MIRPUR DEN

## 3 JMB suspects on four-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed three alleged JMB activists, arrested from a militant den in the capital's Mirpur area over a week ago, on a four-day remand.

The court permitted the police to interrogate Abu Sayeed alias Russel alias Salman, 22, Elias alias Omar Faruk, 23, and Mohsin Ali alias Rubel, 22, in connection with a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act,

Earlier in the day, Mumin Khan, investigation officer of the case (IO) and inspector of Detective Branch of police, produced the accused before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Yunus Khan, and sought a seven-day remand for each of the trio.

In the remand prayer, the IO said the accused were active members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Law enforcers need to conduct a

drive along with the three accused to arrest the JMB second-incommand for Dhaka region Sohel Rana Hiron and trainer for making bomb and grenade Mostafizar Rahman, who fled the scene, he said in the plea.

The IO also said the accused should be quizzed to glean information about their militant activities from them.

On December 24 last year, in a 15-hour crackdown, detectives seized 16 improvised grenades, other ingredients for making over 200 bombs and grenades, a suicide vest, and 15 bullets from a JMB "bomb and ammunition factory" in Mirpur. They also arrested militant suspects Sayeed, Elias and Mohsin.

#### New Delhi begins FROM PAGE 16

from the order. Delhi has experienced hazardous levels of pollution this

The local government announced the scheme after a court ordered authorities to tackle pollution levels more than 10 times the World Health Organisation's safe limits.

The government has made several exemptions to make it easier for people to follow the restrictions. The plan will be imposed between 8:00am and 8:00pm from Monday to Saturday.

Women will be allowed to drive their cars on all days but they can only be accompanied by women, and children below the age of 12. Cars carrying disabled people will also be allowed on all days.

Along with two wheelers, cars operating on natural gas have been exempted. In cases of medical emergency, people will not be stopped

from taking patients to hospitals. The government has hired around 3,000 private buses to provide shuttle services into the city from residential areas to ease the extra pressure on the

public transport network. Schools have been also shut until the trial ends on 15 January so that their

buses can be used as public transport. The government has launched an

app that people can use to book tuktuks to improve last-mile connectivity from the Metro stations.

Traffic policemen and several thousand volunteers will check cars at intersections and violators will be fined 2,000 rupees (\$30; £20) and asked to return.

"The biggest challenge is to make people realise that this fight against pollution is for them, for their health, for their own good," Delhi Transport Minister Gopal Rai told AFP news agency.

Critics, however, say the plan is not practical - they say that in a city with an inadequate public transport system and poor last-mile connectivity, the new measures are likely to inconvenience commuters.

"Let's not convince ourselves wrongly that a simple odd-even policy will solve the overall air pollution issue," AFP quoted Arunabha Ghosh, head of the Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment and Water, as

"Otherwise, we will be simply kicking the can down the road and we will create a feeling of distrust among citizens and the government machinery."

Delhi resident Pankaj Mehta, who drives 45km to work daily, told AFP that the restrictions would make

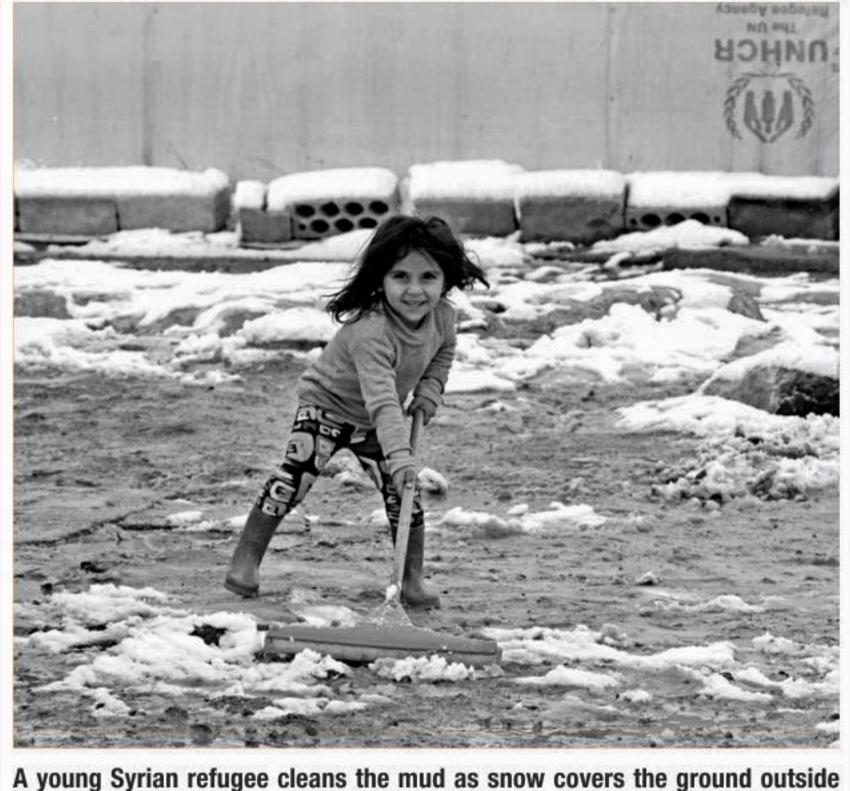
commuting difficult. "Rickshaw, then metro, then feeder bus, then walk - back and forth. A travel nightmare," he said. "But if it makes

