

VISUAL STORYTELLING

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The title 'photojournalist' or 'photographer' can barely describe Din Muhammad Shibly's versatile activism with his camera. His vast journalistic research and photography work on climate change and mentoring programmes at one of Bangladesh's leading photography institute, Counter Foto, has made him an icon in environmental and media activism. A graduate of Mass Communication and Journalism from Rajshahi University, Shibly's journey as a documentary photographer and freelance photojournalist started in 2003.

The turning point in Shibly's life came when renowned photographer Peter Essick from National Geographic Channel visited Bangladesh to cover the impact of climate change, and Shibly got the chance to work with him. "At that time I used to take random photos of every element related to climate change such as rivers or oceans or affected communities," he says.

"However, it was the beginning of my thirty years long project called Time/Life to portray the impact of climate change in Bangladesh," he adds. After the devastating flood of 2007, Shibly took Time/Life as the flagship project of his

documentary-photography career.

Shibly says, "I have travelled to the distant islands of Bhola and also to remote northern districts, like Kurigram to experience the actual effect of climate change on Bangladeshi people's livelihood."

Shibly has been working relentlessly on this project for 12 years and has arranged 4 exhibitions with his works. His first exhibition called Time/Life- 1 was arranged in Rajshahi University and the second one was arranged in Chittagong. However, the third exhibition was something very special for Shibly. "I became very happy when I was allowed to arrange my exhibition at the conference hall of Nansen Initiative on climate change, disasters and human mobility in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region," he says. "Many global policy makers were present at the conference in Khulna and they experienced the sufferings of our people through my works."

Shibly did not go for international recognition or awards. "What I want to do is to draw the attention of leaders and policy makers through my works so that they can realise the plight of the affected people," he says.

The latest exhibition has brought Shibly nearer to his goal. The fourth exhibition of Time/Life has been arranged at the gallery of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, where his works on Bangladeshi climate affected communities have drawn the attention of national and international policy makers.

Shibly says, "I have spent 12 years on this project and I will continue to work for another 18 years. My mission is to show the world what is actually happening to those affected by climate change. Sometimes I wish I could cover all the billboards of the main avenues of Dhaka city with these photographs."

Shibly has also been working as the head of academics of Counter Foto and through his mentoring programme at the institute, has been developing batches of skilled photographers and researchers who will be working on the impact of climate change in Bangladesh.

Din Muhammad Shibly



When we talk about youth leadership, one of the first names to enter the mind is of Ejaj Ahmed. Founder of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), Ejaj has contributed a lot by training and motivating the young generation of our country to take the lead. So far, Ejaj has trained more than 500 students from various high schools, colleges and universities. The leadership boot camp and summit organised by his center are two of the most popular youth-engaging events of our country. Recently, Ejaj served as the principal consultant for writing the National Youth Policy and Action Plan with the collaboration of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Commonwealth Secretariat.

"I grew up in house full of management books as my father was a Professor at IBA, Dhaka University. One can say my fascination towards management and leadership grew from there," says Ejaj Ahmed. During his teenage years Ejaj was heavily involved in community service and social projects through his father's Rotary Club.

At the age of 17, Ejaj started applying for universities abroad. "One of the reasons I chose St. Andrews University to do my Bachelors in Economics was because they had one of the oldest debating chambers in the world. The university itself was 600 years old," he says. In St. Andrews, Ejaj was very involved in student politics. He was elected office in the student union and in his final year he ran to become the first non-white president of the St. Andrews Union.

LEADING THE YOUTH

APURBA JAHANGIR



Ejaj Ahmed

PHOTO: COURTESY

After coming back to Bangladesh in 2003, Ejaj worked for three years as an economist. Around 2006, he went to do his Masters in Public Policy at Harvard University.

"At Harvard, I studied leadership with some of the best minds in the field, and they reinforced in me the idea that leadership is not the same as authority," says Ejaj. "I learned that ordinary people like you and me can become leaders when we have the ability to exercise courage, competence, and compassion."

Ejaj Ahmed established BYLC to provide world class leadership training to the youth of our country. It is the first organisation in the country that brings together English, Bangla, and Madrasa medium students on a common platform. "This work is critical for the future of Bangladesh because we need inclusive and collaborative leadership in our society," he says. "Many of the tensions and conflicts we see in society are due to intolerance towards different beliefs and ideologies. BYLC is trying to foster a sense of unity and common understanding among the Bangladeshi youth," says Ejaj.

A role model to the youth, Ejaj's advice is, "always look out for opportunities that will help you develop your leadership skills. GPA 5 is not enough to be successful in your career. You need strong critical thinking, teamwork, communication skills to excel in the real world and it is only by participating actively in extra-curricular activities during your school, college and university years that you can harness these skills."

