

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

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NAMES FOR BANGLADESHI GAMES

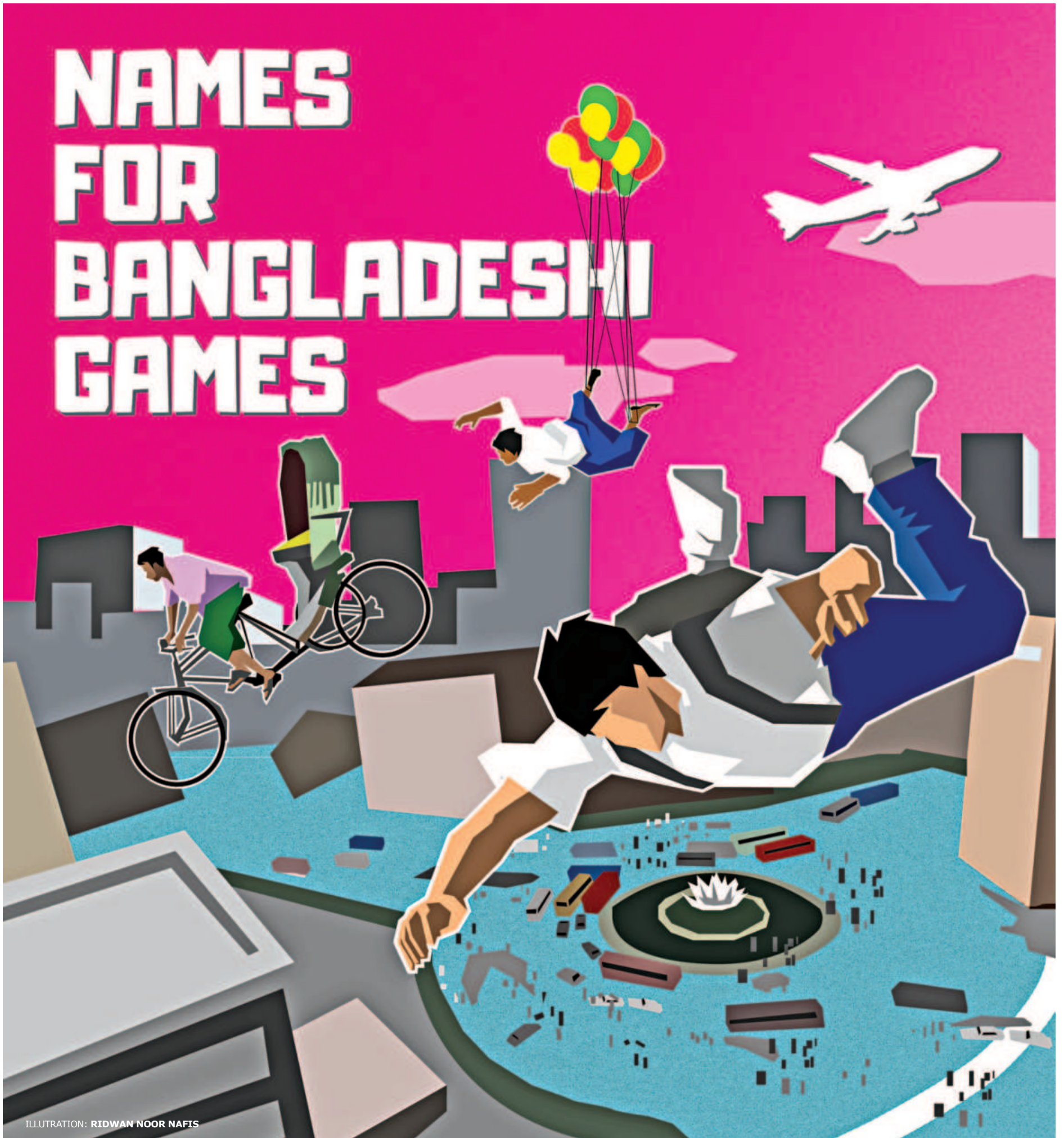


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EDITORIAL

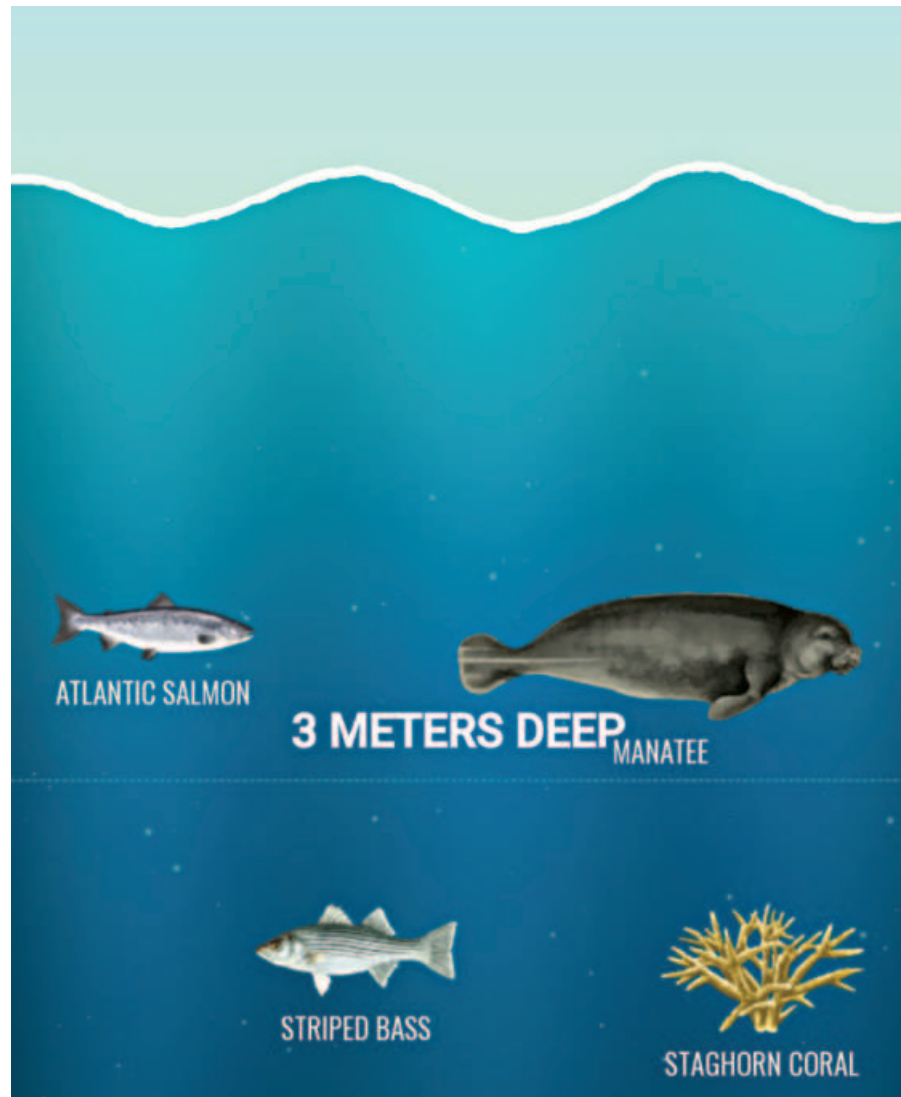
We are so starved for things to do in Dhaka that any large event draws thousands of people, but the Ekushey Boi Mela is my favourite. Its demographics aren't stifled into niches of literary elite, aspiring writers, or just people who really like books, but instead appeals to everyone. And I love that. The Ekushey Boi Mela opens its doors every year to everyone with the possibility of turning them into readers. Unlike other book fairs around the world, the Boi Mela doesn't merely act as a market for book publishers. Simply put, the idea of families spending their Fridays celebrating books makes me feel warm all over. No other event revolved around the arts can attract as big a crowd, with as much enthusiasm as the Ekushey Boi Mela in the country.

– Talat Ahmed, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH
 WEBSITE REVIEW

A CURE FOR THE INTERNET BLUES



MOHUA MOULI

There was a time when surfing the web meant something beyond scrolling through Facebook and Instagram. All different kinds of interesting websites and blogs were popping up everywhere, and dare I say, it added to a level of diversity on the internet.

Neal.fun is such a site that really struck that chord of nostalgia in me. It was created by Neal Agarwal, a computer science graduate, who was aiming to produce something that infuses creativity and technology.

The website at first looks suspiciously simple with just a list of buttons that will redirect you to a variety of pages. Granted not all of these pages are a lot of fun or revolutionarily informative, however, some of them could really give you some quirky insight on random topics. A personal favourite of mine was The Deep Sea.

The Deep Sea is probably one of the most creative and beautiful things I have seen this year so far. Once you click on it, you are redirected to a page that takes you on a deep-sea adventure. As you scroll down, you are taken deeper

into the ocean where you find out how the waterscape changes with increasing depth. It felt nothing short of an interactive encyclopaedic adventure, except you are scrolling on a screen instead of turning the pages to see the wonders of the deep blue sea. I will forever be grateful to this page for showing me what a Japanese spider crab is. I never would've Googled it on my own accord.

