

Editor (The Daily Star)
Mahfuz Anam

Editor (Star Weekend)
(Dilshad) Elita Karim

Staff Writers

Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan
Fayeka Zabeen Siddiqua
Naziba Basher
Apurba Jahangir
Nilima Jahan

Columnist

Osama Rahman

Staff Photographers

Prabir Das
Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo

Graphics & Illustrations

Manan Morshed

Make-up

Md Saiful Islam

General Manager, Production

Selim S H Chowdhury

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PHOTO: PONIR HOSSAIN

"Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart." — Mahatma Gandhi

SNAPSHOT

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com



Turning a Blind Eye

Recently, violence on women and children has taken a new dimension. Women in Bangladesh are considered just as a commodity for pleasure. In fact, our mentality has downgraded to the worst level in this regard. It has become our tendency to blame the victim rather than the perpetrators. In addition to the writer of the article titled "Turning a Blind Eye" (published on April 22, 2016), I would like to say that we are experiencing these incidents not only with a blind eye but also with a sealed heart. We have kept our eyes shut as if we did not see anything. But is it possible to shut our hearts too? Does not our heart feel the sufferings of the distressed? Thanks to Elita Karim and to the *Star Weekend* for a precious write up that was published on April 22, 2016.
Md Sayedur Rahman
Jatrabari, Dhaka

Shining Blue

It is people like Andrew Wakefield, author of a fake research on autism and McCarthy the anti-vaccine activist, mentioned in the article titled "Shining Blue" published on April 29, 2016 who falsely tried to show a relationship between vaccines and autism. However, scientific research showed no causal relationship between vaccines and autism as early back as 1999. Andrew Wakefield was stripped of his medical license in 2010. Because of media hype fuelled by Jenny McCarthy, percentage of parents saying no to immunisations rose from 22 percent in 2003 to nearly 40 percent in 2008. Then, for the first time in decades, the US saw outbreaks of diseases like measles, mumps, and whooping cough.
Syed. Raiyan Abu Zafar
IUB, Dhaka



