

K I T E S
By Jamal Ara

Everyone is acquainted with kites. The end of the monsoon heralds the start of the kite-flying season, and all over India, in towns and in villages, kites of all shapes and colours can be seen flying against a clear blue sky, in charge of persons of all ages from six to sixty. It is a pastime which gives good clean fun to all concerned .

In India kite-flying is merely a pastime, and ingenuity is mostly exercised in the design and the colours of the kites. To name ~~af~~ a few, there is the Adhkapari, literally a half-head, and of two colours; the top shaped like a cap; then there is the Satrangei, or seven-coloured, and this one is variegated in it's hues; the Manbharee, which is white with a patch of colour on the head; and the Chapras, which is tri-coloured, and supposed ~~the~~ to represent the Government Chaprassi! There are many others, and every large town in India has it's own particular kites, the most famous one's being of Lucknow, where during the time of the Nawabs of Oudh this was a Royal pastime.

Often two or more parties will assemble and have a competition with one another. In Chotanagpur this competition is held during the Jatra festival in November, and in ~~Bi~~ the rest of Bihar usually at the time of Shivaratri. ~~D~~ In these competitions the party depriving the other party of the larger number of kites is the winner, and if there are more than two parties ~~the~~ competition is held on the knock-out principle.