

Cop stops MP's SUV from taking wrong side

Footage go viral on Facebook, people laud police's role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic police man stopped an SUV carrying a Jatiya Party lawmaker from being driven on the wrong side in the city's Baily Road on Sunday night. Footage of the incident went viral on social media after a member of a Facebook group "Traffic Alert" posted it. Hundreds of netizens reacted to the post, saluting the cop for his commendable job. The video shows that the SUV of Jatiya Party Lawmaker Salim Uddin (Sylhet-5) is trying to enter the one-way Baily Road from the opposite direction at Shantinagar intersection around 9:30pm. After pulling over the vehicle, the driver insisted upon letting him drive on the wrong side. "However, the policeman stood his ground and at some point the MP came out of the vehicle aggressively to scold him," read the Facebook post.

As the MP noticed that some commuters were recording the incident on their phones, he backed off and started pretending as if he wasn't aware that it was a one-way road, the Facebook post added. The vehicle then changed its direction. Contacted, lawmaker Salim said he was "unaware" of the road being a one-way one. "I was going to NAM Bhaban in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar from Razarbagh. When the traffic police signaled my driver to pull over, I got down and asked him what the matter was." "The traffic police showed me the signboard and I went back," Selim said, claiming that he was not aggressive towards the cop. He said he rebuked his driver. Md Alauddin, senior assistant commissioner (Ramna traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they don't allow any vehicle to be driven on the wrong side of a road. "We take action against lawbreakers. We would have filed a case had it been a civilian's vehicle. We could not take any action as it was a government vehicle."

Deadly tremors

FROM PAGE 16

six severe earthquakes. Next year we could have at least 20 serious earthquakes, and the most intense ones are expected to occur in tropical regions, home to around one billion people. Tiny changes in the speed of our planet's rotation will trigger huge seismic activity by releasing vast amounts of underground energy, experts claim - although their research has been rejected by some scientists. The planet's rotation is slowing down because of tidal forces between Earth and the moon. The side of Earth closest to the moon feels its pull the strongest, while the side farthest from the moon feels its gravity less. That difference in gravitational pull stretches the Earth, which causes tidal bulges. These bulges pull the moon closer or farther away from Earth by around 4cm per year. The moon exerts the opposite force on them, pulling them back toward it, creating friction and slowing down the planet's rotation. The time the Earth takes to make a complete rotation on its axis varies by about a millionth of a second per day. While the rotational rate hasn't declined evenly, the average day has grown longer by between 15 millionths and 25 millionths of a second every year. Scientists from the University of Colorado in Boulder and the University of Montana say that even fluctuations of a millisecond could increase seismic activity. "The correlation between Earth's rotation and earthquake activity is strong and suggests there is going to be an increase in numbers of intense earthquakes next year," Dr Roger Bilham from the University of Colorado told the Observer. Experts, who presented their findings at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America, do not know exactly why this happens but believe minuscule variations in rotation causes a shift in the shape of the Earth's iron and nickel 'inner core'. Many geologists are sceptical about the findings, with some claiming the correlation between earthquake phenomenon and the Earth's rotation are fortuitous. "It appears to be a conference presentation and very preliminary rather than peer reviewed research, so there is no detail for us to examine," said GNS Science communications manager John Callan.



Rohingya refugee Suray Khatun, 70, is carried by her son Sayed Alam, 38, as they enter Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday, a day after crossing the Myanmar border.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Halt hostilities, ensure early return of refugees

FROM PAGE 1

"There is a real possibility [of] Myanmar and Bangladesh reaching an MoU and an agreement for the safe repatriation of refugees (Rohingyas)," she told reporters after a photo session with ASEM foreign ministers, reports UNB. She said the EU is supporting this process and will stand ready to accompany it in the coming week. "That was extremely encouraging. We discussed the need to start implementing the Annan Commission Report," she said, adding that she is very encouraged by the "willingness and readiness" of the Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi in going in that direction. Mogherini is among the foreign ministers from Europe and Asia meeting Monday in Naypyitaw, the capital of Myanmar. "Speakers, in general, agreed in many areas and asked for immediate cessation of hostilities, halting of outflow, early return of externally displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh, implementation of recommendations of the Kofi Annan Commission for durable solutions," said a foreign ministry press release. CHINA PROPOSES THREE-PHASE SOLUTION

