

Lone arrestee's

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filed with Panchlaish Police Station.

Meanwhile, a Chittagong court yesterday ordered the investigating officer of the case to submit the case docket to it on June 12.

The court gave the order after detectives produced Gunnu before it, seeking seven-day remand, said court sources.

Abul Hasan, lawyer of the accused, said they told the court that their client was not involved with Shibir. There is a rivalry between two sisters of Musabiya, a spiritual leader, over establishing supremacy at the shrine.

A supporter of the elder sister of Musabiya, Gunnu is the secretary of the shrine's managing committee. That's why he has been framed by supporters of the youngest sister. The defence pleaded with the court to grant bail to the accused.

The court fixed June 12 for hearing the bail and remand prayers and sent the arrestee to jail.

Meanwhile, Khairun Nur Siddika, on behalf of arrestee's family, at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club yesterday afternoon claimed that supporters of Musabiya's youngest sister lodged around 10 "false cases" against the arrestee with different police stations.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach any of the two sisters over the phone for comment.

NO SMS SENT

Mitu "didn't receive" any text message on her mobile phone from her son's school, asking her to drop the kid at the school half an hour earlier than the regular timing on Sunday, police claimed yesterday.

Speaking at a press briefing at the CMP headquarters, Devdas Bhattacharya said although the phone was missing, they examined the message list of the phone number and became sure that no such message was sent.

The school authorities denied sending any such message.

Mitu along with her son used to go out of her house around 7:00am daily to catch a school bus at the GEC intersection. But on the fateful morning, she left the house earlier.

Bhattacharya said they were probing why the victim went out of her house earlier that day.

MICROBUS DRIVER GRILLED
Police said they were interrogating Jan-e Alam, the driver and owner of the microbus which was seen on CCTV footage following the assailants' motorbike, said the CMP official.

"The driver confessed that he witnessed the killing. We're also probing whether he was involved in the murder," he added.

Law enforcers seized the vehicle from Bhatari of Sitakunda upazila on Wednesday and detained Jan-e Alam for interrogation.

IGP VISITS SP IN DHAKA
AKM Shahidul Hoque, inspector general of police, yesterday visited the Banasree residence of SP Babul, said a release of Police Headquarters.

Condemning the killing, he assured the SP of bringing the perpetrators of the crime to justice soon.

ACCUSED ON FRESH REMAND
A Natore court yesterday placed Sabuj Hossain, tenant of slain Christian trader Sunil Gomez, on three-day fresh remand, reports our correspondent.

Sabuj, 32, was picked up by police on June 5 in connection with the murder.

Earlier on Tuesday, the same court placed him on two-day remand.

Unidentified assailants hacked the sixty-year-old trader to death at Bonpara Christian Palli in Baraigram upazila around noon on Sunday when he was alone in his shop.

No internet

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Others thought the suggestion that the measure could also apply to teachers, who do not deal with much sensitive information, was extreme.

The Straits Times said a memo was sent to all government agencies, ministries and statutory boards announcing the restrictions.

The Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), the agency in charge of the change, said it would guard against cyber-attacks and create a "more secure working environment", Channel News Asia reported.

An IDA spokesperson told the BBC: "The Singapore Government regularly reviews our IT security to make our IT network more secure."

"We have started to separate internet access from the work stations of a selected group of public service officers, and will do so for the rest of the public service officers progressively over a one-year period."

It will eventually apply to all 100,000 public service computers.

Some Singaporeans on social media have speculated whether a specific security breach sparked the move.

Officials would not say if this was the case.

Like many other countries, Singapore has had previous incidents of cyber attacks, including Anonymous group hacking the prime minister's official website in 2013.

6 more haats along Indo-Bangla border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh and India yesterday agreed to set up six more haats along their borders, but New Delhi turned down Dhaka's plea for lifting countervailing duty on import of readymade garments.

The two-day meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG) on trade ended yesterday afternoon with both sides agreeing to set up new border haats along borders with the northeastern Indian states of Meghalaya and Tripura.

To facilitate this, the two countries agreed to expand the ambit of a bilateral MoU in a week, said officials concerned. The two countries already have four border haats.

