

Life is one of those precious fleeting gifts, and everything can change in a heartbeat.

THE ABOVE WAS WRITTEN BY AYUB BACHCHU ON HIS FACEBOOK TIMELINE ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2018.

AYUB BACHCHU

An inadmissible departure

Like millions of people, I was also a die-hard fan of his. I grew up listening to his songs, and he never failed to inspire.

IQBAL ASIF JEWEL

I am speechless with grief and sorrow. Bangladesh lost its best musical warrior.

IBRAHIM AHMED KAMAL

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Like a prognostication, or worse, a bitter nightmare, the legend had left his friends, family and millions of fans for a better place.

While the entire country mourned the irrevocable loss of one of the pillars of modern Bangladeshi music, many were still in denial. He was a man who possessed insurmountable dedication for his craft. "Never give up on your music, no matter what you do," he had told me when I last interviewed him in July.

When I first met the great man as a shaky teenager, I was waiting for my turn to audition for singing in one of his upcoming projects. Despite being a nervous wreck, I was somehow able to impress him. "I believe you have a great career ahead of you if keep your passion intact," he said. Months of observing him at his studio, AB Kitchen had made me realise that the words he had said to me were words he lived by.



ILLUSTRATION: TIRTHO

would not try to expand his already majestic skill set. His eyes lit up with almost child-like ecstasy whenever he could add a rare or signature guitar to his vast collection, or could discover a new tone on one of his many processor-stomp set-ups.

The entire music industry had a profound acceptance of the fact that he was one of the juggernauts of band music in Bangladesh. In an interview with *The Daily Star*, Fahmida Nabi mentioned that Ayub Bachchu's loss was irreparable. "He had a big heart, and always thought about everyone else in the industry. He always showed full support for artistes in need," she said.

"We have lost a musician who played a huge part in making band music popular," said Miles' singer and bassist Shafin Ahmed. "Long live his music."

Nagar Baul, on their official Facebook page had uploaded a picture of James and Ayub Bachchu, possibly their last picture together. "Today, we mourn the loss of a legend of Bangla Rock, Ayub Bachchu. We pray for the peace of the departed soul," wrote Nagar Baul. Gaan Bangla CEO, Kaushik Hossain Taposh had participated in a show together with



SKETCH: ZUBAYER SAYEED

him days before his unfortunate demise. "I never knew that the hug at the airport would be our final one... I can't express in words how much I

have loved you, and will keep loving you" he wrote on his Facebook timeline.

Ayub Bachchu himself had always confronted the philosophy of life and death in many of his songs.

Ei Rupali Guitar Fele
Ekdin Choley Jabo Bohu Dure (Rupali Guitar, 1996)

Trans:
I'll leave my silver guitar
I'll leave for a place very far

Jane Ontojami, Keba Agey Pore
Shobaike Eka kore chole jabo ondho ghore
Ei shohor bari gari kichui jabe na

Trans:
Only the Almighty knows, who is the first to leave
I'll leave everyone alone to a darkly-lit room
This city and its wealth won't go with me
(Ural Debo Akashe, 2000)
The legend himself was never afraid of

death. "I have no complaints in life. Until my very last breath, I will remain true to myself. I believe that the Almighty will take care of me, and life will go on according to whatever plans He has," he had said to me in the midst of one of his final interviews that I was fortunate enough to conduct.

Singer Kona shared the stage with AB on his very last concert. "He was so happy and there was no indication of any ill health once he went onto the stage," she said, "He exclaimed 'Love You, Rangpur!' at the end of the show and took selfies with all of us." Kona added that even amidst all the grief, she was glad that the legend was not bed-ridden on his final days, and did what he loved the most even during his last days.

Ayub Bachchu, a then aspiring musician who came to Dhaka with only 600 taka in his pocket, turned himself into a global star who is argued to be the best guitarist in South Asia. For millions of fans, Ayub Bachchu is a rock legend who will live forever through his music. For me, however, he will be a father figure who brought many now established musicians into the industry. For Bangladesh, he is simply a man who gifted it timeless compositions for generations to come.



Ayub Bachchu and James spend a lighthearted moment together. Nagar Baul posted this in tribute to Ayub Bachchu on their Facebook page yesterday.

He personified the word 'passion'. His only piece of advice to anyone who asked for some was to practice; to be grounded and passionate towards whatever they did. There wasn't a day that the maestro

