



RABITA SALEH

Yesterday my parents dropped a bombshell on me and my two siblings. It went something like this:

"Children, take a seat. As you know, we have been having some difficulty as of late in deciding which of you we would like to brag to our neighbours about and which of you we will have to hide from public view. Therefore your mother and I have decided to hold a competition of sorts to decide which of you shall be heralded as 'The Best Child'."

As our father relayed this speech to us, we took it in stride, inwardly knowing they had our best interests at heart, and on we went with our assigned tasks. The rubric for points was expansive, encompassing all desirable behaviour on our parts. Whoever had the highest number of parent-points at the end of the week would win "The Best Child Award". Why this cup needed to be won, we weren't sure. We assumed it had something to do with our inheritance.

For me, as the unfortunate middle child, this was going to be quite challenging. However, I was determined to win this. I just had to outsmart my siblings.

On Monday, my younger brother returned home with an A on his Maths exam — lethal blow. To one up him I loudly studied all evening for a non-existent exam.

On Tuesday, my older sister decided to clean her room herself without any help. This had to be handled with ruthless re-

taliation since 1981, the year Beyoncé was born. The name is in compliance with the requisites set by International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN).

On Thursday, the little devil was troublesome again by coming back home with a first place trophy at his school sports day. Was he actually more talented than the rest of us? *Wew*, crazy thought. Regardless, I persevered by helping my Dad send an email. For additional points I even photoshopped his attached documents clean, while painstakingly explaining the process to him, knowing he would forget the very next day. Disaster averted.

On Friday, the eldest one pulled out an ace she had up her sleeve. She cooked dinner for us all. As a male, cooking would earn me no points at all. That cunning shrew had used her innate advantages. For a moment, I thought all was lost. But then I realised I could turn the tables on her in the same way.

So the next night at dinner I sampled every vegetable and fish on the table remarking how good they were. My mother's eyes lit up because getting a son to eat all kinds of food was every mother's greatest pride. None of her friends had succeeded in this. As my sister looked on with great envy, for she, as a daughter, could not earn these same points, I swiped the cup from right under her nose. Victory!

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Pokémon and where to find them in Bangladesh

FAISAL BIN IQBAL

The world of Pokémon is expanding and today, it has reached our doorsteps right here in Bangladesh. We are about to enter the eighth generation of Pokémon with over 800 of these pocket monsters to catch! Although we have failed to spot all of them within our borders, we are sure to find them soon once the expedition begins at a much larger scale. But for now, let us see if we can catch the ones that have been spotted.

Be sure to choose a starter Pokémon before you go out into the wild. Also, no riding your bicycle indoors or on the sidewalk. Remember, there is a time and place for everything. Unless you are in Dhaka, Chattogram or any of the other major cities of our country in which case, you are already out of time and place before you have even started your journey.

SNORLAX, THE SLEEPING POKÉMON

Legend has it that Snorlax made its way down the mountains and somehow managed to make all the busiest roads of Dhaka its sleeping grounds. It can be found sleeping peacefully on the roads of Dhaka, without giving a damn about the gridlocks it causes. Snorlax is a very common Pokémon in Bangladesh, especially at the Bijoy Sarani traffic signal in Dhaka, where you're bound to run into it no matter what time of day it is. If you are thinking of using a Poké Flute to wake up Snorlax, you're just being delusional. The only thing to do is wait patiently for this giant Pokémon to wake up and let you pass.

DIGLETT, THE MOLE POKÉMON

Digletts were held responsible for all the potholes in Dhaka, and also the cracks on highways leading out of the capital. Afterwards, construction companies started recruiting them in exchange for fair wages. Digletts became part of the overall development of the country as their hole digging skills began contributing towards mega projects like the metro rail, the elevated expressway, that bridge over that river, and so on. So you see, Digletts were blamed for the damage they caused to our roads. They're still the ones who are being blamed for the condition of our roads, only this time, they're being paid to do so.

WEEZING, THE TOXIC POKÉMON

Weezing can be found at the waste bins and disposal sites located all over Bangladesh. However, in recent times, this Pokémon has been found loitering around different industrial areas in Narayanganj, Gazipur, etc. Weezing is fond of feasting on the stench released by garbage and waste products. It has thus, made Dhaka one of its favourite food hunting grounds as the capital is full of such waste materials no matter where you look.



ILLUSTRATION: JUNAID IQBAL ISHMAN

MUK, THE SLUDGE POKÉMON

Muk is perhaps the most dangerous Pokémon that resides in Bangladesh. By dumping excessively large volume of toxic waste into our water bodies, we have invited this grim Pokémon ourselves. Muk made its home on the banks of polluted rivers, ponds, and tanks, and has been terrorising the locals who live near these water bodies. Scientists predict that the number of these unwelcomed guests will only increase as time goes on. It has also been predicted, that we are one nuclear power plant away from making Muk a radioactive sludge bomb.

GROUDON, THE CONTINENTAL POKÉMON

Groudon's appearance is triggered by the "social orb." The social orb is a collection of rain-related statuses from Facebook users, who wait no longer than ten seconds into the rain, to make a relevant post on social media. Groudon was last seen a couple of weeks ago when Facebook user RJ GT9 posted the lyrics of November Rain. The temperature level for such days depends on how embarrassing the posts are.

GIRATINA, THE RENEGADE POKÉMON

Giratina was banished into the distortion world by Arceus. The distortion world is a dark realm where the concept of space and time ceases to exist, and reality is whatever Giratina wants it to be. It is a popular belief that the distortion world was created specifically for Giratina in order to keep it as far away as possible from our world. And thus, Uttara came into existence, harbouring Giratina within its many sectors.

ZUBAT, THE BAT POKÉMON

When Bruce Wayne ended up in a cave full of bats, he came out of it as Batman. We, on the other hand, would only get annoyed at these noisy flying rats. Nevertheless, Zubats too found their way to Bangladesh. However, due to the unavailability of caves, Zubats had to take shelter under the flyovers and foot over-bridges. People these days are afraid of taking these flyovers and bridges to their destinations, not because they're afraid that these structures would collapse, but



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

Weird animals with even weirder names

HIYA ISLAM

We are sharing our world with 8.7 million species. The vast majority, almost 86 percent is yet to be discovered, studied and ultimately, catalogued. It is no surprise that while scientists are at it, they run out of names. Here are some of the strangest, wackiest names in science that can serve as pretty good tongue twisters too.

Vini vidivici is a species of parrot also known as conquered lorikeet. The Latin name literally translates to "I came, I saw, I conquered." However, the parrots went extinct about 700-1300 years ago. Conquered? Ironic.

A new fungus, *Spongiforma squarepantsii*, discovered in the largest island of Asia, Borneo was named after famous cartoon character SpongeBob SquarePants who looks like a regular kitchen sponge but is indeed a sea sponge. The fungus has been named so due to its similarity in shape with the sea sponge.

Parastratiophcomomyia stratiophcomyoides is too big a name for a small fly. It is the longest scientific name standing at 42 letters with no great meaning either.

Kamera lens is a single-celled organism with protruding appendages and it came



into attention a few decades ago despite being dated as far as 1773. Not much is known about its physiology or ecologic importance. Likewise, nobody knows why it's been named this way. But it makes a good addition to the list anyway.

Scaptia beyoncaeae, that's right, Queen

Bee. In 2012, Dr. Bryan Lessard named a horsefly with a golden back after American singer and actress Beyoncé, as a way to garner attention to the rare species (and important pollinator) and the need to log and study more insects. The fly had been stored in Australian National Insect Col-

Reference

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-14616161>

Hiya is currently struggling to reach her book-reading goals. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com