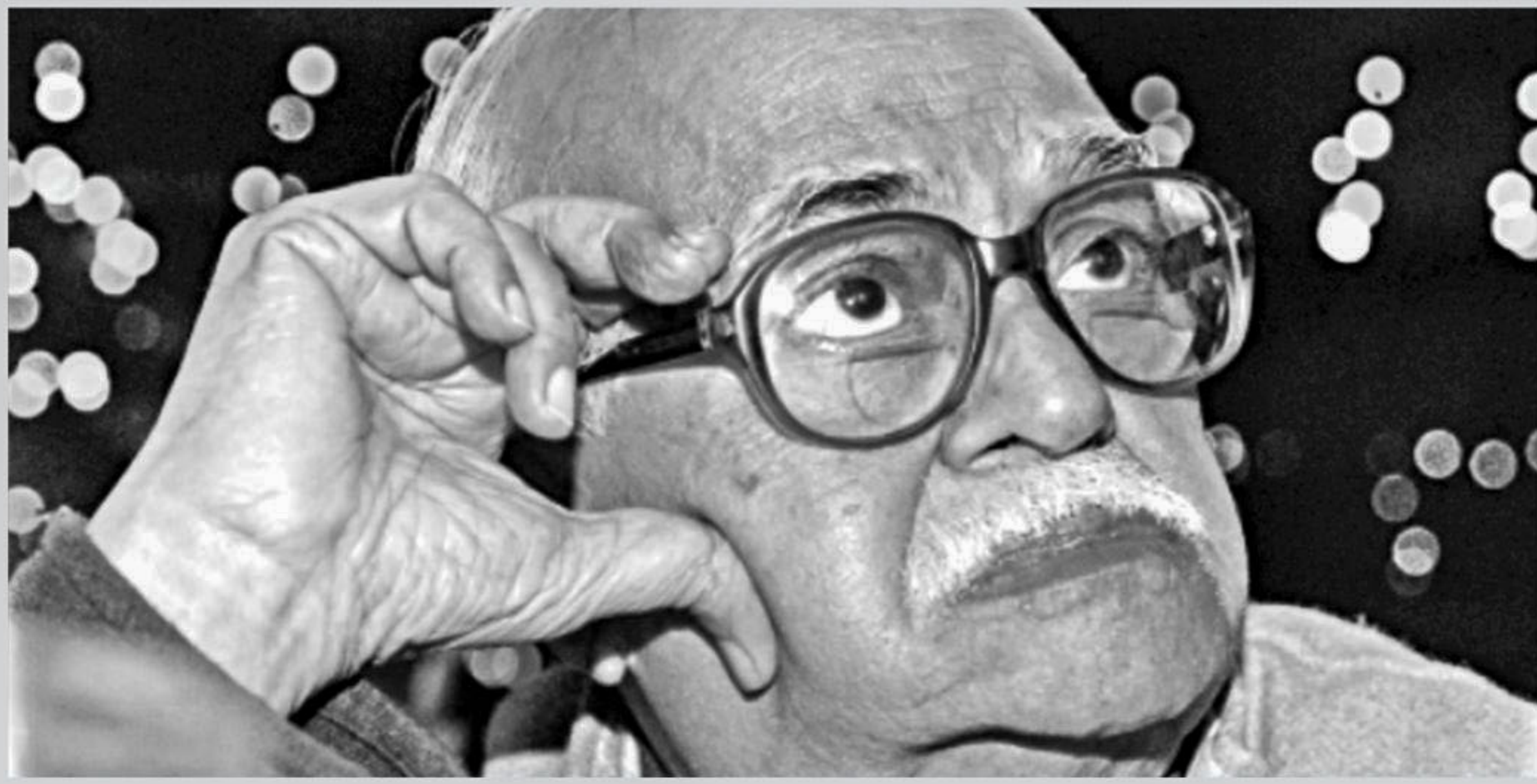


TRIBUTE

# Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui



MOHAMMAD RUKANUDDIN

AMONG the few faculty members of whom we as students were proud of, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui was one at the Department of English in Jahangirnagar University. The way he taught us, his analyses of literature, and the ethics he maintained when teaching us are still vivid in our memory.

