

2016 US ELECTION, GENDER EQUALITY AND BANGLADESH

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CARTOON: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY



the election, but all about what America lost the night before. It was about the loss of faith that good would come victorious over evil. It was about losing faith in America.

We all went back to our desks to dive right into our jobs and somehow insulate us from this stinging reality. I was trying hard to concentrate, but could hardly do so

and soon found out that I was not the only one. Larry, the head of our department, walked over to my desk and asked "Hey Arif, you have a minute? Do you want to talk?" "Thank you, Larry. I needed to let it out too" –we went into one of our meeting rooms. We talked, about the past, the present and how the future may look. We talked about why and how Trump won. I

told Larry that I get how frustrated a lot of people were and how they had been misled. But I failed to understand how, after all the insults and invectives, women in their right mind voted for Trump. So I asked Larry, sage, a PhD, and as old as my father, if he had some answers. He took a moment before saying:

"It goes back to the Bible and what a lot of women of this country, especially in the rural, have been taught. They are taught that the main role of women is to support and follow men. And, men are superior to them, therefore men's immoral behaviour deserve some leniency. After all "boys will be boys." So when you put all these together, you get some idea as to why women did not vote for a woman, and voted Trump even after all the sexual harassment allegations. I am not saying this is the sole reason, there are other reasons too that convinced many women to cast their ballot in favor of Trump. But this prejudice against women, no doubt, played a major role and partially explains why Trump got so many women-votes."

Those few lines from Larry came to me as revelations. I almost forgot, despite the country being the number one economy and the only super-power of the world, how conservative rural America can be. Considering America's practice of objectifying women, sexist attitude against its female citizens (like almost everywhere else) and of course, taking the cultural contexts into account – I am sure a very strong case can be built that USA is not too far ahead of Bangladesh when it comes to gender equality and relevant issues. There is no doubt that Bangladesh has failed its citizens, especially her female citizens, in countless ways.

Nonetheless, electing female heads of the government in the last 4/5 elections exhibits people's somewhat open mindedness, at least, towards accepting females in leadership positions, something that is a key United Nation's indicator to measure gender equality in a country. To corroborate this point, Bangladeshis have been electing female leaders in local levels for so many years now. The latest example of such would be the female mayor of Narayanganj getting elected for the second consecutive time. So it may seem silly to compare USA and Bangladesh – but when it comes to gender equality, I think it is not very silly after all. ■

PERSPECTIVE |

The morning of November 9th; I woke up to start my day. Technically I did not wake up, because you need to go to sleep in order to be able to wake up and I could not sleep the night before. So let's say I stopped twisting and turning, and left my bed. Both my wife and I followed our same morning routine: freshened up, had breakfast, got ready for work and headed to the train station. It was the first morning after the great United States of America had elected Donald Trump as the 45th President.

I looked around, my eyes heavy and tired. Everyone looked unawake and grim – more than usual. No one was laughing or talking, everyone sort of blanketed themselves in silence and isolation. Well, New Yorkers are not famous for their "happy-go-lucky" style anyway, but this was unprecedented. "Or, is it just me?" Perhaps I was seeing what I was feeling inside of me. "That's a possibility" – I told myself.

I got off at Wall Street and took the short walk to my office. The streets looked unusually calm - no horn blowing, no super busy executive running on the side walk, or any dog walker with dogs on leash. To make it even worse, it was a cloudy and soggy morning; downtown New York almost looked like a scene from a zombie movie. I walked into our office and the security guy did not smile for a change. I punched open the office door, turned my office desktop on and saw my supervisor walking in. I waved, his reply was likewise but his usual sincere smile was missing. It was not just me, a big part of America, or at least New York was grieving. Good to know there were co-grievors out there; it's always a great feeling not to feel alone, especially when you are sad.

About an unusually quiet hour later, my colleague Jen messaged me to join her to see Hillary Clinton's concession speech. A full office watching TV on a workday – it was, like the morning itself, quite strange and unsettling. People were struggling to hold back their tears, some were seen crying silently. It felt like someone died, someone who we all knew. Someone who assured all of us that it did not matter where we came from, what God we believed in or how we looked – we all would be treated equally. It was most certainly not about the candidate who lost