Other pages include The Size of Space, where you get to reveal the sheer vastness of the universe starting from the size of an astronaut. Another page titled Life Stats shows you facts about your life based on the year you were born in. One really intriguing page you should look into goes by the name Spend Bill Gates' Money. Yes, you have to find a way to spend all of Bill Gates' money by purchasing random things listed on the site. It will always be a hoot to see the length of your receipt once you've theoretically depleted all of his funds.

If nothing else, this site will surely feel like a nostalgic retreat to the 2000s and it is definitely something to share and bond over with the young ones in your family. Visit neal.fun for the experience.

Maslow's Hierarchy of University Student Needs

ARAF MOMEN AKA

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, portrayed on a pyramid, is an essential tool to understand why people act the way they act.

Instead of having to read silly business jargons like "This diagram disambiguates the social hierarchy by granulating each mark", let me explain this essential theorem through something you can grasp easily—the five stages of a university student's life:

1. PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS: THE FRESHMAN'S DILEMMA

You are a newly enrolled student in a university. As a fresher, you have but one objective: survive with the bare essentials. You must know where the food is, you must know how to interact with your seniors and you also must know that wearing shorts and *chop-pols* to your classroom isn't exactly an appropriate choice of attire.

2. SAFETY NEEDS: THE FRESHMAN'S HABITUATION

You are a few months into your first year. But, what's this? The food's turning your stomach into a grinder? Or that sketchy-looking kid finally asked for your phone number? This is where you learn that "surviving" isn't enough. You'll have to take precautions for your well-being, and upholding a favourable GPA for a future that won't parkour out of your hands.

3. SOCIAL NEEDS: THE SOPHOMORE'S PURSUIT

You did it! You're finally a sophomore. You have people around you haven't met, and you would like to connect with them because you are in a more secure stage now, and you can handle connecting with that Career Club that seems promising to you, or the *polapain* that know how to have fun, or that cutie you are interested in.

4. ESTEEM NEEDS: THE JUNIOR'S DRAG

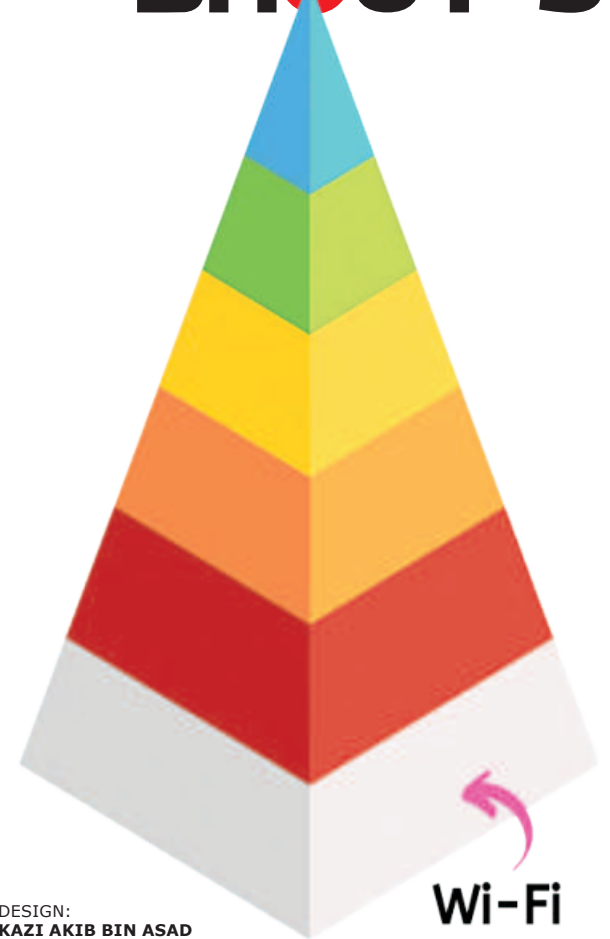
Your sophomore year is behind you. You seem to be growing more popular day by day. Keeping a positive image of yourself, and wanting your peers, seniors, juniors and teachers to see you in that light can be beneficiary for you. Holding up your self-esteem and

keeping yourself in a positive light will make your basic needs much easier to gain. Be a kind and reliable soul.

5. SELF-ACTUALISATION NEEDS: THE SENIOR'S ACCEPTANCE

You learn to love and accept yourself. You learn that keeping a positive self-perception is highly instrumental. Mean words from the people around you are just that: mean words. You realise your worth and don't let others ever devalue your abilities. With confidence, memories, and lessons, you look forward to your graduation and enter the bigger world.

Aka is a tiny bleep on the world's radar, and he finds peace in knowing it. Ruin his peace by poking him on akaaraf@hotmail.com



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THE CASE OF FAMILY VLOGGERS

Are they capitalising on the lives of children?

