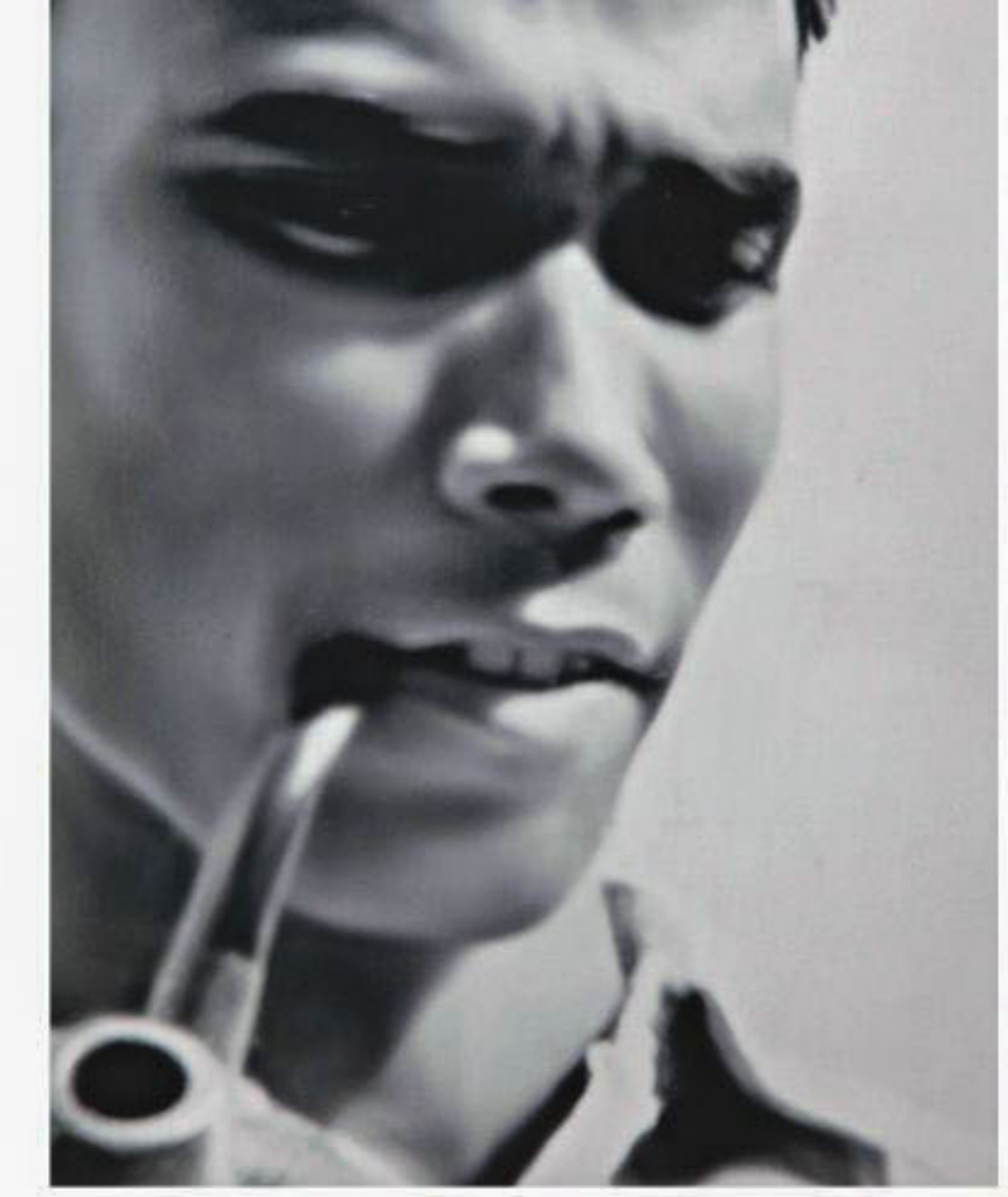


THE LATE LEGENDARY LITTÉRATEUR

Born in 1935 in Kurigram, Syed Shamsul Haq was an accomplished short-story writer, novelist, playwright and a prevalent poet. He received the Bangla Academy Award in 1966 (the youngest among all to receive it), Ekushey Padak in 1984 and Swadhinata Padal Award in 2000 for his contributions to Bangla literature. His literary works were included in the curricula of school, secondary, higher secondary and graduation levels Bengali literature in Bangladesh. Syed Shamsul Haq was married to Anwara Syed Haq who is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in London. Together they have one daughter, Bidita Sadiq, and one son, Ditio Syed Haq. On 27 September 2016, the renowned intellectual passed away due to lung cancer at the age of 81.



Our readers are well aware about the Daily Star's initiative titled Celebrating Life, which focuses on film, photography and lyrics. Under the banner of film, is the film-making workshop, through which, we once decided to make documentaries on seven celebrated personalities of Bangladesh, one of which was Syed Shamsul Haq. The list had names like Mustafa Monwar, Serajul Islam Choudhury, Manzur Elahi and the likes. With my protracted involvement in showbiz, I have had the opportunity to meet with him often, but to me, he always appeared to be an esteemed