



# The shoes that KILLED FOOTBALL

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CLUELESSPONDENT, *from the future*

The month of May, 2077.

The BFFE (Best Friends Forever and Ever) are holding a grand ceremony to celebrate 50 years of the successful eradication of any kind of football-related activities in the country.

For decades at the BFFE headquarters, informally known as Bluffufo, a celebration has been taking place this time of the year.

May marks the pivotal month when, 54 years prior, BFFE ensured that half the sports journalists could not cover football any longer. It stemmed from one classist "inside joke" from the then and the now president of the football board, Don Vito Salamanca.

This reporter -- who travelled through time as part of an inter-temporal investigation to find out what drove a board to declare war on the very sport they were assigned to steer to growth -- first learned upon arrival that no one could recall exactly when the term "Bluffufo" was coined.

Rumours had it that a certain leading spyware company of the 2020s hacked the BFFE website and replaced its name in an act of protest, saying Salamanca was hampering their business by leaking sensitive content himself.

The rumour refers back to when the BFFE chief was overheard demanding that sports journalists must carry a photo of their fathers

wearing shoes to secure entry to the BFFE House.

It first drew ire from people from all walks of life, and some naive folks even thought that was to be the last straw for Salamanca but the reality was different.

The remaining half of the journalists, who had the required photos, faced further challenges as Salamanca demanded pictures with their fathers wearing "branded shoes", and DNA results showing Caucasian ancestry.

Once sports journalists were eliminated, Salamanca's elitist attitude did not spare the footballers as they too were subject to the demands, and by May 2077, had stopped playing the game altogether. The spectators were gone before any of this happened.

In a tell-all interview back in 2027, the football boss said that he wanted to make football elite, because that is the only way standards would be raised.

Fast forward to 2077, and it is impossible to find any sports reporter who once covered football or knew anyone who admitted to doing so.

Asked, a sports journalist who covers Crazeball -- a hybrid of cricket and baseball, the most popular game here -- said football is a taboo topic in this part of the world, mainly because it triggers PTSD in people.

During the 50-year-celebration, this reporter discovered a bizarre costume party

going on, where BFFE officials were dressed in red and white -- reminiscent of the uniform worn by the East India Company.

Moreover, the hosts were seen sipping on this particular drink. It was learned that the so-called beverage, considered sacred at BFFE, was made by soaking the boots and socks of their beloved colonial masters for at least 12 years.

Football is not completely dead, though. A few BFFE officials, who requested several times that their names be mentioned, told this reporter that they have been taking the video game industry quite seriously for a while now and expected more funding from FIFA, EA Sports, PlayStation et al in future.

They also mentioned that spreading the FIFA game to the grassroots is their primary goal, following which everyone laughed hysterically and made a toast.

Soon Salamanca, still BFFE president somehow, tuned in via a hologram from an undisclosed location, somewhere in Europe.

Salamanca was accompanied by his personal lawyer and psychologist. He began his speech, saying, "We must not let every Abul, Mokbul and Emily play the football video game; only the ones whose great-great grandparents had tickets, passports, etc. to show that they had travelled to England can play. It should be made mandatory, alright?"

## Farmers confused by helmet-wearing seasonal farmers

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Chapasthan has employed student leaders of universities and colleges, especially those who wear helmets regardless of whether they have bikes to boost agriculture.

Not only did their addition to the paddy fields during harvesting season change the profile of agriculture, it changed their social media profile pictures too.

Bhair Er Chotobhai, a first-year university student, recently added a new profile picture where he was seen standing with shears in hand right in the middle of a paddy field, with disturbed farmers in the corner of the frame.

When asked whether he abandoned his studies for farming, Bhair Er Chotobhai said, after taking his helmet off, "No, not yet. We are just helping our helpless farmers. I doubt whether they could take their crops home if we didn't come forward to help them."

**The leader of students, Aadu Bhair, whose age implies that he is more an uncle than a brother, has asked everyone not to be confused by the helmets of his soldiers.**

Bhair Er Chotobon, another dedicated soul who prefers uttering slogans to studying, was caught reaping crops whimsically, apparently to draw the attention of the photographers as she stopped doing so as soon as the photographers left.