When I enrolled in the university, Professor Siddiqui was the vice chancellor. During the first two years we saw him speaking as chief guest in various seminars, symposia, and cultural and social programmes. The manner in which he delivered his lectures and speeches, and his communication with people attracted us very much. When we were promoted to the final year of the Bachelor's programme, we came to know that in addition to his assignment as VC, he taught one course in the final year and one course in Master's programme. As soon as we knew about it, we waited eagerly to meet him in the class. Accordingly, he taught us in the final year of BA (Hons) and continued till Master's class. The punctuality and the regularity that he maintained in teaching our classes are simply rare. He was never late for class; neither did he miss any class. Moreover, he gave a clear instruction to us: "You should be here (in the class) before I'm here." And we obeyed his instruction word for word.

His gracious and elegant presence in the class impressed us immensely. His way of speaking English with immaculate British accent was admirably inspiring

and something to emulate. And we noticed that when he used Bangla in his speech, he used only Bangla, and when he used English, he used only English, and while lecturing in the class he did not utter a single word in Bangla. He did not mix languages even in his day-to-day conversation.

He was well versed in the subject he taught and was always prepared. We never saw him groping for appropriate words, phrases or expressions.

We never heard Professor Siddiqui saying anything boastfully about himself or his deeds. I remember once he was on leave for one day with a prior notice saying he would not be able to teach our class the following day owing to an unavoidable circumstance. On that day he was in the TV and radio news. He was seen in a helicopter hovering over Khulna to select a site for the then proposed Khulna University. We came to know from the news that he was the chairman of one of the committees formed for the implementation of Khulna University. Being entrusted with a nationally important responsibility like this was, no doubt, a remarkable event in Professor Siddiqui's life, but never did he mention it to us in or outside of class.

Professor Siddiqui was born in 1928 at Durgapur in Jhenedah. He obtained BA Honours and MA in English at the University of Dhaka in 1951 and 1952 respectively. Then he went to Oxford University in England, studied English literature during 1952-1954 and obtained MA from there. Coming back to erstwhile East Pakistan, he joined Dhaka College. Later, he joined the Department

of English of Rajshahi University where he structured and established a full fledged English Department.

Subsequently, he joined Jahangirnagar University as Professor of English and organised the Department of English, designing a state of the art syllabus and appointing some eminent professors. He served there till 1996. He became the vice chancellor of the University in 1976, and served ably for two consecutive terms (8 years) there.

He was appointed education adviser to the first caretaker government of Bangladesh during 1990-1991. As a prominent writer he wrote about 40 books both in Bengali and English. He has been the editor of many books, one of which is Bangla Academy English - Bangla Dictionary. Besides writing and editing books, he wrote columns in several national dailies of the country. His column, 'Myself and Others' in the now defunct Bangladesh Times was a much read one.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to literature and education, he was awarded 'Alaol Shahitya Purashkar' in 1977, 'Bangla Academy Award' in 1979, 'Kazi Mahbubullah and Begum Zebunnisa Trust Shammanana' in 1990, 'Alokto Shahitya Purashkar' in 1998, 'MA Haque Swarna Padak' in 2003 and Independence Award in 2010.

This revered octogenarian educationist left us forever on November 11, 2014. May his departed soul rest in eternal peace.

The writer is Assistant Professor of English at Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Dhaka.

ABDUL MATIN

THE news of the sudden demise of Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui came as a shock to many of us. He studied at the Presidency College (now University), Kolkata, University of Dhaka and Oxford University. He taught at the Rajshahi University. Prof Siddiqui was the vice-chancellor of the Jahangir Nagar University. He enjoyed teaching. His father was the headmaster of a high school. His eldest son teaches at a university in the States. He was proud to say that he belonged to a family engaged in teaching for three generations.

He was soft spoken, and had a unique style of speaking. He always spoke in chaste Bengali and had unparalleled command in the English language. He never minced words while talking and could keep his audience spellbound with his scholarly and witty speeches. He wrote many books, including an autobiography in which he wrote more about contemporary events and people than about himself. Prof. Siddiqui was adviser to the government when Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was the acting president in 1990-91.

I came to know Prof Siddiqui in my early life through my brother, Abdul Momin, a former minister in the cabinet of Bangabandhu, who studied with him at the Presidency College and the University of Dhaka.

Prof. Siddiqui was kind enough to attend and grace the launching ceremony of my first book, A Passage to Freedom. Knowing someone of his caliber is a great privilege and honour. Losing him is a very painful experience. I send my condolences to the bereaved family and pray for eternal peace of Prof. Siddiqui's soul in heaven.

The writer is a former chief engineer of BAEC.

# For Whom the (Wedding) Bell Tolls

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

"HAVE only one mug of coffee every day." I obey. I start using a mug that's twice as big.

