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Down to Earth Lottery Culture Reaches New Heights

By A S M Nurunnabi

Lottery culture dates back to centuries, thanks to the ingrained instinct in man to get rich quickly through any possible means. In the past, during British rule in India, there were Derby lottery tickets — a bet on horse racing held in Britain. Over the years new ideas on lottery have emerged. A brief survey of the past ideas in this regard in our country shows the following developments. In pre-independence days, there was the "Get-a-Word" competition sponsored by a particular English daily which created widespread interest and large sections of people in the country used to take part in that competition.

At present, the urge to win fortune through lottery is as strong as ever. For all of us believe, more or less, in luck. This belief mainly leads us to take part in many kinds of lotteries. This is very natural in a poor country like ours, where people generally tend to feel that there is no better way of winning a rich reward but through the blind play of chance. Whenever any kind of exhibition is held, the organisers of stalls therein float "lucky" draws selling tickets to encourage the sale of different products sold at the stalls.

Besides such commercial incentives, we have seen, from time to time a series of lotteries launched to entice the public to try their luck. In this game of chance all kinds of people, irrespective of their social, economic and educational backgrounds participate. The catchy slogans propagated by the organisers of these ventures are instrumental in creating a craze for buying lottery tickets. The compelling factor is the widespread feeling that the amount of money spent for lottery tickets is a small price to pay for being unlucky compared to the prospect of winning huge amounts of money.

Though public campaigns for such public lotteries extend over the whole country, the impact of the promotional gimmicks is felt more in cities and other urban areas. In the Dhaka City, kiosks are set up at all important points for sale of lottery tickets. At these sales counters loudspeakers are fitted from which popular film songs blare, combined with noisy exhortations in sale campaigns. Mobile vans and trucks are also used to supplement sale promotion.

There is one beneficial aspect of this sale campaign. It keeps a good number of people engaged, with some remuneration, of course, in advertising ticket sales, thereby mitigating, to some extent for a limited period, the unemployment situation. There is, however, all sorts of noise nuisance created by the booths or kiosks selling lottery tickets when they play almost non-stop popular film songs through loudspeakers driving the peace-loving people in surrounding areas to the edge of their patience.

We may list a number of previously organised large-scale lottery ventures. The National Sports Council topped the list with its offer of lottery in a series — the latest one in the series carrying high stakes. The Sports Council's slogan was the promotion of sports and games in the country. Then came the Coca-Cola's high-profile campaign with its 'Yo-gimmick'. Afterwards came the Red Crescent Society's lottery, the Diabetic Society's lottery, the Sun Crest Company's lottery for promotion of its drinks. In all these lotteries, substantial amounts of cash and other attractive prizes were offered.

Among the latest lotteries, we may cite the recent one for establishment of cornea implant and eye bank and the Pepsi lottery for boosting sale of their beverages. The lottery for eye bank establishment carries prizes worth a total value of 40 lakh. The Pepsi Cola lottery has created a sensation among the young people with its offer of a huge number of prizes including cars and other valuable consumer items.

The lottery craze does not sweep our country alone. Almost in all other countries of the world, lotteries of one form or the other attract people.

Such a universally great fascination with lotteries may as felt by some observers, be channelled to help the funding of public welfare projects, particularly in the health sector. Such beneficial projects may create a sense of participation even among those who fail to win a lottery.

Save Buriganga boat procession today

By Staff Correspondent

The Save Buriganga Movement, a new body formed by environmentalists, will organise a boat procession on the river today to press their demand to save the river.

Several hundred people including representatives from 60 organisations are expected to take part in the procession.

The boat procession will start at 2:00 pm from Shyam-bazar ghat in the city and end at Kamrangchhear.

Prof. Mohammad Mahmud, M A M Muhi, K Q Ahmad and Prof Nazrul Islam, among others, will be present on the occasion.

Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed and Firoz M Hassan, Convenor and Joint Convenor respectively of SBM in a statement yesterday called upon all to participate in the boat procession to strengthen the Save Buriganga Movement.

Incidentally, Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) organised a boat race in the river Buriganga last year to protest encroachment and pollution of the river.

