

Arafat Karim's venture into the world of art began, at an early age. Currently a Masters student at the Department of Fine Arts of Dhaka University, the promising artist has already bagged quite a few achievements, as his artworks travelled a number of exhibitions in the country.

Karim's journey with Unmad, the country's popular satire magazine, started right after he acquired the first place in an anti-corruption cartoon exhibition organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). The TIB contest was a breakthrough in Karim's artistic endeavour and since 2009, he has been attending TIB's cartoon competitions and exhibitions every year and he has proven his worth every time by securing the top position. As a young artist, he secured the 1st prize, beating contestants of 15 countries, in a drawing contest on world peace, organised by the Impact Foundation. In his early 20s, Arafat has already developed his own comic character, a secret agent called C K Zaki, which is published by Dhaka Comics.

He was recently chosen to attend the 100 delegates' summit in India, where again he stood out for his outstanding personae. While the Indian President, Pranab Mukherjee, was delivering his speech in the parliament house for the delegates, Arafat was doing what he is good at- making a quick sketch of the President on the scrap paper that he managed to bring along with him despite the security barrier. Not only did he make a sketch of Pranab Mukherjee, he also made sure to get it signed by the President himself. "Getting close to him was a lot of work, but I managed to send it through the security staff themselves," he recalls. "The President not only saw it, he also

## AN ARTIST FROM THE MODERN DAYS

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Arafat Karim

signed it. This is one of the most significant achievements of my career."

This young artist has always been the talk of his department because of his extraordinary academic performance. No one in recent years succeeded in achieving the record grades that he did in the subject of Drawing and Painting. In fact, he was the top scorer in the Honours final from the entire department, demonstrating his rigour and love for his passion.

Even as a child, Karim knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. Not a doctor, not an engineer but a painter. Because of his father's job, Karim spent most of his life far from the hustle and bustle of Dhaka, and experienced the real Bangladesh that he always wanted to capture on his canvas. "My parents were

incredibly supportive of my passion which gave me the confidence to pursue my dream," Karim says. "In fact, my father, despite not being an artist himself, has been the greatest critic of my work. He always keeps giving feedback to my work." After completing his SSC from Chuadanga and HSC from Rajbari, when he enrolled in the Department of Fine Arts in Dhaka University, he got one step closer to fulfilling his dream.

Even though Arafat is mostly popular among comic lovers for his creation Zaki, he finds solace in drawing and sketching. He was never trained to be a cartoonist but was drawn to this field after his drawing skills developed in university. Arafat's graphic novels are a sight to behold but you'd be surprised to know that all his drawings are sketched and

coloured mostly manually without the support of technology.

"As a cartoonist I don't really draw political cartoons. I focus more on comic strips, graphic novels and drawing the covers of satirical magazines. I would love to build my future plans in other mediums and I am planning to arrange my solo exhibition," says Karim.

"I have learnt a lot more from my surroundings, and from my seniors than I did by browsing the internet or reading international comics. Many senior artists of the country have influenced and inspired me in many ways, but Mehedi bhai (Mehedi Haque, the executive editor of Unmad) and Ahsan Habib Sir (the editor of Unmad) have always been my mentors and support system," says the reticent artist. ■



## CAPTURING LIFE

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

From early childhood, Salahuddin was passionate about light and camera. However, at that time he never thought that his love would turn towards photography. Salahuddin Ahmed is one of the most brilliant emerging documentary photographers in Bangladesh, whose works have been acclaimed nationally and internationally. He has recently awarded The Ian Perry Scholarship 2015 for his outstanding documentary photography.

While studying in tourism and hospitality management in Malaysia, Salahuddin used to pursue photography out of passion. "I used to read articles on photography techniques and would memorise them word by word. Then I used to try the rules with my inexpensive camera - not at all suitable for professional photography," says Salahuddin.

After completing his undergrad studies, he discovered his love for books on photography and would often experiment with his camera. Eventually, he jumped into photography professionally. "When all my friends were busy with their jobs and businesses, I went for a new beginning," he says. "I enrolled myself at the Pathshala South Asia Media Academy for a 3 year long diploma course on photography."