QUIRKY SCIENCE

THE TALE OF LIFE

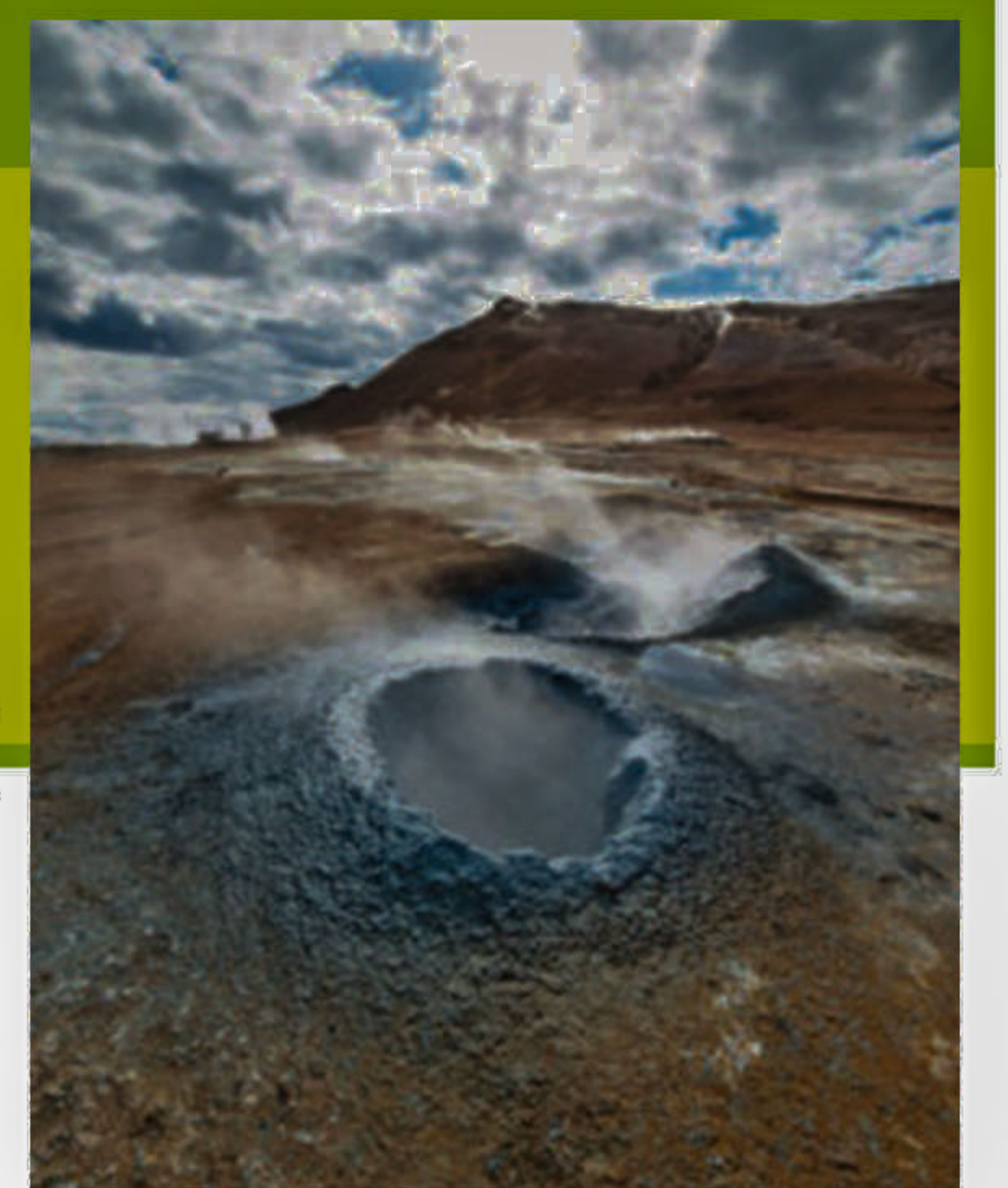
In the beginning, there were simple chemicals. And they produced amino acids that eventually became the proteins necessary to create single cells. And the single cells became plants and animals. Recent research is revealing how the primordial soup created the amino acid building blocks, and there is widespread scientific consensus on the evolution from the first cell into plants and animals. But it's still a mystery how the building blocks were first assembled into the proteins that formed the machinery of all cells.

Now, two long-time University of North Carolina scientists; Richard Wolfenden and Charles Carter

have shed new light on the transition from building blocks into life some 4 billion years ago.

"Our work shows that the close linkage between the physical properties of amino acids, the genetic code, and protein folding was likely essential from the beginning, long before large, sophisticated molecules arrived on the scene," said Carter, professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the UNC School of Medicine. "This close interaction was likely the key factor in the evolution from building blocks to organisms."