At the JWG meeting, Bangladesh pressed India for the withdrawal of countervailing duty on import of readymade garments from Bangladesh. India, however, contended that removal of the countervailing duty would affect the level-playing field for domestic Indian garment manufacturers.

The countervailing duty of 12.3 per cent was imposed in February.

The decision had allowed 46 textile items from Bangladesh to enter Indian markets without any duty.

The Indian manufacturers, however, demanded duty on Bangladesh garments, claiming that the decision was hurting their interests by rendering their products uncompetitive in the market.

The Indian budget for 2013-14 imposed countervailing duty and additional tax of 3 per cent on garments imported from Bangladesh.

At the JWG meeting, Bangladesh also raised the issue of India's clamping anti-dumping duty on jute goods imports, but New Delhi rejected any immediate change in its policy, the officials said.

Currently, the issue of anti-dumping duty is before a tribunal in India and the next hearing will be held after this Eid, added the officials.

India meanwhile requested Bangladesh to drop the extra charges one has to pay for loading and unloading of goods at ports in Bangladesh on Friday, a weekly holiday, on grounds of reciprocity. Indian ports do not charge anything extra on holidays in India.

The Bangladesh side said the matter was under consideration.

Munir Chowdhury, joint secretary of the Bangladesh commerce ministry, and his Indian counterpart Bhupendra Bhalla led their delegations at the meeting.

Profiteers feast on sugar

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The daily demand for sugar in the country is 5,000 tonnes a day, and the refiners are supplying 7,000-8,000 tonnes, said Fazlur Rahman, chairman of City Group of Industries, which has the biggest sugar refinery in the country.

"We don't see any shortfall in the supply of sugar by the refiners," he said.

Talking to this correspondent, City Group General Manager Bishwajit Saha said they had to suspend production at their refinery for a couple of days at the end of last month because of problems in gas supply to the refinery.

The Group is now delivering 2,800-3,000 tonnes of sugar a day with the sweetener priced at Tk 48 a kg, he said.

Bishwajit blamed the price spiral on the imposition of import duty on sugar. He, however, saw no reason for selling the item at Tk 65 a kg at the retail level.

Prices would come down if the commerce ministry strengthens its market monitoring, he added.

On Wednesday, a mobile court in Chittagong fined a wholesaler, Mir Ahmed Sawdagar Traders, Tk 20 lakh for selling the sweetener at Tk 58.02 a kg against the purchase price of Tk 46.08.

The country's estimated annual demand for sugar is 15 lakh tonnes.

In July-April of the outgoing fiscal year, 12.74 lakh tonnes of raw and refined sugar were imported. The quantity was 17.94 lakh tonnes in fiscal 2014-15.

Commerce ministry officials said the demand for sugar rises to three lakh tonnes in Ramadan alone for its increased use in preparing sweet items.

Citing import data on sugar and

some other commodities, the ministry said in a report last month that the supply of sugar was good enough to meet the estimated demand during Ramadan.

Abul Hashem, vice president of Bangladesh Sugar Merchants Association, claimed, "Supply of sugar is yet to be smooth from millers. Prices will go up unless the supply chain runs smoothly."

Sugar was traded for Tk 2,100 a maund (37.32 kg) or Tk 56.27 a kg at mill gates, he said on Wednesday.

Asked about the City Group's claim that it delivers the item for Tk 48 a kg, Hashem said the traders' trucks had to wait in queues for days to get the item from the refinery. Their overall purchase costs went up due to the delay.

Yesterday, the commerce minister warned that if any trader sells the basic commodities at prices higher than normal, his fate would be similar to that of Mir Ahmed Sawdagar Traders in Chittagong.

The minister assigned the director general of the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection to monitor sugar prices so that the unscrupulous traders cannot make extra profits.

He also said the Tariff Commission would soon sit with importers, wholesalers and retailers.

Apart from sugar, chickpeas, dates and pulses, which are widely consumed in Ramadan, saw their prices go up in local markets, said the minister.

"I don't see any reason behind the price hike of these items, as their supply is adequate," he said.

Chickpeas are sold for Tk 85-Tk 100 a kg, which should be Tk 60-Tk 65.

"I hope the prices of the items would fall very soon," he added.

Police launch drive

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in their respective areas, meeting sources said.

