

Good cop gets recognition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Sher Ali, a kindhearted policeman who burst into tears while rescuing a minor girl from an accident and made others cry by his noble gesture, has been selected for the President Police Medal (PPM) 2016.

A constable of Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, Sher Ali was not related to five-year-old Umme Habiba, who was trapped and wounded under a bus that flipped over on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong Highway at Panirchhara in Ramu upazila on December 11.

The sight of the little girl soaked in blood made him break down in tears as he carried her away to hospital.

The picture of sobbing Sher Ali running with the girl sparked an outpouring of admiration and love for

him on the social media.

In recognition of his noble deed, he is going to be awarded by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at this year's Police Week scheduled to start on January 23.

Poritosh Ghosh, deputy commissioner of CMP DB, said Sher Ali had brightened the image of the entire police department.

The CMP in a letter to the police headquarters recommended that the PPM medal be awarded to him so that other members of the force were encouraged to come forward to help people in such noble manners, he added.

When the accident took place, Sher was at his village home in Ramu on three-day leave but did not hesitate to join the rescue operation. The accident

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



A weeping Mohammad Sher Ali, a constable of the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, rescuing a child after a road accident on the Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway in Ramu recently. The picture of Ali overcome with emotions and carrying the young girl to safety sparked an outpouring of admiration and love for him on the social media. Recently, he has been selected for the President Police Medal-2016.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Pressure mounts on Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1

"It's time for the government to get on board and support the establishment of an impartial and independent inquiry," said Matthew Smith, chief executive officer at Fortify Rights, according to a news release issued by the Bangkok-based regional human rights body.

Syed Hamid said the OIC should seek UN intervention to stop further escalation of violence against Rohingyas to avoid genocide, like in Cambodia and Rwanda.

His comments come ahead of a special OIC meeting called by Malaysia yesterday to discuss measures to deal with the conflict affecting the Rohingya minority, who are predominantly Muslim.

"We don't want to see another genocide like in Cambodia or Rwanda," Syed Hamid told Reuters in an interview ahead of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The international community just

observed, and how many people died? We have lessons from the past, for us to learn from and see what we can do," he said.

The OIC represents 57 states and acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world.

Refugees, residents and human rights groups say Myanmar soldiers have committed summary executions, raped Rohingya women and burned homes since military operations started in the north of Rakhine State on Oct 9 last year.

Militants on that day attacked three police outposts, killing nine and prompting the Myanmar military to initiate an indiscriminate "clearance operation".

The government of predominantly Buddhist Myanmar, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, has denied the accusations.

BANGLADESH TO HIGHLIGHT REFUGEE PLIGHTS

Bangladesh is participating in the

extraordinary meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers and will ask to exert pressure on Myanmar to bring an end to the decades old oppression on the Muslim minority, reports our diplomatic correspondent.

A Myanmar government spokesman said it will not attend the OIC meet as it is not an Islamic country.

Zaw Htay, a spokesman for the office of Myanmar President Htin Kyaw, said that UN intervention would only end up facing "unwanted resistance from local people".

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahrir Alam, who will represent Bangladesh at the meeting, will highlight how the government of Bangladesh is handling the current influx of Rohingya refugees.

In addition to the new arrival of nearly 66,000, there are around 33,000 Rohingya refugees living in two camps in

Cox's Bazar since 1992. On top of that, over 300,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals are staying illegally in Bangladesh fleeing persecution in the neighbouring country.

Dhaka will ask the OIC to mount pressure on Myanmar so that they compel to take back all the Rohingyas living in Bangladesh to the Rakhine state, rebuild their houses and get back to work as soon as possible.

Starting from August 2016, there were three commissions, including one led by former UN secretary general Kofi Annan to probe the abuses. On January 3, Myanmar state-run media published the interim findings of a government-appointed commission, which reported no human rights violations and denied allegations of the crime of genocide.

But in a statement, Matthew Smith said none of these bodies are conducting

a serious, impartial investigation into ongoing human rights violations.

In an ongoing investigation, Fortify Rights documented how the Myanmar military razed villages, killed unarmed civilians, and raped Rohingya women, among other abuses in several villages in Maungdaw.

Signatories to the statement include Action Committee for Democracy Development, Action Group on Monitoring Communal Tension, Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters, Burmese Women's Union, Center for Youth and Social Harmony, and Coexist Myanmar.

It said since October, Myanmar authorities have blocked access to affected areas in Maungdaw, denying life-saving humanitarian aid to tens of thousands of Rohingyas while also restricting access for human rights monitors and journalists.

PM calls for greater water collaboration

FROM PAGE 16

no longer be a free input and infinite resource to production or development.

"Water can no longer be a free input and infinite resource to production or development. Water has to be approached as a most critical global common resource in respect of sustainable development," she said while addressing an event in Davos titled "Worlds Underwater" at Congress Centre of BetaZone.

