



DID YOU KNOW?



PHOTO: AFP

If you've been following the FIFA World Cup matches this year, you might have asked yourself why the stadiums changed their names for the tournament. That's because FIFA's rules prohibit the display of sponsors that are not official partners of either the organisation or the World Cup. As a result, host venues must temporarily remove or conceal branding linked to existing naming-rights agreements.

Most stadiums will therefore be referred to by simplified names based on their location, such as Atlanta Stadium instead of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, and Boston Stadium instead of Gillette Stadium.

At Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium,

the Mercedes-Benz logo on the side of the venue has been covered by a FIFA-branded banner. Meanwhile, Gillette Stadium has concealed the branding associated with the razor company behind large white coverings. Kansas City has gone even further, removing the "GEHA" lettering entirely from GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium to ensure the venue meets FIFA's commercial requirements ahead of the tournament.

Atlanta Stadium, however, received a special exemption. According to The Athletic, after 18 months of discussions, officials concluded that removing or covering the Mercedes-Benz logo on the roof could risk damaging the structure.

Editor & Publisher
Mahfuz Anam

Rising Stars In-Charge
Faisal Bin Iqbal

Rising Stars Team
Abir Hossain
Azra Humayra
Zabin Tazrin Nashita

Photographer
Orchid Chakma

Graphics & Layout
TDS Creative Graphics

Production
Shamim Chowdhury

Send your articles,
feedback, and opinion to
rs@thedailystar.net
Find our content online at
thedailystar.net/rising-stars

ANIME

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: THE ORIGIN

The perfect prologue to the epic sagas of Gundam

MD. NAYEEM HAIDER

Mobile Suit Gundam – the franchise – is a cultural behemoth. For many ardent fans of *Gundam*, *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979) – the very first one – is the best entry point to the franchise. But for those unwilling to jump right away into a show that was produced almost half a century ago, *Mobile Suit Gundam: The Origin* (2015) – a six-part OVA series – is superior not just in technical terms but is also richer overall.

The Origin serves as a prequel to the 1979 series but is also its partial retelling. It is set in the Universal Century (UC) timeline and covers the events culminating in the One Year War—the momentous conflict that serves as the stage for much of the UC Gundam media, while holding great significance as a pivotal historical event for shows set further along in the UC timeline. The story encompasses the political struggle for independence, intricate webs of ego, self-interest, and political intrigue, and the brewing war for domination over the future of humanity, all rolled into the vehicles of space naval battles and giant robots.

Humanity, by 68 UC, had set up clusters of gargantuan space colonies orbiting Earth, with one such cluster being Side 3, Munzo, later named "Zeon". It would be named so after Zeon Zum Deikun, the philosopher-



leader who led Side 3 colonies to autonomy and who died under mysterious circumstances on the day he was supposed to formally declare independence. The story follows his children, Casval Rem Deikun and Artesia Som Deikun, who had to flee the colony in the face of political conspiracy, leaving their mother behind. The two siblings, inseparable as they are in the beginning, soon set off on wildly diverging trajectories in life, and this is a thought-provoking case study that the show presents, given that the two of them

begin at the same dark place, bearing the same loss and trauma, a dynamic that calls back to Johan and Anna from *Monster* (2004).

The Origin, as a prologue to *Gundam* (1979), focuses on the complex relationships and rivalries of the characters belonging to the Zeon camp in *Gundam*, particularly the Zabi family, whose patriarch, Degwin Zabi, installs himself in the seat of power following Deikun's demise. Degwin, as well as his children, Gihren, Kycilia, Dozel, and

Garma, are textured richly, as are the couple Ramba Ral and Crowley Hamon, and the series leverages their layers to the utmost in riveting waltzes of conflict and collaboration that, by the end of it, leave you wanting to spend more time with the characters and the world they inhabit. Intertwined with the prelude to the One Year War is the beginning of the legend of a man who would play a decisive role in both the war's outbreak and its cessation. Known as the "Red Comet", Char Aznable – the veneer of ever-reassuring competence, the ruthless tactician beneath, and the ego, emotion and vengeance at the foundation of it all – is singularly the character that makes *The Origin* special. His sister, Sayla Mass, strong-willed yet gentle in spite of the trails of tears left behind, serves as an unparalleled foil. And as the world they both know lunges headfirst into catastrophe – as billions of dreams are vaporised and the earth itself is pummelled from the skies beyond – we are left wondering whether the siblings' paths would ever intersect and in what circumstances.

Through its politics and people and the ubiquitous tension between them, *Mobile Suit Gundam: The Origin* thus weaves acute anticipation in its viewers, making it the perfect prologue for those who wish to embark upon the worlds of *Gundam*.