SAAMIN AZAM SUHA

In recent years, the practice of *vlogging* on online platforms, most notably YouTube, has grown exponentially. As vlogging is something that can be done in the comfort of one's home and on their own time, it is appealing to many. Popular vloggers earn a huge revenue from this as well. Due to this, many families are making this their primary source of income.

In hindsight, this seems like a great solution for those attracted by the culture of vlogging. Now, they can make content with their entire family, while earning enough to support them all. They get to work in a stress-free environment and aren't limited to particular hours. Sounds like a dream come true, then what is the problem?

At the heart of family vlogging channels lie the children—they are the prime attraction, the very reason so many people tune in to these channels. They captivate the audience with their charm and innocence, without seeming staged. Their parents sell merchandise with their faces on it, and fans even go as far as to make fanpages in their behalf. Yet, at the end of the day, they are still *children*. It seems extremely unfair for them to shoulder the burden of their family's income at such a young age, albeit



unknowingly.

It's even worse that we have no idea what goes on behind the scenes. Who's to say that these kids even *want* to star in their parent's vlogging channels, or whether or not they're comfortable with having a camera shoved in their face all the time? Making home videos of your kids is common, but it's a completely different scenario when you upload those videos regularly online

for millions of people to watch. Their entire childhood is being documented and shared with strangers when they can't even comprehend the meaning of that.

For many of these kids—many of them toddlers—they even have to maintain a strict recording schedule to provide weekly content. Children are known for their inability to stay committed to one task for too long, and yet they have to shoot videos

for hours. The bigger the channel grows, the greater those hours become. Could this be classified as immoral?

The former YouTube channel *Daddy-OfFive* is a prime example of this. The vlogging family consisted of Mike and Heather Martin and their five children, and were notorious for uploading "prank" videos. These pranks often consisted of them emotionally and physically abusing their children in the guise of humour. This eventually resulted in a controversy, after which their channel was terminated and they lost custody of their two youngest kids, the ones most targeted by the abuse.

It would be unfair to classify every family vlogging channel as the aforementioned. As a spectator, one can only make assumptions regarding the treatment of these children, and whether or not they truly want this lifestyle. But as we watch these channels grow, more merchandise being made, and the amount of content increasing to an alarming amount, the question remains: is this truly because of the children's passion, or the greed of the parents?

Saamin Azam Suha is a fandom connoisseur, professional procrastinator, and wannabe MasterChef. Send her compliments at saamin.suha@gmail.com

What to do with old tech

FAIZA ADIL

Everyone gets stuck with obsolete and unwanted tech, some of us shove them into a box and hoard it for months. Electronics aren't meant to last forever and eventually all end up unwanted, so what do we do then?

WHY CAN'T I JUST THROW THEM OUT?

Electronic waste contains a number of toxic materials and substances like lead, mercury and cadmium. When we dispose of e-waste, they end up in the garbage disposal system where most inevitably are incinerated, this means all of these harmful substances pollute the air. Apart from global warming, throwing out tech gives rise to a myriad other environmental concerns, from polluting the soil and groundwater to harmful repercussions on our ecosystem.

The rich substances and precious metals in electronics can have a second life, if extracted. For people with low income and the impoverished, e-waste provides additional income but without proper knowledge on how to protect themselves, they put themselves at risk. People involved in dismantling and recycling electronics become endangered to various carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health hazards. Nearly 100 percent of electronic waste is recyclable but Bangladesh still lacks proper systems for safe disposal and recycling, but there's a lot we can do ourselves too. **ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE**

What's useless to you can still be used by other people. Old laptops, computers, tabs and phones are often replaced by new ones, rendering them useless to you, but for a struggling family, an orphanage or an impoverished school your old

tech can still be used productively. Donate your unwanted technology as most can make some use of them even if they're barely working. Charities and underprivileged communities aren't hard to reach out to and you can do your share of giving.

HOW CAN I RECYCLE THEM?

If your old tech isn't salvageable enough to be donated, you can sell or give them away to the local businesses that make a living out of properly recycling and refurbishing electronics for re-sale. Electronic recycling shops are tucked away everywhere in Dhaka, piled to the top with dusty used gadgets but if this isn't an option, many companies and businesses that sell electronics also offer to take them back when you stop using them.

REUSING UNUSED TECH

If you're handy with electronics, you could dismantle and use parts of your laptops, computers, consoles and phones in making other ones. If you're more on the creative side, the internet offers a million different ways you can use old tech in DIY projects, from photo frames and decorations to computer cat beds—anything is possible.

Faiza enjoys the lazy company of her overweight cat and a million deadlines, reach her at faiza2421@gmail.com



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Extend the life of your electronics. Buy a case, keep your device clean, and avoid overcharging the battery.