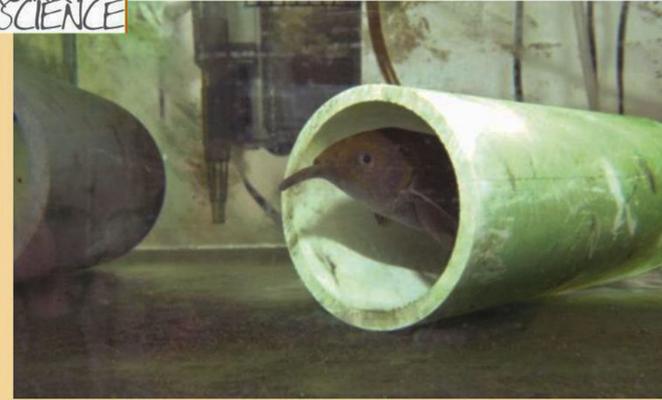
PHOTO: INTERNET

25 | NUMBERS |

Is the number of people killed by two bombs, claimed by Islamic State on Saturday, as fighting intensified in the northern city of Mosul, where government forces are trying to rout the jihadists from their last major stronghold in the country. The blasts, including one suicide attack, tore through a busy market in the Sinak neighbourhood, police said. A pro-Islamic State news agency said the assailants had targeted Shiite Muslims, whom they regard as apostates. Islamic State has continued to launch attacks in the heavily fortified capital, even after losing most of the northern and western territory it seized in 2014. The recapture of Mosul would probably spell the end for Islamic State's self-styled caliphate, but the militants would still be capable of fighting a guerrilla-style insurgency in Iraq, and plotting or inspiring attacks on the West.

Source: Reuters

QUIRKY SCIENCE



WHY BIG BRAINS ARE RARE

As a species we're so brain-proud it doesn't occur to most of us to ask whether a big brain has disadvantages as well as cognitive benefits.

"We can think of tons of benefits to a larger brain, but the other side of that is brain tissue is incredibly 'expensive' and increasing brain size comes at a heavy cost," said Kimberley V. Sukhum, a graduate student in biology in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis.

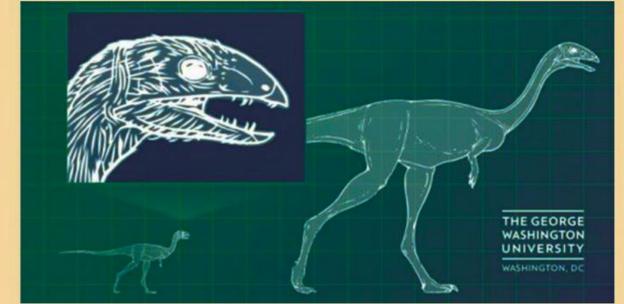
So evolving a large brain requires either a decrease in other demands for energy or an increase in overall energy consumption, said Bruce Carlson, Sukhum's advisor and professor of

biology in Arts & Sciences.

Previous studies in primates, frogs and toads, birds and fish found support for both hypotheses, leaving the evolutionary path to a larger brain unclear.

Carlson's lab studies mormyrid electric fishes from Africa, which use weak electric discharges to locate prey and to communicate with one another.

The mormyrids have a reputation as large-brained fish and indeed one species (the fish in the top photo) has a brain that constitutes 3 percent of its body size, comparable to human brains, which range from 2 to 2.5 percent. But it was unclear whether other mormyrids were equally brainy.



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Researchers have discovered that a species of dinosaur, *Limusaurus inextricabilis*, lost its teeth in adolescence and did not grow another set as adults. The finding, published today in *Current Biology*, is a radical change in anatomy during a lifespan and may help to explain why birds have beaks but no teeth.

The research team studied 19 *Limusaurus* skeletons, discovered in mud, got stuck and died, in the Xinjiang Province of China. The dinosaurs ranged in age from baby to adult, showing the pattern of tooth loss over time. The baby skeleton had small, sharp teeth, and the adult skeletons were consistently toothless.

"This discovery is important for two reasons," said James Clark, a co-author on the paper and the Ronald Weintraub Professor of Biology at the George Washington University's Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. "First, it's

WHY BIRDS ARE TOOTHLESS

very rare to find a growth series from baby to adult dinosaurs. Second, this unusually dramatic change in anatomy suggests there was a big shift in *Limusaurus*' diet from adolescence to adulthood."

Limusaurus is part of the theropod group of dinosaurs, the evolutionary ancestors of birds. Dr. Clark's team's earlier research of *Limusaurus* described the species' hand development and notes that the dinosaur's reduced first finger may have been transitional and that later theropods lost the first and fifth fingers. Similarly, bird hands consist of the equivalent of a human's second, third and fourth fingers.

Source: Sciencedaily.com

STRANGE HISTORY

THE SHORTEST WAR IN HISTORY

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN



The British Empire launched a naval attack on Zanzibar Sultanate in 1896 and the Sultan's army surrendered only after 38 minutes of bombardment. This surrender of Sultan Khalid bin Barghash makes this conflict the shortest war in the recorded history. The conflict between the British Empire and Zanzibar sultanate erupted after the death of pro-British Sultan Hamad bin Thuwaini. According to a treaty of 1886 British government forced Zanzibar's sultan family to select their new Sultan with the permission from a British consul general. However, after Hamad's death, Khalid declared himself Sultan without taking any consent from the British Consul General. The British government considered this move as a violation of the treaty and gave an ultimatum to Khalid to evacuate the palace. Instead Khalid prepared for the war with his palace guards who were also commanded by a British naval officer named Lloyd Matthews whose post was made irremovable by the Sultan according to that treaty. As the ultimatum expired, British battleships started to bomb Sultan's palace but Sultan's army did not fire a single bullet to the invaders. Consequently, the Sultan's army surrendered without any resistance and the Sultan took refuge in German East Africa that marks the end of the Anglo Zanzibar War, the shortest war in recorded history. ■