breathing easier, then it may be worth

Environmental activists have welcomed the decision, saying the situation is so grim that urgent drastic

steps are needed. New car sales are soaring in India, with 1,400 extra cars taking to the

capital's streets every day.



tents supplied by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Syrian refugee families at the Tal al-Abyad camp, near the Lebanese city of Baalbek in the eastern Bekaa Valley, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

# Sujan was a key figure

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now the University of South Wales, and then set up a computer firm in Newport with his brother, reports the Telegraph. Last year he applied for a special visa

to remain in the country because of his sought-after skills, but was turned down by an immigration tribunal. His friends in Cardiff expressed

shock at the news of his death and said he never showed any extremist tendencies. One business associate said: "He helped everyone create websites for

ing up with ideas. "He loved helping people and was friends with everybody and it didn't matter about their religion or culture."

their businesses. He was always com-

Another colleague described him as "thoughtful, punctual, dutiful and hard-working", while another considered him "gentle and down to earth".

Friends said he became increasingly religious after the death of his sister-inlaw and he adopted his nephew to bring him to live in the UK.

In July 2014 he left the UK, telling friends he and his wife were returning to Bangladesh.

In Syria, Sujan, who took on the name Abu Khalid al-Bengali, was taken under the wing of British jihadi Junaid Hussain, who led ISIS' hacking operation.

When Hussain died in a drone strike on August 24, Sujan took over the helm. A spokesman for the University of

South Wales said: "In common with the UK's other major international universities, we take seriously the shared effort to counter radicalisation. "In this we work closely and appro-

priately with our local faith communities and the relevant agencies."

## 2015: Bad time

FROM PAGE 1

the trial of crimes against humanity, the enactment of Formalin Control Act, Bangladesh Energy and Power Research Council Act, Bangladesh Public-Private Partnership Act, the framing of labour regulations, and the approval of domestic workers protection policy.

However, human rights indicators worsened in many other areas, it says. POLITICAL VIOLENCE, LAW AND ORDER

The BNP-led 20-party alliance began a countrywide strike and blockade as the ruling party didn't allow the alliance to hold a rally on January 5 to raise its demands for cancelling the January-5 polls of 2014 and for holding fresh elections.

The blockade continued for two months when arson attacks claimed the lives of at least 70 people, mostly commoners, the report says, adding that at least 812 incidents of political violence occurred last year.

#### EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS, CUSTODIAL DEATHS

While common people were getting killed in political violence, various state forces got involved in abduction, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the name of crossfire and encounter that continued throughout the year, said Sultana Kamal

In 2015, six people died in custody of law enforcers and five during arrest, while three committed suicide after arrest, the report says. Besides, 68 people died in jail cus-

tody. And a number of people became disabled after being shot allegedly by law enforcers. The authorities, however, always denied such allegations, it adds.

DISAPPEARANCE, SECRET KILLING Many families alleged that men identifying themselves as members of law enforcement agencies picked up their relatives.

Last year, at least 55 people fell victims to forced disappearance. Of them, bodies of eight were recovered later, seven were shown arrested, and five returned to their families. The whereabouts of the rest still remain unknown.

The authorities, however, have neither issued any statements on such incidents nor did they initiate any investigation, the report says.

### MINORITIES

REPRESSION ON RELIGIOUS

"Rise of religious extremism in 2015

was a matter of grave concern," said Sultana Kamal. Besides, killing of foreigners, death

threats to Christian priests, bomb attacks on Hossaini Dalan in the capital and Ahmadiyya mosque in Rajshahi, and a gun attack on Bogra Shia mosque created a sense of anxiety among people, she said.

