

Reminiscing Humayun Ahmed’s most unforgettable characters

Humayun Ahmed, Bangladesh’s beloved “magician of words,” crafted stories that transcended the pages of his books to become an integral part of Bangladeshi cinema and television. With a unique talent for creating compelling characters, he left behind a legacy that continues to captivate audiences even years after his passing. Today, on what would have been his 76th birthday, we journey through some of Humayun Ahmed’s most iconic characters. From rural dreamers to philosophical minds, his creations have not only entertained but also stirred deep emotions, etching unforgettable memories in the hearts of fans.



Each character, whether a fearless freedom fighter or a philosophical wanderer, adds to the profound impact the writer has had on the audience.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Moti: A symbol of rural spirit
In *Srabon Megher Din* (1999), Humayun Ahmed introduced Moti, a simple village man portrayed by Zahid Hasan. Set in the lush countryside, this film struck a chord with audiences and became one of Ahmed’s most successful cinematic ventures. Moti’s character, though initially popular among readers, gained even more fame on screen, where Zahid Hasan’s portrayal brought Moti’s innocence and resilience to life, leaving an indelible impact on audiences and Zahid Hasan’s career alike.

Shuvro: The brilliant outsider
Shuvro, the central character from novel *Daruchini Dwip* (1991), embodies a unique blend of brilliance and vulnerability. A young man from a wealthy family with impaired vision, Shuvro is a fan-favourite character whose popularity grew after Tauquir Ahmed adapted the novel into a film in 2007, with Riaz Ahmed taking on the role. Though readers often prefer the literary Shuvro,

the cinematic adaptation gave new life to this character, solidifying Shuvro’s legacy as one of Ahmed’s cherished protagonists.

Badiul Alam: The unyielding freedom fighter
Humayun Ahmed brought the intensity of Bangladesh’s Liberation War to life with his debut film *Aguner Poroshmoni* (1994), and Badiul Alam became a poignant figure in the portrayal of a freedom fighter. Asaduzzaman Noor’s performance struck a deep emotional chord, moving viewers to tears and capturing the courage and heartbreak of those turbulent times. Badiul Alam’s story remains a testament to Humayun Ahmed’s skill in crafting characters that embody strength, resilience, and patriotism.

Misir Ali: The iconic detective
Among Ahmed’s creations, Misir Ali stands out as the quintessential problem solver, a character who relies on logic above all else. A professor by trade, Misir Ali is often sought after to untangle the mysteries and dilemmas of others. First portrayed by Abul Hayat on television, Misir Ali made a memorable comeback on screen in Anam Biswas’ *Debi* (2018), where Chanchal Chowdhury breathed new life into the role. Misir Ali’s contemplative nature and deductive prowess have made him a beloved figure in Bangladeshi fiction, particularly among readers drawn



to psychological intrigue.

Baker bhai and Muna: An unforgettable pair
No character in Bangladeshi television has sparked as much conversation as Baker *bhai*, portrayed by Asaduzzaman Noor in urban drama series *Kothao Keu Nei* (1990). This iconic character’s eventual execution was met with national outrage, with fans even staging protests in response. His complex relationship with Muna, played by Suborna Mustafa, was another highlight of the show. Muna’s unwavering loyalty to Baker *bhai*, even in his final moments, deepened the emotional impact on the audience.

Himu: The philosophical vagabond



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Perhaps the most beloved of Ahmed’s characters, Himu has fascinated readers for years. Known for his philosophical wanderings and refusal to adhere to social conventions, Himu captivated fans who eagerly awaited each new sequel of the novel about his adventures. Although Himu rarely appeared on television, Fazlul Kabir Tuhin’s portrayal in *Nokkhotrer Raat* (1996) gave audiences a glimpse of the character’s enigmatic appeal, further fueling his popularity.

Anis: The quirky, naive intellectual
In the wildly popular drama *Aaj Robibar* (1999), Zahid Hasan’s Anis charmed audiences with his wit and eccentric mannerisms. Anis’s quirky dialogues have recently found new life on social media, with memes and

clips reintroducing the character to a younger generation, making him a fan favourite all over again.

Nilu: A reflection of Humayun’s strengths

The character Nilu from Humayun Ahmed’s debut drama serial *Eishob Dinratri* (1985) resonated with viewers as a reflection of the writer’s ability to create relatable, multifaceted women whose stories touch upon the joys and struggles of everyday life.

The character was portrayed by veteran actor Dolly Zahur, which remains to be one of the most celebrated roles of the actress. The drama was aired on BTV and later adopted as a novel in 1990w with the same title.

Beyond these notable figures, Ahmed’s work also includes unforgettable characters like Yunus from *Matir Pinjira* and Dhotara



Chacha, played by Challenger, in TV drama *Urey Jay Bok Pokkhi*. Each character, whether a fearless freedom fighter or a philosophical wanderer, adds to the profound impact Humayun Ahmed has had on Bangladeshi audience. His legacy, immortalised through these characters, continues to inspire, entertain, and connect with audiences to this day.

