

Star honoured for community service

Wins WAN-IFRA Asian media award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star, the leading English daily of the country, was honoured with a bronze prize from the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).

This is the first time that a Bangladeshi newspaper won this prestigious award from WAN-IFRA's Asian Media Awards. The daily won the bronze in the "Best in Community Service" category.

WAN-IFRA handed over the award to the representatives of The Daily Star during the Publish Asia programme yesterday in Bali at the Westin Resort Nusa Dua.

The Best in Community Service award measures how companies go beyond their traditional roles to become active players in leading and implementing social service campaigns for the benefit of the community they serve.

The 17th edition of the Asian Media Awards attracted 435 entries from countries all over Asia and the Middle East.

Fifty-eight media companies from

19 countries participated. This year, the winners of Asian Media Awards were chosen from seven categories.

The Daily Star received its award for the project "Panir Golpo- The Tale of Water", a joint initiative with Unilever Pureit, which aimed to create awareness and provide water purifiers to people affected by diarrhoea in the Kushtia region.

In early July, 2016, The Daily Star ran a report on the outbreak of diarrhoea in Kushtia when around 2,000 people contracted the disease during the span of a week.

Subsequently, Unilever Pureit joined hands with The Daily Star and formed a research team which went to the area to investigate the outbreak.

They identified the worst affected areas and concluded in their field report that some crucial factors contributed to the high prevalence of diarrhoea were dirt, unclean surroundings and a general lack of awareness.

To address this gap, The Daily Star and Unilever Pureit came forward with the award-winning initiative to create

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



The Daily Star's Digital Marketing Manager Shuvashish Roy, left, its Head of Marketing Md Tajdin Hassan, second from right, and Senior Executive of Digital Marketing Arafat Hossain, right, receive the Asian Media Award in the "Best Community Service" category from WAN-IFRA Deputy CEO Manfred Werfel at the Westin, Nusa Dua, Bali yesterday.

BGB recovers 37 kg gold in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered 37 kg of gold worth about Tk 16 crore from Chuadanga border yesterday. The gold was being smuggled into India.

No one was arrested.

Director of BGB-6 Col Hasan Imam said they had information about a big shipment of gold to be smuggled into neighbouring India through Nastipur border point of Damurhuda upazila in the district.

The Border Observation Post of the BGB at Sultanpur took up position at the location.

After some time, they saw three people swimming across the Mathabhanga River and heading towards the Indian side around 3:00pm.

The BGB personnel asked them to stop. Sensing danger, the trio threw their belts into the river and fled the scene.

Members of the border force then recovered three belts containing a total of 320 gold bars from the river bed.

A case was later filed with Damurhuda Police Station in this connection.

UNSC trip all too crucial

FROM PAGE 1

deputy permanent representatives of the USA, Russia, France and China. These five countries are the permanent members of the council.

The other members would be permanent representatives from Bolivia, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden and deputy permanent representative from Ivory Coast. These are the 10 UNSC non-permanent members elected for a two-year term.

Peru is the current president of the council. Ivory Coast is sending the deputy permanent representative as the permanent representative from the country passed away recently.

"This is undoubtedly worth mentioning that the event will further draw the attention of the global community on Bangladesh and the Rohingya issue will get further importance," said noted diplomat and former Bangladesh ambassador to the United States Humayun Kabir, when asked about the significance of the visit.

He said the international community has already had its attention on Bangladesh and the ongoing Rohingya crisis but the council's visit will add a new dimension since the UNSC is the highest decision-making body of the UN. "If we can convince them and properly brief them, it will definitely have a huge positive impact. We must continue our efforts and follow up the visit for permanent solution to the crisis."

As the highest decision-making body, the UNSC determines the existence of a

threat to peace or act of aggression and recommends what action should be taken. It calls upon UN members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression. It can also take military action against an aggressor.

Another former diplomat, wishing not to be named, said, "This is a rare visit by the Security Council and it is undoubtedly the most important event in recent times. In my long diplomatic career, I can't remember whether any such visit has ever taken place in Bangladesh or around the region."

However, the foreign minister and top government officials, including the foreign secretary and the director general (UN wing) of the foreign ministry, will not be in the country during the UNSC team's visit.

The three are scheduled to travel to Sydney as members of the entourage of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who will leave for Australia this afternoon on a four-day visit to attend the 2018 Global Summit of Women.

Hasina and her delegation members are scheduled to return early Monday. Later at 9:30am that day, the UNSC team would pay a courtesy call on the PM at the Gono Bhaban and then leave for Myanmar.

