

MYANMAR ELECTIONS

After the exhilaration comes the doubt

ACHARA DEBOONME

It was the only show in town on Sunday, as huge numbers of people showed up at Yangon's polling stations. The shining eyes reflected voters' eagerness to voice their aspirations for change. Yet such was the intensity of enthusiasm that I fear they might be unable to cope with disappointment. Though instructed by the authorities not to reveal to journalists who they voted for, many refused to hide their affection for democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). San Yi, 67, a voter in Bahan Township, was proud to reveal that she lived in the same neighbourhood as Suu Kyi. She waited two hours for a glimpse of Suu Kyi on this historic election day. "Even just a brief sight of her face

Meanwhile Facebook was flooded with pictures of people holding up one purple-inked finger. Traffic in the streets was light on Sunday, as taxi drivers disappeared back to their hometowns to vote. It came as no surprise that turnout was as high as 80 percent. Normal life returned to Yangon Monday morning, but concern will linger while the Union Election Commission announces the count constituency by constituency, in a process that will last until Sunday. Many in Yangon fear that vote-rigging could still shatter their dreams. That's understandable. They want to show the world their strong determination for real change - but electoral fraud would threaten that impression. Hla Myint, 69, is among those hoping for the best but fearing the worst. He has confidence in the voters but not in the authorities.

"above the president". "She has been a democracy defender. But now she says she will be more influential than the legitimate president. That contradicts her long-admired stance," he said. Laying his misgivings aside, he still voted for the party, choosing to remain optimistic about the outcome. The next question is who will be in the Cabinet. The administration of President Thein Sein saw several retired generals serve as ministers. Some NLD members of parliament may have the right credentials for high office, though most are thought to take their orders from Suu Kyi. The NLD leader recently hinted possible changes to a controversial dam project awarded to a Chinese consortium, changes that would certainly threaten foreign-investor sentiment. Would her Cabinet members dare



PHOTO: AFP

is worth the wait. I wanted her to know that there are many people supporting her as well as the NLD. I sincerely believe the NLD will win the election and Daw Suu can lead us to a better status, even though she is prohibited by the charter from becoming president. I am desperate to hear the election result." San Aye, 72, was elated to be casting her vote for the first time in 25 years. The retired government official believed that every citizen shared that same feeling. She openly admitted being an NLD supporter. "I believe in the party, and I have confidence in its candidates," she said. After casting her ballot, she said she would pray that the party won enough seats to form the government. Deep down, she was confident. Khin Yi, 50, a senior assistant teacher, spoke with pride at having voted in the same booth as "Auntie Suu". "Now I am very excited to hear the election results. This time I hope we don't miss out on the opportunity to choose our own government."

"What worries me the most are the 'fake ballots'," he said, adding he was praying the authorities would maintain transparency to ensure the election had been free and fair. First-time voter Ko Ko Aung, 20, shares that hope. It remains to be seen whether they will be disappointed or not. Monday morning, preliminary results suggested the NLD may have won a landslide victory. That should please Suu Kyi's supporters, as it would serve as an extra deterrent to any military move to block her party from forming the government. As an outsider, I am now left wondering how the smooth political transition and economic and social development is to be carried out. The first question is who will be president, as the military-drafted constitution bans Suu Kyi from running for the job. NLD supporters are asking the same. A Yangon resident told me he was agitated with Suu Kyi's announcement, just days before the election date, that she would be

risk the wrath of Suu Kyi and the attendant unpopularity by going against such a decision? The third question concerns Suu Kyi and the future of NLD directly. In a stunning show of support, tens of thousands attended many of her high-profile election campaign rallies. Yet little was reported about the local NLD rallies in remote areas. That led to an impression this was the fight of a woman named Suu Kyi, not a political party. It begs the question, what if something bad happens to the democracy icon? (Though given her overwhelming popularity you would be wise to whisper this qualm.) After the historic vote, Myanmar's citizens should brace for the possibility of disappointment. However, I believe they will handle things well. As such, the bulk of the disappointment should derive from their own actions. After decades of military rule, it appears that they have finally been allowed to vote for change.

The writer is senior journalist, *The Nation*. ©The Nation/ANN

TRIBUTE A Scholar Extraordinaire

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

IT'S 3 in the morning. I went to bed at 9 last night just to wake up early in order to meet the deadline for my piece on the first death anniversary of my mentor Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui. Now, why do I feel like someone who has an exam? The one-page bio of my professor seems like a syllabus that cannot be reviewed in one sitting, especially when the course involves someone as eminent as ZRS. He always had this effect on me, his aura of greatness forcing me to resort to a reverent silence.