The field-level officers have been directed to know the whereabouts of all suspected militants in their areas, a top police official said. "We have been also asked to make a list of militants in hiding."

Another top official said, "Written instructions will be sent to districts regarding the drive."

At the meeting, many of the participants admitted that law and order has deteriorated across the country and voiced concern over the rise in recent secret killings. They also discussed the brutal killing of SP Babul Akter's wife Mahmuda Khanam Mitu in Chittagong.

Some police officials at the meeting suggested that police should be "more aggressive" in tackling militancy as it has emerged as a major security threat.

Over the last two years or so, suspected militants have attacked and killed university professors, writers, publishers, secular bloggers, gay rights activists, foreigners, policemen and members of religious minorities, including Shia and Sufi Muslims, Christians and Hindus.

At least seven people have become victims of such targeted killings since May 1. They include a Christian grocer and a Hindu priest.

Contacted, IGP Shahidul Hoque said law enforcers will conduct drives against the listed militants and suspects.

"We have a list of militants involved in terror incidents across the country since 2004. Many of them were arrested and charge-sheeted. Many were acquitted, granted bail or released. Besides, we have a list of suspected militants prepared by different intelligence agencies," he added.

"Primarily, it is decided that the drive will last seven days, but it may be extended."

The IGP said police will adopt a special strategy in conducting drives in militancy-prone districts.

According to sources, the districts include Gazipur, Joypurhat, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jhenidah, Natore, Sirajganj, some districts of Khulna and Chittagong divisions.

Anwar Latif Khan, additional director general (operations) of Rab, told this newspaper, "We will carry out large-scale drives in the militant-prone districts in northern area and in Khulna and Chittagong."

Some officials, however, said police have already begun crackdowns on militants after the killing of the SP's wife.

At least nine people, including five JMB men, were killed in "shootouts" or "gunfights" with law enforcement agencies in the last three days.

"Following the directives, we have strengthened our vigilance, increased the number of checkpoints," said a SP preferring anonymity.

"Especially, we are frisking bikers as militants and criminals in many attacks used bikes to flee away."

HUMAN TRAFFICKING Bangladeshi jailed in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Malaysian court yesterday jailed a Bangladeshi for 10 years, finding him guilty of trafficking three fellows through the Andaman Sea in Songkhla province of Thailand between 2014 and 2015.

Nurul Islam, 32, admitted to the court in the Malaysian state of Perlis that he had trafficked three Bangladeshis -- Mohammad Nurbasa, Delwar and Joy -- between October 2014 and April last year, reports Malaysian daily The Star.

Meanwhile, a Thai national, Biau Wong Chumpo, 46, was charged with trafficking in Bangladeshi Tofajir Hussain between October 2014 and May 2 last year.

The report, however, did not elaborate further on the trafficking incidents.

Contacted, Musharrat Jebin, first secretary (labour) at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, told The Daily Star that they had no information in this regard yet. "We will check the matter," she added.

Another official at the mission, however, said some cases had been filed against traffickers of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia.

Some 716 Bangladeshi migrants were among over 1,051 trafficking victims rescued from Langkawi Island of Malaysia on May 11 last year. The traffickers had abandoned them in the island after holding them captive in a Thai jungle for weeks.

Of the Bangladeshis, 670 have already returned home and the rest are still languishing in detention centre in Malaysia.

Besides, over 3,000 Bangladeshis were rescued in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar last year after the issue of human trafficking through the Bay of Bengal got international media attention.

Mothers

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questions: 'Why was my teacher killed? Why did her mum kill her?'

"I said, 'Don't worry. You are my beloved daughter.'"

Maham, pictured in pink and black and frowning as she looked at the burn marks, told AFP she had seen her teacher's feet beneath the shroud covering her body.

"When I saw that I started weeping because my teacher was dead," the 10-year-old said. "I was so afraid."

Muskan, also 10, lived opposite Zeenat in Pakistan's teeming cultural capital of Lahore, and had been taught the Quran by her too, the child's grandmother Nasreen Bibi told AFP.

"Her face was very pale when she returned from the house," she said of her granddaughter. "She was looking very afraid."

Zeenat, both the women added, was "so kind and gentle".

