

FIVE THINGS TO DO THIS YEAR

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

It's a brand new day, a brand new year, and we can safely say that at least 40% of the people want a 'fresh start'. Well, we're here to help you make that happen. There are many 'habits', if you will, that Bangladeshis share in unison. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule. Having said that, here are 5-to-do's this New Year, to make sure we kick-start 2016 as positively as possible.



- 1 Use Public Transportation:** There is a very famous quote by the former mayor of Bogota, Enrique Penalosa, where he said, "A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars, it's where the rich use public transportation." While everyday we sit in our lavish air-conditioned cars, and complain about being stuck in traffic, we often forget that the car we're sitting in is contributing to that very traffic. Maybe we should take the first step, and take the bus?
- 2 Keep Clean:** Once again, a lot of us will throw chocolate wrappers and tissues from our privileged lives inside the car or our home window, and then complain about 'how dirty Dhaka is'. Instead of expecting those living on the streets to clean up after us, maybe it's time for us to be a little cautious about the environment ourselves. 2016 is the perfect time to start.
- 3 Quit Smoking:** While this does not apply to many, you would be surprised how many it does apply to. Even if you don't want to quit smoking (which you should, to at least live healthy), at least don't force others around you to smoke. Take your cigarette outside, if you are surrounded by people who don't have the horrid habit themselves. And most importantly, don't smoke in front of children.
- 4 The Gross Fluid Habit:** It's sad that 2015 is almost over and these particularly uncouth issues can still be applied to so many, many people. Peeing and spitting on the streets is a public nuisance. No two ways about that. Not only is it visually disgusting, it's gross in every other way. There're bathrooms everywhere. If women can hold it in, you men should be able to as well. And grab a tissue whenever you feel like something's lodged in your throat and you need to get it out. No one needs to hear and see you discharge fluids from your body!
- 5 Be Kind:** This is something that we could all use in our daily lives. This particular act not only helps in uplifting others, especially the old, young, ill, and poor, you would be surprised at what bringing a smile to someone else's face can do for you. You will undoubtedly spend the rest of the day feeling light and joyful. Try doing at least one act of kindness per day, and you'll see how addictive being kind can become!

There are so many things keep listed for the New Year coming ahead, to renew your lifestyle, your faith, your hope and everything in between. Follow these five simple resolutions, make some of your own and you'll be able to ensure a good year ahead, for yourself and those around you. Have a brilliant New Year!

QUIRKY SCIENCE

SCIENTISTS MANIPULATE CONSCIOUSNESS IN RATS

Scientists showed that they could alter brain activity of rats and either wake them up or put them in an unconscious state by changing the firing rates of neurons in the central thalamus, a region known to regulate arousal. The study, published in eLIFE, was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health.



"Our results suggest the central thalamus works like a radio dial that tunes the brain to different states of activity and arousal," said Jin Hyung Lee, PhD, assistant professor of neurology, neurosurgery and bioengineering at Stanford University, and a senior author of the study.

Located deep inside the brain the thalamus acts as a relay station sending neural signals from the body to the cortex. Damage to neurons in the central part of the thalamus may lead to problems with sleep, attention, and memory. Previous studies suggested that stimulation of thalamic

neurons may awaken patients who have suffered a traumatic brain injury from minimally conscious states.

Dr Lee's team flashed laser pulses onto light sensitive central thalamic neurons of sleeping rats, which caused the cells to fire. High frequency stimulation of 40 or 100 pulses per second woke the rats. In contrast, low frequency stimulation of 10 pulses per second sent the rats into a state reminiscent of absence seizures that caused them to stiffen and stare before returning to sleep.

EVOLUTION OF FACE MITES

Scientists have discovered a universal human truth about our bodies: they all, without exception, have mites. A landmark new study, led by scientists at Bowdoin and the California Academy of Sciences, explores the fascinating, little-known natural history of the face mite species *Demodex folliculorum*, using genetic testing to link the microscopic animal's evolution to our own ever-evolving human story. By zooming in on a type of genetic material (called mitochondrial DNA) in mite samples from around the world, scientists discovered that different human populations have different mites, that those mites follow families through generations, and that they are not casually transferred between humans. The study is published today in the Early Edition of the journal PNAS.

