

In the battle of the present versus the cataclysmic future, Cristiano Ronaldo showed that humans still have a chance against the genetic freaks of modern science as he bounced back from being down 4-1 in the Ballon d'Or count against Argentina's Lionel Messi.

The underwear model who moonlights as Real Madrid's talisman has not had an easy road to becoming the greatest footballer in the history of the sport, especially when you consider that Pele and Diego Maradona had to contend with other humans while Ronaldo was pitted against one of humanity's greatest threats—GMOs.

Although the mild-mannered Argentinian was thought to be just an idiot-savant for years and years, the fact that Messi's body has been genetically modified since his teenage years has been brought up numerous times. However, much like Michael Jordan's gambling addiction was overlooked by the NBA, FIFA has conveniently swept Messi's issues under the rug.

Now, in the aftermath of any sport's greatest achievement, let us bring the harrowing facts to light. Messi has been injected with human growth hormone (HGH)—one of many substances the now-disgraced Lance Armstrong admitted to taking—for an extended period of time since he was 13. Barely gifted as a youngster, he failed to find a club willing to take him on until Barcelona proposed the expensive and extremely illegal science experiment to mould him.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the hormones help to 'not only develop greater height, but

also help deal with a variety of internal issues, such as pituitary function, skin and teeth problems and lower immunity while also increasing stamina and strength, heightening motor functions, having perfect control of the ball and also grant the ability to slow down time".

It is a damning indication of where he gets his "god-gifted ability" from, especially considering that the use of HGH is banned in almost all sports, amateur and professional. Of course, he perhaps could have fashioned a therapeutic use exemption from the infamously corrupt members of FIFA or his chums at the European footballing body.

If given, the reason would be as much of an excuse as the aforementioned Armstrong saying he needed blood doping, erythropoietin and HGH to survive cancer. What would you say then: "No Armstrong, don't cure your cancer?" I thought not.

Ronaldo could have taken a leaf out of Messi's book. Instead, he has always chosen to forge his own path, believing in himself with an unwavering conviction that only the world's most egomaniacal and metrosexual have. When he limped out of the final of the Euros in 2016, he willed his team to victory from the sidelines, mostly by not hogging the ball and taking potshots. When Messi lost the Copa America (South America's equivalent of the Euros) in 2016, he retired. The match rolled into shootouts, Messi missed his penalty and then, to put it as aptly as possible, he rage-quit.

Unlike Messi, who has stayed at only Barcelona (and with one woman)

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RONALDO VS GMOS

SAMAMA RAHMAN



CARTOON: OMAR MOMANI

throughout his career not out of loyalty but for fear of being unmasked, Ronaldo planted his flag in Europe (and multiple supermodels) with Manchester United as well, a feat that earned him his first Ballon d'Or.

So when one of mankind's finest picked up his crown jewel atop the Eiffel

Tower, a platform from which it was rather easy to overshadow the famously thin-skinned Neymar, his posse of Brazilians and orgy-loving father, the whole world had only a few things to do; sit down, be humble and bear witness.