APAC rally in city tomorrow

Dhaka city unit of All-Party Action Committee has asked its ward committees to make tomorrow's planned rally at Muktangan a success, reports UNB.

APAC will hold the rally to protest government's failure to combat dengue fever and improve law and order.

The committee at a meeting yesterday at the central office of BNP with its convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka in the chair finalised the programmes.

Secretary General of BNP Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, JP Secretary General Nazim Rahman Monzur, Jamaat Secretary General Mattur Rahman Nizami and Oikya Jote Secretary General Mufti Fazlul Haque Aminil, among others, address the rally.

Kashmir peace talks Hurriyat insists on 'collective effort'

SRINAGAR, Aug 4: Kashmir's main separatist alliance said today the way forward for peace in the rebellion-torn territory was three-way talks involving it, Pakistan and India, reports Reuters.

Abdul Gani Bhat, chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), brushed aside Thursday's first-ever talks between the Indian government and a Kashmiri militant group, and stressed the need for a 'collective endeavour'.

"I cannot say about Hizb talks, but a collective political effort is needed which ipso-facto includes India, Pakistan and the APHC," Bhat told Reuters. "A step in isolation cannot lead you to your destination."

Kashmir's biggest militant group, the Hizbul Mujahideen, and Indian negotiators agreed on Thursday to set ground rules for a ceasefire in Kashmir, where a rebellion against Indian rule has raged since the end of 1989.

The ceasefire decision brought a ray of hope in the troubled Himalayan region.

hours after militants apparently opposed to the peace initiative unleashed a series of killings across Kashmir that left at least 90 people dead.

Bhat, whose organisation group 22 separatist, religious and political organisations, said a comprehensive political process was required to resolve the Kashmir tangle, over which India and Pakistan have gone to war twice since 1947.

India has said it is ready to determine who was behind the rebellion in India's only Muslim-majority state and called for an independent investigation to determine who was behind the bloodbath.

AFP adds: Hundreds of Muslims defied a curfew today in Jammu to hold an anti-Pakistan protest against the recent massacre of nearly 100 people.

The demonstrators, who shouted slogans against Pakistan and Pakistan-based militant outfits, burnt an effigy of Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf to mark their protest.

Normal life remained paralysed in most towns in the Jammu region of Kashmir as security forces patrolled the streets to prevent any violation of the curfew order.

Police said the curfew was imposed to prevent communal clashes following the massacres which mainly targeted Hindu pilgrims and labourers.

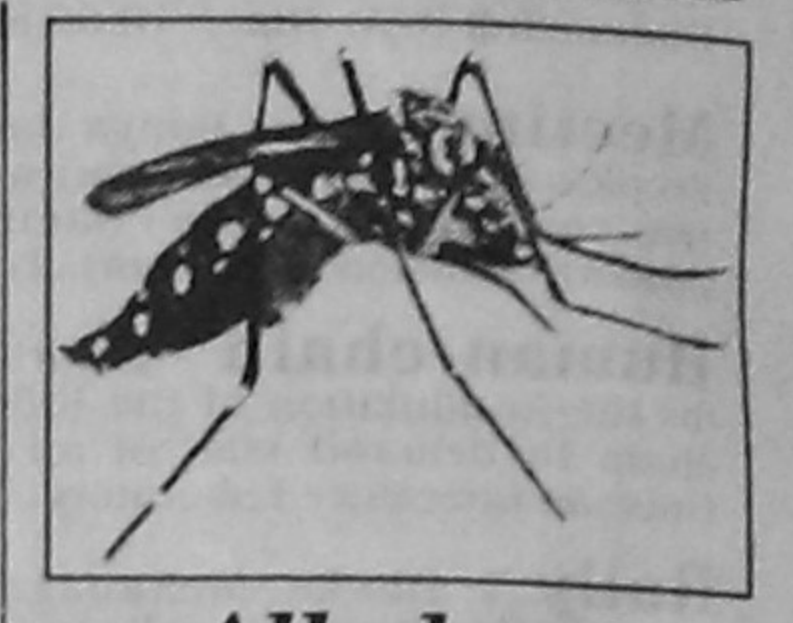
Jammu police arrested about 240 people Thursday for curfew violations.

