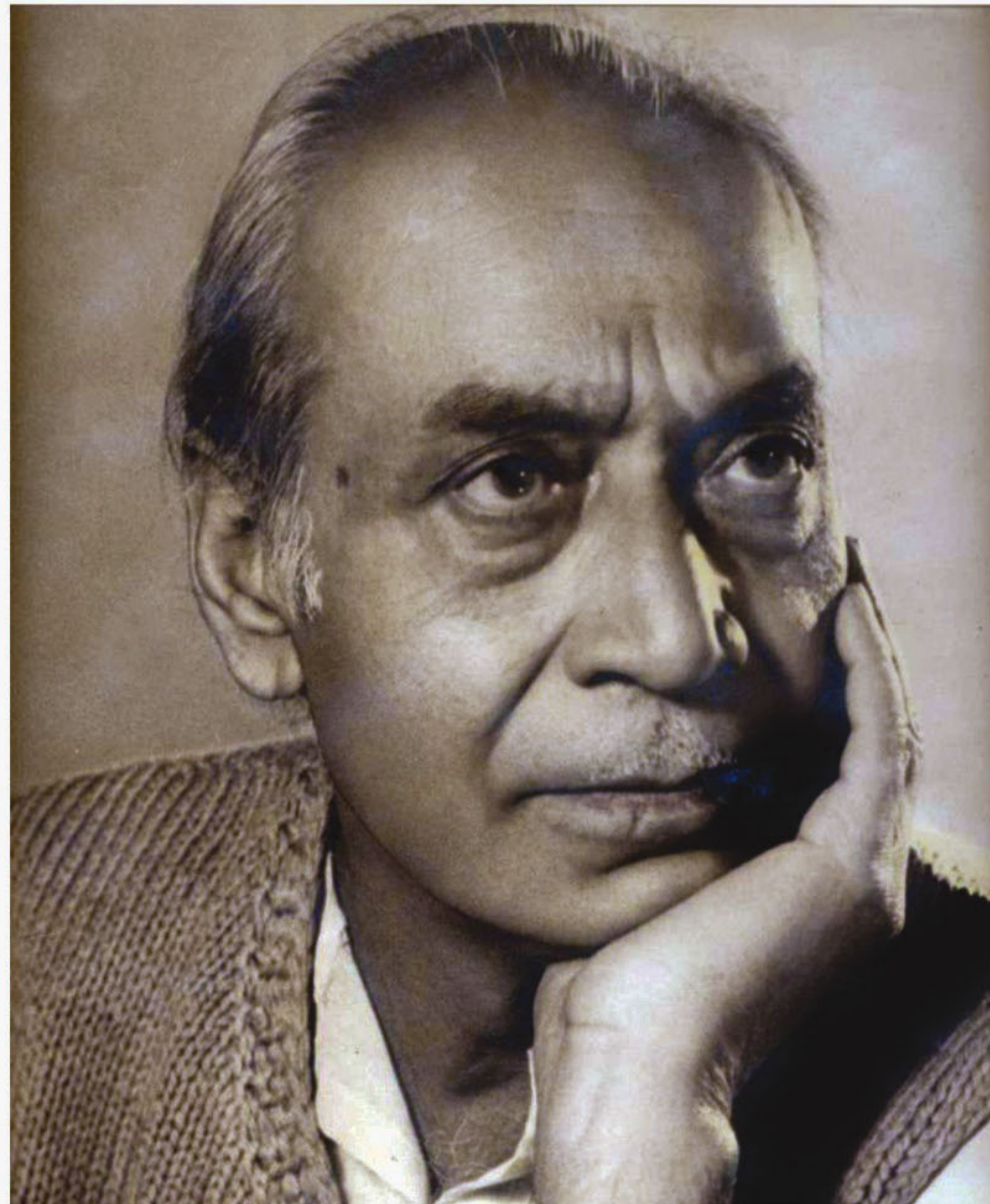


There are two kinds of people in this world: those that love to read and those that love to write. Snuggled between these two groups, smack-dab in the middle of the dividing line, are those who are simply enchanted with words. These individuals are the true connoisseurs of vocabulary, who celebrate the nuances in pronunciations and revel in the imageries that words have the ability to invoke. Naushad Noori, celebrated Urdu poet and an iconic grand-father, epitomised the description of these word-aficionados. He danced in doldrums of the dictionary and in turn was a staunch protector of any language, in any form. In 1952, Naushad Noori would attract infamy from the very quarters he called his own when he stood up for the Bengali language, despite being an Urdu poet.