When asked what exactly brought her out underneath the scorching sun instead of studying in an air-conditioned room, Bhair Er Chotobon said, "Well, no other work can be as great as helping our farmers!"

But the farmers continue to be baffled by this practice. Anxiety grips them as their crops get smashed by the unwanted parade of helpers.

The leader of students, Aadu Bhair, whose age implies that he is more an uncle than a brother, has asked everyone not to be confused by the helmets of his soldiers.

"Look, we are witnessing the hottest summer of the last few decades. Our boys are using helmets



PHOTO: FREEPIK.COM

while helping you in the paddy fields just to save them from the scorching sun. Neither they nor their helmets pose any threat, especially for farmers," Aadu Bhair said loudly in front of the crowd, of which 70 percent were media people, 20 percent local inhabitants and 10 percent farmers.

Farmers, on the other hand, remained disrupted as they couldn't accept "the new farmers" on their fields. They remained clueless about what exactly compelled these bikers to leave the roads and join farmers in the fields.

When asked how they were feeling as they didn't have to do the toil, Tausif, the lead farmer, said, "Have you really been present here since morning? How will I fix my spoiled crops, smashed by the helpers? It actually doubles my work. We need more farmers, not bikers who act like farmers."

# Living in a loving society

NAZIBA BASHER

We are lucky to be growing up in a society so caring and loving.

Through a series of questions, this society shows its undying affection for all its members.

These very thoughtful questions are asked from the heart, with the need to make the person questioned feel important and loved (read: humiliated and traumatised).

One of the very first questions a Bangalee, anywhere in the world, will ask at the very first meeting is "Desh er bari kothay (which district are you from)?"

This is an all-important question, because each district has a distinct set of characteristics irrevocably associated with the locals.

So, when they find out you are from Noakhali, whether they ever meet you again or not, they will know to keep dinner invitations short. If, say, you are from Barishal, in the two minutes that you spend with this caring Bangalee questioner, you will come off as someone with anger issues, and just a bad person overall.

If you are from Cumilla, you are supposedly selfish. If from Chattogram, you are all things terrifying.

With this particular information, it is easy for society to analyse and dissect your character to judge you better to know precisely how much and what kind of importance and love to give you.

Your "desh er bari" dictates who and how you are -- regardless of your manners, your morals, or your charming smile.

The next question on the list, more often than not, is "Matic/inter kon shale (When did you sit for SSC/HSC exams)?"

This is society's caring, tactful way of finding out your age.

However, questions following this one will include your grades, your future plans, your subject of interest and whether or not you are getting a Master's degree and a PhD.

Again, all these matters matter very much because without answers to these very crucial questions, one cannot find enough material with which to judge you, very lovingly of course.

Another thoughtful question



parents face is "Bachchar result ki (What is your child's exam results)?"

Because who doesn't love watching parents crumble in embarrassment if by any chance there is a child who did not get to flash the infamous V sign this year?

Whether they have passed the exams or not is the least of their concerns. They have to know the exact numbers, for how else can they compare your child with theirs and everyone else's?

Because society has taken it upon itself to make sure you know whether or not your child is stupid -- out of sheer love and concern.

But society reserves the most incisive inquiries for when you enter adulthood.

While you are already conflicted regarding what you want to do in life, society never fails to remind you that you are always falling behind.

Behind what, no one knows. But your time is somehow "running out". Forever.

Any wedding you attend after the

age of 18, you will be asked "biye kobe korba (When will you get married)?"

Because how many suitors you have and which one you pick (or picks you) is all you have left to "achieve" after all those degrees they want you to have. And society just wants you to achieve, because it cares.

If, "luckily", you have someone you will be getting married to, men will face "Meye ki forsha (Is the girl fair skinned)?"

Mind you, she cannot be foreign, lest you want to become an outcast, but she has to be fair like foreigners.

Meanwhile, the ladies hear "Chhele koi chakri kore, salary koto (Where does the boy work, how much does he earn)?" Because, if you are a woman, you cannot be the one making the money. You must be making the sandwich with the bread he buys with his money. And society must know if he can buy you that bread.

And if, by any small chance, you are already married and thinking, "Hah! No more ridiculous, beyond-personal questions now!" you will be slapped on the face with a "Bachcha kobe niba (When will you have kids)?"

You have kids?

"Bachchar results ki?"