NAMES FOR BANGLADESHI GAMES

ABHOY HRIDDO

Video games is the biggest form of popular culture in our generation. Most video games we play are based off fictional stories or real life events that take place in a foreign land, usually where the game is developed, like the US, Japan, or maybe Europe. This got me thinking, what if there were games like this but based in Bangladesh? How would they be, and what would we call them?

MISHTI CRUSH

Candy Crush is a free-to-play match-three puzzle video game released by King that your parents are hooked on. The story follows a character named Toffette as he travels through the Candy Kingdom bringing joy and happiness through Candy. As the game progresses more characters are introduced and the difficulty increases. Now imagine the same concept but instead of Candy Kingdom, you travel through South Asia in a small cart to sell sweets. The gameplay will pretty much be the same but the tiles will be replaced with iconic sweets of South Asia like *roshogolla*, *mawar laddu*, *kaalojam*, *chomchom*, *Muktatagar monda* and so on. The cart will travel from the quiet mountains of Sylhet to metropolitans like Dhaka. Passing a set of levels will allow you to earn points and customise your cart. Different regions will mean different sweet cravings with different challenges and different types of consumers. Instead of a sultry voice saying words like "Sweet", "Tasty" or "Divine" when there are impressive matches, you could have some Dhakaiya dude scream "*Mitha*" or "*MAAAKKKHHOOON*".

SENTU MIA'S CIVILIZATION

One of the biggest problems in our country is how horrible and unpredictable traffic jams are. You could probably attribute all of this to unplanned infrastructure or lack of it altogether. Now imagine this, you're on the Iron Throne of Bangladesh, rebuilding our infrastructure, fixing traffic congestion and transforming the whole nation into a paradise. And the best part, you can do it over thousands of years. Much like the *Sid Meier's Civilization* series, the gameplay should focus on building, resource management and exploring new opportunities. Throughout the game, global crises will disrupt the economy you've built. It could be our neighbours not exporting onions or the West not buying ready-made garments, or inexplicably, a global ban



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD



on prawn, you'll have to face these challenges head on try to stop it from putting your country into ruins. Beware of whatever equivalent of "Nuclear Gandhi" our *deshi* game spews up.

FIVE NIGHTS AT FARID'S

Five Nights at Freddy's is one of the most popular games of our time. Its story is mysterious, gameplay is fresh and villains are terrifying. Imagine the same concept with a sprinkle of Old Dhaka, specifically the older buildings with history, character, and a lot of structural damage. A rickety, shady house filled with killer robots, which are powered by souls of dead goats that have given their lives for *biriyani*, and their sole purpose is to grab you by the throat and shove you into a drain that's already overflowing. Absolute bonkers! Your objective would be to stay alive avoiding

the robots at all cost and maybe find a way to destroy these abominations. Weapons will be scattered around multiple rooms with several places to hide. A multiplayer option should be available for you to battle it out with your friends.

BHAAT ER HOTEL SIMULATOR

This takes inspiration from the many similar simulator games set in foreign lands. It's a simple point and click game. Take the *bhaat*, put it on a plate, and serve it to the customer. Sounds simple enough, right? Well it will be once you get the hang of it. The game will start off with you as a small restaurant owner in an alleyway. As you level up, you'll be introduced to new customers, new areas, new problems and new cuisines. Upgrades are readily available and decorations keep cycling throughout the store. The more you devote to the restaurant, the more chances of it to become a world class fine dine. Rising from a small restaurant to a world-class chain will be a journey to enjoy. An online mechanic could be introduced in the game where you could get to see other people's restaurants and, if needed, buy some decorations from them. The game may have a bidding system where, after your restaurant is big enough, you could sell unwanted branches and players may bid to buy it from you. This would increase player interactions and will add a certain new dynamic of the game, and in-game transactions are mostly good for business.

KHALED MAHMUD CRICKET 2020

Yeah, you read that right. A lot of us have played *Don Bradman Cricket 14*, but what if they made it special for Bangladesh. Maybe there could be 30 wicket games when Bangladesh plays. Thirty wickets might seem excessive but with Bangladeshi batsmen and a realistic representation of their skills, the wickets will be dropping like dominoes. If you make the bowlers mediocre enough, we might even get some competitive matches. The player system could be like FIFA's ultimate team as you gather cards of different rarities and build your dream team. Matches will be about 20 to 30 minutes long and game mechanics will be the usual.

Playing against India will be the hardest as none of the decisions will be in your team's favour.

PEYAJUNKNOWNS BATTLEGROUND

The recent kerfuffle with the onions was a big hit for the country. People scoured for these little orbs like crazy and their price skyrocketed. This led to onions being sold out very quickly after stores opened. Imagine that there's the last kilo of onions in Bangladesh and a 100 people are out to get it. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to obtain these onions by any means and get back home as fast as possible. Grab weapons ranging from chairs to raw fishes and smack the life out of your opponents. As time flies, the *kaacha bazar* will shrink, bringing your opponents closer together. Maps will be ranging from Town Hall bazar's malodorous alleys to Meena Bazar's sleek hallways.