Islamabad has consistently talk to all militant groups, but has frowned upon involving arch-rival Pakistan, which it blames for stoking the rebellion.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said today that the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba was behind this week's killings and dialogue with Islamabad was impossible unless such acts of terror stopped.

Pakistan rejected Vajpayee's allegations and demanded an impartial probe.

See also page 5



All about aedes, dengue symptoms

By Staff Correspondent

Aedes mosquito that bites during day and transmits dengue virus breeds in clean stagnant water both indoor and outdoor.

The black mosquito is about 5 millimeter in size with stripes on the body and legs and can fly up to about 50 meters at a time. It can fly up to a height of about ten meters.

Its eggs or larvae grow into adult mosquitoes in three days. It lives on blood for survival. Aedes female mosquitoes can not breed without blood.

The mosquito is found in tropical and sub-tropical urban areas. It generally acquires four types of dengue virus from an infected person and transmits those to humans throughout its life span, normally up to four weeks.

After a person is infected, symptoms including fever becomes apparent in 4-6 days.

Symptoms of classical dengue fever are sudden rise in body temperature, facial flush, severe headache, pain in eyes, muscle and joints and rash.

Classical dengue rarely causes death but dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) may lead to death from bleeding and high temperature.

There is no known vaccine to fight the virus. It can be prevented by destroying aedes mosquito and its larvae. The mosquito breeds in stagnant water in small pots, jars, drums and discarded plastic containers and tyres.

Doctors say the virus normally attacks children under 14. In severe form of attack, it causes plasma leakage, which generally results in shock and causes accumulation of fluid in liver and surrounding tissues.

Normal treatment of dengue haemorrhagic fever is rapid replacement of blood. Blood platelets may be needed if indications are there. The patient should be treated in intensive care.

According to a doctor at Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre in Singapore, investigations to diagnose dengue infection should include blood and platelet counts, clotting profile, chest X-ray, ultrasound examination of abdomen and blood culture.

Normally, Blot test and Elisa test are done to confirm dengue infection.

According to WHO, fatality rate of DHF can exceed 20 per cent without proper treatment. But it can be brought down to less than one per cent through treatment in intensive care with the help of modern equipment.

Embezzlement of Tk 7.30 lakh: 5 Sonali Bank staff held at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 4: Police today arrested six people, including five employees of Sonali Bank Corporate Branch on charge of embezzlement of Tk 7.30 lakh.

According to FIR, two people — Anwar Hossain and Abdur Rahim — drew Tk 4.60 lakh against current account no 4908 and Tk 2.70 lakh against current account no 4903 from the Corporate Branch of Sonali Bank during banking hours on Thursday. But only Tk 3000 was shown in the debit ledger.

Police could not trace the two account holders as they gave false address. Police arrested their guarantor Monsur Ali.

The arrested bank employees are principal officer of the branch Abdus Samad Mia, cash officer Rafiquddin Khan, general banking officer Khorsheed Alam, Sarkar, bank employees Rabul Alam and godown keeper Mostafa Kamal.

The Deputy General Manager of Sonali Bank Moinul Islam lodged an FIR with N'ganj thana in this connection.

Comment on Benazir, Sharif Pak politicians hit out at military ruler

KARACHI, Aug 4: Pakistani politicians today hit out at military ruler General Pervez Musharraf for declaring that former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had no place in politics, reports AFP.

Musharraf said in an online interview on Wednesday that both Bhutto and Sharif had been tried twice and they "failed."

"They have no place in Pakistan's politics," he said.

Bhutto ruled from 1988 to 1990 and was succeeded by Sharif. She was again elected in 1993 but was sacked in 1996 leading to elections in which Sharif took power.

Raja Zafarul Haq, a central leader in Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party, said the two political leaders could not be ousted from politics.

"Both these leaders are an important factor of Pakistan politics and could not be ousted from the political scene if someone does not like them," he said.

The Pakistan Peoples Party of Bhutto described Musharraf's remarks as wishful thinking.