Termining water technology crucial, Hasina called for ensuring greater access to technologies, support to develop adaptive solutions in improving water use efficiency across the entire chain of production and processing.

She also underscored the need for further efforts to facilitate trans-boundary agreements and joint-governing institutions for all basins and aquifers.

The premier said Bangladesh is trying to source cost-effective solutions and technologies to transform and be responsible partner in global supply chains.

Hasina underlined the need for addressing pollution, declining environmental flows and watershed degradation to secure river basin resources and ecosystems.

"Trans-boundary rivers, wetlands and watersheds are precious wealth in any region. Trans-boundary waters drive economic growth, ensure social development, secure political stability and determine cross-border engagements," she



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at an event titled "Worlds Underwater" during the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum held at the Congress Centre in Davos, Switzerland yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

said.

She mentioned that though sharing of trans-boundary river water was often complex two decades back, Bangladesh succeeded in entering into a long-term sharing arrangement with India on the Ganges waters.

Noting that cooperation in freshwater and oceanic resources can serve as an equaliser in addressing inequalities, Hasina said for many coastal and island countries like Bangladesh, the ability to tap and utilise freshwater and marine resources define bulk of people's living

existence.

She said private sector's increasing interest in water resources is encouraging.

"Many businesses hold critical knowledge that we need desperately. Any solution will have to be beneficial, affordable and sustainable to the large majority of

our poor and marginal people."

Predicting that around 48 per cent of Bangladesh population will live in urban areas by 2030, the Prime Minister said, "So, we're focusing more on the sub-national actors. And, we're ready to consider any form of partnership between global capital and knowledge providers and our local and community actors on waters."

SAARC

Hasina has strongly advocated for the continuation of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), saying it is very much alive.

"The effectiveness of Saarc is still there and, I think, there's a lot to work on it... Saarc is very much alive," she said.

Hasina was speaking in an interactive session titled "Harnessing Regional Cooperation in South Asia" at the Congress Centre, Aspen 1, in Davos on Tuesday on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2017.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman and a Pakistani Civil Society member, among others, took part in the interactive session.

Referring to the postponement of the last Saarc summit in Pakistan, Hasina said, "What happened was that one Saarc summit was postponed. There's no reason for apprehension... the next Saarc summit could take place in near future."

A lesson in law

FROM PAGE 1

asked them to approach Rab.

Then, they along with Nazrul's followers besieged the Rab camp office in Narayanganj city.

"I even met Rab-11 officials, and offered them more money for Nazrul's release than what they had got from Nur Hossain," Shahidul told The Daily Star yesterday, recalling the day's happenings.

"While testifying before a Narayanganj court, I talked about my offer to the Rab men," he said.

On April 28, 2014, Nazrul's wife Selina Islam accused Rab men of abducting her husband and others, but the elite force refuted the allegations.

The following day, the home ministry withdrew four officials of law enforcement agencies, including the then Rab-11 commanding officer Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, from Narayanganj, citing deterioration in law and order as the reason.

Suspicion among the victims' families and locals about Rab's involvement grew stronger when the bodies of Nazrul and the other six were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river. The bodies were tied to sacks filled with bricks. The sacks carried government seals for ration goods.

The bricks were similar to those

used in an under-construction building for Rab, locals alleged at that time.

On May 4 that year, Shahidul alleged that Rab members killed Nazrul in exchange for Tk 6 crore from Nur, the then vice president of Siddheshwari Thana AL unit. The following day, Shahidul claimed a ruling party lawmaker's son brokered the deal with Rab men.

The alleged involvement of several officials and members of the disciplined force triggered huge protests in Narayanganj and also other parts of the country.

Later, Tareque along with the then company commanders Maj Arif Hossain and Lt commander SM Masud Rana were given forced leave from the defence services for their alleged involvement in the abduction and killing. And Nur was expelled from the AL.

But given the reality, arrest and trial of such influential Rab officials seemed unlikely.

Following a writ petition over the seven-murder, the High Court issued a set of directives considered by many as a significant step towards ensuring justice for the victims' families.

The court ordered arrest of the three Rab officials, and also a probe into the incident, mentioning that no Rab man

could be engaged in the investigation.

Following the HC order, the trio were arrested and put behind bars.

They gave statements before a court, confessing to their involvement in the murders. They first used anaesthetics on the victims, and then strangled them at Kanchpur. Later, they put the bodies in Rab boats under the Kanchpur Bridge, tied those to sacks filled with bricks and dumped in the confluence of the Meghna river.

Several other members of the elite force were also arrested for their alleged involvement in the abduction and murder.

Rab also carried out a probe on its own, and submitted a report to the HC in December 2014, saying it found involvement of 21 of its men in the seven-murder. Among them, Tareque and Arif were involved in it through-out.

In April 2015, investigation officers of the two cases filed over the seven-murder submitted probe reports to the Narayanganj court, accusing 35 people. Of them, 25 were Rab men, including the three officials. The rest are Nur and his nine cohorts.