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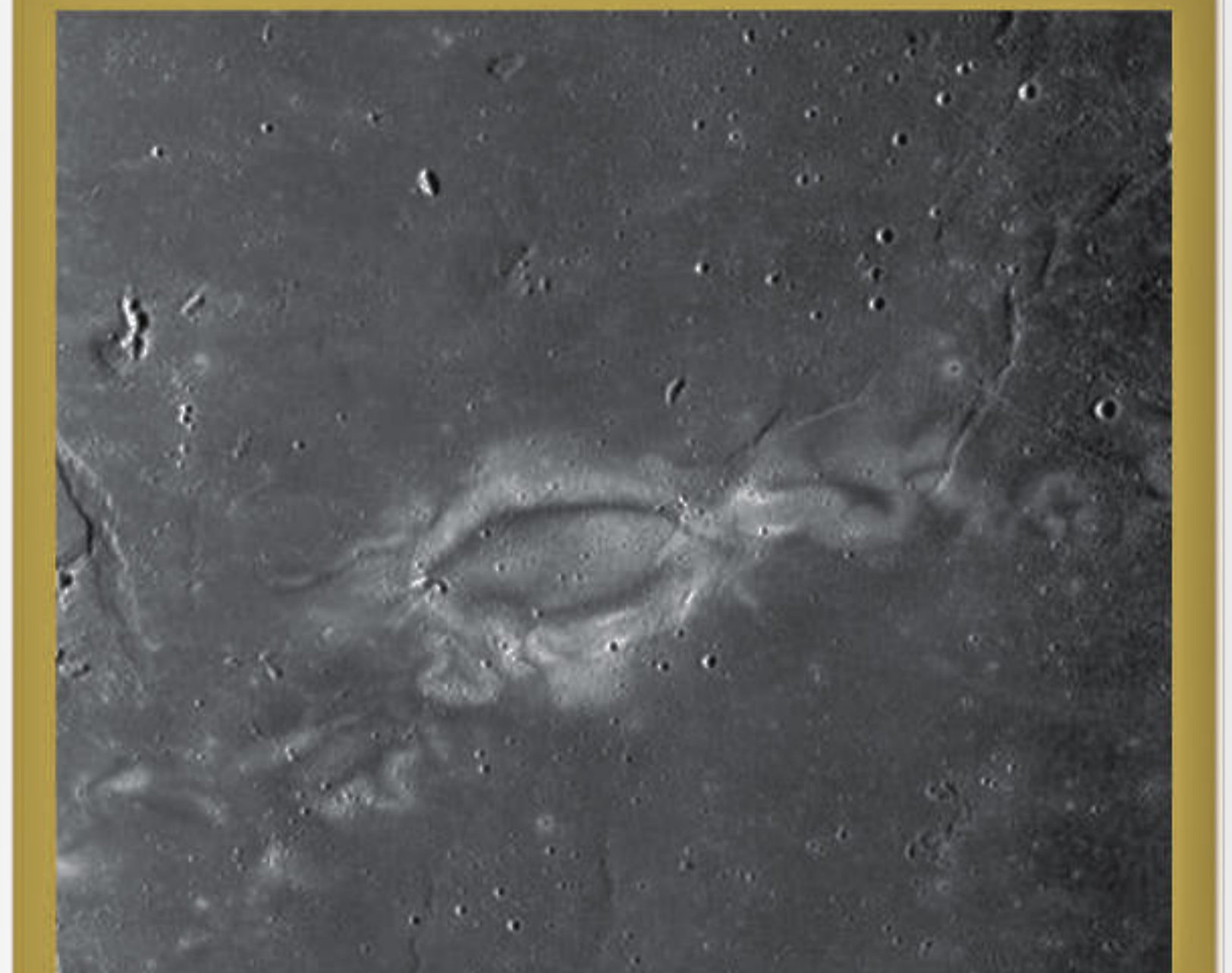
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LUNAR SWIRLS



Brown University researchers have produced new evidence that lunar swirls -- wispy bright regions scattered on the Moon's surface -- were created by several comet collisions over the last 100 million years.

In a paper published in the journal Icarus, the researchers use state-of-the-art computer models to simulate the dynamics of comet impacts on the lunar soil. The simulations suggest that such impacts can account for many of the features in the mysterious swirls.

"We think this makes a pretty strong case that the swirls represent remnants of cometary collisions," said Peter Schultz, a planetary geoscientist at Brown University. Schultz co-wrote the paper with his former graduate student, Megan Bruck Sval, who is now a researcher at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Lunar swirls have been the source of debate for years. The twisting, swirling streaks of bright soil stretch, in some cases, for thousands of miles across the lunar surface. Most are found on the unseen far side of the Moon, but one famous swirl called Reiner Gamma can be seen by telescope on the southwestern corner of the Moon's near side. "It was my favorite object to look at when I was an amateur astronomer," Schultz said.

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