

# Remembering HUMAYUN AHMED through the eyes of three actors

“His distinctive way of speaking through the pages of his books forged a unique bond with readers, making him one of the most beloved authors in the country. Few writers have achieved such prolific and reader-friendly status.”

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Celebrated literary figure Humayun Ahmed was deeply loved by millions of readers during his lifetime. As an author, he gained immense popularity by creating characters like Himu, Rupa, and Misir Ali, through which he earned countless devoted fans. The craze for Himu is still visible in today's generation, as fans still wear yellow panjabi—a signature dress worn by the character. Even as a scriptwriter and a filmmaker, he was equally loved and appreciated. His written plays, including *Ayomoy*, *Kothao Keu Nei*, *Ei Shob Din Ratri*, and *Aaj Robibar*, have received acclaim from audiences. His directorial films, such as *Aguner Poroshmoni* and *Shyamol Chhaya*, were widely praised as

I miss sir a lot: Riaz

A writer, playwright, and filmmaker of his calibre won't grace the industry again. It's been twelve years, but the void feels as fresh as yesterday. I miss him greatly. I've had the privilege of working in both his plays and cinema. Collaborating with him brought immense joy, something I truly miss these days. Audiences used to savour his works, and even now, people watch those plays and discuss them. His films had a unique quality too. Now, memories are all that remain. I'll simply say, wherever you are, may you stay well. From afar, I convey my respects and birthday wishes. He was truly unique through his works, succeeding in everything he did.



speaking through the pages of his books forged a unique bond with readers, making him one of the most beloved authors in the country. Few writers have achieved such prolific and reader-friendly status.

Not only renowned as a writer, but he also excelled as a playwright. His written plays continue to be a subject of discussion and admiration. The character of *Baker bhai*, in particular, has left an indelible mark on the audience's memory. I am deeply grateful and forever indebted to him. I have collaborated with him on numerous occasions, including his long-running television drama series and films.

Honestly, it's hard to stop talking about him. I acted in his film *Srabon Megher Din*, and the memories from that experience are etched in my mind. His love and affection have been a true blessing in my life, and receiving love from someone like him is a significant achievement.

The numerous anecdotes, shootings, and experiences shared with him have enriched my life. On his birthday, I extend my love and respect.

Buying his books at the Ekushey Book Fair remains a cherished memory: Ferdous

I had the privilege of acting in two of Humayun Ahmed's films, *Amar Achhe Jol* and *Chandrakotha*, both of which received acclaim. Working with him gave me the chance to closely observe, understand, recognise, and truly know him. In reality, he was a writer of immense stature, a person of great significance, and a remarkable playwright and director.

I acted in his directorial television drama *Esho*. The memories of it are still vivid in my mind. I often recall his words filled with extraordinary wisdom. I used to consider him a father, a mentor, a friend. His sudden departure has left an immense void that will never be filled.

From my student days to the present, I remain a great fan of his writings. His books adorn my bookshelf, and looking at them brings back countless memories. I distinctly remember that after the release of my film *Hothath Brishty*, he called and congratulated me, a memory I haven't forgotten.



## Puja Chery's 'Nakphul' to release on Valentine's Day

Puja Chery and Ador Azad starrer film *Nakphul* is scheduled to be released on Valentine's Day (February 14) in 2024.

Confirming the release date, sources from the film's production company, Bengal Multimedia Ltd, said, "We are almost done with the post-production of the movie, and if everything goes well, we will release it on the upcoming Valentine's Day."

Regarding the film's context, director Aalok Hasan said, "In this modern era, we have become so digitalised that we have lost touch with our roots. As it is my debut film, I wanted to connect with my culture through my film. I don't know how much I could connect, but I intend to represent the lost Bangladeshi cultural aspect by revisiting my roots."

## Iconic voice actor Doug Cockle replaces Henry Cavill as Geralt in 'The Witcher'

The Netflix series *The Witcher* has successfully engaged viewers since it first aired. Now, a new addition to its legacy is on the horizon – an animated series.

Netflix also announced the return of the voice-acting legend, Doug Cockle, along with the release of the anime film's trailer.

"Doug Cockle is set to lend his voice to Geralt in *The Witcher: Sirens of the Deep*, scheduled to arrive on Netflix in late 2024," read Netflix's tweet.



