

Messi, Messier, Messiest



OF MAGIC & MADNESS

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It was, quite easily, the most extraordinary final in the long history of the World Cup. A nail-biting, end-to-end game, full of goals, early leads and dramatic comebacks. A cliffhanger, really, in a tournament full of similar cliffhangers, as the staggering intensity with which it was played stretched absorbingly into extra time, and then some more, to be finally decided through penalty shootouts.

As a football fan, you couldn't have asked for more. Because more doesn't exist. In a World Cup final, the stakes are usually so high that it inhibits performance. Yet, what a game this was. The final showdown between Argentina and France – equals in every way, each vying for that third star on their jerseys – didn't just live up to its billing; it surpassed it by some distance. And Argentina winning it is perhaps footballing justice, for what it means to them, the entire region of South

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Lionel Messi of Argentina touches the World Cup trophy during the awards ceremony after the FIFA World Cup 2022 final at Lusail stadium, Qatar.

PHOTO: EPA

America, and their World Cup starved fans across the globe, including in Bangladesh.

But let's face it: in a few years, as moments melt into memories and narratives, the

FIFA World Cup 2022 will be remembered less for what happened on or off the field in Qatar than for what it eventually came to represent: the crowning moment for a

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history as he held the most-coveted trophy in football after singlehandedly guiding his team to World Cup glory, matching the feat of his idol Diego Maradona who last won the cup for Argentina in 1986. "Singlehandedly" might be a bit of a stretch, as he had motivated lieutenants to support him, but there is no doubt that he was the general that held them all together, leading them

he has been doing for the last 16 years or so, with a level of consistency that few can or could rival. This is what he did when he reached the 2014 World Cup final, which he lost. He won the Golden Ball then as he did on Sunday again. He had an average supporting cast then. By most standards, what he has in his winning team now is also an average supporting cast. What worked for him this time, then?

This is where we must take note of Messi's evolution, as a player, as an Argentine, and as a captain – a progression we can call "Messi, Messier, Messiest." For most footballers, being just Messi would be more than enough. Just Messi is calm Messi, demure Messi, brilliant Messi. This Messi appears to be self absorbed, aloof even. Messier is when we see him in terms of his relationship with Argentina, a country he chose to represent over Spain, one that gives him a greater purpose beyond the pleasure of breaking records. He is equally deadly in that role, if not as impactful in terms of trophies. It is his transformation as a leader that really made all the difference.

This supreme version of Messi, ironically, is more fragile but also more determined, more emotionally invested in what is happening in his team, and therefore more responsive to their needs. This Messi knows you are only as strong as the weakest member of your team. This Messi is not afraid to get down and dirty for them.

As Gabriele Marcotti, a senior writer for ESPN, has noted: "Messi watchers place the turning point at the 2019 Copa America. Argentina lost in the semifinal to host Brazil, and after the game, Messi was decidedly un-Messi-like. He railed against the referee and showed an obvious, outward edge that few had seen before. He had taken over the captaincy a few years earlier, but this was a different Messi: This was angry Messi, snarly Messi, street Messi. (This was the Messi who would materialise after the game against the Dutch, hissing at Wout Weghorst: "What are you looking at, Bobo?")"

What won this World Cup for Argentina is Captain Messi. After the final, Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, when asked to explain his Golden Glove-winning performance, said: "I did my thing." Messi could have said the same thing, and it would have been wrong. Leadership was not his thing. He grew into it over time. The reward is three major international trophies in just a little over one year – a World Cup, a Copa America, and a Finalissima.

This new Messi is beautiful to watch, both on the field and off. Who knows what else Captain Messi can achieve for his team in the coming years?

Holding our celebrities accountable



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December 2021. It was around this time that the Evaly scam was coming to a head. The now notorious e-commerce platform had made many promises to its customers, but had failed to deliver on most, if not all of them.

However, it wasn't only the organisation that was under fire. Countless customers came forward to sue not just Evaly, but the many celebrities who had worked with Evaly as brand ambassadors and partners.

Many customers shared the same sentiment: if famous celebrities were involved in promoting the platform, then surely they could trust it. Celebrities like Tahsan, Mithila and Sabnam Faria were sued by one customer; all of them were eventually relieved of fraud charges by a Dhaka court.

On December 5, 2022, *The Business Standard* published an investigative report documenting how RF Builders, a real estate company, started the construction of an 18-storey building on a 110-katha plot in the Adarsha Gram area of Cox's Bazar in 2012.

In a similar fashion to Evaly, RF Builders heavily engaged in bringing big celebrities to associate with their operation. To this measure, they were able to get the likes of Ilias Kanchan and Shakib Al Hasan involved in the project, with the former joining as the project's director.

Aptly named "White Sand," the project's site now lays empty, even though it was supposed to be complete in 2018. Like sand, the dreams of all those who invested their hard-earned money into this project slipped away from their hands.

Similar to RF Builders, some 10 other developers also engaged

in similar scams, fronting their projects with the names of stars like Moushumi and Omar Sani, and public figures like Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Planning Minister MA Mannan.

