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Shakib's sister embroiled in Indian betting scandal!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan's sister Jannatul Hasan Ritu's name came up in the Mahadev App investigation – an online betting scandal in India – according to a couple of Indian media outlets.

The media outlets said that Jannatul was a business partner of one of the high-profile arrestees of the investigation who was recently nabbed by the law enforcement agency.

India Today reported yesterday that Enforcement Directorate (ED), the agency which has been investigating the scandal, arrested Girish Talreja and Suraj Chokhani, close associates of one of the promoters of Mahadev app, Hari Shankar Tibrewal, on Friday.

According to ED, Chokhani invested in an app called Hwicket.com in Bangladesh and Jannatul was one of his partners.

Shakib or his sister are yet to give a statement about the issue.

This is not the first time that Shakib's name has come up in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Leftover rice straws and waste from the cattle markets in the capital's Gabtoli being burned on the roadside. The burning of waste, dead leaves and straws is a common practice across the country, even though it contributes heavily to air pollution. Even yesterday, Dhaka's air quality was the fourth worst in the global Air Quality Index. The photo was taken recently.

JP splits again, Raushan new faction chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Raushan Ershad and Kazi Mamunur Rashid have been elected chairman and secretary general of Jatiyo Party by its council, which officially split the party again.

The party had split five times before.

GM Quader leads a faction of the JP which has 11 MPs in parliament.

The JP's council, held yesterday at city's Institution of Engineers, also made Kazi Firoz Rashid executive chairman and Syed Abu Hossain senior co-chairman of the party.

Besides, Saidur Rahman, Shafiqul Islam Sentu, Rahgir Almahe Saad Ershad, Golam Sarwar Milon and Shunil Suvho Roy were elected co-chairman of the party.

The names of all the central committee members would be announced within three to four days, sources said.

It was announced in the council that Saad Ershad, son of Raushan Ershad, would act the party's chairman in the absence of Raushan.

Around five thousand councilors and delegates elected the new leadership and approved the new committee of Jatiyo Party.



SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

INDOMITABLE MARCH

জাতিসংঘ সেক্রেটারী জেনারেলের দায়িত্বে ওখানেই শেষ নয়....



যাদনার সর্বশেষ পরিস্থিতি সম্পর্কে শেষ মুক্তি

Mujib appeals to prevent genocide

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

In a press statement issued on March 10, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman urged the UN chief to take action to avert the threat of genocide in East Pakistan. Referring to UN Secretary-General U Thant's approval of the withdrawal of UN employees from East Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib said that the UN chief couldn't ignore his responsibility to protect the human rights of the 70 million Bengalis. In that case, it would be a clear violation of the UN human rights mandate.

MUJIB'S MESSAGE TO BLOOD

Archer K Blood, the American Consul General in Dhaka, writes in his memoir that on March 10, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sent a message to him via Alamgir Rahman who informed that Mujib was greatly relieved at the news of Yahya coming to Dhaka for a discussion. Mujib wanted very much to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Dengue meanest this lean period

Experts fear situation may worsen if immediate steps not taken

HELEMUL ALAM

The number of dengue cases recorded this January and February is higher compared to the first two months of the previous 23 years, raising the spectre of another deadly outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease.

The total number of cases logged in January and February this year was 1,454 and that of deaths was 17. Till March 7, the cases rose to 1,455 and deaths to 18.

Experts fear the number may rise further in the months to come if effective steps are not taken to contain the menace.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 1,055 dengue cases and 14 deaths were recorded this January, and 339 cases and three deaths in February.

Last January, the numbers of cases and deaths were 566 and six. Last February, they were 166 and three.

The country saw the first dengue outbreak in 2000, when 5,551 cases and 93 deaths were recorded. Last year, the total number of cases was 3,21,179 and deaths 1,705.

According to DGHS data, since 2000, outbreaks took place in 11 separate years, including 2024.

One dengue case was recorded in

DENGUE CASES IN LEAN PERIOD SINCE 2000

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
2005	1	-
2014	-	7
2016	13	3
2017	92	-
2018	26	59
2019	38	18
2020	199	45
2021	32	9
2022	126	20
2023	566	166
2024	1,055	339

January 2005, 13 in January 2016, 92 in January 2017, 26 in January 2018, 38 in January 2019, 199 in January 2020, 32 in January 2021, 126 in January 2022 and 566 in January 2023.