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| MUSINGS |

THE CASE FOR PLAGIARISM

SNITCH

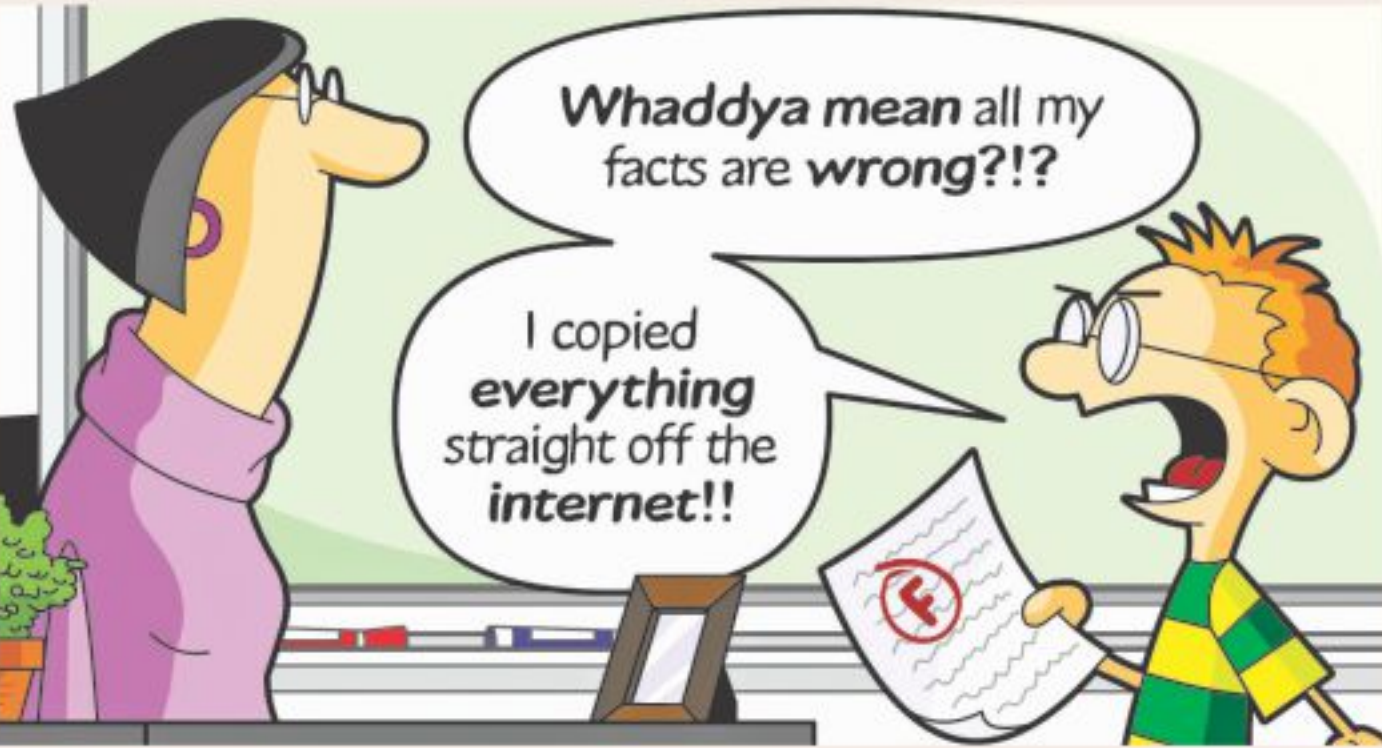


PHOTO: STOLEN FROM THE INTERNET

the three years that I have spent in the apparently best school of the country, I have received next to zero opportunities to conduct any meaningful research. Most teachers prefer setting assignments that are extremely uninteresting, and easily available on the internet, instead of original topics relevant to the Bangladeshi context. Why wouldn't students copy from these highly convenient sources?

Even if someone chooses to ignore the internet and carry out the research anyway, who will provide them with the necessary resources? Research requires a lot of logistical support. I once tried to do a survey on the earnings of *tong dokans* in and around my university,

and it turned out to be an absolute disaster, mostly because we were unclear about what exactly our teacher asked for. Students are not expert researchers; they need guidance every step of the way.

Let us suppose, in a perfect world, people end up writing 3,000 completely original, never-seen-before words after finishing the research. But here, the teachers never read those papers. *No one* ever reads those papers, except that one junior who will ask you for the finished assignment a year later, so that s/he can copy it. Maybe, if the teachers read and gave regular feedback on the papers their students work on, they would have *some* incentive to not plagiarise.

Trust me, I would put more effort into my term papers than I do into maintaining my Instagram feed if there was any chance of me receiving some recognition for it. Foreign universities publish their students' research work in journals if they're good enough. Here, it'll end up in random print shops. A teacher once told me that she doesn't feel like writing local business case studies because she knows that her paper will show up in Nilkhet the day after it's published, ready for use by anyone and everyone.

Let me end this rant with a true story: a professor assigned 200-page term papers. The deadline? A week. Knowing that he would never read the 200 or so papers, every single student collected the assignments done by the previous batch, and submitted them, almost entirely word-for-word. I hear they even had an Excel sheet to keep track of who was stealing whose assignment.

Plagiarism is really quite addictive. You get away with it once, and you keep wanting to do it. Unless our teachers manage to reward us for originality and the effort it requires, there's no getting rid of our old friends: ctrl+c, ctrl+v.

Snitch eats two shingaras a day to escape the harsh realities of life.

