

Lessons from the Games

An extraordinary Olympic Games came to end last Sunday in the Catalan city of Barcelona in Spain. Not only were these, the 25th Games, the largest in history in terms of the number of countries and athletes participating, these were also the first Games since 1972 which were not marred by boycotts.

The supreme irony of these Games however, may turn out to be the eventual fate of the 1992 Champions, The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), that is the old Soviet Union, which have won more medals since 1952 than any other nation.

While the shape of things to come from the eastern half of Europe is an uncertain one, the emerging picture in east Asia is crystal clear. The performance of China in Barcelona went a long way to confirm what many sports-watchers have been predicting for some years.

While the world's largest nation, China, gave Asians something to be proud of, a tiny Latin American nation, Cuba returned to the Olympic arena after a 12-year absence in triumph.

The lasting memory of the Games, however, has to be the sight of Ethiopia's Derartu Tulu and South Africa's Elena Meyer holding hands and doing the lap of honour together at the end of the women's 10,000m race.

A Close Look at History

The Atish Dipankar Gold Medal '91 award was handed over, like every year, to people for excellence in different fields, at a function befitting the occasion.

The problem with us is that we tend to look for a short-cut rather than assigning ourselves to the painstaking task of delving deep into history.

The fact that he travelled through Lasa, Tibet to China to spread knowledge there is quite a vindication of the abiding religio-cultural relationship between the sub-continent and the Chinese mainland.

Better it would be if a Sino-Bangladesh joint effort could come up with a Foundation for the purpose of thorough study and research on the subject.

Yet to give the process an institutional shape, the preservation of our ancient relics such as the Paharpur stupas and Shalban Vihar of Mainamati should receive equal attention.

PAKISTAN is trying hard to achieve the distinction of being the country with the fastest record of privatisation.

In just 20 months, 35 state-owned industrial enterprises have been transferred to the private sector.

Apart from the speed, the methods of privatisation have raised controversy. The Muslim Commercial Bank, for instance, was sold to the private group whose bid was second highest.

Privatisation of the Allied Bank Ltd was unique in being sold to its employees. They had pooled their savings and secured personal loans to pay for the shares.

Initially, the privatisation of state-run industrial units was

Under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan has embarked on a massive privatisation programme. Since he took office, 35 state-owned industrial enterprises have been sold to private companies.

Javek A. Malik writes from Islamabad

not that easy. Private companies were less than enthusiastic about investing in loss-making enterprises.



PRIME MINISTER NAWAZ SHARIF Accused of helping the privileged

Then in August 1991 the government decided to offer 100 industrial units for sale at one time.

The Privatisation Commission, formed to organise disposal of state assets, hopes to complete its work by the end of 1993.

The commission was set up to expedite privatisation and save it from bureaucratic red tape.

Rapid privatisation has been attacked by the opposition, mainly the former ruling party, the Pakistan Peoples Party led by Benazir Bhutto.

The opposition argues that it will create monopolies and concentration of wealth and is being followed with undue haste to favour the government's friends.

For its part, the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif says it has made all the details of privatisation public and challenges the opposition to prove irregularities.

On criticism about undue haste, Aziz says: 'Yes, the pace of privatisation is fast, but we need speed as the losses to national economy because of a huge public sector have become unbearable at Rs 500-600 million a year.'

Speed, he maintains, does not mean rules and regulations are being compromised.

The most conspicuous problem and the largest contributor to the losses have been over-staffing. Successive

governments, forced by political pressures, employed people in these enterprises without restraint.

These employees became a major hurdle to privatisation because they feared losing their jobs.

They relented after the government signed an agreement ensuring job security for the employees for at least one year after privatisation.

The government has not started utilising the proceeds from privatisation — currently Rs 4 billion. It has been decided not to use them for budgetary support.

Part will be used for developing the social infrastructure in the country and part to rehabilitate workers who lose their jobs through privatisation.

So far privatisation has focused on such areas as the financial sector, cars, cement, chemicals, engineering and the food industry.

Formulation of the regulatory framework for the telecommunication and electricity sector is underway, while for railways partial privatisation is being tried on profitable sections.