Meanwhile, seven dengue cases were recorded in February 2014, three in February 2016, 59 in February 2018, 18 in February 2019, 45 in February 2020, nine in

February 2021, 20 in February 2022 and 166 in February 2023.

No dengue cases were recorded in the years apart from the aforementioned ones.

Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury said it is alarming that the number of cases and deaths in these two months is almost double compared to January and February of last year. "However, this is the lean period and it is the right time to take effective measures to stop the number from getting any higher."

The authorities concerned, he said, have to identify Aedes mosquito clusters – localities with active transmission – by collecting the addresses of the patients currently suffering from the infection.

"Identifying clusters is very important during the lean periods to control dengue as during this time it is easy to find clusters and neutralise them. But when it spreads during the rainy seasons, it becomes very tough to control."

Conducting anti-mosquito drives by using larvicide and adulticide, along with cleanliness drives and awareness campaigns in the identified localities, is a necessity now, he said, adding that unfortunately there is no sign of such efforts yet.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

'World's oldest bread,' discovered in Turkey

CNN ONLINE

Archeologists in Turkey say they have discovered the world's oldest known bread, dating back to 6600 BC.

A largely destroyed oven structure was found in an area called "Mekan 66," where there are adjoining mudbrick houses, at the archeological site of Çatalhöyük in the southern Turkish province of Konya, according to Turkey's Necmettin Erbakan University Science and Technology Research and Application Center (BİTAM).

Around the oven, archeologists found wheat, barley, pea seeds and a palm-sized, round, "spongy" residue, it said in a press release Wednesday.

Analyses determined that the organic residue was 8,600 year-old, uncooked, fermented bread.

"We can say that this find at Çatalhöyük is the oldest bread in the world," archeologist Ali Umut

Türkcan, head of the Excavation Delegation and an associate professor at Anadolu University in Turkey, told Turkish state news outlet Anadolu Agency Wednesday.

"It is a smaller version of a loaf of bread. It has a finger pressed in the center, it has not been baked, but it has been fermented and has survived to the present day with the starches inside. There is no similar example of something like this to date," he added.

Scanning electron microscope images showed air spaces in the sample, with the sighting of starch grains "eliminating our suspicions," biologist Salih Kavak, a lecturer at Gaziantep University in Turkey, said in the release.



Almost half the positions in BR vacant

Struggles to deliver quality services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite hiring over 5,000 employees over the last 15 months, the Bangladesh Railway (BR) is functioning with half the workforce it needs, which is significantly limiting its ability to deliver quality services to passengers.

According to BR data, the state-owned rail transport agency currently employs 24,403 people out of a total of 47,637 authorised positions, leaving 23,234 posts vacant.

Of the vacant posts, 20,666 are for third- and fourth-grade employees, who make up the majority of the BR workforce, officials said.

BR began hiring non-gazetted staff members for the third and fourth grades in 2022, around five years after the recruitment process was suspended due to a lack of recruitment rules. The move came after new recruitment rules for BR were approved in November 2020.

However, because of the staffing gap created as many senior employees went into retirement in the meantime, BR is still operating with only half of its approved workforce, despite this initiative.

The manpower crisis deepened after the launch of several new trains in the last few years as part of BR's plans to expand its service, officials said.

The situation will further deteriorate when BR starts

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



A partially collapsed building after an Israeli air strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Tigers lose series as Lankan rivalry fuels

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Sylhet

Bangladesh succumbed to a 28-run defeat against Sri Lanka in the third and final T20I in Sylhet yesterday, failing to win their first-ever T20I series against the island nation. However, the rivalry between the two teams has gained new grounds ahead of the ODI series.

The visitors, who restricted the hosts to 146 all out after posting 174 for seven, brought out a 'timed-out' celebration while posing with the trophy – pointing to their wrists in reference to Angelo Mathews' dismissal against Bangladesh in last year's ODI World Cup.

Following such responses, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain was asked whether the team would want to be aggressive going forward to the ODI series, beginning on March 13.

"There is nothing to handle aggressively. I feel that what they had done with the 'timed-out'

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1