Diplomatic circles in Dhaka expressed surprise to learn that the top Bangladeshi diplomats will remain absent during the "rare and unprecedented" visit by a full UNSC team.

Md Shahriar Alam, state minister for

foreign affairs, and Rear Admiral (ret) Khurshid Alam, a secretary at the ministry, will receive the delegation members at Cox's Bazar.

Director General (South East Asia Wing) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tareque Muhammad, who coordinates the Rohingya issue, will accompany the UNSC team and brief its members about the entire Rohingya situation, government policy and efforts towards their repatriation, said ministry officials.

The state minister would host a reception in honour of the UN team at 7:30pm at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden Hotel on Sunday, the officials said, adding that Dhaka will urge the UNSC team to act right now.

DHAKA'S PREPARATIONS

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a number of foreign ministry officials said they have compiled various documents and reports, released by the UN and other renowned international organisations, human rights bodies, national and international media outlets, to hand those over to the UNSC team for its better understanding of the Rohingya crisis.

"We already had distributed all the necessary documents, including reports, government papers and refugee strategies-related documents, among all permanent representatives of the UNSC at the UN headquarters," said a senior official at the ministry.

"We also regularly apprised them of the updates. Apart from briefings, our diplomatic missions abroad also regu-

larly provide documents on the Rohingya situation to the foreign ministries in their respective countries," he said.

Contacted, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Abul Kalam yesterday said the delegation would visit the refugee camps in Kutupalong and interact with the Rohingyas to learn about the atrocities they faced in Rakhine.

"Then, on behalf of the government, I will brief them about the overall Rohingya situation here," said Kalam. "We want the delegation to see and listen to the Rohingyas refugees."

MYANMAR'S PREPARATIONS

The UNSC had first proposed a visit to Myanmar in February. But the Myanmar government did not give consent to it saying it was "not the right time" for the trip.

On Monday, the Irrawaddy, a news website run by Myanmar nationals exiled in Thailand, reported that the country gave consent to the visit early this month on the advice of China and Russia.

Facing global condemnations for "atrocities crimes" against Rohingyas, Myanmar sees the visit as an "effective method" to reduce international criticism. The Myanmar government officials are preparing to explain what they have been doing to repatriate Rohingyas. They will also clarify the details of arrangements for the repatriation, according to the report.

"The [Myanmar] government invited them as a form of cooperation with the United Nations. We have sent our invita-

tion through the permanent representative of Myanmar at the UN," U Myint Thu, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Irrawaddy.

During the visit, the UNSC team will meet the de facto leader of Myanmar and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the chairperson of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) and officials in Naypyidaw. On the second day, the team may visit Rakhine State.

"Inviting an important international body is an effective method. It might produce good outcomes as well as bad ones. Those who are responsible for tackling the problem should be prepared," said Daw Pyone Kay Thi Naing, a member of the Lower House international relations committee.

Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Nyi Pu said his government has arranged transportation and security for the delegates, added the report.

Myanmar's own version of the repatriation is tricky. It has all along been blaming Bangladesh for inking the repatriation treaty and delaying the beginning of the repatriation though it itself had imposed some strict criteria in the treaty which made the repatriation difficult.

Even, taking back a family from a woman's land recently, Myanmar publicised in the global media that it began the repatriation process. Bangladesh was not aware of taking back of the family in the dark of the night.

THE CRISIS, THE UN ROLE
Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas fled Myanmar

The skilful skimmer

FROM PAGE 1

Returning home, he would clone the cards by copying the information in blank cards using a laptop and other devices. After cloning the card, he would use it to withdraw money from ATM booths.

He would don a wig and sunglasses for this step to avoid detection in the closed-circuit television cameras installed at the booths.

All this came to light after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested him on Tuesday evening. They claimed Shariful was the key man in the recent embezzlement of money from five banks in the capital.

Shariful's scam came to an end after he was picked up from his house in Mirpur, Molla Nazrul Islam, special superintendent of CID, told reporters at a press briefing held at its headquarter in Malibagh yesterday. The 33-year old cashier used to work at a well-known retail chain shop's Banani branch.

He had gone hiding since March 9 to avoid arrest after police approached the store's officials regarding their suspicions.

About 1,400 cloned cards, a specialised skimming wristwatch, a magnetic strip reader and writer, three point-of-sale (POS) machines, two mini-card reader devices and other related items were seized from his possession, the police official said.

Following complaints from customers, different banks informed police about the financial frauds. Later, police started investigating the incident.

"We first got a complaint from Brac Bank last month about the nine cardholders being swindled. Then we came to know [about similar incidents] in City Bank, EBL Bank, UCBL Bank and Bank Asia," Nazrul said.