NEWS

Veteran actor Manoj Mitra passes away

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partition, the Naxalite movement, the tyranny of the ruling class, and religious fundamentalism, among other major social and political issues.
Mitra was born December 22, 1938, in a village in Satkhira district of undivided Bengal. His father was a government officer.
Though plays were enacted at his family home during the festive days of Durga puja, children were not allowed to watch them. Backdrops, props, costumes, and other articles associated with the staging of plays stored at home kindled his passion for plays.
Mitra permanently moved to India from erstwhile East Pakistan at the age of 12. He completed his Master of Arts degree in Philosophy in 1960.
During the college and university days, he wrote short stories and plays. However, after his play “Mrityur Chokhe Jal” earned him first prize at

a statewide competition, he focused only on this field. His acting prowess mesmerised veteran actors of that time as the 21-year-old youth effortlessly metamorphosed into an elderly man in “Mrityur Chokhe Jal”.
When Mitra was in his 40s, he immortalised the character of the 90-year-old protagonist Banchharam in Tapan Sinha’s 1980 film “Banchharamer Bagan”. This dark comedy on the oppression of the peasants by the zamindars was adapted from Mitra’s play “Sajano Bagan” (1977). He bagged the Filmfare Award for Best Actor for the movie.
Some of his notable major full-length plays are: “Narak Guljar”, “Aswathama”, “Chakbhanga Madhu”, “Mesh O Rakhshash”, “Galpo Hakim Saheb”, “Rajdarshan”, “Alokanandar Putra Kanya”, “Sajano Bagan”, “Chhayar Prashad” and “Jene Shune Bish.” Some of his famous one-act plays

are: “Mrityur Chokhe Jal”, “Chokhe Angul Dada”, “Ami Madan Bolchi”, and “Taksak”.
Mitra also acted in more than 80 films, including Satyajit Ray’s “Ghare Baire” (1984) and “Ganashatru” (1989), Tapan Sinha’s “Adalat O Ekti Meye” (1982) and “Wheel Chair” (1995).
After the 1984 hit Bengali commercial film “Shatru”, Mitra was reportedly offered an opportunity to act in Bollywood films but rejected that proposal, fearing it might affect his commitment to the stage. Mitra was conferred with the Sangeet Natak Award (1985) and the Asiatic Society Award (2005) for his overall contribution to theatre, among numerous other awards.
Mitra, along with his friends at the Scottish Church in Kolkata, set up the theatre group “Sundaram” which he later headed for many years. He was a professor of philosophy at a college in West Bengal.

14 RMG factories closed

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front of the factory’s main gate around 11:30am yesterday and resumed their demonstration.
Workers of Quasem Lamps Ltd in the Konabari Baimail area, who have been protesting for the last two days, demanding their due benefits, including overtime allowance and attendance bonus, also resumed their agitation programme yesterday morning.
Authorities of these four factories announced a general holiday

immediately after the workers resumed protesting yesterday, said workers and police.
However, the specific reason for the closure of five other factories could not be known, said Mosharraf Hossain.
But Superintendent of Police (Gazipur Industrial Police-2) Md Sarwar Alam told The Daily Star that the factories were closed as the owners could not reach consensus over workers’ demands.
Later in the evening, traffic slowed

down on Dhaka-Tangail highway, when workers of Beximco Industrial Park Factory started demonstrating at Chakraborty Bus Station area in Kashimpur around 7:00pm, demanding due salaries.
The agitating workers set fire to tyres on the road and partially vandalised one of the gates to the factory, said SP Sarwar.
“We’re talking to workers to try and get them to withdraw from the road,” he told The Daily Star around 8:30pm last night.

Trump picks China hawks for top posts

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fulfilling his key domestic promise of mass deportations of undocumented migrants.
US media also reported that Stephen Miller, the author of Trump’s so-called “Muslim ban” immigration policy during his first term, was set to be his deputy chief of staff with a broad portfolio.
New York congresswoman Elise Stefanik, a hardline defender of Israel, got the nod for UN ambassador,

Trump’s transition team said in a statement.
In a further announcement, Trump’s team said Lee Zeldin, an early political ally, would be proposed as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chief with a mandate to slash climate and pollution regulations that are considered red tape by businesses.
Top nominations, including for Stefanik, Zeldin as well as the secretary of state, would need

approval by the Senate, but Trump is hoping to bypass oversight from the upper chamber by making appointments while it is in recess.
He has turned the issue into a loyalty test, insisting Saturday that any Republican seeking to be the leader of the Senate “must agree” to recess appointments.
The three senators jockeying for the post immediately issued statements saying they supported the move, or were at least open to the idea.

