

# While a Nation Gently Weeps...

# AYUB BACHCHU

16 AUGUST 1962 – 18 OCTOBER 2018



*"Shopnora hariye jay  
shomoyer shagore  
Bethar aabire kobita aadhare haray  
Bhabnar phul jhore jhore jay aha  
Jiboner gaan hoy na shure gawa"*

(Excerpt from LRB's *Ghum Bhanga Shohore*,  
written by S M Jangi)



The harmony of the artiste's life was far from being lost. Always full of life and laughter, his contemplations were anything but weary. Even the day before his departure, he shook the stages of a concert in Rangpur with the same aggression and energy of a veteran. In fact, deep down, he had always believed himself to be nineteen forever. But like his own words, the waves of eternity, beyond mankind's control, keeps crashing down on the shore, marking the dates of mortal's departure with each ebb and flow. And unfortunately, this time the tides consumed a star within. This time, it was the magician of the strings and frets who had to wave goodbye. This time, it was Ayub Bachchu – our beloved AB.

With only 600 taka in his pocket, he left home to pursue a dream he had embraced in one of his countless sleepless nights of the teen days. The sound of six strings had him convinced to be an urban-minstrel. Like any universal truth, Ayub Bachchu had believed that this was what he was born to do, to be a guitarist. Even after decades of fame and fortune as the frontman of world-famous band LRB, Ayub Bachchu expressed that he felt much more comfortable with his identity as a guitarist than as a singer. And anyone who has seen AB playing is sure to know how absolute his love and passion for that very identity was. Struggle had been his regular companion in the early days of career. But when one has pure faith in his passion, success becomes a matter of time.

Popular as the 'Golden Era' of Bangla rock/metal music, the '80s and early '90s were full of promising faces in the country's band scenario. Bands like Miles, Warfaze, Renaissance and Souls in synergy had been functioning like powerhouses for the youngsters. And LRB was no different either. There was a time when hardly any street or any back alley full of rebellious punks and brats failed to sync with the reverbs of the likes of *Ghumonto Shohore*, *Hawker*, *Meye* and *Mon Chaile Mon Paabe*. 'Little Robin's Band' had found its peremptory pace; and since Robin did not remain so 'little' anymore, LRB soon took a deeper dive on their journey and renamed themselves as 'Love Runs Blind'. In their almost 28 year long journey, LRB has achieved everything any musical band could ever wish to achieve. The pure love of their listeners had been LRB's only north star, yet on the grim morning of October 18, 2018, the captain of LRB's grand vessel himself became a shining star on the horizon, resting far away from any mortal's domain.

Ayub Bachchu underwent a major heart surgery back in 2009, and had to face multiple complications in the latter years. But despite his body not supporting such hard work, his love for the stage and the gain knob turned full, AB kept coming back to his fans on and on. Triumphant over health complications, AB rocked the country with his epic number '*Rakhe Allah, Maare Ke? Tomader Bhalobasha Firiye Enechhe Ei Amake!*' Almost in every single of his concerts in the last few years, AB made a dramatic ending by playing the tune of the national anthem of Bangladesh with his seasoned fingers on guitar. And the day his namaz-e-janaza took place, the veteran listeners conveyed their gratitude by ornamenting the vehicle that carried AB's dead body with the majestic national flag of Bangladesh.

AB had fallen in love for the first time when he was a teenager. Though it was not just for any tootsie from the neighborhood. It was for the smell of the burnished fret-board and the sound of the six strings that was the gateway to his own utopia. It took him to his paradise, where he kept exploring until the last moments of his life like an evergreen wanderer. Till the very day he died, AB had no less than 40 guitars in his collection, which he took care of like a father does to his children. Over a week has now gone by after the magician's departure. AB's beloved offspring Tazwar and Fairuz still cannot hide their teary eyes. Come to wonder, aren't his guitars also weeping for their foregoer?

Perhaps.

By Tasbir Iftekhar