Naushad Noori, like all dreamers who make up his category, developed an affinity with the languages early on. Fittingly ahead of his time as poet, the unassuming figure who picked out the best mangoes for his grandchildren in between piggyback rides, transformed into a revolutionary when handed the pen. His large body of work is evidence of the zeal with which he worked. However, his pursuit wasn't one of remembering something to live by but rather a celebration of literature; a purely undiluted love letter to man's genius of crafting the best form of communication. He was a man bursting to engage with enunciations and just as his love affair with the Bangla language was at its zenith, Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan,



Naushad Noori

PHOTO: COURTESY

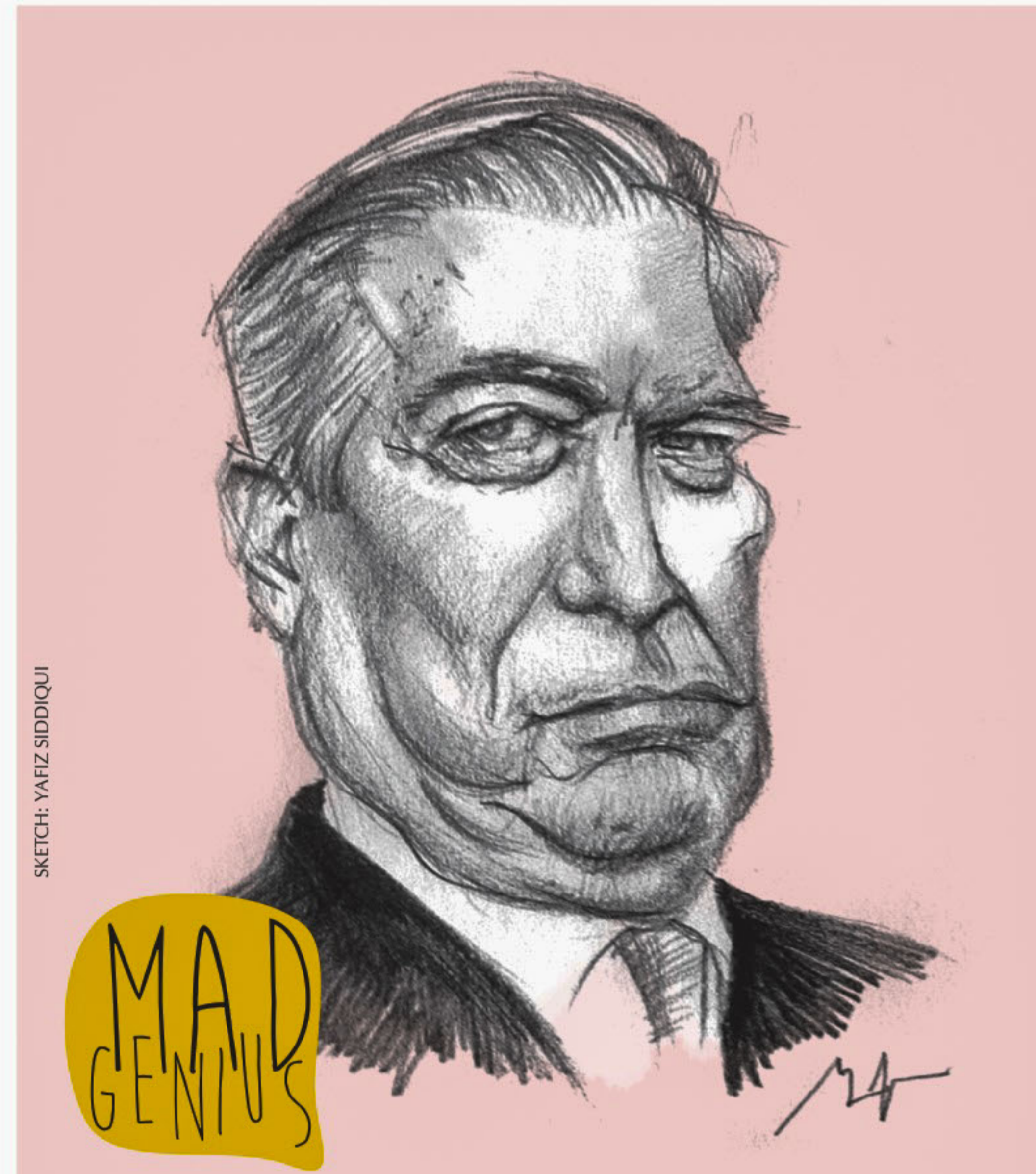
| PERSONALITY |

Noori lambasted the Prime Minister for his capitalistic ambitions and lack of foresight. In a show of his prodigy, he delivered the entire poem in Hindi and Sanskrit as opposed to his regular Urdu and Persian, endearing himself to the gathered audience of working class people hard done by a growing wealth gap. His words echoed so much that the Indian government took notice and issued an arrest warrant which led to his migration to Dhaka.