WB points out myriad issues

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According to finance ministry officials, negotiations with the WB were completed on Monday, and the first round of talks with the ADB and JICA also concluded.
Officials of the Economic Relations Division of the finance ministry said they would soon finalise each development partner’s contribution to the plan. The government would foot the rest of the bill.
The plan, titled “Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Development Programme (HNPSDP)”, is renewed every five years. The current plan is set to expire in June next year.
Experts said the existing budget for health is insufficient and that the sector has struggled to effectively use the funds allocated to it.
In recent review of the health sector, the WB said, “Bangladesh’s Health, Nutrition, and Population (HNP) sector faces numerous challenges, including maintaining immunisation coverage, improving child nutrition, enhancing the quality and reach of services, reducing socio-economic and regional disparities, addressing emerging health challenges, and strengthening financial management in the health sector.”
Syed Abdul Hamid, health economics professor at Dhaka University, said the current health system is ineffective, preventing people from truly benefiting from it.

“The main issue is that the sector lacks sufficient funding. We are unable to even fully utilise the limited funds. The money is often inefficiently spent,” he told The Daily Star, adding that corruption was a major issue too.
The World Bank has identified several challenges, including the slow pace of poverty reduction amid widening inequality, as well as malnutrition.
It noted that even though the maternal mortality ratio has declined to 143 per 100,000 live births, it is still more than double the global Sustainable Development Goal target of 70.
It observed that malnutrition threatens health outcomes and human capital. Nearly one in five women in Bangladesh is undernourished, one in three women aged 15-49 is anaemic, and one in six babies is born with a low birth weight, it said.
Improving the quality of antenatal care by including measures like multiple micronutrient supplementation could help prevent these poor outcomes, stated the WB.
Action is urgently needed as Bangladesh is also vulnerable to climate change, which threatens to exacerbate malnutrition and increase the risk of climate-sensitive non-communicable diseases, it said.
“Underlying these trends is a low-quality health system,” the WB said, adding that maternal health services suffer from poor quality, with issues like inadequate midwife support during

childbirth, overuse of cesarean sections, and ineffective referral systems for timely care of complications.
The WB further mentioned that “primary healthcare facility performance is about 60 percent”, contributing to a high rate of preventable complications, increased reliance on more expensive and climate-intensive services, and a high out-of-pocket payment rate of 68.5 percent.
Prof Syed Abdul Hamid held the sector’s inefficient management accountable for these issues and suggested that recruitment for managerial positions needs to be overhauled, with rigorous training provided for both managers and supporting staff.
He advocated for block allocations for public hospitals to address emergency crises and recommended involving the private sector for repairs of machinery.
Hamid also called for streamlining the medicine supply chain, strengthening Essential Drug Company Ltd., increasing dedicated drug storage capacity, overhauling the rural healthcare sector by consolidating health and family planning services under a single framework, and establishing primary healthcare services in urban areas.
To reduce out-of-pocket expenses, he suggested lowering medicine consumption, regulating pharmacies, and controlling drug prices.

SC stays order to appoint receiver

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has filed the leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division of the SC in September this year seeking scrapping of the HC directive.
In the appeal, the company (Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited) said the HC has committed error of law fact in failing to take into account that there is no specific allegation of mismanagement or damage to any property of the company and without allegation of jeopardy, wastage or destruction to property, the court cannot direct for appointment of receiver and attachment of property based on mere apprehension and therefore, the “impugned order” is

liable to be set aside.
On Monday, the Appellate Division bench headed by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam fixed today (Tuesday) for passing order on the leave to appeal petition after concluding hearing on the matter.
Following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Masood R Sobhan, the HC on September 5 this year that directed the Bangladesh Bank to appoint a receiver to manage the companies of Beximco Group and attach all the properties belonging to the companies for six months.
The HC also ordered the central bank to recover the money obtained by Salman F Rahman, founder of

Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited, from different banks and bring the money back to Bangladesh from abroad and issued a rule to this effect.
According to Investopedia, a receiver is a person appointed as custodian of a person or entity’s property, finances, general assets, or business operations. Receivers can be appointed by courts, government regulators, or private entities.
In compliance with the HC directive, the central bank on November 10 appointed its Executive Director Md Ruhul Amin as receiver to Beximco Group in order to manage the financial affairs and assets of the troubled conglomerate.

HC clears Gias Uddin Al Mamun

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The accused walked out of jail on bail on August 6 this year after spending 17 years behind bars.
Sabbir Hamza Chowdhury, the lawyer for Mamun, told The Daily Star that the HC acquitted his client on the ground that he could not submit his wealth statement as he was in the law enforcers’ custody in 2007.

Besides, the ACC’s notice seeking his wealth statement was illegal as it had given him only 72 hours to do so instead of seven days, he said.
The lawyer added that his client was accused in 22 criminal cases. Of them, 19 were filed during the military-backed caretaker government and the rest during the Awami League government.

Mamun, who has been convicted in five cases, got bail from the HC and lower courts concerned in all the 22 cases, he said.
The accused was picked up by the joint forces on January 26, 2007. He was shown arrested in a case on March 26 that year.
Md Ashif Hassan appeared for the ACC during yesterday’s hearing.