luminary. He was a fashionista whose elegant attire always echoed of his presence. The manner, in which he would present the TV programmes with distinctiveness, truly made him a class apart. Unfortunately, by the time we approached him regarding the documentary, his health condition had deteriorated; yet, he was rather enthusiastic about the overall idea, and suggested that he would like to be a part of it once he returned after his treatment. I still remember the remark he had made about me, mentioning that I looked like a modern day Rabindranath Tagore, due to my poet-like appearance with the long hair and a beard. He also stated that looking at me, he could envision a character for one of his literary pieces, to which he would like to give life to and therefore sought to meet with me soon. To me, it was a matter of pride that my appearance had inspired him to pen down a fiction.



Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit at the hospital

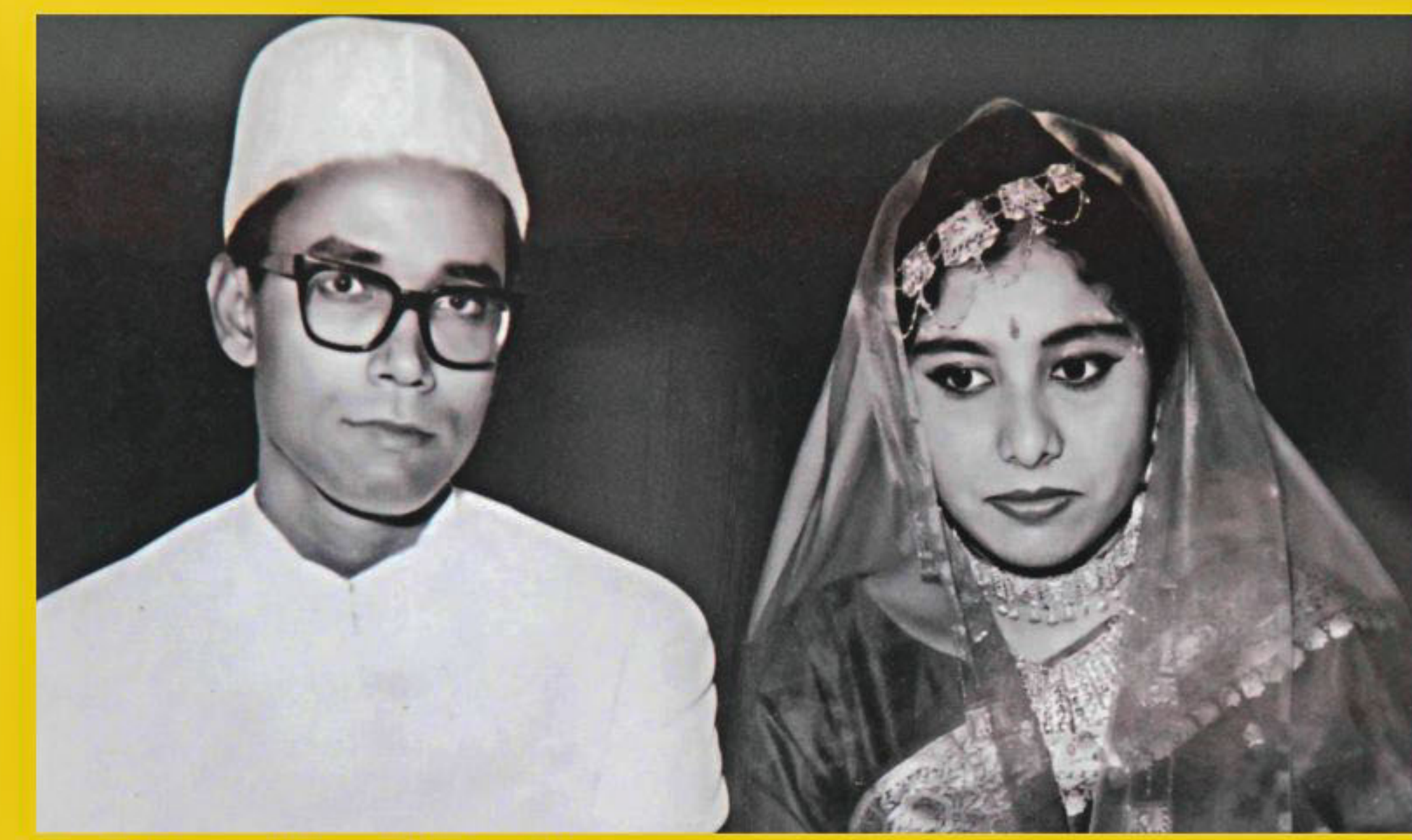
Syed Shamsul Haq's ability to prosper with words was truly enchanting. He was equally gifted when it came to writing lyrics, poems, scripts, plays, stories and novels, which is beyond possible for many renowned writers. Due to his incomparable talent, he was able to garner a large amount of audience and admirers from various sectors. His contribution towards the field of entertain-

