

BOARD GAMES WE DESERVE

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In this modern day and age where our smartphones are loaded with apps and games, the age old tradition of board games is often overlooked. And it shouldn't be. With that in mind here's our attempt at devising board games with a uniquely Bangladeshi vibe.

DHAKA TRAVELLER

The premise of Dhaka Traveller comes from the woes of all those who dwell in it. The game's objective is simple, to travel from one point of the city to another. The fun (or painful) part comes in the journey as you'll need to face random events on the way, calculate the optimal route, choose the right vehicle, and of course, make your way through unforgiving traffic.

The board will consist of the map of Dhaka city. Intersections will work as waypoints. You need 1 point to go from one intersection to any of its neighbouring ones. Points will be gained from dice rolls.

Reaching an intersection, a player must pick 2 cards. The "Jam Card" will show how many points it would cost due to traffic in that intersection. The "Event Card" will generate a random event, but more on that later. Intersections will be categorised based on the severity of traffic leading to different types of "Event Cards" and traffic costs.

The game will have 6 types of transports: rickshaw, bike, CNG, bus, car and your own two feet (yotf). Transports have some significant roles in the game. One, they work as weights on points. For example, if you roll x on the dice, rickshaw will grant you $x+1$ points while car will grant $x+5$ points. Two, transports have their distinct costs which are based on your points. While yotf will cost you 0 taka, buses will cost $x*2$ taka, cars will cost $x*15$ taka and so on. Three, transports have their own stops spread across the city, except yotf where you can change your transport. Four, transports may have roads, on which they are disallowed. For instance, rickshaws can't travel on the main road or cars can't travel in the *chipa goli* of Old Dhaka. Also, buses have their designated routes which you're obligated to follow.

Back to "Event Cards": examples of negative "Event Cards" include "Etai Last Stoppage" (bus prematurely stops, you have to choose another transport), "Nyajjo Bhara Den" (you're an embarrassment in haggles, rickshaws will cost double), "Molom Party Strikes" (your CNG wala betrayed you, you lose 100 units), "Rasta Kata" (all possible roads ahead have ceased to be roads, you have to take a U-turn) and so on. As for the positive "Event Cards", they can be "Student Bhara" (bus costs half here after), "VIP lief" (you've been promoted to what the city calls a VIP, "Jam Cards" are now useless on your car while other players' double), "Eid-er Chhuti" ("Jam Cards" are useless on all transports and any transport can go on any road) and more.

We believe Dhaka Traveller has the potential to become a very relatable and popular board game and people of all ages will tackle the actual traffic of the city to go play it at a friend's house.

EMPIRE LUDO

There has been a viral rise in the love for Ludo in the form of a mobile app we will not name (it's Ludo Star). Ludo has always been a staple when it comes to Bangladeshi board game culture. It's simple, easy to pick up, and more importantly, it has just that right amount of banter in it that leads to the game being far more intense than it would have been otherwise.

Although Ludo has broken countless friendships and family bonds, it is timeless and still delivers an unparalleled experience. But we believe there is a scope for a notched up version of this much beloved game.

The history of this subcontinent has seen some major dynasties. In the game of Empire Ludo, the Sena Empire, Mughal Empire, Maurya Empire and the British Empire will be pitted against each other on the board of Ludo. The traditional four 'guti' of Ludo will be replaced by four types of units: the soldier,

the archer, the cavalier and the shield-bearer.

The soldier is your run-of-the-mill Ludo guti. Archer is similar to the soldier except for the fact that it can kill any unit from one tile away. The drawback to the archer is that its movement speed will be half (ceiling) the dice roll. The cavalier can move at two more spaces than the dice roll. However, it can only move if the dice roll is at least 3. The shield-bearer has two lives, meaning one will have to eliminate him twice to send him back to the start. Shieldbearer, however, cannot attack. These four units will undergo the perilous task of crossing over to the throne in the middle.

One more rule is that guti can be used as political prisoners. If you get hold of one of your opponents' guti you have the choice of sending it to its starting point or leaving it as it is but freeing one of your other units in the base. The winning condition remains the same, as the first person to get all his guti into the centre wins.

RUPKOTHA AND RAKKHOSH

Dungeons and Dragons happens to be one board game phenomenon that we unfortunately missed out on. Table-top role playing games such as D&D epitomises storytelling, adventure, creativity and imagination. Bangladeshis thankfully lack none of those.

We all have fond childhood memories involving "Rupkothar Golpo". The brave warrior fighting hordes of treacherous Rakkhosh Khokhosh to protect his kingdom, and to save the princess kidnapped in a faraway land. These are all stories and settings too good to pass up on.

First, the players about to take part will build up the character they are playing as. Is the character a spoiled prince with a lesson to learn? A brave warrior who lives by honour? The Minister to the King, controlling the land

from the shadows? The Wiseman of the court with jibes at the ready? It's completely up to the player! The players will start their journey on the board. Every step they take will have event triggers which will lead to the Gamemaster explaining the trouble ahead. How will the player deal with the Rakkhosh guarding the forest? How will they trick the ghost of the Banyan tree? The players will describe their action and the success of it will depend on the dice roll and the stats they have. The court Wiseman will have better odds of getting past the ghost's riddle while the brave warrior will have better odds fighting the Rakkhosh. They will weave their own adventure as the journey takes them to the destination at the end. The beauty of tabletop RPG is that the reward is not in the objective one was striving for, but the journey that led them to it. And it's about time we slay some Rakkhosh to experience that.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy

Nuren Iftekhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftekhar18@gmail.com



ILLUSTRATION: ISHAMM AHMED