"It is a tone of a dictator and not the voice of the people," PPP leader Nisar Khuhro said.

Sharif, toppled by Musharraf in a coup in October last year, was sentenced last month to 14 years and banned from public office for 21 years in a corruption case. Earlier he was sentenced in April to life term on hijacking and terrorism charges.

Bhutto, who lives in exile in London, was convicted in absentia on corruption charges and sentenced to five years jail during Sharif's rule.

The two rival parties, both deeply upset by the predicaments of their leaders, are to sit together for the first time next week at a conference of political parties in Lahore.

The so-called All Parties Conference has been organised to mount pressure on the military government seeking revival of democracy.

Pakistan's Supreme Court has validated the military coup and given Musharraf until October 12, 2002 to hold general election.

34 arrested for harassing passengers at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Police at Zia International Airport yesterday arrested 34 people including five women from the canopy and car park areas for creating trouble to incoming passengers.

Seventy people including these 34 were arrested in the last four days on charges of dragging luggage from the passengers and bothering them in various other ways, police said.

These elements known as *tana party* particularly target those returning home. Sometimes they take away luggage from passengers.

In reply to a question, a police official said the drive would continue till the situation improved.

Earlier, press reports said that a section of the taxi drivers at the airport was engaged in looting valuables from passengers on their way home.

Asked if police would conduct any drive against them to improve the image of ZIA, a senior police official said they did not get any specific allegation in this regard.



Bangladesh Shishu Academy organised a cultural show at its auditorium in the city yesterday to mark the death anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore. — Star photo

PM on judiciary

From page 1

ing for criminals and are trying to protect them," she said, urging all not to encourage killers. "I will continue to say so, no matter how many statements they issue, and I am sure my words will one day come true."

Responding to a question, Hasina brushed aside Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia's allegation that she had planned to kill her (Khaleda).

Hasina also questioned the motive behind making such an allegation, especially after the recovery of two powerful bombs at Kotlailpara, believed to be planted to kill her.

In her first reaction to the highly sensitive allegation, the PM also challenged the authenticity of the book Khaleda referred to while making the charge in an interview with the BBC on Tuesday.

"According to the opposition leader, the attempt on her life was made while she was prime minister. She had a lot of things to do. But, why has she come up with the allegation after such a long time?"

The PM's press conference followed her three-day visit to Malaysia.

In a strongly-worded denial, Hasina said: "My politics is transparent. I don't do politics of killing, nor do I do anything secretly. There were many attempts on my life for pursuing the politics against killing, coup and conspiracy."

Fobana alert

NEW YORK, Aug 4: Five Bangladesh-American newspapers and a cultural organisation received envelopes containing threatening letters and a powdery substance this week, prompting an investigation by the city's joint task force on terrorism, reports AP.

James Margolin, an FBI spokesman, said that no one who came into contact with the powder was injured or became ill. He said the substance was being analysed at a lab.

Abu Taher, executive editor of Weekly Bangla Patrika, told The New York Times that the letter he received Tuesday began "Fobana Alert: Take the sweet taste of nerve gas."

Fobana, which stands for Federation of Bangladeshis in Societies of North America, is the name of an annual Bangladesh convention to be held in New York on Labour Day weekend.

The annual convention, which includes seminars and cultural events by artists from Bangladesh, has long been troubled by splits and factions. The squabbling over who has the rights to the official Fobana began last year, when two Fobanas were held in Atlanta.

One convention designated a Bangladesh organisation in Toronto to be the host of this year's Fobana, which it plans to hold. Then, the other convention designated a New York organisation to handle this year's convention. The Times reported.

Alleged activist of Harkatul Zihad held at Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 4: A special police team arrested an alleged activist of Harkatul Zihad from Nabagram Road in the town.

According to police, a four-member special police team headed by SI Tapan came here yesterday to arrest three members of Harkatul Zihad for their alleged involvement in planting of bombs at Kotlailpara in Gopalganj on July 22.

The police team with the help of Barisal district police arrested Mohsin Uddin, 67, Imam of Merka Mosque at about 11 am.