Last year, criminals vandalised and set fire to 104 houses and Hindu temples, and destroyed 213 idols across the country.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Referring to the killing of a number of free-thinkers, bloggers and writers, the report says this trend was a matter of concern last year.

Besides, progressive politicians, intellectuals and journalists received death threats.

The government tried to control the freedom of opinion through legal means, and showed a tendency to harass people through the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended in 2013), says the report.

Three journalists were killed and 18 others suffered repression at the hands of law enforcers. And a total of 244 journalists fell victims to violence last year, the ASK says.

"Practically, the opposition was not allowed to hold any rallies. Opposition leaders and activists were arrested on various grounds, and were not given bail. Thus, they were denied basic rights," said Sultana Kamal.

The biggest humanitarian crisis in 2015 was the trafficking of Bangladeshis through the Bay of Bengal and discovery of mass graves in Malaysian and Thai borders, she

POLITICAL VIOLENCE, CASES AND TRIAL

The most burning issue of 2015 was political violence during the blockade in the first quarter of the year.

More than 400 cases were filed in connection with political violence throughout the year. Of those, 200 were lodged in the first quarter, and thousands of people were accused in

Sultana Kamal said these cases could not make progress because they were identified as "political". "The actual criminals responsible for such incidents always remain behind the curtain."

## Dried up

FROM PAGE 1 pursue mainland-based livelihoods.

Meanwhile Ranjit Chandra Das of Char Kalmati, by family heritage a fisherman, is also suffering. "Once I could catch about 10 kilograms of boirali fish every day," he says, referring to the Indian flying barb, an endemic species traditionally caught in the area. "These days I can only catch about half a kilogram."

The species, which is at risk of extinction, no longer breeds in the river for lack of water, he adds. Lalmonirhat's executive engineer of

the Bangladesh Water Development Board, Shibendu Khastagir, says the water level fell sharply in September, with all the district's rivers drying at an alarming rate.

Farmer, fisherman, boatman and general shoal dweller alike, people here hope and wait for the government to take much-needed measures, including the finalisation of a fair water sharing treaty with India, in order to restore the year-round navigability that can alleviate suffering.

## AL to discipline

meeting on Thursday night, quoted Hasina as saying.

The ruling party already suspended around 55 grassroots leaders for running for mayor ignoring party decision. Their fate would be decided at the AL central working committee meeting on January 9, sources said. "No mercy for party rebels. If we

go soft on them, it will encourage others to violate party decision," AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury told The Daily Responding to a query, he said

party-nominated candidates in at least 12 to 14 municipalities were defeated because of local MPs. According to party sources, the dissident who won in Shibganj under

Chapainawabganj was backed by local MP Golam Rabbani. Rabbani, also Shibganj upazila AL president, was suspended from the party already on December 24

for going against the party deci-

sion. In the polls, AL rebels won in Sonargaon under Narayanganj, Kalia municipality of Narail, Chuadanga Sadar and Jibannagar under Chuadanga, Chatmohor under Pabna, Barguna sadar, Birampur of Dinajpur Kulaura

Bogra. They were backed respectively by local MPs Shamim Osman Kabirul Hoque Mukti, Ali Azgor Tagor, Mokbul Hossain, Dhirendro Debnath Shambhu, Shibli Sadique, Abdul Matin and Habibur Rahman.

under Moulavibazar and Dhunat in

Manikganj Sadar was backed by AL MP AM Naimur Rahman Durjoy. The area is not even under Durjoy's constituency Manikganj-1. Other lawmakers who will have

Besides, AL rebel who won in

to face tough consequences are Abul Kalam Azad of Jamalpur-1, Mohibur Rahman Manik of Sunamganj-5, Ramesh Chandra Sen of Thakurgaon-1, Abdur Rouf of Kushtia-4, Abul Kalam Azad of Gaibandha-4, Shamsul Hoque Bhuiyan of Chandpur-4, Hasibur Rahman Swapon of Siranganj-6, Monoranjan Shil Gopal of Dinajpur-1, Mohibur Rahman Manik of Sunamganj-5, Didarul Alam of Chittagong-4, Fazley Karim Chowdhury of Chittagong-6, Abu Reza Muhammad Nezamuddin of Chittagong-15 and Golam Mostofa of Nilphamari-3, sources said.

In Wednesday's polls, the AL secured 168 mayor posts while BNP only 19. In the last municipality polls, AL-backed candidates had bagged 90 mayor posts while the BNP favourites 95.