From the day he bought his first DSLR, Salahuddin started to capture the life of the tannery workers. "I grew up and still live in Rayer bazaar which is very close to Hazaribagh, the hub of Bangladesh's tannery industries," he says. "I used to spend time with the tannery workers and observe how they live and work in this fatally hazardous condition."

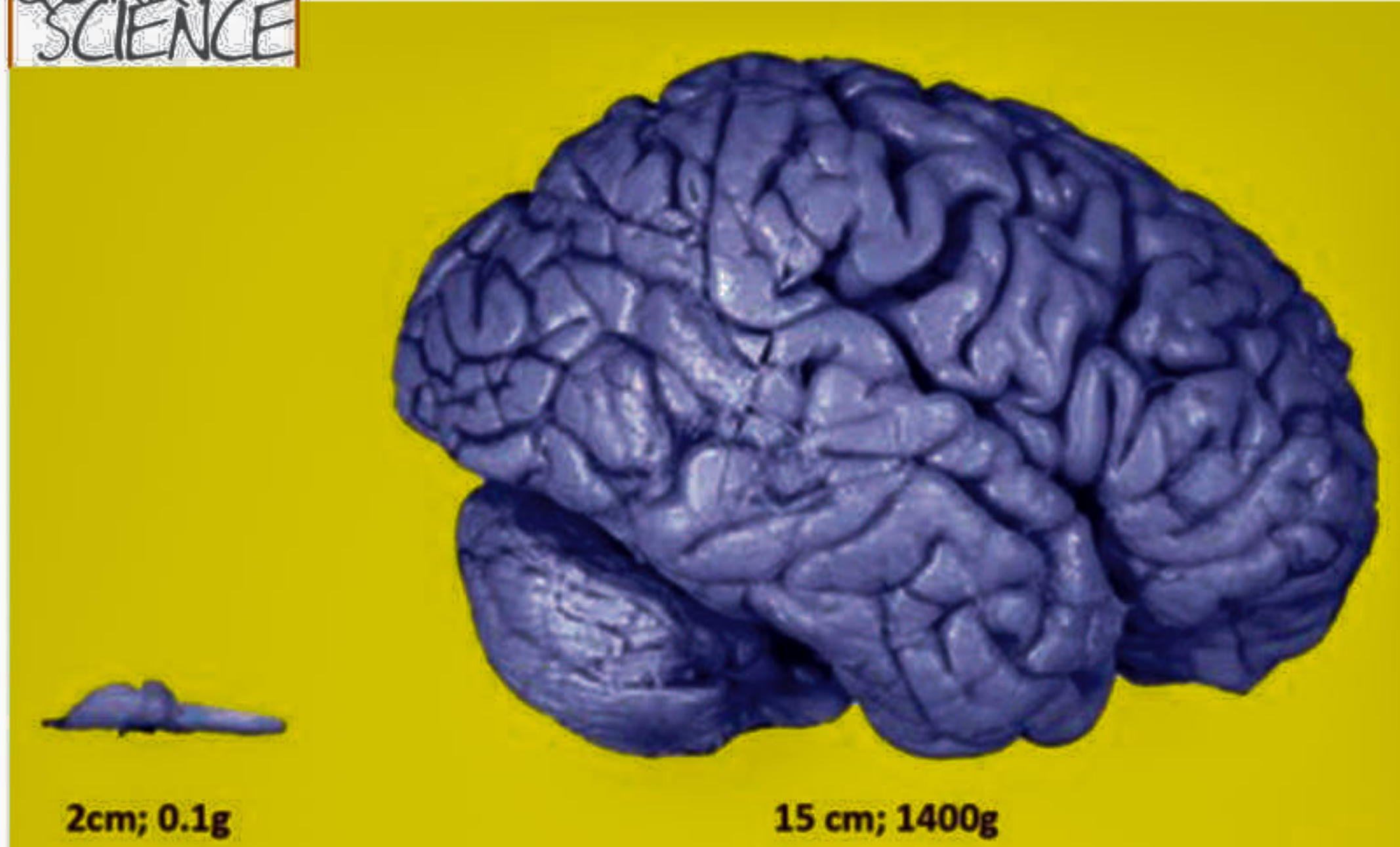
From this experience Salahuddin decided to take a series of photos on the life of these workers, some of the most neglected labour forces in Bangladesh. With selected photos, Salahuddin made a photo story called 'Toxic Tanning' which got him 'The Ian Perry Scholarship Award 2015'.