According to the charge sheets, Nur had enmity with Nazrul, and Nur paid the Rab officials to abduct and kill Nazrul.

Being the commander of the force, Tareque ordered his subordinates to abduct and kill the seven persons and hide the bodies with the intention of getting financial benefits by breaching the force's discipline.

Arif and Masud directly took part in the crime, and the other Rab members, whose names were mentioned in the charge sheets, participated in the offence at different stages.

Following the charge framing on February 8 last year, the Narayanganj District and Sessions Judge's Court recorded testimonies of 106 witnesses and heard arguments from the prosecution and the defence before fixing January 16 for delivering verdict.

The court handed down death penalty to 26 accused and jailed nine others for various terms -- from seven to 17 years.

Twenty-five of the convicts are from Rab, and 16 of them, including Tareque, Arif and Masud, were sentenced to death.

Never before in the country's history have so many members of a disciplined force been given death penalty for abduction and murders of civilians.

Earlier in November 2013, a total of 152 people, including 150 members of erstwhile BDR were sentenced to death

in the case over the 2009 Pilkhana carnage.

The families of the seven-murder victims as well as political leaders have hailed the judgment.

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha on Tuesday said no offenders, however big they may be, would get impunity.

"Some influential accused officials of the Rapid Action Battalion committed the gruesome seven murders with an attitude of impunity, which have stunned the nation. The offenders have been put on trial at the timely interference of the Supreme Court.

"People's faith in the judiciary has increased as the trial of the case has been completed within the shortest possible time," he said.

Family members and their lawyers also lauded the role of the HC and the Narayanganj court. They said the judiciary deserves kudos for bringing the killers to book.

Many believe the landmark verdict is a lesson not only for Rab but also for all other forces amid a rise in incidents of enforced disappearance. It also gave a signal to the agencies that none is above the law.

According to rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, at least 97 people fell victim to enforced disappearance

Tigers try

FROM PAGE 16

middle was Bangladesh's coach Chandika Hathurusinga and captain Mushfiqur Rahim. They were having a discussion, presumably about the second Test against New Zealand that starts here from Friday.

But before the game starts in two days' time the discussion of the team management was dominated by talk surrounding the injuries to three key players including the captain himself. The coach spoke about that and said opener Imrul Kayes has a 50-50 chance, Mushfiqur is still under observation and Mominul Haque is feeling good.

"We have a few injuries to key players. We are waiting for another kind of protocol examination with the doctors today for the captain. Imrul is still 50-50, he has a tear in his thigh. Mini [Mominul] think will be pretty good and hoping that he will be okay," was the injury update the coach provided at around 12:00pm yesterday.

They will get another day to make a final decision regarding the playing eleven for the second Test after that stunning seven-wicket defeat in the opening Test at Wellington.

The most important call is supposed to come from the captain himself. Considering that there are two more pressing series ahead, it would have been wise for Mushfiqur to rest his fractured thumb instead of risking it further in conditions where there is every possibility for him to get a few more painful blows. But it is also true that his absence for most part of the tour cost the Tigers dearly. He is not only the crucial middle-order batsman of the team, his presence provided a sense of assurance in the first Test where he scored a magnificent 159. He was also taking the Tigers close to safety on the fifth morning despite battling with an injured thumb, but was undone by a bouncer. He was stretched off to the hospital with a mild concussion after scoring 13.

However as it stands at the moment, both Mushfiqur and Imrul will not be in any position to don the wicket-keeping gloves, in which case the team's reserve wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan will make his Test debut at the Hagley Oval on Friday.

And if Mushfiqur makes a decision to play the Test risking a fractured thumb and Imrul recovers in time, Bangladesh might have to sacrifice a bowler and in that case off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz may be dropped considering the condition of the wicket. Mehedi may still be dropped even if Imrul fails to recover and in that event Soumya Sarker, who had a long net session yesterday, could come in as a batsman who can also bowl a bit of medium pace.

The team management is happy with the performance of the three pace bowlers in the first Test. And according to the coach the wickets here will suit the bowling most.

"When you look deep into their history they haven't bowled like this. They are not used to bowling 18 overs and then come on to bowl another 15 over the next day. So the physical challenge is there and there is also the mental challenge as well. The good thing is this is the best condition to bowl for fast bowlers," quipped the coach.

Among the three pace bowlers Kamrul Islam Rabbi impressed most. Taskin Ahmed was expensive on his debut but Subhshis Roy, the other debutant, also bowled well. The Bangladesh pace attack might not have quite matched their opposition but they gave a very good first impression at the Basin Reserve.

The wicket at Hagley Oval will not only offer bounce, it is likely to provide seam movement. And if that happens the wicket will be more challenging for the batsman. Bangladesh played extremely well in Wellington and if the batting can display the same resolve it showed in the first innings of the opening Test, Bangladesh can still return home with a bit of a smile on their face after an otherwise disappointing tour.