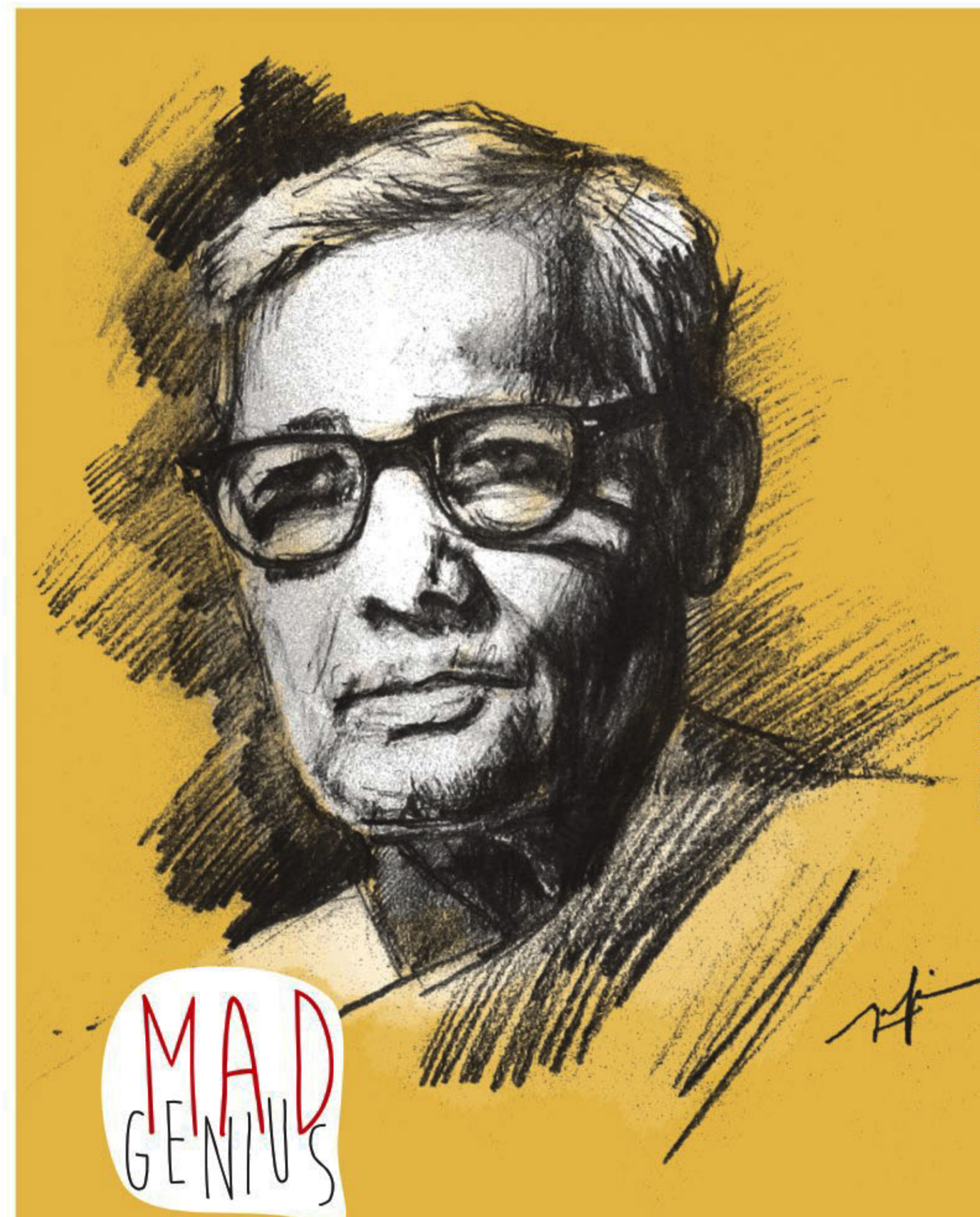


Dr Michelle Trautwein, Academy curator of entomology and senior author of the new findings, says improving the understanding of the mites that live in human hair follicles helps shed light on human evolution and may allow scientists to pinpoint mites' role in human health. Dubbed

"face mites," *D. folliculorum* are actually tiny arachnids that inhabit hairs throughout the human body and consume skin cells and oils. Mites exist in human ears, eyebrows, and eyelashes as well as hairs that cover nipples and genitals.