Besides these, Salahuddin is also known for his works on the Rana Plaza disaster, one of the most tragic building collapse incidents in Bangladesh. He visited Nepal immediately after the devastating earthquake to capture the disaster there. Polaris Images, an international photo and news agency has published many of his works.

Salahuddin is planning to expand his project 'Toxic Tanning' and work on it more extensively. He says, "I am passionate about documentary photography and I will continue doing it for the rest of my life. Through my work, I want to depict the survival of our people."

STAR PEOPLE

QUIRKY SCIENCE



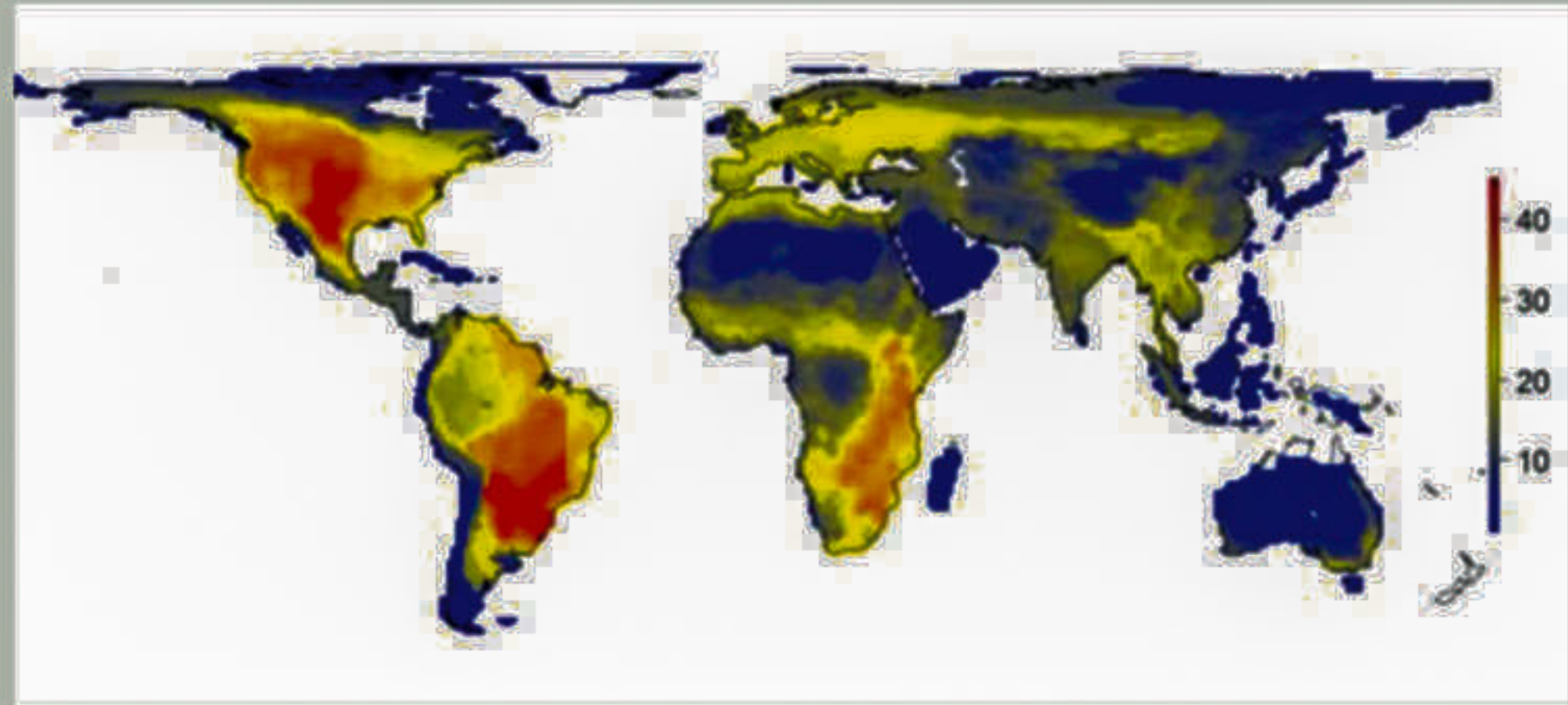
2cm; 0.1g

15 cm; 1400g

## WHY WE ARE SMARTER THAN CHICKENS

Toronto researchers have discovered that a single molecular event in our cells could hold the key to how we evolved to become the smartest animal on the planet. Benjamin Blencowe, a professor in the University of Toronto's Donnelly Centre and Banbury Chair in Medical Research, and his team have uncovered how a small change in a protein called PTBP1 can spur the creation of neurons – cells that make the brain – that could have fuelled the evolution of mammalian brains to become the largest and most complex among vertebrates.

The study is published in the August 20 issue of Science. Brain size and complexity vary enormously across vertebrates, but it is not clear how these differences came about. Humans and frogs, for example, have been evolving separately for 350 million years and have very different brain abilities. Yet scientists have shown that they use a remarkably similar repertoire of genes to build organs in the body.



## WORLD WITHOUT HUMANS

The fact that the greatest diversity of large mammals is found in Africa reflects past human activities – and not climatic or other environmental constraints. This is determined in a new study, which presents what the world map of mammals would look like if modern man (Homo sapiens) had never existed.

In a world without humans, most of northern Europe would probably now be home to not only wolves, Eurasian elk (moose) and bears, but also animals such as elephants and rhinoceroses.

This is demonstrated in a new study conducted by researchers from Aarhus University, Denmark. In a previous analysis, they have shown that the mass extinction of large mammals during the Last Ice Age and in subsequent millennia (the late-Quaternary megafauna extinction) is largely explainable from the expansion of modern man (Homo sapiens) across the world. In this follow-up study, they investigate what the natural worldwide diversity patterns of mammals would be like in the absence of past and present human impacts, based on estimates of the natural distribution of each species according to its ecology, biogeography and the current natural environmental template. They provide the first estimate of how the mammal diversity world map would have appeared without the impact of modern man.

