

Two elderly women were seen crying near the Chandra intersection of Gazipur district which is one of the busiest highway intersections in Bangladesh. When asked about what happened they described a very unfortunate incident. They boarded a bus bound for Dhaka's Mohakhali bus terminal. However, in the midway at Chandra, the bus supervisor forced them to get off as they had no other passengers for Mohakhali. Those women did not know anyone in Chandra and had no idea about how they could reach their destination.

Lucky for those helpless women, they were in a place where traffic police has gained a different kind of reputation. Soon the cops on duty rescued those women and took note of the description of the bus. Before taking them to another bus for Mohakhali, one of the sergeants rushed for the first bus, found it at a fuel pump station and nabbed the driver and the supervisor. They were arrested, forced to return the bus fare and apologise for their misconduct to those women.



PHOTO: COURTESY

## A CHANGEMAKER'S JOURNEY

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Led by Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sakhawat Hossain, traffic police division of Gazipur has made countless examples of quick response like this and saved hundreds and thousands of commuters from harassment and life threatening dangers. Besides proactive presence in the field, this young officer has gone above and beyond the call of duty by maintaining 24/7 connection with the people through a very popular Facebook page called 'Traffic Division, Gazipur'

(<https://www.facebook.com/trafficgazipur/>). With the help of his team, Sakhawat keeps this 4.7 rated page constantly updated with the recent traffic information, video footages, awareness raising photos and posts.

"I have shared my official contact number in this public page. Anybody can contact me if they face any problem in Gazipur district. I and my team will take immediate and quick action to solve the problem," says Sakhawat.

And in the page there are thousands of comments made by people thanking Sakhawat and his team for their dedicated service to ensure road safety and protect people from harassment. This young officer has also taken



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Senior ASP, Sakhawat Hossain

### | HARASSMENT |

uncompromising actions against corruption. "The first post that I had made on the page was of my personal phone number," he says. "I had no official number at that time and expected people to inform me if they see any policeman doing any misconduct or demand bribe from them."

"Then I arrested all the criminals who used to extort money in the name of police or other government organisations and published their photos in the page to make people aware of those criminals," adds Sakhawat.

Thanks to Sakhawat's relentless effort Gazipur is now under the IP (internet protocol) camera surveillance system with 14 cameras installed in three important locations of the district. This efficient officer and his men can monitor the traffic situation from their cell-phones and can give necessary instructions.

Besides these, with the help of Md Rezaul Hoque Khan, assistant professor of the department of electrical and electronic engineering, Sakhawat has taken an initiative to develop a system that will track every vehicle passing through the roads of Gazipur district.

"Since, Gazipur is a heavily industrialised area and one of the most important highway intersections of the country, hundreds and thousands of vehicles pass through this district every day. If we can find out the number of passing vehicles, it will be easier for us to take control the traffic," says Sakhawat.

"So far, the vehicle counting system is running very well. Now we are working to develop the second phase of the system which will enable the system to take photos of the registration plate of the passing vehicles. If it can be developed, organised crimes using vehicles can be prevented very effectively", he adds.

This young, energetic officer has graduated from the Department of Chemistry of Dhaka University. After completing masters in Nano-Chemistry, he joined Bangladesh Police on December 1, 2010 after passing 28th Bangladesh Civil Service Exam, refusing his PhD scholarship at University of Tokyo. "I have joined the police because unlike many other government jobs here I have the opportunity to work for the people directly from the field besides my routine office works," says Sakhawat.