ment was rather virtuous and efficient. Once when I was preparing for an interview with Aly Zaker, I had learnt that Syed Shamsul Haq was his bosom friend, and whenever Aly Zaker would travel abroad, he was sure to bring back an extravagant gift for his acquaintance. When I invited Syed Shamsul Haq to be present at the interview of his friend, he agreed without any hesitation. Given the

fact that Aly Zaker is a sensational actor, most of the renowned plays in which he had performed were written by Syed Shamsul Haq. However, the maestro was best known for his poetic-plays (kabonatok) which is a foreign concept, but by utilising the colloquial dialect of various local regions as a means of communication, he won the hearts of many throughout the nation. One such exam-

ple was "Jago Bahe Konthe Sobai" from "Nuruldiner Sara Jibon", which is considered a classic. It was truly an honour for Showbiz and me to have had a dialogue with two of the most prominent names from the industry. In whatever ways Syed Shamsul Haq had contributed for our art and literature should be considered a as a blessing. He has also captivated our hearts writing songs like "Jar Chaya Poreche Monero Aynate" and "Haire Manush Rongin Fanush", which not only comprise great lyrics, but also music, composition, vocals and meaning. He had also worked on various documentaries as well. Even his translations of William Shakespeare's plays in Bengali were meticulous. Syed Shamsul Haq always believed that if you are true to yourself and value your heritage, you are bound to succeed. He also believed that if a writer tends to be repetitive, then he is of no significance, therefore his work always reflected diversity. He always said that even if one line of a writer is admired, that is the true success, rather than having volumes of work unappreciated. Even during his last days when he was unable to write, his devotion towards literature was unaffected, and he would ask his wife to write down whatever he narrated. He dedicated his life for writing and shall forever remain alive through his immense contribution towards our nation.

Narrated by Rafi Hossain
Transcribed by Minam Haq



Syed Shamsul Haq with his wife



Syed Shamsul Haq with his wife



Aly Zaker with Syed Shamsul Haq