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

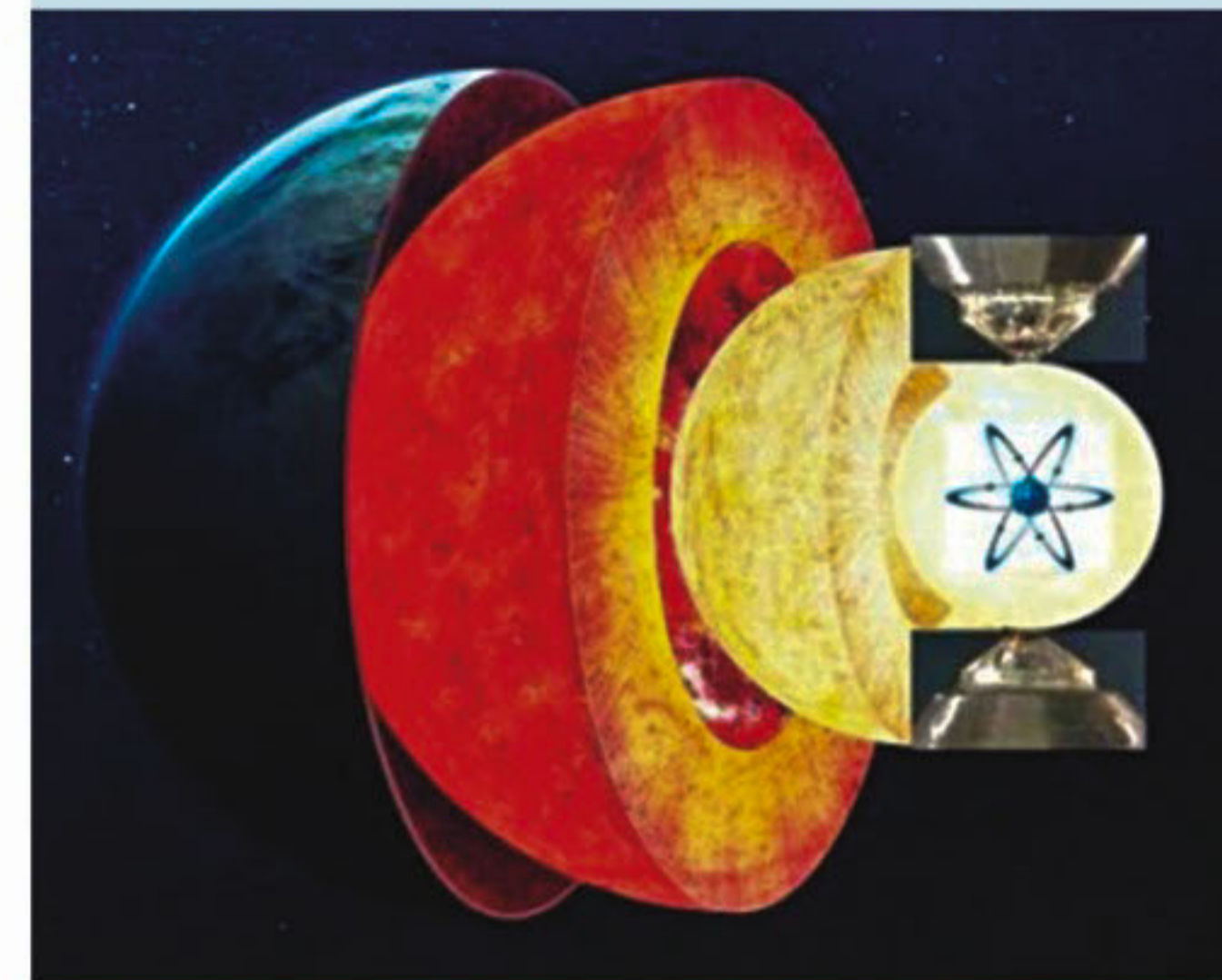
Promises and Illusions

I would like to thank Fayeka Zabeen Siddiqua for pointing out the difference between donation and compensation. Immediately after Rana Plaza disaster, I was somewhat consoled by seeing that people from all walks of life gave their kind hands to the survivors and the relatives of the victims. A lot of funds were collected from both public and private sectors. But these days when I learnt that there was a difference between donation and compensation and all that was handed over to the survivors was in the name of donation, not in the form of compensation I was shocked. I was also shocked to know that these donations were given mainly to the victims of physically injured people and people who suffered from severe mental shock, but trauma did not get any considerable donation. Is there any major difference between mental health and physical health? I strongly request the concerned authority not to deprive the traumatised people of their rights to compensation.
Enamul Hasan
Madinanagar, Narayanganj

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the *Star Weekend*.

QUIRKY SCIENCE

LAB MIMICRY TO LOOK BACK IN TIME



New work from a research team led by Carnegie's Anat Shahar contains some unexpected findings about iron chemistry under high-pressure conditions, such as those likely found in the Earth's core, where iron predominates and creates our planet's life-shielding magnetic field. Their results, published in *Science*, could shed light on Earth's early days when the core was formed through a process called differentiation—when the denser materials, like iron, sunk inward toward the center, creating the layered composition the planet has today.

Earth formed from accreted matter surrounding the young Sun. Over time, the iron in this early planetary material moved inward, separating from the surrounding silicate. This process created the planet's iron core and silicate upper mantle. But much about this how this differentiation process occurred is still poorly understood, due to the technological impossibility of taking samples from the Earth's core to see which compounds exist there.

Seismic data show that in addition to iron, there are "lighter" elements present in the core, but which elements and in what concentrations they exist has been a matter of great debate. This is because as the iron moved inward toward the core, it interacted with various lighter elements to form different alloyed compounds, which were then carried along with the iron into the planet's depths.

Which elements iron bonded with during this time would have been determined by the surrounding conditions, including pressure and temperature. As a result, working backward and determining which iron alloy compounds were created during differentiation could tell scientists about the conditions on early Earth and about the planet's geochemical evolution.

MYSTERIOUS BINARY SYSTEM

Two black holes in nearby galaxies have been observed devouring their companion stars at a rate exceeding classically understood limits, and in the process, kicking out matter into surrounding space at astonishing speeds of around a quarter the speed of light.

The researchers, from the University of Cambridge, used data from the European Space Agency's (ESA) XMM-Newton space observatory to reveal for the first time strong winds gusting at very high speeds from two mysterious sources of x-ray radiation. The discovery, published in the journal *Nature*, confirms that these sources conceal a compact object pulling in matter at extraordinarily high rates.

When observing the Universe at x-ray wavelengths, the celestial sky is dominated by two types of astronomical objects: super massive black holes, sitting at the centres of large galaxies and ferociously devouring the material around them, and binary systems, consisting of a



stellar remnant – a white dwarf, neutron star or black hole – feeding on gas from a companion star.

In both cases, the gas forms a swirling disc around the compact and very dense central object. Friction in the disc causes the gas to heat up and emit light at different wavelengths, with a peak in x-rays.

But an intermediate class of objects was discovered in the 1980s and is still not well understood. Ten to a hundred times brighter than ordinary x-ray binaries, these sources are nevertheless too faint to be linked to supermassive black holes, and in any case, are usually found far from the centre of their host galaxy.

Source: *Sciencedaily.com*

বৃত্তি
কলা কলকণার গর্ভ

দেশের সর্ববৃহৎ প্রকাশনা
'রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলি'
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