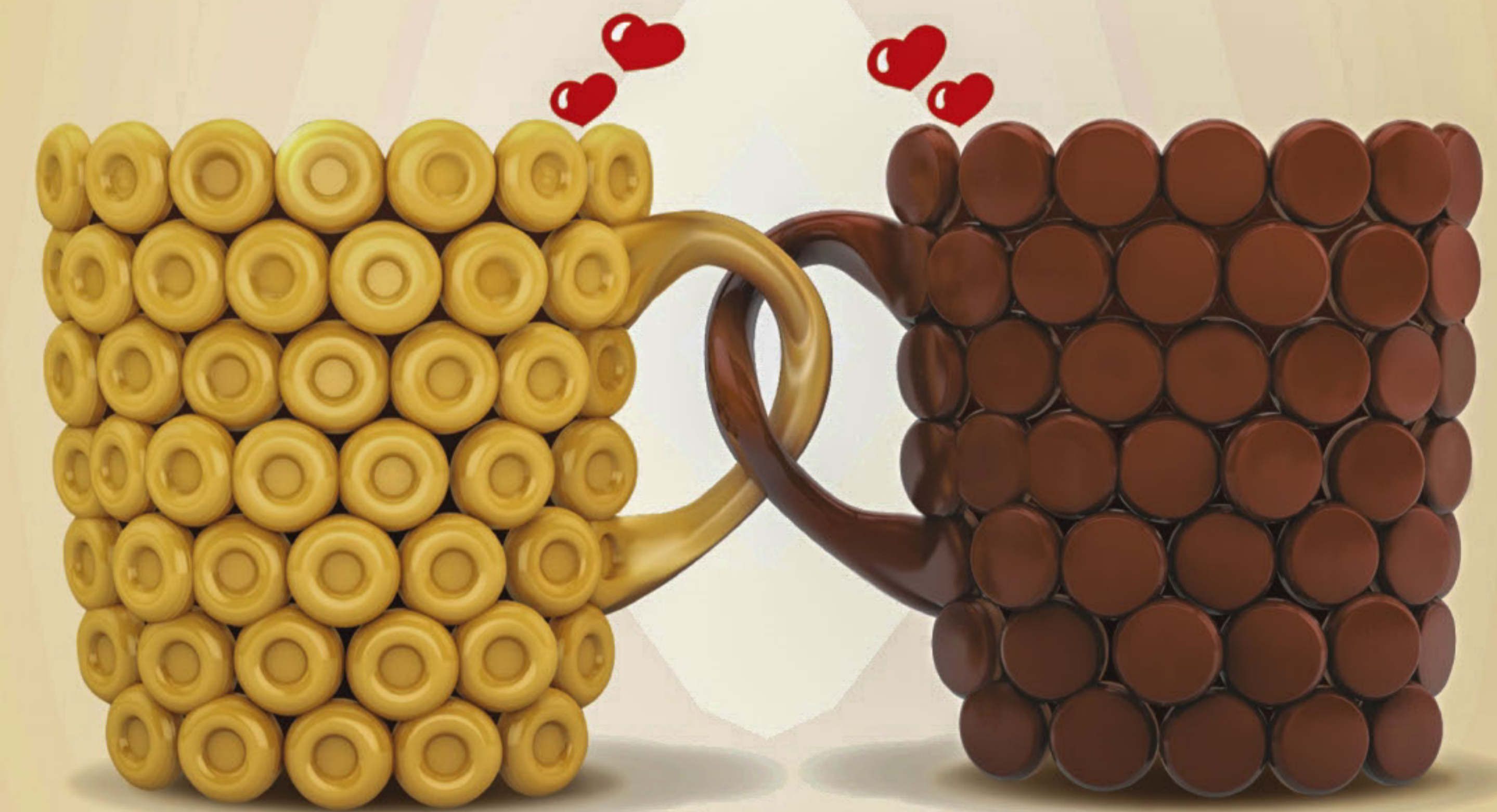
"My sacrifice and effort becomes a success when I get positive responses and thankful messages from people. It is for them I work and for the rest of my career I will continue my effort to protect and safeguard my countrymen," he adds.

### NUMBERS

# 130,000

The number of women in Saudi Arabia who registered to cast their first votes in municipal elections in the country's history. In an ultraconservative country where often women do not enjoy their basic rights like driving or travelling abroad without a male relative's consent, voting and running for the first time as candidates is being considered a milestone in their country's history.

PHOTO: INTERNET



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