# NEWS

## Rights record go under UN scrutiny

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Thereport goes on to claim that 28 of the 76 on the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances' list "have criminal cases including murder cases against them and are absconding to avoid justice".

"There were 10 cases where the relatives didn't cooperate with law enforcement agencies by providing information/feedback as was required for investigation," it said, adding, "Two are foreign nationals [about whom no judicial or police records were found regarding the said missing incident]."

The government said, "Miscereants' using the name and disguise of law enforcement agencies to carry out abductions and kidnappings has emerged as a worrying trend".

Furthermore, the government continues to insist that those cited to be victims of enforced disappearance are not actually missing.

Civil society organisations like Human Rights Watch, The Human Rights Foundation, Maayer Daak, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, World Organisation Against Torture and many others refuted this in a report submitted to the council.

"The government continued to deny the occurrence of enforced disappearances despite a reported total of 192 persons that had been subjected to enforced disappearance," they said.

The government did not respond to requests for a visit by the UN Working

Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, they pointed out in their report.

Four years ago, 15 countries like Japan, US, Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Togo, Peru, and South Korea had told Bangladesh to take steps about enforced disappearance, like ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The government's report said it is strengthening the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (NHRCB) by making "violence by state mechanism" one of the priority areas for the commission's next five-year plan.

However, the civil society organisations pointed out that the human rights commission still cannot legally investigate law enforcers.

The NHRCB stated this in a report submitted to the council. "The NHRCB acknowledged its limited authority to investigate allegations against law enforcement agencies and recommended establishing an independent mechanism for investigations and an independent complaint mechanism to address allegations of torture and ill-treatment," said the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The civil society organisations said, "The government continued to ignore

the calls of civil society organisations for a transparent and participatory selection process of the NHRC members."

The government claimed in its report that during the last national elections "216 complaints were received but later disposed of as [they were] disallowed for invalidity or lack of evidence". It accepted 46 complaints and took action, it said.

The civil society organisations in their report said the Election Commission, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary are used by the government to implement its political agenda.

The national report mentions that the Digital Security Act was amended and the new Cyber Security Act was enacted "to ensure freedom of journalists in cyberspace".

Multiple organisations, including Editors' Council and Amnesty International, said the new law would not protect journalists.

During the council's last UPR cycle, 30 countries recommended that Bangladesh take steps to uphold freedom of expression, including changing existing legislation.

The national report claimed that EPZ workers can form welfare associations but stakeholders refuted that claim.

Civil society organisations like the UK and Belgium-based International Centre for Trade Union Rights

and International Trade Union Confederation mentioned in their report that there are still barriers to trade union registration and recommended reforming labour laws.

The government report stated that a draft data protection act has been made incorporating stakeholders' recommendations.

Stakeholders, however, said the draft still grants the government sweeping powers to access personal data without judicial oversight.

Bangladesh received 256 recommendations in the last UPR cycle.

## Russian navy ships

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Chittagong Ashik Imran as saying that the ships are here solely on a friendly visit.

"This is evidence that the relations between the two states are currently at a very high level," he stressed.

The ambassador told the news agency that the last time Russian warships were here, it was to clear the water of mines.

"At that time, the group of Russian naval ships came here actually to save the young country that gained its independence in 1971 from a humanitarian catastrophe. After the war of independence, the port's waters were mined and also tens of vessels were sunk there," he said.

country in the last 15 years thanks to uninterrupted distribution and import of this fertiliser. "Now there is enough stock of the fertiliser."

Mentioning that the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy is "Friendship to All, Malice towards None," she said this newly built fertiliser factory is an example of the foreign policy as friendly countries assisted Bangladesh in constructing the large factory.

She said this factory would reduce the country's dependency on fertiliser imports and create jobs.

The annual production capacity of the environment-friendly fertiliser factory is around 1 million tonnes.

Now the local demand for urea is around 2.6 million tonnes annually.

The PM also had a tour of the factory.

## Nine in nine for India

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The result means Bangladesh finished as the eighth team and qualified for the 2025 Champions Trophy while Sri Lanka (ninth) and the Netherlands (10th) missed out.

After their colleagues had departed following breezy fifties on a good M Chinnaswamy Stadium track, Iyer (128 not out) struck his fourth ODI ton before Rahul (102) exploded as the duo lit up the stage on the Hindu festival of Diwali to get India to 410-4.