In Bangladesh, knowledge of high-level financial scams – particularly the ones backed up by large investments, companies and public figures – is very low. With how drastically development has taken place in Bangladesh, scams like Evaly and RF Builders have only come to the forefront in recent years. It is concerning that celebrities and public figures have continued to be involved in such devious projects, without anyone holding them accountable.

Yes, they aren't the ones who devised the scams. Most of them probably weren't even aware that these companies would scam their customers. However, as a general observer, it's infuriating to see that such big names love to pocket the cash, say some inspirational quotes about how whatever they are endorsing will solve everyone's problems, and then immediately duck out as soon as things don't bode well for them.

In the age of social media and scandals, accountability is hard to come by. But why is it that celebrities feel that they can use their brand and name to promote products for a paycheck and then immediately drop any accountability when push comes to shove?

The issue of influencers and celebrities endorsing dodgy products and services isn't only one that exists in Bangladesh. In October of this year, Kim Kardashian was fined USD 1.26 million for promoting a cryptocurrency called EthereumMax

without disclosing that she was being paid for the endorsement.

In the US, a law was passed by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 2019, which required celebrities and influencers to declare when they were being sponsored to promote products or services by a certain brand on their social media platforms.

But in Bangladesh, there are no such regulations governing celebrity endorsements. As a result, celebrities can get away with endorsing scams, all the while preserving their goodwill with the public.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that celebrities in Bangladesh are yet to take any form of real accountability in such a situation. Without some sort of precedent being set, it is unlikely that they will come forward to accept blame.

Simultaneously, public figures like our honourable politicians should also be put under scrutiny. Their social capital can be a large contributing factor behind why people invest in ventures or buy certain products. Public figures, particularly politicians, should not be allowed to endorse products at all. Their vested interest in projects can also mislead people to assume that these projects are bulletproof and guaranteed to succeed.

The government should step forward to put regulations in place, while also ensuring that, once in place, said regulations would be strictly enforced. If we don't act now, then this will continue, mostly with the rate at which internet infrastructure is developing in the country.

Celebrities, too, should be angry over this issue. When a brand uses you to promote a product which is then revealed to be a scam, celebrities should be coming forward to clear the doubt around their own image.

At the end of the day, celebrities should not be allowed to make profits from their credibility and star power, while thousands of their fans pour their hard-earned money into whatever the biggest names in the country are promoting for a quick buck.

Bangladesh Election Commission		
Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase) Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207		
Invitation for Tenders		
1	Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Election Commission.
2	Agency	Election Commission Secretariat.
3	Procuring entity name	Represented by Project director, Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Bangladesh Election Commission.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Invitation for	Upgradation and Capacity Enhancement of Disaster Recovery sites.
6	Invitation Ref. No. & date	17.14.0000.240.07.093.2022/3239; Dated: 18 December, 2022.
KEY INFORMATION		
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
FUNDING INFORMATION		
8	Budget and source of funds	GoB (Development Budget).
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
9	Project/program code (if applicable)	224331200.
10	Project name (if applicable)	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase).
11	Tender Package No.	GD-09.
12	Tender package name	Upgradation and Capacity Enhancement of Disaster Recovery sites.
		Date Time
13	Tender publication date	20 December, 2022
14	Pre-tender meeting date and time	03 January, 2023 11:00am
15	Tender last selling date and time	16 January, 2023 04:00pm
16	Tender closing date and time	17 January, 2023 11:30am
17	Tender opening date and time	17 January, 2023 12:00pm
18	Name & address of the office(s)	Address
19	Selling tender document (Principal)	Assistant Director (Finance), Room No. 818, (Floor-8), Nirbachan Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
No conditions apply for sale, purchase of distribution of tender documents.		
20	Pre-tender meeting	
21	Receiving tender document	Conference Room No. 721, Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-7), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
22	Opening tender document	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
23	Eligibility of tenderer	1. Tender shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the applicable law. 2. Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh. 3. Tenderers shall have to fulfill its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. 4. Detail information has been provided in the tender document.
24	Brief description of services	Upgradation and Capacity Enhancement of Disaster Recovery sites Lot-01: Active Equipment and Accessories (SAN Storage, SAN Switch, ToR Switch, Management Switch, Server, Rack with PDU); Lot-02: Passive Equipment and Accessories (Automatic Voltage Regulator, Fire Suppression System Upgradation, Automatic Intelligent Transfer Switch, Additional Power Connection for Data center, Network Router, Network Switch, Accessories, Certified Data Center Professional Training). As specified in the Tender Document.
25	Price of tender document (Tk.)	BDT 4000.00 (Four thousand Taka only) non-refundable.
26	Package No.	Identification of package Location Tender security amount (Tk) Completion time in weeks
	GD-09	Lot-01 Dhaka Tk 25,00,000 (Pay Order/Bank Guarantee) 90 days from the date of signing contract.
		Lot-02 Dhaka Tk 3,00,000 (Pay Order/Bank Guarantee) 60 days from the date of signing contract.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
27	Name of official inviting tender	Brigadier General Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem.
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Project Director.
29	Address of official inviting tender	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Telephone: 00-88-02-55007594; E-mail address: pd.idea2.bd@gmail.com
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

GD-2337

Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem
Brigadier General
Project Director