Police have said the teenager was killed Wednesday by her mother after marrying Hasan Khan, her long-term boyfriend.

Burns covered 90 percent of her body. A post-mortem to determine whether she was still alive when she was set on fire was being conducted.

None of her relatives sought to claim her body, police said Thursday, leaving her new husband's family to bury her charred remains before dawn in a graveyard near the city.

The vicious murder has sparked fresh calls for action against so-called "honour killings" in Pakistan.

Hundreds of women are killed by their relatives each year after allegedly bringing shame on their families in the deeply conservative Muslim country.

"I never (saw) such a mother in my whole life," Zeenat's mother-in-law Shahida Bibi told AFP.

"Zeenat was so cute, so simple, so innocent and so kind... I loved her very much."

Her own child is demented with grief, she said. "Our boy has gone mad."

"The family, which is supposed to be the basic unit of society, turning against their own child shows that there is something flawed in law and society," rights activist Hina Gilani told AFP.

The hashtag #NoMoreKillingGirls was being used by Pakistanis on Twitter yesterday and was officially trending in Karachi, the sprawling port megacity of 20 million.

"They are killing minds and souls," wrote one user in Karachi.

Tweeting the image of Maham and Muskan staring at the ash, @Veengasj added: "What r girls thinking & getting msg? Girls hv no value?"

Fear and depression has taken over the neighbourhood a day after the murder, residents said.

"Parents should protect their children," said Muhammad Asghar, a neighbour who has two daughters and one son.

It is the first time such an attack has taken place in that neighbourhood, he said, but it frightened him so much he is now considering moving.

"We will start preaching to parents in this street to take care of their kids," said another neighbour, 60-year-old Firdaus Bibi.

I'm with her: Obama

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with her Democratic primary opponent, Bernie Sanders.

"Tens of millions of Americans made their voices heard. Today I just want to add mine," Obama said in the video.

"I don't think there's ever been someone so qualified to hold this office."

"I am with her. I am fired up. And I cannot wait to get out there and campaign for Hillary," he added.

The endorsement was long expected but is nonetheless a shot in the arm to the Clinton campaign and could end concerns about party unity after a bitter contest.

Obama's backing will give Clinton a potent surrogate on the campaign trail. After nearly eight years in the White House, Obama is still one of the country's most popular politicians.

His approval ratings among black, Hispanic, young and liberal voters are stratospheric.

Obama and Clinton will hold their first joint campaign appearance in Wisconsin next week, the campaign also said.

Together, the announcements trumped what appeared to be a day of careful diplomacy between senior Democrats and Sanders as he made his way around Washington to meet with Obama and other party leaders after Clinton secured the Democratic nomination this week.

After meeting with Obama for about an hour, Sanders struck a somewhat conciliatory tone toward the former secretary of State and thanked the president for his impartiality during the primary but offered no clarity about his plans to either drop out of the presidential race or back Clinton.

Sanders' chances of becoming the Democratic nominee are nearly nonexistent, dependent solely on a dramatic swing of support from superdelegates away from Clinton. But he entered yesterday's meeting with Obama and a later one with Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid with some bargaining chips, aware of Democrats' desire to avoid any whiff of intraparty dissent.

Reading a prepared statement outside the West Wing after his visit with Obama, Sanders cataloged the familiar list of issues that have driven his grass-roots campaign and that he said he would "take to the Democratic National Convention" next month.

But, in a nod to what Democrats want from him - to throw his support to Clinton as she embarks on her general election campaign, Sanders

quickly attacked presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump. Sanders said it was "unbelievable" to him that Republicans would nominate a figure "who makes bigotry and discrimination the cornerstone of his campaign."

"Needless to say, I am going to do everything in my power — and I will work as hard as I can — to make sure that Donald Trump does not become president," he said.

Sanders reaffirmed that he would contest the lone remaining Democratic primary, on Tuesday in the District of Columbia, primarily to argue for the city's right to full congressional representation.

Then he said he looked forward to speaking with Clinton about how to beat Trump "and to create a government which represents all of us, and not just the 1%," his rallying cry for months on the campaign trail.

Obama had already congratulated Clinton for securing the nomination this week.

But he went further in the prerecorded video message, saying she had "the courage, the compassion and the heart to get the job done."