His reputation as a reserved man preceded him. Soon after I joined Jahangirnagar University as a student, ZRS joined the first caretaker government as an Education Advisor. We would hear stories of his calm composure that added to the myth of ZRS being a reserved man. We were too young to understand the subtlety of his wit. In one of his classes, a student pronounced Chaucer as 'Saucer.' ZRS simply looked out through the window, and said, "I don't see any!" I am sure the mortified student wished at that moment that a flying saucer would indeed come and take him away.

After ZRS resumed his professorial post, at a university that he served as VC for two successive terms, I began to realise what a wonderful teacher he was. He would normally sit on his wooden chair, lean forward and read out from his copy of a book that was marred by personal inscriptions and annotations. He would enunciate each word so distinctly that it would dance before your eyes. I still remember the way he explained the words 'chiaroscuro' and 'gossamer' while transporting us to the world of Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters* or the way he voiced out "Oh my prophetic soul" while teaching us *Hamlet*. His description of the debate of the fallen angels in the pandemonium or Satan travelling through Chaos made Milton come alive. Well we also learned about the 'pins and needles' that were bothering our professor in the English department.

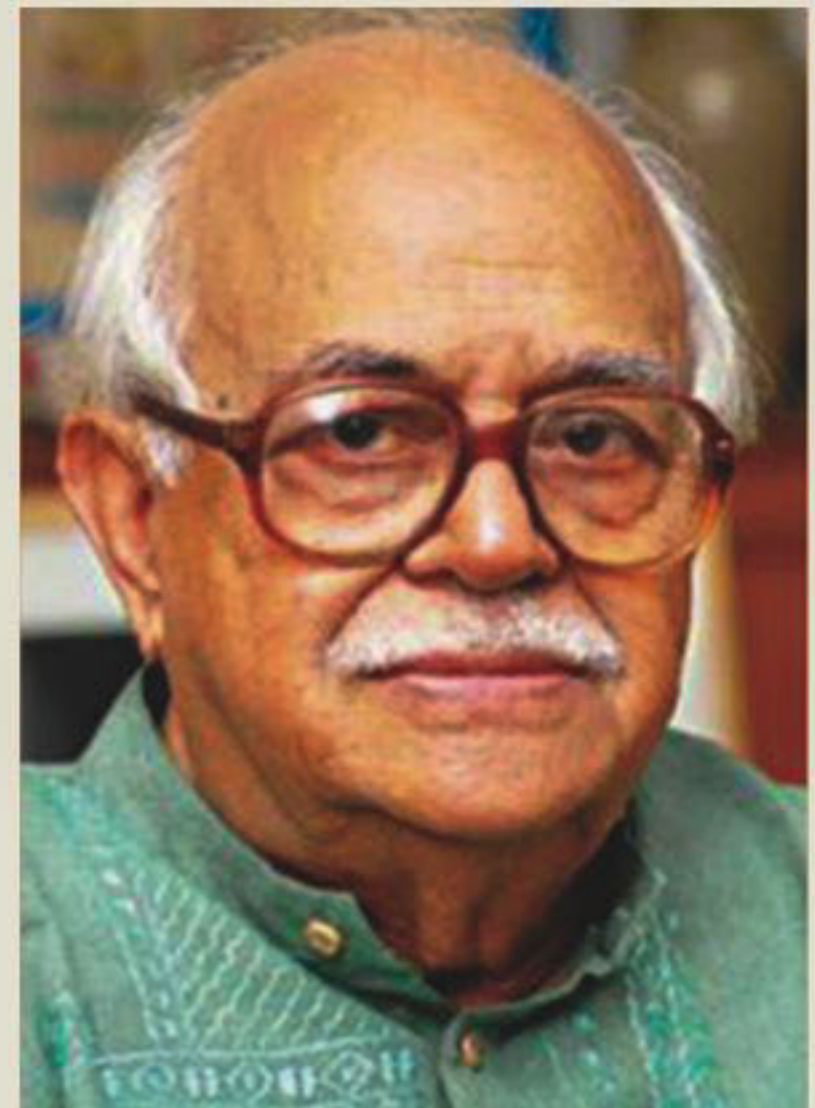
"Make a habit of spending at least 4 hours for a one-hour lecture, and retain all your notes." He advised after I had joined JU as a lecturer in 1994. ZRS was working on a Ford Foundation project on Higher Education at that time. He asked me to become his research assistant. I jumped at the opportunity. While working with him, I got to know the 'man' behind the 'name' ZRS. He would tell me about his Rajshahi, Oxford, and of course Jahangirnagar days.

