

Dhaka summers are almost never looked forward to- the heat, the humidity, and the frizz, sweat patches and load shedding being a few of the legitimate reasons behind this understandable dislike. One of the major side effects of all of the aforementioned is one we hardly ever speak of but endure on a daily basis- foul body odour (BO). Be it inside a vehicle (public or private), in the elevator, on a crowded street or within the close proximity of office cubicles, one whiff is enough to ruin your day. We won't even mention the hugs that are sometimes necessary and unavoidable.

What is avoidable however, is walking around smelling like a bag of week-old garbage, causing misery

TO SMELL OR NOT TO SMELL THAT IS THE QUESTION

ANIKHA HOSSAIN

all around- a fact that the smelly are quite unaware of. So let's help them out with a few tips on how to tackle their problem.

First of all let us do away with a common misconception that excessive sweat causes BO. Sweat itself is almost odourless, but the microscopic bacteria that live in our skin tend to mix with sweat, and multiply causing a stink. Those who sweat more tend to wash away that bacteria, as for the rest, they just need to shower atleast once a day (anyone with a basic sense of hygiene should know this), and pay special attention to areas more prone to gather sweat such as the armpits, groin, belly button, feet etc. Be sure to use an antibacterial soap.

Towel off thoroughly after you shower because it's harder for odour causing bacteria to breed on your skin if it is dried properly. Next, apply a strong deodorant or antiperspirant that will mask your "natural" smell. These



AN APPLE A DAY

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

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are available over the counter-no prescription required. It is a terrible idea to use perfumes as a substitute because they just don't work.

Wash your clothes regularly (this includes socks). Some people are averse to doing laundry regularly because they tend to believe this odd practice increases

the durability of their garments. Ask yourself this- will anyone care how new your outfit looks if you smell like a baboon's backside? If you have an ounce of common sense, you will arrive at the right answer, the sooner the better. Also, when selecting your clothes choose ones made of natural fibres such as cotton and silk because research shows these fabrics allow for better airflow on the skin keeping it drier.

Change your diet. Those who eat lots of spicy food, hot peppers, onions, garlic etc tend to produce unpleasant body odour. This is because the aroma of these foods can be carried in your sweat. So beware.

Follow these suggestions, and if none of it works for you, seriously consider seeing a dermatologist. So the next time you want the world to experience your *au naturel*, state, remember, unpleasant BO can affect how people perceive you. It can also affect relationships both personal and professional. Good luck! ■

QUIRKY SCIENCE

Why the Universe isn't as Bright as it should be

A handful of new stars are born each year in the Milky Way, while many more blink on across the universe. But astronomers have observed that galaxies should be churning out millions more stars, based on the amount of interstellar gas available.

Now researchers from MIT and Michigan State University have pieced together a theory describing how clusters of galaxies may regulate star formation. They describe their framework this week in the journal-Nature.

When intra-cluster gas cools rapidly, it condenses, and then collapses to form new stars. Scientists have long thought that something must be keeping the gas from cooling enough to generate more stars - but exactly what has remained a mystery.

For some galaxy clusters, the researchers say, the intra-cluster gas may simply be too hot - on the order of hundreds of millions of degrees Celsius. Even if one region experiences some cooling, the intensity of the surrounding heat would keep that region from cooling further - an effect known as conduction.

For so-called "cool core" galaxy clusters, the gas near the centre may be cool enough to form some stars. However, a portion of this cooled gas may rain down into a central black hole, which then spews out hot material that serves to reheat the surroundings, preventing many stars from forming - an effect the team terms "precipitation-driven feedback."





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NICE TO SNIFF YOU

Handshakes may engage our sense of smell



Why do people shake hands? A new Weizmann Institute study suggests one of the reasons for this ancient custom may be to check out each other's odours. Even if we are not consciously aware of this, handshaking may provide people with a socially acceptable way of communicating via the sense of smell.

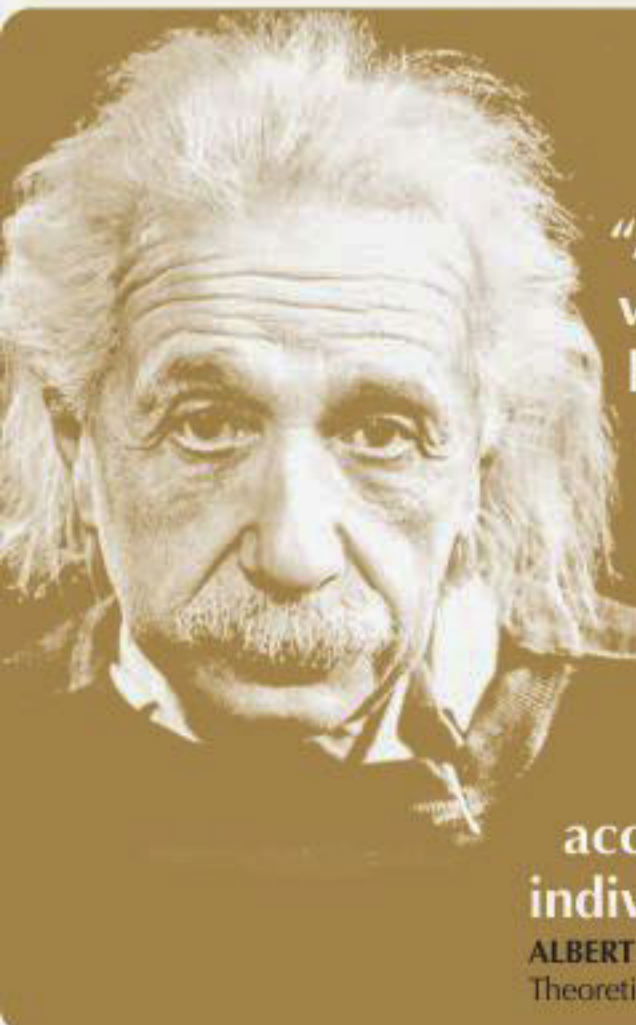
Not only do people often sniff their own hands, but they do so for a much longer time after shaking someone else's hand, the study has found. As reported today in the journal *eLife*, the number of seconds the subjects spent sniffing their own right hand more than doubled after an experimenter greeted them with a handshake.

To examine whether handshakes indeed transfer body odours, the researchers first had experimenters wearing gloves shake the subjects' bare hands, then tested the glove for smell residues. They found that a handshake alone was sufficient for the transfer of several odours known to serve as meaningful chemical signals in mammals.

Next, to explore the potential role of handshakes in communicating odours, the scientists used covert cameras to film some 280 volunteers before and after they were greeted by an experimenter, who either shook their hand or didn't. The researchers found that after shaking hands with an experimenter of the same gender, subjects more than doubled the time they later spent sniffing their own right hand (the shaking one). In contrast, after shaking hands with an experimenter of the opposite gender, subjects increased the sniffing of their own left hand (the non-shaking one).

Compiled by: APURBA JAHANGIR

PEARLS OF WISDOM



"All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual."

ALBERT EINSTEIN
Theoretical physicist.



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

NELSON MANDELA
South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician and philanthropist.

"The fact that the poor are alive is clear proof of their ability."

MUHAMMAD YUNUS
Nobel Peace Laureate, social entrepreneur, banker and economist.