For most people, mites are harmless. For some, however, mites can be associated with various skin and eye disorders including rosacea and blepharitis. Trautwein says this is one reason among many that scientists need to learn more about these constant human companions.

Source: Sciencedaily.com



SKETCH: YARIZ SIDDIQUI

JASIMUDDIN

30 October 1903 – 14 March 1976

Born in the village of *Tambulkhana* in Faridpur District, Jasimuddin had one of the most remarkable careers of any Bangladeshi poet. Popularly known as *Pollikobi*, he is acclaimed for his celebratory representations of the rural Bangladesh in his poetry. As a collector of folk literature, he worked closely with Dr Dineshchandra, famous Bengali litterateur who believed Jasimuddin had created a new school of poetry in Bengali literature scene. As one of the compilers of *Purbo-Bongo Gitika* (Ballads of East Bengal), he collected more than 10,000 folk songs and some of which have been included in his traditional song compilations *Jari Gaan* and *Murshida Gaan*. His work also includes the interpretation and philosophy of Bengali folklore tradition. Some of his most popular works include *Rakhali*, *Nakshi Kanthar Maath*, *Baluchor*, *Dhankhet*, *Sojan Badiyar Ghat*, *Rangila Nayer Majhi*, *Hashu*, *Rupobati* and *Beder Meye*. Among all his works, *Nakshi Kanthar Maath* (Field of the Embroidered Quilt) is considered a masterpiece and has been translated into many different languages.

“Brothers and sisters, remember Hindu and Muslims lived side by side in Bangladesh. Just as how the omnipresence of Allah and the greatness of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is etched on our sarees, the presence of Hindu god Krishna playing the flute sitting on a tree is also embroidered.”

In the depths of my heart I've kept the feeling that I experienced when I discovered the amazing wave of folk music while travelling in different villages. When I met Abbas (singer Abbasuddin), I thought that I should spread folk music through his astounding voice amidst the educated class of the country.”

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES

STAR DIARY

JOY OF A FATHER

Last Friday, my one and only son got his first salary from his office. With the small amount that he received, he bought a Panjabi for me, a saree for her mother and a dress for his little sister. I was very much delighted seeing his sense of responsibility and concern for us. The moment he got me the gifts, I became very emotional thinking my little son has grown up and started thinking for his family. Actually, this joy of a father cannot be described in words. This is a heavenly feeling. Parents raise their children up with proper education for them to have a better future. But when the children start taking responsibility of their parents and family, that becomes a proud moment for their parents.

Alamgir Kabir
Madhupur, Tangail



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

THE DARKER SIDE OF OUR MODERN WORLD

Bithi sat in front of me with her runny nose talking about her coughs pausing for some time to breathe through her mouth since she had a partially blocked nose to deal with. My five year old patient lived in a slum near Bijoy Sharani and came to the health camp that was set up on Victory Day last year. When I asked her if she had any other complain, she showed her feet and my heart skipped a beat after what I saw. A huge chunk of her sole was missing and the wound had clotted blood and dirt all over it. She said to me a cat in her locality bit her left foot when she prodded the cat with a stick to get her attention. As she went to her mother with the wounded feet, her mother beat her with the same stick and later gave her some "lobon pora" and that's it. Her neighbour was waiting in line behind her with her toddler on her lap. When I asked her neighbour about the incident she found the incident highly amusing and did not take it seriously at all. I explained to them why it was important to take her to a hospital immediately and finally they realized the gravity of the situation. Our teacher who was present there immediately referred her to the Infectious Disease Hospital but Bithi had to wait for her mother to come back home to take her there. There are hundreds of kids in the streets going through the same situation and unaware of the grievous outcome of animal bites. We are raising awareness through various organizations and we are working on various situations to put an end to this darker part of the society. It is important to reach out to everyone so that no one is left behind, and no other Bithi is left unattended.

Fabiha Tanzeem
Purana Paltan, Dhaka