the group's activities under Golam Mowla's leadership, the sources added.

Contacted yesterday, Mowla, now a professor, said he started informal discussion in Bangladesh over Hizb-ut Tahrir but when the origination took formal shape, Mohiuddin was made its chief coordinator.

"I have not been involved with the organisation since the government banned it in 2009," he claimed.

DU acting proctor M Amzad Ali said, "A case has been filed against Golam Mowla but the verdict has yet to be delivered. He is taking classes and staying at the teachers' quarters. We did not take any decision on him. Proper steps will be taken against him after the verdict."

In its recruitment policy, the urban-based organisation targeted university and college students who are from well-off families. In the beginning, its activities were limited to seminars and discussions in auditoriums or halls. Later on, its presence was noticed on the streets too.

In a report in 2005, the intelligence agencies expressed fears that the group may turn into an extremist organisation any time and suggested closely monitoring its activities.

In September 2008, Rajshahi police arrested Golam Mowla and nine of his associates at Rajshahi

City Press Club on suspicion of promoting militancy in the country. Later, he was released on bail.

Hizb-ut Tahrir was banned in October 2009 as it had long been engaged in "anti-state, anti-government, anti-people and anti-democratic activities in the country".

Though outlawed, its activists carried out clandestine activities, including holding rallies, putting up anti-government posters and circulating leaflets in different parts of the capital.

Tahrir's name came to the forefront again during the spate of targeted killings in last year and this year as two of its activists were found to have been involved in at least two incidents.

Golam Faizullah Fahim, one of the three attackers who badly hacked a Madaripur college teacher in June this year, admitted to be a member of Hizb-ut Tahrir, police said.

Fahim was killed in a "shootout", four days into the machete attack.

Besides, Moinul Hasan Shamim alias Sifat, whom police identified as a key plotter of the killing of publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan last year, was also an activist of Hizb-ut Tahrir.

Sifat, who is from Sunamganj, was arrested from Gobindaganj Bazar while distributing leaflets of Hizb ut-Tahrir in 2010. He was a student of Madan Mohan College at that time, police say.

Sifat, who later got involved with pro-al-Qaeda militant outfit Ansar al-Islam, another banned Islamist outfit, was made an accused in a case filed with Chhatak Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act. He was arrested in August this year.

On January 8, 2012, Hizb ut-Tahrir distributed provocative leaflets across the country based on a Facebook post of Syed Mohammad Ziaul Haque alias Major Zia, a sacked army person now considered the mastermind behind the target killings in the country.

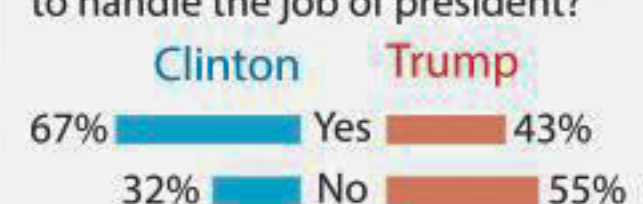
US election debate

CNN/ORC poll*

Who won the debate?



Would the candidates be able to handle the job of president?



*Snap poll of 521 voters who watched the Sept 26 debate