Alas! There are smarter minds. They call to lower the minimum legal nuptial age of girls from 18 to 16. After all, that paints a much better picture of the statistics on child marriage.

Now, which age are we talking about? Remember the fateful day in class as ninth graders when we wrote down our age in the certificate and inked in a collective lie?

Once again, I'm smart. I remain truthful and instantly age from all my classmates by an average of five years. After all, it's seniority -- till death do us part. Until that happens, we live a life of lies. Wonder if those dates on the tombstone need to be verified through carbon dating.

As for me (five years 'older' than my class buddies), I remain young as I don't pay much attention to my biological age. Then again, once the teeth start to fall off, the mind and the body will have no choice but to connect.

Perhaps this is the very rationale of the camp which is drumming to lower the legal age of marriage of girls -- wary of the biological clock ticking away while the certificate age tries to catch up with the legal age at the rate of one year once every Halley's Comet. There goes our chance to beat the world record of the Japanese woman who turns 114. I don't think we, with all the formalin and the grease, will ever live for 125 years to 'officially' beat that record. The consolation prize? Celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and menopause on the same day.

Yeah, yeah, age is just a number. Picture the (much) older man, the (soon to be) legally mandated underaged wife and the nine kids spread out over 15 years. A family portrait looks more like the signal strength bars of a mobile phone. Turn sideways, jay walk on a zebra crossing and we have the cover of the *Abbey Road* album by *The Beatles*. No wait, that's Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

And turning 80 is not to mark eight decades on the planet, but to celebrate the 30th anniversary of looking 80. Now don't go tell this guy to act his age, because if he does so, he'll die.

When it comes to age and retiring, we are the elite SS troupe -- Strictly Sixty. No wonder the nationwide panic when a trailblazing banker and a champion of the poor, aptly credited for his fight against poverty, is shot down for evading the regulatory radar on age for 10 years. Well, at least that tells us at what warp speed the regulator works. And who better to investigate the matter than someone who may well be a hero from the Battle of Plassey. Wonder if Tagore turned in his grave or if Amartya Sen freaked out and refrained from ever setting foot on Bangladeshi soil.

Oh well, the banker's creation has turned from steak to hamburger. Women in poverty panic. Never fear. So that the future woman (now an adolescent at best) doesn't face this predicament, she can now be 'disposed off' two years quicker. For her, the wedding bell tolls.

The writer is an engineer & CEO turned comedian (by choice), the host of NTV's *The Naveed Mahbub Show* and the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: mailto:naveed@naveedmahbub.com

## CHHATRA LEAGUE RAIN OF TERROR



# The ugly is back to the fore

MUHAMMAD ZEESHAN MOHSEN

THE most condemnable event unfolded right at the foot of what millions of Bangladeshi consider almost sacred -- the Shaheed Minar. It is the symbol of respect towards what others hold in high value -- in our case, our cherished language and the sons who did not flinch once in the face of death while securing our future. The Dhaka University, the premier education institution of the country, like other renowned universities across the country, is today under the clutches of ruthlessness.

What once used to be the centres of knowledge and excellence have been reduced to dens full of political party apparatchiks, who are there not to partake in constructive intellectual discussion but to devise multiple forms of un-student like behaviour that a civilised society reviles -- at the cost of those who defy all odds to study at these historical institutions and at the same time risk being painted with the same brush as the patent perpetrators of the moment.

As if the hijacking of billboards and finding ways to the headlines wasn't

*Chattra League defiled the sanctity of the Shaheed Minar, one of the most cherished symbols of Bangladesh's existence, by brandishing sandals at the protesters.*

enough, the Chattra League, on November 11, thwarted a peaceful march led by eminent citizens to protest the assault on three people, including one woman, within the Shahidullah Hall premises on November 5. Their only fault was that they had thought they were living in a free country and that the Dhaka University fields belonged to the public, who could access, enjoy and appreciate it as and when they willed.

Chattra League defiled the sanctity of the Shaheed Minar, one of the most cherished symbols of Bangladesh's existence, by brandishing sandals at the protesters.

As if the political excesses and egregious behaviour of the Chattra League are not well known, they have now audaciously assumed the role of moral police, attacking people at whim for what they consider immoral acts.

These sordid events have established one thing beyond reasonable doubt, that student politics in our country suffer from pathological antipathy to anything civil. The madness needs to end. If this is the quality of students that our premier educational institution produces, then the future of this country seems terribly grim. A nation cannot survive too long on false pretences and promises of political leaders alone. Progress of a nation depends on the quality of human resource, and with the kind of student politics we have had in the past 20 years, there are more than compelling reasons to make the students keep to the classrooms, ever more so after the incident at the Shaheed Minar.

