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## Freedom of press not absolute at all times

Says SC, releasing full judgment in Janakantha case

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court yesterday observed that the freedom of the press is not "absolute, unlimited and unfettered at all times and in all circumstances as would lead to disorder and anarchy".

"...there is no separate guarantee of the freedom of the press. The freedom of the press is not higher than the ordinary citizen. It is subject to the limitations," it said.

The apex court made the observations, releasing its full judgment in a case against the daily Janakantha.

It, however, said the freedom of the press cannot be curtailed by executive orders or administrative instructions which lack the sanction of law.

In the judgment, the court also explained the elements and categories of contempt of court.

Publication or other acts scandalising or lowering the authority of the court or interfering with judicial proceedings or administration of justice are contempt of court, according to the SC.

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## Police witnessed but didn't act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police played the role of silent spectators at many voting centres when supporters of the ruling Awami League mayor candidates prevented voters from entering polling stations, snatched ballot papers, and stuffed those in ballot boxes yesterday.

Disappointed, many polling officials expressed their helplessness. They also alleged that the on duty policemen were reluctant to take actions in the face of high-handedness of the ruling party activists.

However, on duty police officers at most of the polling centres denied the allegation, but The Daily Star correspondents witnessed such inactiveness of the police at two centres in Patuakhali, five in Jessore, two at Sitakunda and Razon in Chittagong, and one each in Magura and Narail.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission yesterday sent a letter to the inspector general of police, requesting him to suspend five sub-inspectors for their alleged negligence in discharging duty at different voting centres.

The cops are: Nazmul Hossain, Alamgir Hossain, and Md Solaiman who were on duty in Chandnaish municipality of Chittagong. The other two are Abdul Kuddus Siddik and Sharif Abdur Rahsid. They were posted at Kalkini municipality in Madaripur, said Shamsul Alam, deputy secretary of the EC Secretariat.

The EC sent another letter to the director general of National Security Intelligence, asking him to withdraw and suspend watcher-constable Farhad Hossain in Patuakhali.

Mejba Uddin, deputy commissioner of Chittagong, said the EC had asked the police headquarters to take actions against the three policemen, as they failed to check irregularities at three centres in Chandnaish.

Voting at those centres was suspended due to "forcefully casting votes".

The EC recommended actions against the two police officers in Kalkini after two mayor candidates alleged that

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A gun-wielding man in action when supporters of an AL candidate and an AL rebel clashed at PTI intersection of Munshiganj during the municipal polls yesterday.

## Heavy defeat despite heavy ballot-stuffing

HASAN JAHID TUSHER, back from Sonargaon, Narayanganj

He moved heaven and earth to win it. Threatening his rivals, intimidating the voters, hiring goons from outside his municipality, sending them inside the polling centres, and having them stamp ballots and stuff those in the ballot boxes -- he left no stone unturned.

But nothing worked. Awami League favourite Fazle Rabbi yesterday faced a humiliating defeat at the hands of Sadequr Rahman Bhuiyan, a party rebel, in Sonargaon municipality of Narayanganj.

Rabbi got 6,025 votes while Sadequr bagged 9,064 votes. Locals said the Sonargaon municipality election was virtually a shadow battle between two influential AL lawmakers of Narayanganj.

Narayanganj-2 MP Nazrul Islam Babu extended all out support to Rabbi, his brother-in-law, while Narayanganj-4 lawmaker Shamim Osman backed Sadequr from behind the scene.

Despite being a less known face than Sadequr, Rabbi managed to secure the party ticket only because of Babu's support, locals said.

There are allegations that Rabbi's father was a collaborator of the Pakistan army during the Liberation War and was convicted in a bank robbery case after the independence.

Sadequr, on the other hand, had the blessings of Shamim Osman, arguably the most powerful political figure of the district.

Sadequr earlier was elected mayor of Sonargaon municipality with the blessings of the BNP-Jamaat, the locals said.

Centring the elections, Babu allegedly sent a few thousand men from his Arahazar constituency to Sonargaon

PHOTO ON PAGE 1 SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Ghost voting makes turnout high

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPOB, back from Savar

Some polling centres in Savar municipality recorded an abnormally high turnout yesterday although the presence of voters was visibly thin.

Visiting some polling stations around 3:00pm, The Daily Star found that over 60 percent votes were cast in some centres against the average turnout of about 30 percent.

For example, 1,554 male votes out of 2,250 and 1,325 female votes out of 2,394 were cast at Savar Girls School centre, 1,357 male votes out of 2,673 at Savar Model Govt Primary School, 1,345 votes out of 2,380 at Central School and College and 908 votes out of 1,352 were cast at Madinatul Uloom Madrasa, according to presiding officers.