Players enter the map by getting dropped out of local buses that ended up flying because they went too fast on Airport Road. The more onions you obtain, the more you level up. Characters can range from working dads to screaming teenagers.

Well here you have it folks, these are some of my picks for Bangladeshi names of popular games. We don't have these games yet but we sure hope they'll come around, maybe one of the new studios can come up with something, or maybe YOU could come up with the studio that comes up with it.

Abhoy Hriddo is an antisocial teenaged geek who would prefer to sit at home and play Call of Duty during Valentine's Day. Be sure to torment him at abhoyhriddo@gmail.com

AIUB and DU jointly organise BIMSTEC Film, Media and Journalism Conference 2020

The closing ceremony of the first BIMSTEC Film, Media and Journalism Conference 2020 was held on January 21, 2020 in the Auditorium of American International University Bangladesh. Dr. Murad Hasan, State Minister for Information, was the chief guest and Beatrice Kaldun, Head of the Office and UNESCO Representative to Bangladesh was present as special guest. Dr. Carmen Z Lamagna, VC of AIUB, presided over the programme.

Prof. Dr. A J M Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan, Convener, conveyed his gratitude to the sponsors of the event. Dr. Lamagna emphasised the necessity of more collaboration among the BIMSTEC countries in the field of media and journalism to foster the people-to-people contact in this region. The conference was jointly organised by the Department of Television, Film and Photography, University of Dhaka and the Department of Media and Mass Communication, AIUB. Events of first two days took place in the University of Dhaka and last day's programme was held in AIUB. In total, 32 papers from local and international participants were submitted in the conference focusing on issues ranging from media's role in shaping people's identity to creative industry's preparedness to face the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution.

DIU holds roundtable discussion on hospitality industry

Aiming to establishing the tourism industry as a major economic power of Bangladesh, the department of Tourism & Hospitality Management of Daffodil International University (DIU) organised a roundtable discussion on "Hospitality Industry: Securing the Future for Bangladesh in the Global Arena" on January 30, 2020 at Banquet Hall of the university. Dr. Md. Sabur Khan, Chairman, BOT, DIU and Chairman, Daffodil Family was present as the chief guest. Prof. Donald Sloan, former Chairman of Oxford School of Hospitality Management and Chairman, The Oxford Cultural Collective presented the keynote presentation. Prof. Dr. Yousuf M Islam, VC, DIU presided over the roundtable discussion. Mahabub Parvez, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management Head moderated the discussion.

Speakers in the meeting lauded that Bangladesh hospitality and tourism industry is experiencing rapid growth and it is becoming a significant contributor to the economy. Its sustainable success depends on a pipeline of skilled and motivated workers. For this reason, DIU is planning to partner with The Oxford Cultural Collective to explore the prospects of this sector.

It was decided in the roundtable discussion that an international conference titled "DISH Bangladesh" (Daffodil International Symposium on Hospitality) would be organised in Bangladesh from April 2-4, 2020 by DOCEH.

SASS of SEU organises freshers' reception and orientation programme

A freshers' reception and orientation program for the newly admitted students of Spring Semester 2020 under the School of Arts & Social Sciences (SASS) of Southeast University (SEU) was held on February 3, 2020 at SEU Seminar Hall, Banani, Dhaka.

Prof. Dr. AFM Mafizul Islam, VC of SEU, chaired the programme while Imdadul Haq Milan, Editor of the Daily Kaler Kantho was the chief guest. Abul Bashar Howlader, President, Bangladesh Teachers' Union, attended the programme as special guest.

Maj. Gen. Kazi Fakhruddin Ahmed (Retd.), Registrar of SEU welcomed newly enrolled students. Prof. Dr. Md. Abdul Hakim, Director of IQAC, introduced respective faculty members to the students. Prof. Dr. ANM Meshquat Uddin, Adviser to BOT, also addressed the students in the programme. Among others, chairpersons, faculty members, officials, newly enrolled students, and their guardians were present in the programme.



UAP hosts Career Expo 2020

The UAP-RB Career Expo 2020 was organised at University of Asia Pacific (UAP) campus on January 25, 2020. The programme was organised by the Department of Civil Engineering in association with the Civil Engineers Alumni Association of UAP.

Prof. Dr. M. R. Kabir, Pro-VC, and Prof. Dr. Farzana Rahman, Head of the Department, Department of Civil Engineering, UAP jointly inaugurated the programme.

