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A sly trick, indeed

Syndicate trafficking people to Europe showing them as spectators of EURO 2020, say cops

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A syndicate was found trafficking people to Europe in the name of sending them to watch football matches.

They attracted people through an advertisement -- "No flight, no fee" -- on different online platforms.

The racket's activities were exposed following a drive by the immigration department of the Special Branch of police on June 12, when it intercepted 18 Bangladeshi nationals at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport just as they were about to board a Qatar Airways flight to Russia with "Fan ID".

Although they claimed they were going to Russia to watch matches, many of them seemed to have no previous travel history and did not have any knowledge about any match, said a high official of the Special Branch's immigration department, requesting anonymity.

The syndicate first collected a "Fan ID" of the interested candidate for the Euro Cup, which was scheduled to be held last year but was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With those IDs, they purchase a ticket or two of the upcoming matches.

A Fan ID is a mandatory document for all spectators of the UEFA EURO 2020 matches in Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation). It and a ticket are required to

access the stadium and it is used to enter and leave Russia.

As those with Fan IDs and match tickets did not require a visa to enter Russia, the syndicate used this opportunity and already sent over 50 people to Russia from HSIA. Those people were then trafficked to other countries in Europe.

During interrogation, the 18 said they were traveling to Russia under one Abdul Awal Emon, who, apparently managed to fly to Russia earlier, the official told The Daily Star.

"We also came to know that Emon charged each of them Tk five to eight lakh to arrange a Fan ID, hotel rooms, and match and flight tickets. Emon's actual intention was to take these people to Russia first and then send them to other countries."

The immigration police then filed a case against Emon with the Airport Police Station the same day.

The case statement reads Emon and his associates were trying to earn a quick buck by trafficking people to Europe and some other country.

The immigration department has already beefed-up measures to stop the practice following the incident, said the SB high official.

ARREST, INVESTIGATION

On June 18, Emon returned to Bangladesh and was immediately arrested by police. He

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Boats for sale at a fair, held every Friday, at the Kuriwana Canal in Pirojpur's Swarupkanthi upazila. As boats are used often to sell fruits and vegetables in the district, locals flock to the fair hoping to get good prices. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

ALLEGED TAX EVASION

Freeze accounts of ex-BB deputy governor, wife

NBR asks banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue yesterday directed banks to freeze accounts of former Bangladesh Bank deputy governor SK Sur Chowdhury and his spouse Suparna Sur Chowdhury on suspicion of tax evasion.

In a letter, the Central Intelligence Cell of the NBR suggested banks freeze withdrawal or transfer of money from all accounts maintained by the persons.

The intelligence office also asked banks to submit a compliance report, citing the last outstanding balance of the accounts.

The NBR directive came more than four months after it sought detailed information on all types of accounts and transactions of five persons, including SK Sur Chowdhury, and Bangladesh Bank Executive Director Shah Alam and their spouses.

Earlier, a close associate of alleged money launderer PK Halder confessed to a Dhaka court that the two senior BB officials had assisted them in carrying out the financial scams.

Alam was stripped of the responsibility

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistani propaganda in USA

JULY 8, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

THINGS ARE 'NORMAL'

The Pakistan government brought a group of East Pakistanis to New York in an effort to persuade the press and diplomats that things were "normal" in East Pakistan.

The East Pakistanis who came on behalf of the Pakistani government were: Nurul Islam, a judge of the Dhaka High Court, Sajjad Hussain, VC of Rajshahi University, Mohar Ali, a professor of Dhaka University and Din Mohammad, also from Dhaka University.

The basic line of their propaganda was that the Awami League was not representative of East Pakistan, but it won an electoral victory and moved thereafter to bring about secession through "terror tactics"; that refugee movement into India is not of the order that India was painting but of only those who fled East Bengal in the aftermath of the "terror" that the Awami League let loose after March 1, and whose return India was now preventing.