Aziz insists that privatisation should not be seen in isolation. He asserts that it is a part of the overall policy to open up the economy to the private sector and foreign investors.

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YOUSUF, one of the sons of Yaquob (Israel), once had a dream — he saw all his brothers including his father bowed to him.

There is an American old farm ballad, dating back several hundred years, that ends in the verse: 'A man gets tied up to the ground, he gives the world its strongest sound.'

Initially the United States was an agricultural settlement, and many of their moral and philosophical values and much of their political structure find roots deep in the early American farm.

Farming Americana Feeds the World

by Avik Sanwar Rahman

Revolutionary War was caused by agricultural restrictions might be open to debate, one thing stands clear: the war was declared, fought and won by American farmers.

The reasons for this are complicated, and astounding when the full implications are studied. Americans have, for instance, led both Russia and China, when in truth both countries have more arable land and farming for longer than America has existed.

The American farm not only became unique, as it still is, but it revolutionized the very idea of farming, and shattered boundaries in so doing.

At no time in history have so few fed so many from such a relatively small amount of arable land. It has been said, and rightly, that America feeds the world; the prairies have been called the breadbasket of

the world, and it is a proven fact that when famine and drought hit other countries they turn to America.

Part of it, of course, is technology: American production methods have put efficient machinery for farming into the hands of almost all farmers.

In America, a man could own the land he worked. He could realize the profit from his own land, and how he profited depended on how well he could make it produce.

It's small wonder that Jefferson, Franklin, and later Daniel Webster worked very hard to design an improved plow.

It's small wonder that Jefferson, Franklin, and later

is as true now, with giant self-propelled combines or tractors, as it was in 1776 with a simple one-bladed plow.

But what is strange is that this feeling didn't seem to extend to other farmers in the world.

Comparisons are generally fruitless, but when the indications are so clear it is difficult to avoid taking at least a minimally comparative look.

The evolution of power for agriculture in America has always been just behind the demand; it was so in 1776, and it is so now.

It is still farming, the wonderful art of pulling food from the soil, of planting and bringing sustenance for life from reluctant dirt, and the critical nature of the work — will the weather or won't it allow a crop? — will probably never change.

But there are perhaps some indications of what will happen. Farming has always been a profit-motivated business, which is probably the reason that it has grown into a king of mega-industry more suited to computers than to grandfather hitching up the team for a day of plowing.

Class-struggle is on. It would continue till the highest stage of the development of the society is achieved; when the society would be able to meet everyone's basic needs.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts.

BTV and CNN

Sir, The less said about the performances of BTV, cultural, educational or mechanical, the better.

CNN authorities are justified if they want to put their own men appointed recently to run the show.

A reader's view

Sir, I am a regular subscriber and reader of The Daily Star. I became very much interested in The Daily Star

since it was first published. Now everyday, getting up from bed in the morning what first comes to my mind is to read The Daily Star.

The Daily Star introduced some new items right from the beginning such as education, feature, write to Mita column, My World column, Rising Stars, Commentary, Dhaka Day by Day, Down to Earth, which are worth reading and sharpen our intellect.

neutrality in presenting each and every news to us. Now about some other writings. Recently, two write-ups entitled 'Quest for a breath of air' and 'Bengali erotica' have appeared in your daily.

However, I appreciate Nahed Kamal for her topic and writing. I expect more writings as of heart-touching from Nahed Kamal in the pages of The Daily Star.

Class struggle

Sir, Several years back, coming to know the communist political tenet — the dictatorship of the proletariat — I was overwhelmingly chagrined.

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Here comes the Marxist theory of class-struggle. Some people have rejected outright this approach to the interpretation of social evolution.

The oppressed people are generally sympathetic towards each other. They do not hesitate to share whatever they have with all others, but the oppressors do.

Coming back to the national society; it has also been divided into several classes and one class rules over the rest.

With this bourgeoisie at its top the society as a whole cannot develop. Aiming at social development, the other oppressed classes are also to hold the decision-making power of the society.

All these relate to many of the present national societies worldwide. As for Bangladesh, I feel that the illiterate, less conscious over-whelming majority people's fate can only be turned better through a revolution leading to the transfer of decision-making power also to the presently oppressed. The

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