Requiring a record World Cup chase to win, the bottom-placed Dutch side got good starts from Max O'Dowd (30), Colin Ackermann (35), Sybrand Engelbrecht (45) and Teja Nidamanuru (54) but they never threatened and were dismissed for 250 in 47.5 overs.

Mohammed Siraj (2-29) overcame a throat injury suffered in a dropped catch to dazzle alongside Kuldeep Yadav (2-41), Jasprit Bumrah (2-33) and Ravindra Jadeja (2-49) to secure victory for India, who face New Zealand in the semi-finals on Wednesday.

Iyer reached his century in 84 balls and finished with 10 fours and five sixes while Rahul needed only 62 balls for his ton, getting there with two huge sixes in the last over that took

India past 400.

The duo forged a 208-run partnership – the highest fourth-wicket stand in World Cups – as India scored 126 runs in their final 10 overs to post the third total above 400 in the event.

India put the Netherlands to the sword after winning the toss and opting to bat as Rohit (61) and Shubman Gill (51) hit boundaries at will to give them a superb platform with 91 runs in the powerplay.

Gill was severe on the bowlers with three fours and four sixes, but the world's top-ranked batsman found the man in the deep while taking on a short one from Paul van Meekeren after reaching his 12th half-century.

The Netherlands chipped away and were rewarded when Bas de Leede had Rohit caught at wide long-on, but Kohli (51) and Iyer took India past 200 runs in the 29th over with a 71-run stand.

Kohli delighted the crowd with a wide array of shots after a shaky start to his quest to reach 50 ODI tons and eclipse Sachin Tendulkar's record, but Roelof van der Merwe briefly silenced fans by breaking his stumps with a flatter one.

## Appointment of EC

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experience in performing election duties, their experience will come in handy," said a source in the EC.

The EC, however, is yet to decide if its officials will become ROs and AROs.

The field-level EC officials at a meeting in October demanded the EC appoint them as ROs and assistant returning officers in the next election.

In July last year, when the EC held talks with political parties aiming to prepare its work plan for the 12th national polls, at least 11 political parties recommended that EC should appoint its officials as ROs.

Even in its work plan prepared in September 2022, the EC said it would make EC officials as ROs and AROs in as many constituencies as possible.

Contacted, EC Spokesperson and Secretary Jahangir Alam said the commission will make the decision to this end. "I did not get any decision from the commission regarding appointing EC officials as ROs."

According to the Representation of the People Order, 1972, the EC can appoint anyone as returning officer.

## Govt can't be overthrown by covert attacks

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Hasina said this while addressing a rally as the chief guest at the Mosleh Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Narsingdi after she inaugurated Ghorashal-Polash Urea Fertiliser Factory, the largest of its kind in Southeast Asia.

The PM said if the people do not join, a movement cannot be waged. "BNP is a terrorist party. Jamaat is a party of war criminals. The people of this country can't hear their words [call]."

She blasted the BNP as it came up with blockade and hartal accusing them of burning people at a time when students will sit for examinations this November ahead of the general election.

Hasina added that the BNP activists beat up journalists and police. "They've been violating

human rights."

"If anyone goes to carry out arson violence and set a bus on fire, catch them and throw them in the fire. If so, they would get a lesson otherwise not."

Coming down heavily on BNP leader Tarique Rahman, the PM said he was involved in many offences, including the August 21 grenade attack, arms smuggling, and money laundering.

"He [Tarique] is in London fleeing from [the country] and instructs to carry out arson violence, staying there. Come back to Bangladesh, if you have the courage. We'll see you for a while."

About the minimum wage for garment workers, Hasina said, "This time the wage was raised to Tk 12,500. Their wage was increased by 56 percent. What should be their

objection now?" asked the premier.

She sought votes for "boat", the electoral symbol of ruling Awami League, in the upcoming election.

The PM also asked her party leaders and activists to work unitedly for the party's nominated candidates.

The AL refused a foreign proposal to sell gas abroad before the 2001 national election. That caused her party's defeat in the polls, the PM said in another event while opening of Ghorashal-Polash Urea Fertiliser Factory.

But BNP leader Khaleda Zia agreed to it and won the polls, she said.

Hasina said had she yielded to the pressure that day Bangladesh would not have seen such an excellent fertiliser factory today.

She said no shortage of urea fertiliser was seen anywhere in the