But being outspoken meant, while he attracted a large following here, he also courted controversy. In 1952, shocked and appalled by the policies of the West Pakistani government, he penned one of his best known poems, "Mohenjo Daro", in Urdu. His choice of Urdu was not only for his appeal; it sent quite a telling message. Mohenjo Daro was his personal, lyrical protest against Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan's decision, to impose Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan. For the first time ever, Naushad Noori forced not only his Urdu speaking counterparts, but even the Bengalis, to understand the ramifications of giving up their language.

"Our manuscript, our song Our ancestor's fables! To each his own lullaby To each his own alphabets, Enscribe them in leaves, stones, skin, papyrus leaves, silver and even iron, The epidemic has resurfaced..." he warned. For Naushad

Noori, Jinnah's logic flew against the face of what he loved most: words and languages. He personally took it upon



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

MAD GENIUS

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

Jorge Mario Pedro Vargas Llosa, 1st Marquis of Vargas Llosa more commonly known as Mario Vargas is a Peruvian writer, politician, journalist, essayist, college professor, and recipient of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature. Vargas Llosa is one of Latin America's most significant novelists and essayists, and one of the leading writers of his generation. Some critics consider him to have had a larger international impact and worldwide audience than any other writer of the Latin American Boom. Upon announcing the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Swedish Academy said it had been given to Vargas Llosa "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat".

“It's easy to know what you want to say, but not to say it.

No matter how ephemeral it is, a novel is something, while despair is nothing.

In my case, literature is a kind of revenge. It's something that gives me what real life can't give me - all the adventures, all the suffering. All the experiences I can only live in the imagination, literature completes.

Memory is a snare, pure and simple; it alters, it subtly rearranges the past to fit the present.

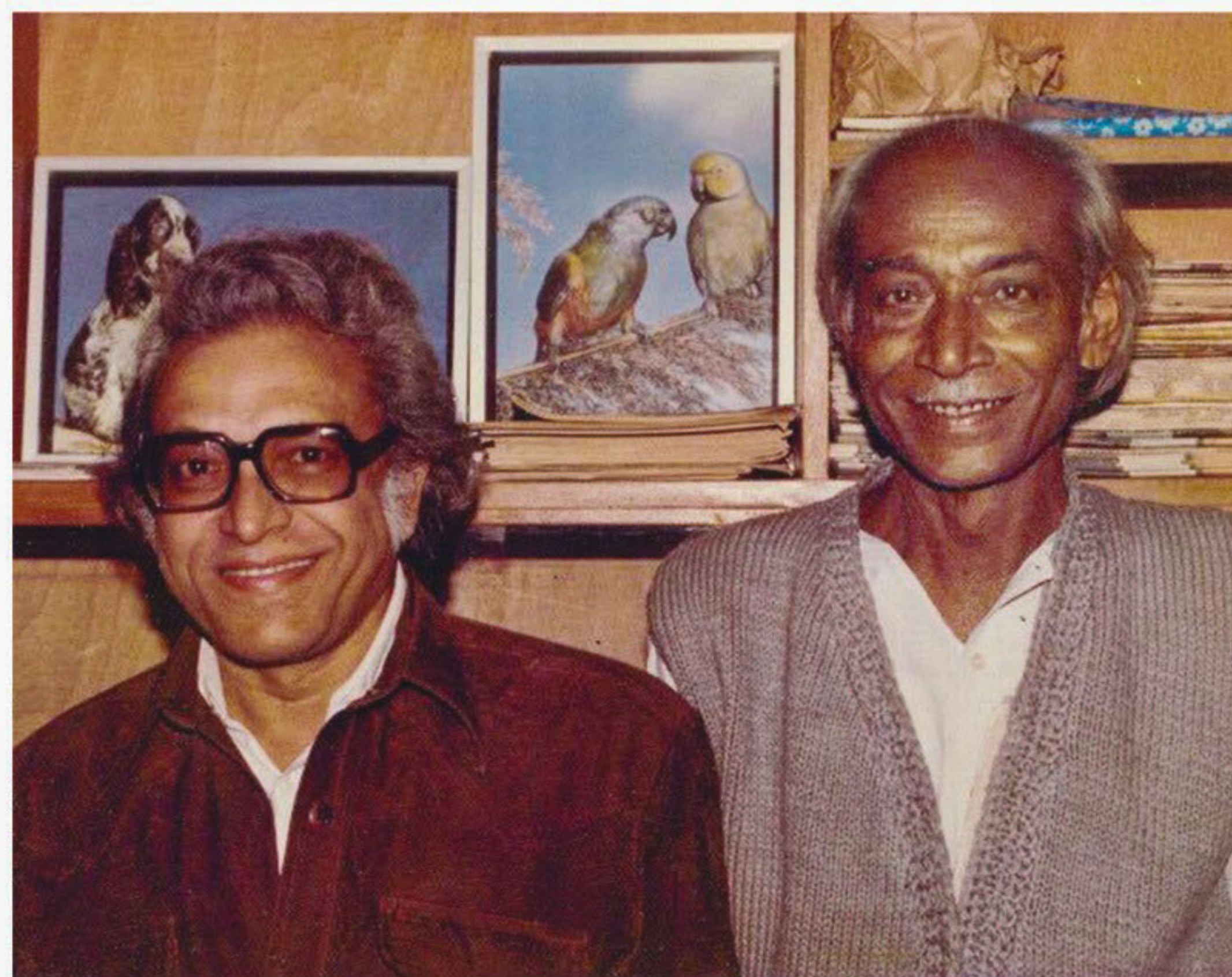
You cannot teach creativity—how to become a good writer. But you can help a young writer discover within himself what kind of writer he would like to be.”