Meanwhile, China has proposed a three-phase solution to help settle the

issue in Myanmar's Rakhine state. China believes that the Rakhine issue can be addressed by a solution acceptable to both Myanmar and Bangladesh through consultations between the two neighbouring countries, Wang told a joint press conference Naypyidaw on Sunday with Myanmar's State Counsellor and Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi, Xinhua news agency reported. The international community and the United Nations Security Council should encourage such efforts by creating conditions and good atmosphere for consultations, he added. The first phase is to achieve a ceasefire so that local residents can no longer be displaced. Through joint efforts, the ceasefire has been in place, Wang said. Second, the international community should encourage Myanmar and Bangladesh to keep communication channels open in a bid to find a feasible solution to the issue, he said. The two countries have reached an initial agreement on repatriation of Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh from Myanmar. The third phase is to find a long-term solution. Stressing that poverty is the root cause of turbulence and conflict, the Chinese foreign minister called on the international community to sup-

port poverty alleviation efforts in Rakhine state. Development can lead to stability, Wang said, adding that China's proposal has been backed by both Bangladesh and Myanmar. SUU KYI GLOSSES OVER ROHINGYA ISSUE

In her opening speech, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi said the world is facing instability and conflict in part because illegal immigration spreads terrorism. The speech comes as her country is accused of violently pushing out hundreds of thousands of unwanted Rohingya Muslims. Suu Kyi did not directly mention the refugee exodus in her speech to welcome European and Asian foreign ministers in Naypyidaw, the capital of Myanmar. But her speech highlighted the views of many in Myanmar who see the Rohingya as illegal immigrants and blame the population for terrorist acts, reports AP. Suu Kyi said conflicts around the world gave rise to new threats and emergencies, citing how illegal immigration spread "terrorism and violent extremism, social disharmony and even the threat of nuclear war." "FOCUS MORE ON CONNECTIVITY" Meanwhile, Bangladesh Foreign

Minister AH Mahmood Ali, who is leading a four-member delegation, had bilateral meetings on the sideline with his counterparts from Switzerland, Hungary, Estonia, Finland and United Kingdom, where they exchanged views on the Rohingya crisis, particularly the early return of displaced Rohingyas and stressed the importance of an inclusive and durable solution to the protracted problem. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh foreign minister reaffirmed Bangladesh's firm commitment to peace and development. He stressed the need for inclusive development by ensuring rights and equal opportunity. He also highlighted shared interest in encouraging peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. The foreign minister emphasised that marginalisation and denial of basic rights creates insecurities, which can lead to forced displacement and destabilise the region. Ali cautioned against resurgent nationalism and use of prejudices and exaggerated imaginary threat perceptions. He urged ASEM to focus more on connectivity of ideas and culture to reduce tensions among countries and the region while focusing trade and physical connectivity.

BCL leader arrested for hitting a cop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Chhatra League leader punched an on-duty constable in the nose and bloodied his face for stopping him from going inside an examination centre in Pabna's Santhia upazila yesterday. Arman Hossain alias Manik, 22, secretary of Nagdemra union BCL, was arrested, police said. Inam Hasan, officer-in-charge of Santhia Police Station, said Arman tried to enter the centre at Sonatola High School around an hour after yesterday's Primary School Certificate (PSC) examination began. He, however, was stopped by Shafiqul Islam, constable of the police station. There, the two had an altercation and at one point, Arman hit Shafiqul in the face and fled, he said. The constable was taken to Santhia Upazila Health Complex. He later filed a case against the BCL leader with the police station. Police arrested Arman near his home in Nagdemra village later in the day. Arman is a student of a private university in the capital. He is also a brother of Nagdemra Union Parishad Chairman Harunur Rashid, who is a ruling Awami League leader, police said. The arrestee would be produced before the court today.