Noting their history as political rivals, he said her decision to serve in his administration was "a testament to her character."

"From the decision we made in the Situation Room to get Bin Laden to our pursuit of diplomacy in capitals around the world, I have seen her judgment, I've seen her toughness, I've seen her commitment to our values up close," he said.

Clinton welcomed the vote of confidence: "Honored to have you with me, @POTUS I'm fired up and ready to go!" she tweeted, echoing one of Obama's own campaign rallying cries from 2008.

In that election Obama bested Clinton to become the first black president.

They later made peace, as Clinton became Obama's first secretary of state.

Now Clinton is trying to make history of her own by becoming the first female president.

Standing in her way is bombastic businessman Donald Trump, who shocked the world by becoming the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

Just after the endorsement, Trump tweeted: "Obama just endorsed Crooked Hillary. He wants four more years of Obama—but nobody else does!"

3 more killed

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raid one Jahangir Hossain's house, being informed that JMB men had gathered there, said Mozammel Huq, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Police Station.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, JMB men opened fire at them. Police retaliated with gunshots, the OC said.

Within half an hour, members of the outlawed group fled the scene. Police later recovered a body, one detonator and explosives from the spot, he added.

Law enforcers claimed that the dead was a JMB man but could not give his identity.

The OC said the house owner, Jahangir, was an active member of the JMB, who is on the run now.

In Dhaka, an alleged leader of a doping gang, Nazrul Islam, was killed in a "gunfight" between his cohorts and members of the Rapid Action Battalion at a checkpoint in Protasha bridge area under Turag Police Station around 1:45am, Lt Commander Md Shoaib, deputy director of Rab-1, told The Daily Star.

Nazrul and two others were crossing the checkpoint on a motorcycle. As Rab men signaled to them to stop, they opened fire from the running motorcycle. The Rab members fired back.

Nazrul hit by a bullet fell off the bike, the Rab official said.

The injured was taken to Tongi General Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 2:30am, he added.

Lt Col Tuhin Mohammad Masud, commanding officer of Rab-1, said Nazrul had been involved in criminal activities including mugging and human trafficking.

The Rab claimed to have recovered one pistol and two bullets from the spot.

In another such incident in the capital's Rampura, a suspected mugger was killed.

The dead, Kamal Parvez, 35, was a resident of Uttar area, said Abdul Karim, operation officer of Rab-3.

According to the Rab, Parvez was held with a gold bangle about 3:00pm on Wednesday after he along with his three accomplices had mugged a woman at Taltola in Khilgaon.

A team of Rab-3 then took him to Balurmath area to arrest his accomplices in the middle of the night, Rab sources said. Sensing Rab's presence, criminals opened fire. Law enforcers fired shots in retaliation, leaving Parvez injured.

He was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Israel enraged

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The attack, as families were enjoying a balmy evening out at the open-air Saron complex, took place just a couple of hundred yards from the fortified Defence Ministry in the heart of Tel Aviv, which has seen far less violence than Jerusalem.

After security consultations overseen by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the military said it was rescinding some 83,000 permits issued to Palestinians from the West Bank to visit relatives in Israel during the ongoing Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

It also announced that two battalions would be deployed in the West Bank by the end of the day to reinforce troops stationed in the area, where the military maintains a network of checkpoints and often carries out raids to arrest suspected militants. Israeli battalions are comprised of around 300 troops.

Such measures, including restrictions on access to Jerusalem's Aqsa Mosque compound, the holy site in the heart of the Old City that Jews refer

to as Temple Mount, have in the past led to increased tension with the Palestinians.

After the attack, fireworks were set off in parts of the West Bank and in some refugee camps people sang, chanted and waved flags in celebration, locals said.

Hamas spokesman Hussam Badran called it "the first prophecy of Ramadan" and said the location of the attack, across the road from Israel's fortified Defence Ministry, "indicated the failure of all measures by the occupation" to end the uprising.

During the recent wave of violence, Israel's government has repeatedly criticised Palestinian factions for inciting attacks or not doing enough to quell them.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the largest group in the Palestine Liberation Organization after Fatah, the Western-backed party of President Mahmoud Abbas, described the killings as "a natural response to field executions conducted by the Zionist occupation".