The events of this programme were designed with a goal of giving the participants a glimpse of the job field, opportunities and the challenges they may face on their journey. About 230 students and 13 companies including SMEC Intl., VEnS Inc., DPM Consultants Ltd., Asha Jute Industries Ltd., Ridge Park Holdings Ltd., GPH Ispat Ltd., Seven Rings Cement, The SEL, BD Venture Ltd., Engineering and Research Associates, BSRM, along with Bangladesh Road Research Laboratory and the title sponsor RB Construction & Consultancy were present for the event.

The programme had competitions and sessions such as spot recruitment interview, start-up idea competition, CV writing workshop etc.

National Professor Dr. Jamilur Reza Choudhury was present at the closing ceremony held at the UAP Central Auditorium.

The six winners of the spot recruitment interview were awarded with job offer letters and the winners of the start-up competition were awarded with fund money. Crests were presented to the attending companies and guests.

The programme ended with the vote of thanks from Prof. Dr. Farzana Rahman, Head of the Department, Department of Civil Engineering, UAP.

BISC hosts Inter House Annual Sports Competition 2020

The weeklong Inter House Annual Sports Competition 2020 and prize giving ceremony of Bangladesh International School and College (BISC), Nirjhor, was held recently at Dhaka Cantonment. On the final day, there was a congregation of students, teachers and guardians in the college premises. This year the Abdul Zabbar House became champions while the Abdus Salam House became runner-ups.

Students presented a parade show and display along with participating in regular sporting events. Maj. Gen. Md. Moshfequr Rahman, SGP, SUP, ndc, psc, Area Commander, Logistics Area and Munshi Raihana Snigdha were present on the final day as chief guest and special guest, respectively. At the end of the event, the chief guest handed over the prizes to the winners. Chairman Brig. Gen. Kh. Md. Mozammel Haque, psc and Principal Lt. Col. Moksed Ali, PhD, AEC along with other distinguished guests were also present at the event.

IHSB organises press conference for 9th Interschool Bangla Olympiad

The 9th Interschool Bangla Olympiad, hosted by International Hope School Bangladesh (IHSB), will take place on February 22, 2020 at Chattogram and February 29, 2020 at Dhaka in the premises of their Sector 4 campus.

A press conference was held on February 3, 2020 at World Literature Center's conference hall. The Principal of the International Hope School Bangladesh Roksana Zarin, Deputy Head and Bangla Olympiad Coordinator Kamrul Ahsan, Alumni Coordinator Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Head of Music Department Saroar Hossain, and the Bangla Language and Literature teacher Md. Mizanur Rahman, were present there.

In the event, Roksana Zarin said, "We are proud to be able to host this event every year, in the presence of other English medium and English version schools, in the hope of remembering all the martyrs of the 1952 Language Movement. There are no other events as such, and that makes us extremely happy to be able to organise it."

Bangla Olympiad Coordinator Kamrul Ahsan said, "For the ninth year running, we are hosting this year's Bangla Olympiad with other prominent English medium and English version schools. This year's event is even larger than before, with three lucky participants to be chosen through a raffle draw, entitled to a fully funded visit to USA. Additionally, this year's event will also take place for the first time in our Chattogram branch."

The registration for the event has already started, and will run until February 15. Students are eligible to register in the following categories: Singing, Dancing, Poem Recitation, Drawing, Extempore Speech, Bangla Quiz, and Essay Writing.

Last year's Bangla Olympiad was participated by 99 branches of 71 schools countrywide, with 1600 students in total.

To register for the Bangla Olympiad, visit www.banglaolympiad.org

OLFACTORY

PARTHIB MAHMUD

I saw her again on a chilly January evening, standing under a raintree, waiting for a ride, perhaps. That magnificent raintree at the junction where the University Road met the Colonel Street, with its colossal branches hugging the air and hiding its face in the broad hazy chest of the winter sky.

I saw her, in a grey parka and a pair of sneakers. They were dark pink, reminiscing the evening sky above her. A maroon muffler – maybe a shed or two darker than the postbox she was standing next to, wrapped around her neck. So much like the raintree she stood under and the winter she breathed in. She took out her phone and tapped a few buttons, smiled at the screen while doing so, then put it back in her bag. Her reddish curls shimmered under the faint sodium lamps.

I could smell her hair from where I was standing, although not sure whether it was the northern breeze that contoured around her before reaching my face, or just the memories evoking in my head, deceiving my olfactory nerves. How mysterious the brain can become at times! It can make you see things that are never there, or hear sounds that never originated. Or may even make you forget your surroundings on a cold evening and think about a tiny brownish mole that some girl has, right underneath her parka, a couple inches below the collar; something that I haven't seen in a long time.

Ah, she has found her ride I see.

The writer is a student of Economics at the University of Dhaka.