He told me how his professor at DU, the then Chair of the English Department, Ms A.G. Stock, recommended him to do a second BA leading to an MA in Oxford. He recalled his encounter with the curator of the cricket ground of Worcester College. As ZRS appreciated the green turf, the curator curtly replied: '300 years in the making!' He would tell me about the Oxford tutorial system, high table and low table, the boat race and so on. Little did he know that he was instilling a desire in me to pursue research in the UK. This small talk took place normally during our lunch break.

He would tell me about his decision of joining Rajshahi University, leaving the job at Dhaka College. His challenge of building a new university at

Jahangirnagar; his constant meetings with architect Muzharul Islam in finalising the architectural design of Jahangirnagar campus: the unique butterfly shaped Mir Mosharraf Hossain Hall, the library building at the heart of the 740-acre campus, or the amphitheatre.

Some of these accounts are recorded in his autobiography, *Amar Cholar Pothe*, where he graciously mentioned me. He retired from Jahangirnagar in 1996. His farewell was arranged on a lakeside lawn under some tall palm trees arranged in a circular pattern. The pro-VC Prof Tajul Islam speaking at the occasion reminisced how ZRS made them plant those palms. The lush green campus that JU boasts owes a great deal to this visionary man. His love for JU was immense. He made a special arrangement with the library to avail its service even after his retirement. He had a plot of land in JU Housing Society, and whenever he would come to Savar, he would visit the library. There is hardly any book in JU library that does not have ZRS's initial on the issue card. Such was his passion for books.



Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

ZRS grew up in an academic milieu. He was born in Jhenaidah in 1928. His father was the headmaster of Jessore Zilla School. He went to Presidency College before joining DU soon after the partition. He became the VC of Gono Biswasbidyalaya after his retirement from JU, but the daily

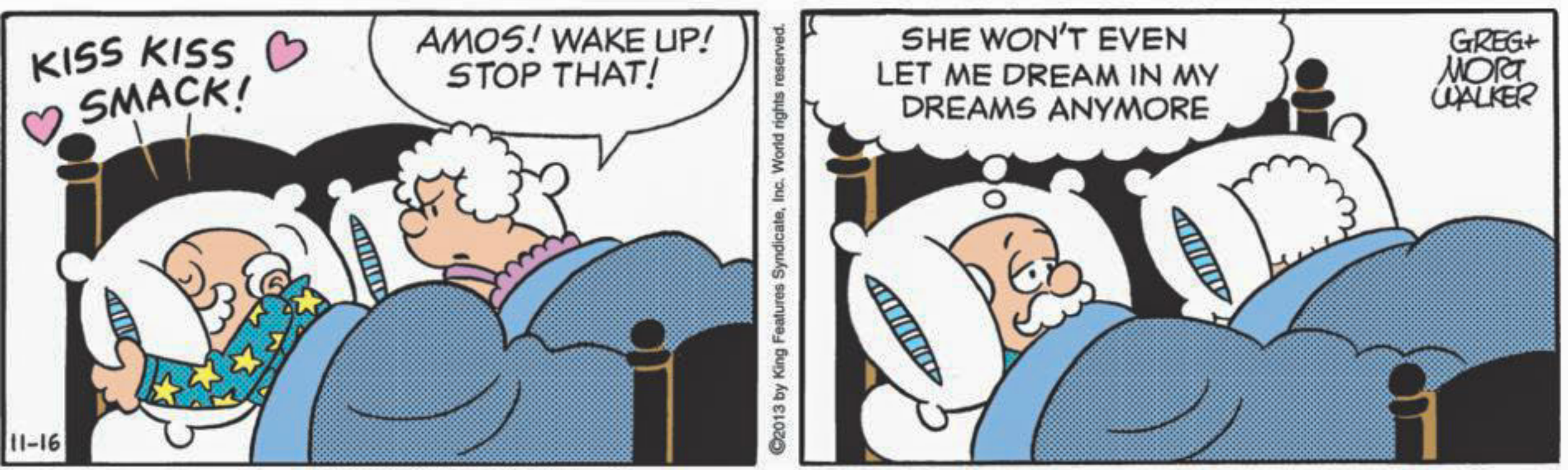
journey proved too much for him. He left that job in 2003, and focused mainly on writing. The *Bangla Academy English-Bengali Dictionary* is one of his greatest achievements. He was a translator par excellence. His lucid translations of Milton's *Areopagitica* and Shakespeare's *Sonnets* retain the flavour of the original. This was possible because he himself was a creative writer. He has nearly 40 books to his credit, ranging from travelogues to poetry. Bangla Academy Award and Swadhinota Puroshkar for Education are two laurels of many in his wreath.