Police also recovered some important papers including some issues of Jago Mujahid their party bulletin, from his possession.

Proposed CDS

From page 1

resenting Australia, Singapore, USA, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, the tender for the CDS will be submitted within August 20, Shamsuddin stated.

The chairman said a short list of three companies will be prepared. "We will negotiate with two companies. But finally one company will be selected."

The depository will eliminate the necessity of maintaining a full-fledged share division of the listed companies by facilitating share registration services. It would also ensure safe-keeping of valuable share certificates on behalf of the local and foreign investors. The bourses will send all transactions to CDS, which will record the transfers, and the shares will automatically change accounts. The share-holders will not have to go to the companies to transfer their scrips. Fees will be charged against every return for the company.

CDBL has a ten-member Board including the Managing Director, the company will be run by an independent secretariat and the Board of Directors will not interfere with its management activities.

Representatives of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), foreign banks, nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) MD, presidents of the Bankers' Association, Association of Listed Companies, Merchant Bank Association and Insurance Companies Association are the sponsors and board members of CDBL. Later, ADB and IFC will be inducted into the Board.

The CDS will ensure transparency regarding the accounts and holdings of the listed companies, which will buy them the credibility to go for cross-border trading and listings, Shamsuddin said.

Dematerialisation of shares listed with the stock exchanges will be completed gradually. New companies can directly go for scrips trading through the CDS.

Once CDS starts functioning, investors across the country will be brought under its umbrella. They will be able to trade shares from their respective places through authorised dealers and different bank branches who will be the direct participants (DPs) of the CDS.

US warship visits China to renew military ties

WASHINGTON, Aug 4: US officials said yesterday the friendly visit of a US naval warship to China was part of the resumption of bilateral military ties following the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the 1999 Kosovo air campaign, reports AFP.

The USS Chancellorsville's visit is part of a military reengagement programme with China that involves mutual ship visits," said Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon.

The Chancellorsville, a guided missile cruiser with a crew of 350, arrived at the port of Qingdao for a three-day visit on Wednesday.

It is the first US navy vessel to visit China -- with the exception of Hong Kong -- since the USS Vandegriff, a missile frigate with a crew of 290, made a port call to Shanghai in December 1998, according to the navy.

It is also "the first visit since the unfortunate, tragic and mistaken bombing of the Chinese embassy during Operation Allied Force a little more than a year ago," Bacon said.

The visit is "one of the most important jobs the Navy is doing this week," said the Chancellorsville's commanding officer, Captain Gordon Dorsey, according to an article posted on the Chancellorsville's Web site.

Appointment, transfer

By Special Correspondent

Mahfuzul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests has been transferred to the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs in a reshuffle in the administration, sources said on Thursday.

He joined the ministry only last month, replacing Syed Marghub Murshed, who was transferred to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Mahfuzul Islam has been replaced by Mamunur Rashid, who was Secretary, Statistic Division.

Syed Tanvir Hossain, who was Additional Secretary in the Energy Ministry, has been made Secretary of Statistics Division.

In another change, Nuruz-zaman, Conservator of Forests, has been promoted to the post of Chief Conservator of Forests. He replaces Kazi Golam Habib and supersedes four of his colleagues, the sources said.

Mamata

From page 1

day they would be finished. She had even heard that CPI-M leaders were of the view that if she was killed, there would be 'Bengal bandh' for four or five days and after that they would survive, the Trinamool Congress leader said, according to a Star News channel press release.

To a question about the electoral alliances in future, Banerjee said she was not a political strategist and everything would depend on the situation and circumstances as they unfolded.

Asked whether she would ditch BJP, she said she would ditch people unless and until they ditch us.

3 BCL activists arrested at Tangail

TANGAIL, Aug 4: Police arrested three BCL activists from Beradoma in the town today (Friday) on charge of stabbing one of their friends, reports UNB.

Police said Asaduzzaman alias Ashique, Mehedi Iqbal Bappi and Sunam beat up and stabbed their friend Talash at 10 am following an altercation.

On information, police raided the area at 11:30 am and caught them from the Mukti-juddha Sangsad office.

They were also wanted in several cases.