FIRST SNOW

NUJHAT ASLAM

The North wind blows past,
Turning pages to unveil the end.
A blurred skyline –
Through the frosty window pane.
Unsure of what waits ahead.

The weary legs follow the wind
Not to ignore its beckoning
The mirage of warmth –
Provokes further steps.

At the farthest end lies a barricade –
Made of enticing ice
Encaged stays all earthly life.

The flakes fall as to reign over –
Abating the warmth of beating hearts
Exhaling sullen, misty breath
Covering the eyelids –
Of the owners of the last breath.

PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD



I walk into an art exhibition...

MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

Two years ago, I was in a bad place, mentally. Life became mundane and grey. I went to Dhaka Art Summit dragging myself from underneath the covers, hoping for an afternoon that would distract me and frankly, give me something to do.

What I got in return was more than I had expected. We're so engrossed in our own lives, in our own familiar surroundings, that sometimes we lose bearings. The art event with its displays portraying the plights of people from around the globe—from past and present—grounds you and humbles you by reminding you of the colossal scope of human existence amongst which you live a tiny life.

It gave me so much to marvel at. Fine human creation always reminds us of how much we all can achieve if we put our mind to it. Pictures of persecution of indigenous communities on the opposite side of the globe made me stop whining about my own problems and put things into perspective. Travelling across the globe to see the world may be a long-term plan at best but going to an exhibition doesn't have to be.

I came home feeling refreshed and stimulated but most of all, I felt alive. Art has the power to remind you that there is so much to see, so many places



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

to go, so much to do and above all, so much to live for. "I have seen, have heard, have lived/ In the depth of the

known have felt/ The truth that exceeds all knowledge/ Which fills my heart with wonder and I sing," is how Tagore

expressed himself and it seems very fitting here.

However, art can also intimidate people. "I don't really know much about art," "I never studied art," and "I never get what modern art is supposed to be" are very common sentiments among people who feel as though they may be lost or alienated among the artwork.

The truth is one does not need to be an artist to visit an exhibition. There is rarely one specific truth that is the meaning of each artwork and most of what's on offer is open to interpretation. Even if there is one specific interpretation that was the intention of the artist, who cares if that exactly is not something you figure out? The artist's job arguably ended with the last stroke of paint on the canvas and what we perceive from that painting is the starting of a perfectly different conversation.

Art, in my belief, is about eliciting a feeling or reaction among people. As long as the colours, textures, patterns or installations remind you of anything, spark a curiosity or change your mood even the slightest bit, you've lived a bit more by just walking into an art exhibition.

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Viewing art in person is different from on a screen. • Take your time with a piece. Look for patterns.

Five Stages, One Bad Haircut

SYEDA ERUM NOOR

BARGAINING

Before you could get comfortable, the hairdresser has already chopped off a good two inches—more than you had asked. Instantly, you begin having a conversation with yourself.

"Say something!"

However, your crippling need to please people and your discomfort with unpleasant social interactions stop you. So you strike up a bargain. You start offering anything to get yourself to speak up before it gets worse.

"Please say something. We'll buy the milkshake we've been craving for a week if you do!"

Hah, you're only met with a rapidly pounding heart and a counter bargain.

"Hmm, maybe it's not that bad? She is a hairdresser. She must know what she's doing."

The battle between the rational you and the introvert you rages on until suddenly, it's too late. Your hair has been destroyed.

PANIC

The following stage is always panic. With a nervous smile, you pay for something you didn't want, lie about how much you like it, and bolt out. You pull on your hoodie over your head in shame.

Upon reaching home, you stand before the mirror with



ILLUSTRATION: JUNAID IQBAL ISHAMAM

a look of terror on your face. You stare at yourself and bite your nails. It's even worse than you thought.

THERAPY

"Hello," you tell yourself in a trembling voice. *"You can't ever go outside again."*

And it begins. It starts with the rant about how your hairdresser doesn't know how to do her job and shifts to self-hatred for not saying anything.

"I'm paying for it, aren't I?" you ask your less-than-bothered reflection. *"I should have said something."*

Alas! From a bad haircut to self-doubt and then questioning your entire life.

ACCEPTANCE

The longer you stare at yourself in the mirror, the more you notice the great texture your hair seems to have.

"Maybe it wasn't so bad? Maybe I was overreacting?"

To answer your question—yes, you were. But that's only a very natural part of the process.

Soon, you start to experiment, putting your hair up in different ways to see which way looks most flattering.

"This might very well be okay."

GLAMOUR

By the third day, you are rocking the new haircut. You start to discover all the great things about this hairstyle that you were too upset to notice before. Your faith in hairdressers is restored. You have a new pep in your walk and a twinkle in your eye every time you go somewhere.

Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com