The writer is Barrister, Inner Temple, Associate, Mohsen & Mohsen - Law Offices, Dhaka.

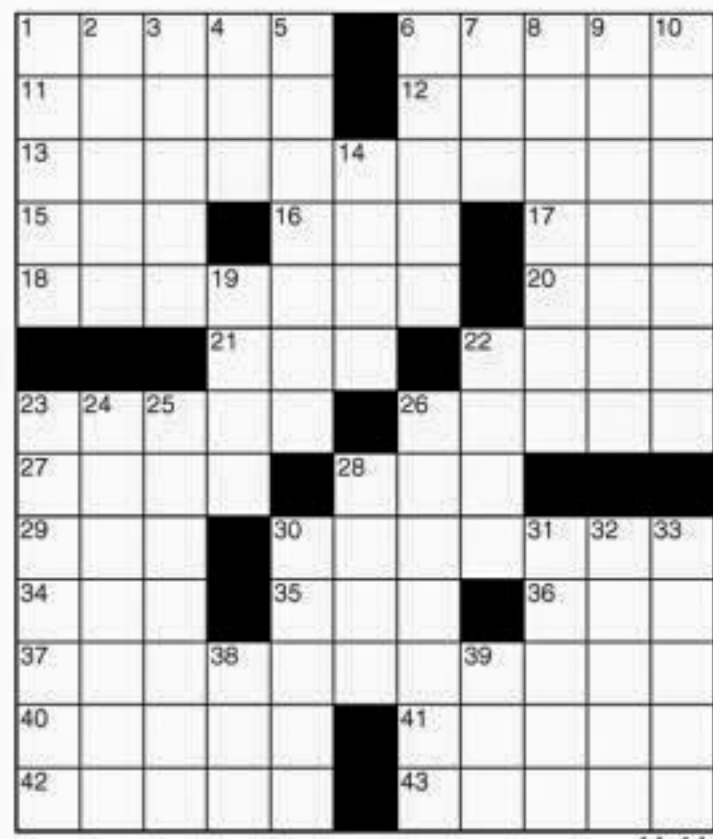
QUOTABLE Quote

Genius may have its limitations, but stupidity is not thus handicapped.

Elbert Hubbard

### CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

- ACROSS
- 1 Strong winds
  - 6 "Horrible" Viking of the comics
  - 11 Coral Island
  - 12 Wonderland visitor
  - 13 Miniature army figures
  - 15 "Strangers - Train"
  - 16 Suit accessory
  - 17 Waikiki souvenir
  - 18 Feels empathy
  - 20 - about (wander)
  - 21 Tie the knot
  - 22 Enormous
  - 23 Medal, for example
  - 26 Some Picassos
  - 27 Depend
  - 28 Singer Shannon
  - 29 Baseball's Ripken
  - 30 Not beyond repair
  - 34 Verb for you
  - 35 Back muscle, briefly
  - 36 Young fellow
  - 37 Cheyenne warrior group
  - 40 Continental coins
  - 41 Wise saying
- 42 Puts away
- 43 Rube
- DOWN
- 1 Croc's cousin
  - 2 Be penitent
  - 3 Faithful
  - 4 Golfer Emie
  - 5 Like some spoons
  - 6 Cerberus guards it
  - 7 Boxing great
  - 8 "Arthur" Oscar winner
  - 9 Farm measure
  - 10 Dwells
  - 14 Told tales
  - 19 Wrong
  - 22 Luau dance
  - 23 Pinball palaces
  - 24 Exhaust
  - 25 Brisk tempo
  - 26 Like some deliveries
  - 28 Tuning knob
  - 30 Dentist's directive
  - 31 Desolate
  - 32 Sizable
  - 33 Car of the '50s
  - 38 Scatter seeds
  - 39 Marrying words



CRYPTOQUOTE 9-22

DYWR DW JWW MYW AKRS KJ K LGXXTRBMP MG DYBLY DW QWAGRI, DW XKP QWIBR MG TJW BM DBMY AGOW KRS EWJFWLM. - KASG AWGFGAS

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE: WE MUST BALANCE CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION WITH CONSCIOUS CAPITALISM. - KEVIN KRUSE

### Yesterday's answer



A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

### BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



### HENRY

by Don Trachte