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Mehedi woke up in a cold sweat. Was he ready? Could he possibly be the man to outdo Rohit Kohli, that too in his first match? Would anyone buy that? Seriously, he thought, it was asking too much... he wouldn't have believed it.

Anxiety batting away whatever sleep, was left as the dawn seeped through to his bedroom, Mehedi abandoned hopes of further slumber and got up to get

amount she does not care started blaring. "That's a classic... it's called Bodak Yellow by Cardi B. We're trying to make you a classic too, trying to make some green."

Mehedi went off with his jersey and the pill and when he re-entered the dressing room, things were heating up. Yasir was in one corner with the fielding coach yelling "Drop!" now and "Catch!" the next. Karunasinghe was padded up

CRICKOMANIA 2037

SAKEB SUBHAN

ready for what was set to be the most important day of his life. BPEL Crickomania 2037. It doesn't get much bigger.

It was past 2 pm by the time he made it to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. His father had told him a few years ago that they used to play in the daytime. Entrances must have sucked back in the day, Mehedi had thought.

"Go straight to the staging area. They've been waiting for you," barked Anamul, Abahani's director, the moment Mehedi entered the dressing room.

"No Mehedi; you are to be known as Medieval Hasan," Kiran Modi, the emcee extraordinaire, said as he put a hurried yet reassuring arm around the youngster's shoulders when he got to the staging area. "You should relax. No use being antsy; that's not the personality you are going for. You're in the club just to party. Ultra cool, but capable of combustion at a moment's notice. That's what will make it special; they won't see it coming."

"Erm... does Mr Rohit know what will happen?"

"You don't worry about that; Rohit is a finely honed professional. Now you have to remember to take the microphone from the umpire before anything happens. What we are going for here is a star on debut. We've never done that... no pressure, but you only get to do this once," Modi looked at the near-trembling Mehedi and changed tack. "But don't worry, the way we've got it laid out, it shouldn't be a problem. Just follow the script and let the adrenaline do the rest. Now here's your jersey, put this [hands Mehedi a pill] under your wristband and just pop it when your music hits..."

"Speaking of," Modi turned around and walked to a console of touch screens and tapped a few, "you'll be walking out to this." Some retro music with synth and a girl's voice rapping out the precise

installed the new lights yet, these ones will make you look all washed out on video.

"Okay, I'll be off now to finalise the script with Mohammedan. Remember: your entrance is at the start of the last over—that's the fifth over. You get in Rohit's face—remember the microphone—tell him that his celebrity power-couple parents took you in after his falling out with them, and you know all his secret deliveries. They betrayed him... Virushka is on your side now. Don't hurry though, give the crowd the time to applaud. Then it's all simple, he'll bowl you a long hop and you'll hit it for the winning four. Even if you mishit it, don't worry, it'll be taken care of. Just make the connection."

"They used to play Tests; can you believe it sitting here today? Five freakin' days instead of five overs! If not that, then it was seven-hour one-day matches. Even the shortest format was three-and-a-half hours of mostly cricket. Seriously man, thank god for Shane McMahon. The WWE and cricket are such a natural fit."

"Yeah, but it still needed vision to see that. I would say it was 2017 that changed all that. Remember that year, the BPL? The chaos about the match shifting from Sunday to Monday for rain even though there was no reserve day. Yeah, the best part was the justification... they said it was for the greater interest of the tournament. Once that was accepted, you were just a few excuses away from the real thing."



PHOTOS: COURTESY



"We can't take all the credit, you know," Rahman countered. "Right after the BPL, the T10 Cricket League just changed everything. It was only a matter of time. And wasn't it that same year that the four-day Test was played? Things were trending towards this."

"Yes, but someone had to see the trend then, and I am just happy we got there before the IPL. Who would have thought in 2017, that just 20 years later, Bangladesh would be the centre of the cricketing universe."

"Sports entertainment universe," spat out an indignant voice from the corner. It was one of the national captains in 2017, someone not as enamoured with BPEL as his juniors were. The old-timer, however, was brought around to the events to appease some fellow backward thinkers with a few selfies.

"Same difference," snorted Hossain before muttering to Rahman, "Such a downer, no wonder he used to play Tests."

The lights went out. The speakers went silent, momentarily before Modi's showbiz voice boomed out, "This is Bangladesh Premier Entertainment League and welcome to Crickomania!"

Then the captain's music hit and the crowd went wild.

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