Source:sciencedaily.com

TO DO

## 5 THINGS TO DO WHILE STUCK IN TRAFFIC

NAZIBA BASHER

The worst thing about travelling around Dhaka is being stuck in traffic. Spending hours inside a stagnant car, bus or an auto rickshaw can be unnerving and agitating. To keep your mood stable, here are a couple of suggestions the Star Weekend has for city-dwellers stuck in traffic.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

- Read:** The best thing to do while travelling on the roads of Dhaka is carrying a book. In case you forget to bring one with you, keep one in your bag at all times. If you use a chauffer driven car like many of the Dhaka dwellers, keep a book inside the car. This can be a great time for you to catch up on reading and delve into a different world.
- Catch up with friends:** There is always a friend or two that you tend to lose touch with when business invades your life. Stuck in traffic? Now is the time take your smart phones out! You can use the time stuck in traffic to call up an old friend or email one and catch up on all their recent shenanigans. Caution: Beware of pick pockets!
- Turn on the radio:** There're always many new songs worth listening to. And with the amazing new upcoming musical stars we have, there's always something good on the radio. Foorti, Shadin or ABC – give the stations a chance and dance your way through traffic.
- Internet:** Well, everyone now has internet on their phones. No denying that. Even if there isn't WiFi everywhere, you can get data connection through your service provider. Being stuck in traffic gives you the chance to catch up on some world affair. Once you're in, there are plenty of things to do- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or just reading about different countries and their histories!
- Journaling:** Keep a notebook and pen in your bag at all times for this. Whenever you find yourself stuck in traffic, you can whip out the stationary and start writing. Whether planning your day out on paper, or just writing your thoughts down, this can be a great way to not just enhance your writing skills, but also keep you busy during this dreaded time.

Now that you have 5 solid suggestions, you will find yourself calmer on the roads than ever before. Now you can just the fight traffic off by just keeping busy! ■