AWAMI LEADERS RULE OUT POLITICAL COMPROMISE

Over 300 elected representatives of Bangladesh reaffirmed their determination to carry on an unflinching struggle for the liberation of the country.

The Awami League members of the national and provincial assemblies, who met at a two-day conference on July 6 and 7, also ruled out the possibility of any political compromise, short of independence.

The Awami League leaders urged the world organisations and

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KURIGRAM BORDER

Road work suspended due to BSF opposition

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The work of widening of a road has remained suspended due to objection from the Indian Border Security Force along Phulbari border in Kurigram, said an RHD executive engineer.

As the development work remains stopped, locals are suffering immensely. They demanded immediate completion of the work.

Of the 19km Phulbari-Nageshwari road, around 750 metres near Jummapara Bazar area, 2km away from Phulbari upazila town, is being disputed.

Members of Kurshahat BSF camp of the 38 BSF Battalion in Cooch Behar district of India opposed the widening work and asked the contractor to stop

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Thousands flock to see dwarf cow in Manikganj



AFP, Charigram

Thousands of people are defying a nationwide coronavirus lockdown in Bangladesh to see Rani, a 51-centimetre (20-inch) tall cow whose owners claim it is the world's smallest.

The 23-month-old dwarf cow has become a media star with scores of newspapers and television stations throwing the spotlight on the tiny bovine at a farm near Dhaka.

Pictures of Rani on social media platforms have set off a tourist frenzy.

Despite a nationwide transport shutdown because of record coronavirus infections and

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COAL POWER PLANTS

Emission of carbon will be almost zero: FM

STAR REPORT

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday said the coal-based power plant projects, including Rampal Power Plant, undertaken by Bangladesh would emit almost zero carbon emissions.

"This cannot happen that other countries will continue doing it and we will do nothing," he said regarding implementation of such power plant projects.

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 8

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:10 12:45 5:00 6:55 8:17
JAMAAT 4:45 1:15 5:15 7:00 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

President of Haiti killed by gunmen at residence

Wife wounded

AFP, Port-Au-Prince

Haiti President Jovenel Moise was assassinated and his wife wounded early yesterday in a gun attack at their private residence, tipping the impoverished and crisis-hit Caribbean nation into a renewed state of political uncertainty.

Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph declared a national "state of siege" and said he was now in charge of the country, urging people to remain calm while insisting the police and army would ensure public order.

As international outrage and shock spread over the killing, the airport was closed in the capital Port-au-Prince, but witnesses said the city was quiet with no extra security forces on patrol.

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Selim Uddin taking his nieces and nephews out on a drive with his garbage van, after they had been demanding a ride on the vehicle for long. The photo was taken in the port city's Bakalia area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Modi 'overhauls' Indian cabinet

36 new faces sworn in; seven cabinet ministers sacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday carried out a major expansion and reshuffle of his council of ministers inducting 43 people, including 36 new faces, taking its total strength to 77.

Seven cabinet ministers were among a number of ministers dropped in the mega shake-up. Analysts say the mega cabinet reboot is an effort by Modi to offset criticism as the country emerges from a fierce second wave of Covid ahead of key state elections in 2022.

The new members were sworn in at the presidential palace in the evening. It was the first cabinet reshuffle since Modi was re-elected in 2019 on a promise to transform India into a political and economic power.

He has retained his core team at the foreign, finance, home and defence departments even though the economy is in a deep recession and there are widespread concerns that a surge in Covid-19 infections will stall the recovery.

A number of key portfolios -- including health, law, Information and Technology and railways -- have gone to new ministers and junior ministers who got a promotion in Modi's Council of Ministers.

The number of cabinet ministers has been boosted from 21 to 30 in the reshuffle. The number of junior ministers has gone up too, from 23 to 45.

But what made bigger news yesterday was the sacking of IT and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Environment and Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar.

Vardhan's removal follows the severe criticism of the Indian government's handling of the second surge of

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