### Iwo sisters

FROM PAGE 16 same union.

A relative of the girls told The Daily Star that the elder sister had developed a romantic relationship with the arrestee over phone recently. Around 5:30pm on Thursday, Sumon asked her to meet him near Noannoi Board Office.

As it was already quite dark, she took her younger sister with her. Reaching the board office, they saw

that Sumon was already there and was talking to someone else over phone. Within moments, some other

youths joined him. From there, they took the sisters to a nearby paddy field and took turns to rape them, said the relative.

Hearing a hue and cry, locals rushed there. But the rapists had already left.

Later, the girls were sent to Noakhali General Hospital, added the relative. Police said the sisters would go

through forensic tests at the hospital today. A case was filed against 12 people,

including Sumon, with Sudharam Model Police Station. Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they were

#### raiding several places to arrest the other accused. Diversity

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Highlighting Bangladesh's persistent economic tolerance amidst global economic recession over the last few years, the premier said she hopes the country's economic growth rate would be 7 percent in the current fiscal. She said she strongly believes that

Bangladesh must emerge as a middleincome country on the world economic map by 2021. She hoped that businesspeople, industrialists, exporters, importers, researchers and technologists from home and abroad would come forward to help establish a dignified position for Bangladesh. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed

Opposition Chief Whip Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Commerce Secretary Hedayet Ullah Al Mamun and FBCCI President Abdul Matlub Ahmed also spoke on the occasion. Cabinet members, senior govern-

ment officials, diplomats, business leaders, exporters and participants from home and abroad were present. Later, the PM went round different stalls of the fair.

not finished with terrorism yet" and that the threat of another attack "re-Belgian police were holding five

Year celebration. Authorities said

put on a spectacular firework show,

firecrackers likely started the blaze.

at Kursky after sniffer dogs searched stroke of midnight on Thursday. Jakarta remained on high alert after

in the Indonesian capital. Turkish police detained two IS

suspects allegedly planning to stage attacks in the centre of the capital More than 100,000 police were Ankara. In Moscow, police for the first time

thousands of revelers traditionally gather. "It's no secret that Moscow is one of

ahead of the celebrations.

In Britain, Scotland Yard said

In the United States, authorities said they had arrested and charged a 25-year-old American Muslim convert over an alleged attempt to launch a

# 'Helpless, shocked'

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An assistant upazila education officer by profession, he was working as an assistant presiding officer at the Shailakupa Girls High School voting centre. But the story did not end here.

During the vote counting, polling agents of the pro-Awami League candidates and the law enforcers forced him to add around 200 fake votes to the actual number of votes AL-nominated mayor candidate Kazi Ashraful Azam had got there.

"I refused to sign on the papers with the inflated figure of votes. But a policeman threatened me that he would file a false case against me and arrest me. So, I had to comply eventually," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Similar allegations were raised by the election officials of some other polling stations in the municipality. Kazi Ashraful won the mayor elec-

tion in Shailakupa with 15,108 votes while his nearest contender Khalilur Rahman from the BNP got 4,709. In Bogra, a presiding official at Maltinagar Town Govt Primary School fainted when some 20-22 ruling party

men stormed his booth brandishing arms. "When I regained consciousness, my colleagues there told me that the cadres had stamped a huge number of ballots and stuffed those in the boxes,"

the official told The Daily Star. "As a result, many voters had to return without casting their votes as their votes had already been cast," he added.

Over 50 Chhatra League and Jubo League activists went to the MM College polling centre in Jessore municipality the night before the voting day. They took control of the centre and

started stamping the ballot papers in

share of these patients in Malaysia, as

treatment cost there is 30 to 40 percent

less than that of in Singapore and

feasible for us to treat critical cases like

heart surgeries and cancer treatment,"

Besides, some three lakh tourists

from Bangladesh visit Malaysia every

year and they could take advantage of

half-day health check-up in the morn-

ing and consultation in the afternoon,

For that, the hospitals offer pack-

ages of health screening for three days

and two nights in the weekends. They

also have five-day packages, Kavitha

is always a fear of travelling. "If a doc-

tor says that a surgery is needed, we

always want to hear from a second or a

She added that they were providing

"We send our doctors to Bangladesh

the second or third opinion service to

so that patients there can bring the

medical records and meet our doctors

for the next course of action. It is not an

obligation that if they see Malaysian

doctors, they have to come to Malaysia.

If you have the service at your home

However, if a patient is willing to

country, have it there," she said.

the Bangladeshis in Bangladesh.