They claimed the turnout increased as the day progressed.

Out of 80 polling centres in the municipi-

pality, this correspondent visited 22 and found no agents of the BNP mayor nominee in 13 centres.

In the morning, AL, Jubo League and Chhatra League men walked in and out of the polling booths in many centres.

Shirina Akter Mitu, wife of the BNP mayor candidate Badiuzzaman, alleged that there were irregularities in at least 40 centres.

"Awami League men drove away our agents from all the centres in wards no-2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. They closed the doors of the polling booths in those centres around noon and stuffed ballots," she complained.

Shirina said some of her husband's agents even did not go to polling centres as they were "threatened by the ruling party men".

The BNP mayor hopeful has been on the run for fear of harassment by police and AL men.

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## Police form special counter-terror unit

600-strong force to combat militancy, cyber crimes, terror financing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 600-men police unit specialising in technology has been formed under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to enhance police capability in combating militancy and terrorism.

The "Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime" unit has been formed at a time when the country has witnessed a sharp rise in deadly attacks on bloggers, publishers, different Muslim sects, foreigners, and people of other religion, police sources said.

With militant groups recruiting tech-savvy operatives, the police had been pressing for a special unit.

A police proposal for forming "Police Bureau of Counter-Terrorism" had been put on hold for years.

The proposal for the bureau, which was sent to the home ministry in August 2011 from the police headquarters, remained shelved at the public administration ministry after the home ministry sent it there in September, 2013, officials at the police headquarters said.

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## Needle-free life

Seaweed capsule could replace daily injections for diabetes patients

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A capsule made from seaweed extract could spare type one diabetes patients from daily insulin injections.

Scientists have developed a novel capsule for preserving insulin-producing pancreatic cells which could be used in pancreatic islet

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**SIBL** Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING

DECEMBER 31

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-27 7-00

JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-30 7-30

SOURCE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Two women look at a notice board at the otherwise empty Dinajpur Adarsha College polling centre for women around 11:00am yesterday.

## 1m reach Europe by sea in 2015

AFP, Geneva

Over one million migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Europe in 2015, nearly half of them Syrians, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said yesterday.

The milestone marks an almost five-fold increase over 2014 figures, when UNHCR recorded 219,000 arrivals via the perilous sea crossing.

"The vast majority of those attempting this dangerous crossing are in need of international protection," the agency said.

The massive movement of people this year in Europe, most of them seeking refuge from conflict, has exposed deep divisions among EU leaders on how to deal with the influx.

In total, 1,000,573 made their way across the Mediterranean since January

1, while 3,735 people who attempted the journey died or went missing, the UN agency said.

Greece was by far the top landing spot with 844,176 arrivals, followed by Italy, a distant second with 152,700 migrants landing on its shores.

The figures underscore the enormous impact that Syria's nearly five-year civil war has had on changing

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**'AAA' ক্রেডিট রেটিং অর্জনকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান**

**সাধারণ বীমা কর্পোরেশন**

রাষ্ট্রীয় খাতে সাধারণ বীমার (নন-লাইফ) একমাত্র প্রতিষ্ঠান সাধারণ বীমা কর্পোরেশন, বীমা ও পুনঃবীমা দাবী পরিশোধসহ সকল ক্ষেত্রে বলিষ্ঠ অর্থনৈতিক ভিত্তির আলোকে 'AAA' ক্রেডিট রেটিং অর্জনকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি লাভ করেছে। বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম খ্যাতনামা রেটিং প্রতিষ্ঠান আলফা রেটিং কোম্পানি লিমিটেড সাধারণ বীমা কর্পোরেশন-এর বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন ২০১৩ অনুযায়ী 'AAA' রেটিং প্রদান করেছে। সম্প্রতি সাধারণ বীমা কর্পোরেশনের ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্বে) শামীম আখতার-এর নিকট আলফা রেটিং কোম্পানি লিমিটেড এর ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর মোহাম্মদ আসাদুল্লাহ রেটিং সংক্রান্ত সনদ হস্তান্তর করেন। এ সময় উভয় প্রতিষ্ঠানের উর্ধ্বতন কর্মকর্তাবৃন্দ উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

**দেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় বীমাকারী ও পুনঃবীমাকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান**

রাষ্ট্রীয় খাতে সাধারণ বীমা'র একমাত্র প্রতিষ্ঠান

**সাধারণ বীমা কর্পোরেশন**

প্রধান কার্যালয়

৩৩, দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ।

(অর্থনৈতিক নিরাপত্তার প্রতীক)