He wrote regularly for *The Daily Star*, *Prothom Alo* and *Samakal*. He started writing the DS column, "No Time for Trumpet," at the request of his friend S.M. Ali. There was something unique about his generation. Prof Siddiqui belonged to the class of 1950. All his friends are immensely successful in their respective fields. He would tell me about the debate that they used to hold in the dorm and how the English professors would pick on them for their wrong choice of definite articles. I noticed a strange mutual admiration and possessiveness among this generation. He would never mention his closest friends without an epithet: "Amar bandhu Habibur Rahman Shelly," or "Amar bandhu Shamsur Rahman." Yet he would always use *apni* to address them. ZRS once sent me to poet Shamsur Rahman's house in Shyamoli to pick up a book; he too said, "Amar bandhu Zillur tomake pathiyeche?" ZRS was an extremely measured and composed man. There was nothing excessive about him, yet he exuded extraordinariness. A year back, on November 11, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui left us. He was 86, the newspaper read the following day. Well, he is a much greater figure than these figures would suggest. I salute my professor and wish him eternal peace.

The writer is Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka.

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Purposely ignores
 - 6 Bounders
 - 10 Like Swiss cheese
 - 11 Deplete
 - 13 Following
 - 14 Florida city
 - 15 Damage
 - 16 Three on a clock
 - 18 Make mistakes
 - 19 Cave formations
 - 22 Some amount of
 - 23 Office note
 - 24 Spots for tots
 - 27 Cook's wear
 - 28 Top-notch
 - 29 Saloon quaff
 - 30 Cave formations
 - 35 Saloon
 - 36 Sticky stuff
 - 37 Contented sound
 - 38 "off Two Cities"
 - 40 Nick of "48 HRS"
 - 42 Golfer Ben
 - 43 Used a towel
 - 44 Take a breather
- DOWN
- 1 Pillow covers
 - 2 Jack Sprat's restriction
 - 3 Extreme
 - 4 Pollen collector
 - 5 Damascus natives
 - 6 Be effective
 - 7 Simile center
 - 8 Goddess of grains
 - 9 Top boss
 - 12 Church leader
 - 17 Record over
 - 20 Frozen company
 - 21 Louvre entrance designer
 - 24 Algiers section
 - 25 Shoulder muscle
 - 26 Furious
 - 27 Praline base
 - 29 In the past
 - 31 Operative
 - 32 Shire of "Rocky"
 - 33 Gourmet
 - 34 Storage sites
 - 39 Vegas
 - 41 Mine rock



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

F I R M I N C A S
M O N E Y M A S S
O S C A R S Y R U P
U T I L I Z E I D O
N E T L A I E R O B I C
T R E N D S D E S K
A S T R O
S C A M F O R G E D
O R D E R U P U R I
R A M E L E C T R A
E V I T A S A T A N
R A I T E I R E N E
T E E M N E R D

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

The only university in Bangladesh where all faculty members have foreign Master's or Doctorate degrees primarily from USA, Canada, UK, Australia and Japan

Graduate Admission Spring 2016

Programs

- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA)
- Master of Public Health (MPH)
- Executive Master of Public Health (EMPH)
- MS in Economics
- Master's in Development Studies (MDS)
- MPharm in Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacy
- MPharm in Pharmaceutical Technology and Biopharmaceutics
- MS in Biotechnology
- MS in Environmental Science and Management
- MS in Computer Science and Engineering
- MS in Electronics and Telecom Engineering
- MS in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- MA in English
- MPPG (Master in Public Policy and Governance)

Application Requirements

Four-year Bachelor's degree or equivalent with at least Second Class or GPA 2.75 on a scale of 4.0

Three-year Bachelor's degree with honors students with inadequate course work background may be advised to take additional pre-requisite courses.

Admission Test is waived for candidates with GPA 3.0 from NSU or 3.5 from other institutions or adequate score in GMAT or GRE and TOEFL score of 500 (Paper Based) or equivalent.

Financial Aid

Up to 100% based on admission test and academic performance. NSU offers scholarship over Tk. 10 crore per year for meritorious and needy students.

Application Deadline

25 November, 2015, 5:00 pm

Admission Test

27 November 2015
Friday, 10:00am
at NSU Campus

Application form can be downloaded from NSU website and submitted with document of deposit Tk. 1500 at any of the following banks: Southeast Bank, UCBL, DBBL, NCCBL, IFIC Bank, Bashundhara branch, and One Bank, Jagannathpur branch, Dhaka. Printed forms are also available in the above mentioned banks.

For more details, please contact
NSU Admissions and Information Office
 Level 1, Bashundhara, Dhaka 1229
 Tel: 880 2 55668200, Ext. 5000, 5002, 5004, 1174, 1062
 E-mail: admissions@northsouth.edu, nurul.amin@northsouth.edu