For a critical patient, she said, there

Kavitha Mathuvay said.

FROM PAGE 16

in Malaysia.

she said.

third doctor."

Malaysian hospitals

favour of the ruling party-backed mayor candidate.

The policemen remained inactive and polling officials were too afraid to

"When they captured the centre and started stamping on the ballots, we were frightened because the law enforcers did not come forward to help us. We could not sleep for a moment that night," an assistant presiding officer told The Daily Star.

There were 2,719 male voters under the centre's jurisdiction and the number of ballots found in the voting boxes shows that each one of them had cast votes, something highly unusual, if not impossible, in a fair election. "Most of the votes were cast even

before the voting had begun," the polling official said. Additional District Magistrate Sohel

Hasan of the Bogra deputy commissioner's office later went there and seized the ballots. He said he had gone there on infor-

mation that the votes were counted even before the voting time ended. The Election Commission has

cancelled voting at the centre. Similar irregularities were reported

in dozens of other municipalities. The polling officials were threatened with physical, legal and political harassments if they refused to comply. "When I refused to allow some ruling party activists from casting fake

votes, they started branding me as an agent of the BNP-Jamaat," said a college lecturer, who was the presiding officer of a voting centre in Savar municipality elections. "After what happened that day, I do

not want to perform election duty ever again," he said yesterday. Fearing reprisals, none of the elec-

tion officials wanted to be named.

travel, the MHTC will support his or her treatment in Malaysia. The MHTC also works through its

representative in Bangladesh -- GD

Thailand as well as healthcare quality Assist, a subsidiary of Green Delta is of high standard in at least 68 inter-Insurance Company (GDIC). nationally accredited private hospitals "Currently, we also have an insurance product [provided by the GDIC] "Being geographically close, it is which offers medical treatment in

> Malaysia," Kavitha said. The MHTC has been working with Malaysia Airlines which gives 30 percent discount to the Bangladeshi patients and their family members flying in to Malaysia for treatment.

The agency is also in discussion with Biman Bangladesh Airlines to find ways to work together for providing a better service to the people travel-

ling to Malaysia for treatment. Zalifah Yasmin Ibrahim, corporate executive at the KPJ Healthcare Berhard in Kuala Lumpur, said Bangladesh and Malaysia have many similarities, including weather and

halal food. "So, Bangladeshi people travelling to Malaysia would not find it difficult

to stay and get treatment," she said. Dr Kumara Gurupparan Ganesan, cardiologist at the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur, said the hospital has state-of-the-art technologies to treat cardiac patients.

Drawn by the facilities, many Bangladeshis are now coming to this hospital for cardiac treatments, he said, adding that some Bangladeshi doctors are also working there.

## Terror threat

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said IS had planned to use suicide bombers in the attack. Despite police warnings to stay away from big crowds, thousands of people were on the streets of Munich at midnight to welcome the New Year with fireworks. Meanwhile, about 500 people were

evacuated from two railway stations in Moscow yesterday after police were tipped off about bombs being planted, RIA news agency cited an emergency services source as saying. RIA reported that Paveletsky and Kursky stations had been evacuated

and said later that no bomb was found

the station, reports Reuters. Security forces in many capitals around the world were on raised alert after a year of violent attacks. In Europe, terror fears loomed large, with firework displays cancelled in Brussels and Paris.

deployed throughout France to guard celebrations, as defiant Parisians turned out on the Champs Elysees to greet 2016 in the biggest public gatherings since attacks in the city on November 13 left 130 people dead. In his New Year address, President Francois Hollande said France "has

mains at its highest level". people over an alleged New Year attack

plot in Brussels, as well as arresting a 10th suspect over the Paris attacks. In Dubai, a vast blaze ripped through a luxury 63-story hotel, the Address Downtown, close to the

gathered to ring in the New Year. Investigators have yet to determine the cause of the blaze. But authorities

refusing to let the hotel blaze, which injured 16 people, disrupt celebrations. In the Philippine capital Manila, a fire hit at least 1,000 homes displacing 3,000 families just hours after the New

Sydney, traditionally the first to host a major New Year's bash, kicked off the global festivities when it lit up the skies with pyrotechnics at the

anti-terror police foiled detailed plans for an alleged New Year suicide attack

closed off Red Square, where tens of

the choice targets for terrorists," Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said

around 3,000 officers were deployed across central London in what was reported to be an unprecedented antiterror security effort.

New Year's Eve attack in upstate New world's tallest tower where people had York in the name of IS.