KSA cracks

FROM PAGE 1

residency laws while 3,883 tried to enter the Kingdom illegally and another 4,353 violated labour regulations. Authorities also reported that 25 Saudi nationals were held for abetting and transporting illegal migrants. "Saudi Arabia announced an amnesty of six months for illegal migrants and allowed another month to leave the country without paying any fine. Those who have stamps for departure can now depart the country within 60 days," Nazrul Islam, deputy chief of mission at the Bangladesh embassy, told The Daily Star. "But those without valid iqama or stamp for departure are being rounded up by the Saudi police," he added. He, however, could not give the exact number of Bangladeshi detainees. Sources said around 2.5 million illegal migrants, including Bangladeshis, availed of the amnesty. According to Saudi Gazette, around 1.3 million Bangladeshis, including 60,000 female domestic helps, now work in the Kingdom. Expatriates with expired residency visas would be allowed to stay up to 60 days after the issuance of a Final Exit Visa, the Saudi General Directorate of Passports (GDP) tweeted. The tweet came in response to a question by an expatriate asking: "I have a final exit visa and my Iqama [residency permit] has expired. Is there a problem with this?" The GDP replied, "There is no problem, provided the departure is within 60 days of the date of the issuing of the visa." Arab News reported that the interior ministry called upon citizens and residents to abide by regulations and instructions that prohibit dealing, hiding, sheltering, transporting, operating or providing support to those who violate residency, employment and border security. It further pointed out that security authorities would apply penalties stipulated to the maximum extent on violators. The ministry urged citizens and residents to cooperate with security authorities, report violators or those who support them by calling 999.

Don't hold

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammadpur did not hand over the body of a baby boy to his parents as they failed to clear the medical bill. The HC yesterday also ordered the City Hospital authorities to give Tk 5,000 to Anjuman Mufidul Islam, a social and charitable organisation, which buried the child's body. According to the newspaper report, Rokeya Begum, of Digda village in Gazipur's Kapasia, gave birth to a baby boy on May 27, 2012. The baby became sick and his father Saiful Islam admitted him to the City Hospital. The baby died on June 7. The child's medical bill stood at Tk 42,000, but his parents could pay only Tk 15,000. As his parents failed to clear the medical bill, the hospital authorities refused to hand over the body. So, his parents had to leave the body in the hospital, the report added. Later, Anjuman Mufidul Islam buried the child. Contacted, Manzill Murshid said the HC in its order described the hospital authorities' refusal to hand over the child's body to his parents as inhuman and a violation of human rights.

Keep watch on NGOs

FROM PAGE 1

Contacted, officials of the NGO Affairs Bureau said they regularly monitor the activities of the NGOs operating in Bangladesh with foreign assistance. According to the bureau's latest report, 2,565 NGOs are now running with foreign donations. Bureau officials, however, said that in reality, around 1,400 of those are operating fully while the rest are struggling because of fund crisis. NGO officials and trade union leaders said they carry out activities in line with the guidelines of the bureau, and there is no scope for deviation from the conditions set by it. Md Shahadat Hossain, acting director general of the bureau, said they regularly monitor the activities of the NGOs operating with foreign donations. "Whenever any foreign fund comes, the NGO concerned approaches us with a project proposal. "We examine the proposal. If we find everything satisfactory, only then we release the money. We also see the follow-up report on the project, audit report, district or upazila authorities' certification, the annual report of the

NGO and other issues for the next phase of the project." Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said, "It is surprising that there is such a gap of information. All international funds, received and spent by any registered NGO in Bangladesh, are strictly subject to approval of the NGO Affairs Bureau under the office of the prime minister. "NGOs are under legal obligation to regularly report to the bureau about their activities as well as income and expenditure." He further said the bureau also exercises the authority to oversee NGOs' activities by itself at the national level and through the offices of DCs and UNOs at the local level. Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said, "As far as I know, none of the trade unions can take foreign funds directly. "Various national and international organisations get involved in the activities of trade unions upon permission from the NGO Bureau." These organisations are constantly