NAUSHAD NOORI BANGLADESH'S GREATEST URDU POET

OSAMA RAHMAN

declared Urdu to be the state language of Pakistan. Naushad Noori reacted with fury and reached for his pen when others in his position would have advised temperance. Noori was not going to stand for the death of what he considered one of the most beautiful languages in the world.

At this point, one may wonder why a poetry or a prose would matter to Jinnah. It is important to note that this was a time when intellectualism mattered more to the masses than muscles. Naushad Noori had also attracted an affectionate notoriety for himself in those days. A graduate of BN College, Patna, Noori joined the Progressive Writer's Association, formed in 1936 and moved on to attend the programmes of the Communist Party. The disparity of wealth distribution, evident by the state of his state of birth Bihar, was perhaps one of the reasons behind his leanings towards the left. Reacting to the invitation of Harry S Truman sent to the Prime Minister of India to go to Washington, Noori penned one of his most famous poems, 'Bhikari' (beggar). As Nehru geared up to ask America for aids,



Naushad Noori with Shamsur Rahman (L).

PHOTO: COURTESY

himself to protect Bengali. He lost his government job when he chose to resign instead of retract but did not change his tone and continued to fight for the Bengali language.

Growing up, I did not know these fascinating facts about him. For me, he was a grandfather, who carried me around on his shoulder and played with us cousins. We never knew his firebrand political side. We did not know the sacrifices he made. He would ask his children for nothing but a new panjabi or so and even then he did not want more than four sets in total. He was a simple man in love with simple things. When he passed away, I was confused at the number of people mourning his loss. How did they know him, I wondered. Perhaps they didn't; they knew his words and they fell in love with how he resonated with them. Naushad Noori may be Bangladesh's greatest Urdu poet. For me though, he will always be the world's greatest grandfather and while the Ekushey Padak may not make his way to him anytime soon, nothing detracts from his legacy. ■

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

One evening, I read my father's personal diary which I have been seeing laying around our house since childhood. Never did I touch or even try to open it as I did not feel it necessary to do so. Things that we are used to seeing around us don't attract us much as per the universal principle.

But that evening, my mom gave me the dairy to find out an urgent phone number of one of our family doctors. While looking up for the number, I went through the pages of the diary, and I came across

some of my father's memories- happy and sad- dated mostly from 80s and 90s.

I could not hold back my tears as I got to know the unknown ordeals and upheavals my father and his whole family had to go through. The way I used to see life-- a fantasy of happiness and ecstasy changed after reading the diary. It turned into a realistic world which I too might have to face in the near future. Sigh! Samiul Raijul North South University Dhaka



PHOTO: INTERNET

OF TERRIBLE JUDGEMENT

These are the two incidents that sometimes make me question myself if I'd done a crime or something.

Incident 1: Since I was a little child, unlike others, I had developed an interest in astronomy. When I was in 2nd grade, I had decided to become an astrophysicist and still want to. At first, no one questioned why I wanted that or who inspired me to want that. One of my idols are Stephen Hawking and I've read almost all of his books and tried to understand the contexts. Nowadays, my family members and even my private tutor have been telling me that if I go that way I'll become an atheist. So, I should grow a liking to any other subject.

Incident 2: Me and one of my

classmates were talking about the heinous terror attack which took place in Gulshan. To my great horror, my classmate said that the attackers hadn't done a bad job by killing the foreigners and those who were wearing western clothes. In fact, she said that if she was in their place, she'd also do the same. That was the last time I spoke to her. She has already become an extremist and I wonder what will happen when she grows up. She also told me that I felt sad for the victims because I'd become an atheist. I'm now terrified and depressed about the situation that everyone thinks that if one has different views of things, they're atheists or bad people. Pokemon Ashley Uttara, Dhaka