

that very moment. It is really amazing how resourceful the Vietnamese are; we just had a fantastic meal with ingredients that most households would throw away. I am going to make sure that nothing is wasted from the vegetable cooked at home, not even the stalk and rind!!

DUYEN left early the next morning. Idris and I decided to wake up late since our flight was at 9pm and Saigon is a small place to shop around. By mid-morning we started to cover Dong Khoi Street. The first shop next to Majestic Hotel is Viet Silk boutique; a lovely shop with bright colourful clothes for women. We both wanted to get our wives some silk with Chinese and Oriental motifs and, believe me, the fabrics are great and cheap. The two of us walked out with bags of stuff that, we hoped, would definitely bring us fame and glory in the women's world when our wives showed off our shopping prowess. Across from Majestic is an old boutique shop selling lifestyle products; it is so charming with its candles and incense burning, old wooden displays with silks strewn across them, table mats, coasters, frames, shawls. The shop resembled something like a grandmother's attic with old chests and black and white pictures of Saigon. We went wild in these curio shops picking up things for our homes. Vietnamese are experts in the art of lacquer ware. Intricate works of this art form is everywhere in the Vietnamese lifestyle. Our driver took us to the best lacquer ware store and factory in town where you could get lost and be spoilt for choice. Huge wall hangings on Vietnamese rural life on lacquer, Chinese tables, contemporary art - the place was amazing and the owner proudly showed us huge portraits of visiting dignitaries who patronize the establishment thus adding further credibility to the high prices she charges. This was the only place we found expensive.

Sitting at the airport lounge, we pondered as to why we don't have more Bangladeshis coming here. I know that Bangkok is "second home" for the Bangladeshi traveller and Kuala Lumpur is slowly becoming another such place; but when you compare the three cities it is fair to say that Saigon, and the rest of the country too, is at a crossroad, traditional South East Asian culture infused with a European flair, a distinctive character, that will appeal to the discerning holidaymaker. I myself am a die-hard Thailand lover; there is no doubting that. But after a while you want something unique, something that leaves a lingering taste, which makes you want to come back - and I have to confess that Saigon is such a destination. Duyen said to me, "Farhan, the way you have taken to Vietnam and are promoting it, I shall get the Government to honour you with the title of "Viet Bhai!" Call me "Viet Bhai" or as another friend said "Saigon Sam"; I am completely sold on Vietnam.

Farhan Quddus is a Travel Consultant and Managing Director of Travel House Limited.

Taste of initiative

ALMOST all players love to attack. The taste of initiative is so good that very few can resist the temptation of advancing towards the enemy position with their troops. But attacking alone won't win the game for you. The attack must be based on a thorough preparation. If only a part of the army is conducting the hostile operations, chances are that they will be beaten back by the enemy. And you will be left with a ruptured position.

So, you must not hurry. The pieces have to be developed to their best squares early in the game. Usually, the minor pieces-- the knight and the bishop--must be brought into play before the major ones like the queen and the rook. The reason is that if you advance your queen deep into the enemy territory very early, she will have to duck the blows from the lighter infantry and retreat empty-handed. That's a lesson for the players who bring out the queen before developing the lighter pieces and hope for a quick checkmate.

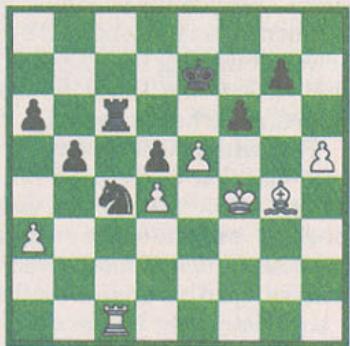
Attacking also has some psychological advantages. You may feel relaxed because the opponent remains busy defending against your threats. It may also give you some sense of accomplishment as the spectators usually love to see fireworks.

That said, an attacker's life is not easy. While a defender has to calculate the deadly moves that might be made, an attacker has to take care of a much greater number of possibilities. That happens because there may be many ways of defending a position. You don't always get a position where the defender has to make a single forced move. The attacker will also come under pressure when he sacrifices material for, say, a direct attack on the king. If this attack fails and the material cannot be recovered, he will be left with a hopeless position in the ending. Such a position is psychologically very difficult to accept, after having command over the game for a long time.

Mikhail Botvinnik demonstrates in the following game how to play against a great attacking player. The basic theme is: simplify as much as possible!

White- Mikhail Tal
Black- Mikhail Botvinnik
[B12]

World Championship Match, Moscow 1961
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.h4 h6 5.g4 Bd7 6.c3 c5 7.Bg2 e6 8.Ne2 Bb5 9.Na3 Bxe2 10.Qxe2 cxd4 11.cxd4 Bxa3 12.bxa3 Nc6 13.Be3 Qa5+ 14.Kf1 Nge7 15.Rb1 Rb8 16.Bh3 Qa4 17.Rd1 Qxa3 18.Kg2 Qa6 19.Qxa6 bxa6 20.h5 Kd7 21.Rb1 Rb6 22.Kg3 Na5 23.Rxb6 axb6 24.f4 Nc4 25.Bc1 Nc6 26.Rd1 Nb4 27.a3 Na2 28.f5 Nxc1 29.Rxc1 b5 30.Ra1 Ke7 31.Kf4 Rc8 32.g5 hxg5+ 33.Kxg5 exf5 34.Bxf5 Rc6 35.Kf4 Rh6 36.Bg4 Rc6 37.Rc1 f6 38.Bf5 fxe5+ 39.dxe5 Nxe5 40.Rd1 Kd6 41.Be4 Rc5 0-1



Position after 37...f6

-PATZER