monitored by the bureau, he added. DISCUSSION ON WORKERS' WAGES

At the meeting, Chunnu said the condition of Bangladeshi workers is quite good as they are getting good wages. A worker gets a minimum of Tk 7,000-8,000 a month, he added. Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, also a labour leader, then said the workers' wages should be hiked, as salaries of government employees have been raised significantly. He also mentioned that the prices of essentials have gone up in recent times, according to the meeting sources. Taking the floor, Chunnu said a wage commission is formed every five years, and the last one was constituted in 2013. The issue of hiking workers' wages will be addressed when the new commission will be formed next year, he added. According to the current wage structure, a worker gets a minimum wage of Tk 5,300 with a basic pay of Tk 3,000. But trade union leaders proposed Tk 16,000 as the minimum wage with Tk 10,000 as basic pay.

Contacted, Garment Sramik Oikya Parishad President Moshrefa Misha said they already placed their demand for hiking workers' wages, as the cost of living has increased manifold since the last wage commission was formed. "The workers' wages should be hiked as prices of essentials, gas, water and electricity and house rent have gone up," added Moshrefa. At yesterday's meeting, the cabinet approved the draft proposals for making two separate laws for the formation of metropolitan police in Gazipur and Rangpur cities. "The formation of two metropolitan police forces has become necessary after the establishment of Gazipur and Rangpur city corporations," Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam said at a media briefing at the Secretariat. The new laws will be made in the light of the existing metropolitan police acts, he mentioned. About punishment under the new laws, he said that in most cases, police officials would be empowered to impose fines for violation of the acts.

Culprits must be punished, says Fakhrul

FROM PAGE 16

Fakhrul, demanding a judicial probe into the attack. In reply to a question, the BNP secretary general said Organising Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Olama Dal Inamul Haque Mazedi's involvement in the attack was his personal offence; the party would not take the responsibility. The BNP will always be with the people of Thakurbari village, which came under the attack on November 10. About the upcoming national polls, Fakhrul said the AL was now planning to come to power by holding an election like that of January 5, 2014. People in the country cannot tell the truth now. The AL is controlling the judiciary and the media, Fakhrul claimed. The chief justice had to leave the

country because he was vocal against irregularities, he alleged. Later, the BNP leader distributed saris and lungis among the affected Hindus of Thakurbari village. Besides, Tk 10,000 was handed over to each of the families whose houses were torched during the attack. The body which was formed to investigate the attack in Thakurbari village got seven more days to submit its report on Sunday. Formed the day after the attack, the committee was scheduled to submit its report on Sunday. Abu Rafa Mohammad Arif, additional district magistrate of Rangpur, who leads the three-member probe body, said they had appealed to Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur Muhammad Waheduzzaman for seven more days to submit the report as they could not complete the probe.

Ziaur Rahman, Rangpur Sadar upazila nirbahi officer, and Saifur Rahman, assistant superintendent (Sadar circle) of Rangpur police, are two other members of the probe committee. Joynul Abedin, 66, a Jamaat leader and a member of Mominpur Union Parishad under Rangpur Sadar upazila, who was arrested in connection with the Thakurbari attack died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Sunday. He was the ameer of Gopalpur union unit of Jamaat-e-Islami, said his daughter Munni Begum. Police said Joynul became sick at Rangpur Central Jail early Sunday, and the jail authorities sent him to RMCH. Local influential Muslims allegedly spread hatred against the Hindus of Thakurbari, claiming that Titu

Chandra Roy of the village insulted the Prophet in a Facebook post. There had been a campaign in the area through loudspeakers in this regard for several days. On November 10, a man was killed and 20 others were hurt after police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells as violence flared up in the village over the alleged Facebook post. At least 20 Hindu houses were torched and vandalised as religious zealots ran riot in the village. Later, three cases were filed with Gangachara and Rangpur Sadar police stations in this connection. Lawyers yesterday decided to appear for Titu in the court, said Rangpur Court Inspector Monoj Kumar. No lawyer appeared for Titu in the court when police sought his remand on Saturday and Wednesday.