After the investigation, they discovered that Shariful was behind the recent frauds which took place in five



Materials seized by CID from the suspect. These were used to capture information from the magnetic strips of credit and debit cards and clone them.

banks and he had amassed crores through this.

Shariful had gone to Russia in 2007 to study mining engineering before returning to Bangladesh in 2010.

However, in his three years in Russia, not only did he earn an engineering degree, but also learned how to clone cards to steal money.

He picked up the knowledge from his Russian roommate Evanovich. When Shariful returned, he began cloning cards and stealing money.

He was arrested back in 2013 in Chittagong in two cases over card-skimming and remained in jail for 18 months.

After his release, he started a student consultancy firm, which did not prove to be profitable. He thus returned to card fraudulence, police said.

The CID said Shariful brought the cloning devices from China.

"He cloned around a hundred cards and has a hefty amount of money in his bank accounts at differ-

ent banks. We got information of one of the banks where Shariful has around Tk 15 lakh.

"Shariful was living a lavish life. He owned a Toyota Allion," the CID official said.

Shariful was taken into a four-day remand yesterday.

An official of the superstore said Shariful had been working at the POS terminal at the merchant's outlet. Some customers at the chain shop's Banani branch alleged that he [Shariful] used to write something on their slip.

The official said when they wanted to investigate the allegation, Shariful went into hiding. They looked for him at the permanent address provided on his NID and found it to be fake.

Police said Shariful also used to work at other such shops before.

Zara Zabeen Mahbub, head of communications and service quality at Brac Bank, said the cards, which had information saved on their magnetic strip, were copied.

Iran rejects

FROM PAGE 16

Iran has the support of all other parties to the accord, who say it is working and Tehran has stuck to its commitments.

EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini yesterday insisted the deal must be maintained.

"On what can happen in the future we'll see in the future, but there is one deal existing, it's working, it needs to be preserved," the former Italian foreign minister said as she arrived for a donor conference on Syria in Brussels.

Moscow also reiterated its support, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov telling reporters: "We believe that no alternative exists so far" and demanding that Iran be involved in any further discussions.

LOOMING DECISION

Macron, who has built a warm rapport with Trump, has positioned himself as an emissary for European officials seeking a compromise that allows the mercurial US president to claim a public victory, while keeping the deal intact.

But he admitted after meeting Trump that he still did not know whether the US president would walk away from the nuclear deal when the next deadline for renewal comes up on May 12.

Trump -- true to his background in reality TV -- teased his looming decision.

"This is a deal with decayed foundations. It's a bad deal, it's a bad structure. It's falling down," the US leader said. "We're going to see what happens on the 12th."

Putting on a brave face, Macron said he wished "for now to work on a new deal with Iran" of which the nuclear accord could be one part, but neither leader indicated what Iran might get in return.

Iran, meanwhile, has warned it will ramp up enrichment if Trump walks away from the accord, prompting a blunt warning from the US leader.

"They're not going to be restarting anything. If they restart it, they're going to have big problems, bigger than they ever had before. And you can mark it down,"

Trump said.

Trump had earlier said his predecessors should have made a deal that "covered Yemen, that covered Syria. No matter where you go in the Middle East, you see the fingerprints of Iran behind problems."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is expected to press the case for staying in the agreement again when she visits Washington tomorrow.

Macron was also due to appear before Congress yesterday, and his entourage told AFP he would address the challenges eroding historically warm Franco-US ties, including economic inequality, climate change, how to tackle terrorism and the rise of nationalism.

OLIVER STONE 'SHOCKED'

The French president's pomp-filled, three-day visit was not welcomed by one long-time critic of US foreign policy, Oliver Stone, who happened to be in Tehran for a film festival yesterday.

Stone told AFP he was "particularly shocked" to see Macron standing alongside President Donald Trump, calling for a revision of the nuclear deal.

"To see this young man, who doesn't have much of a sense of history or memory of the great traditions of France... was very depressing," Stone said.

Meanwhile, hawkish American officials accuse Europeans -- particularly Germany -- of putting business interests ahead of security, and of opposing a tougher stance against Iran to safeguard investments in the Islamic Republic.

That charge is sharply rejected by European officials, who are increasingly frustrated at spending time dealing with Trump's complaints rather than tackling Iran's behaviour.

The disagreement threatens to plunge transatlantic relations to their lowest point since the Iraq War.

But for now, Macron's visit has been marked by the exuberant welcome given the French leader as the Trumps rolled out the red carpet for a lavish state visit.