NITYARANJAN MURDER Shibir man on

5-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday placed an Islami Chhatra Shibir leader on a fiveday remand in a case filed for the murder of Nityaranjan Pandey, who was a sebak (volunteer) at a local Hindu ashram.

The additional chief judicial magistrate court passed the order after Pabna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-charge Abdul Kuddus, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced the accused before the court with a 10-day remand plea.

The accused is Ariful Islam, general secretary of Pabna district west unit of

Shibir, a pro-Jamaat-e-Islami body. Shibir in a press release has said Ariful was "framed" for the murder, reports our correspondent.

Nityaranjan, 60, was hacked to death on Friday morning when he was taking his regular morning walk about half a kilometre away from the monas-

tery in Hemayetpur. Later, Islamic State claimed responsibility for the killing, according to the US-based SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors global terror activities.

Acting on a tip off, police arrested the Shibir leader from a house in Bazitpur area and seized his cell phone on Sunday, said the IO.

He also claimed to have got some "important information" about the murder from the phone.

The OC said several text messages were sent to the number of one of Ariful's friends in which the arrestee mentioned the murder of Nityaranjan.

"In one of the messages, he [Ariful] said he would state the names of the killers later," OC Abdul Kuddus said they would

be able to glean more information from Ariful during his remand. He added that they were trying to identify and detain the friend of the arrestee. "We are investigating the case

considering many issues, including [the involvement of] religious fundamentalists," added the IO. "However, we cannot tell you anything clearly before the investigation is complete.

On Sunday night, police arrested Abul Hashem, 40, a key suspect in the case, at Hemayetpur. He was placed on a five-day remand on Monday.

Two suspects

FROM PAGE 1

Sensing the presence of police, the criminals opened fire on them and also swooped on them with sticks and sharp weapons, he added. The law enforcers retaliated with gunfire, leaving the two dead on the spot, claimed the district police boss.

Police recovered firearms and sharp weapons from the spot. Three policemen including Farid Hossain, officer-incharge of Joypurhat Police Station, were injured in the shootout, police said.

The bodies were sent to Joypurhat General Hospital for autopsy.

The police said the dead were accused in Azad murder case. They were also accused in several snatching and extortion cases filed with Joypurhat Police Station.

AK Azad along with his aide Nayan Chandra Barman was stabbed and shot on June 4 on his way home. He later died of his injuries at Popular Hospital in the capital on June 12.

Azad contested the UP polls as an independent candidate for the chairman post and was elected on May 28. On Sunday, police arrested Saikat

Hossain, 25, and Abdul Hakim in connection with the killing. The arrestees reportedly gave confessional statements before a magistrate.

With the deaths of Rana and Nurul, 15 people including five suspected militants have been killed in "shootouts" or "gunfights" this month alone, according to reports published by this paper.

Of them, nine people were killed in three consecutive days following the killing of the wife of the superinten-

dent of police of Chittagong on June 5.

HC to deliver

on April 16, 2005 handed down death sentences to 22 people and life terms to six others.

Those sentenced to death are Nurul

Islam Sarker, Nurul Islam Dipu, his brother Shahidul Islam Shipu, Mohammad Ali, Mahbubur Rahman Mahbub, Amir, Syed Ahmed Mojnu, Jahangir alias Boro Jahangir, Hafiz alias Kana Hafiz, Anwar Hossain alias Anu, Faisal, Jahangir (1), Sohag alias Shoru,

Lokman Hossain alias Bulu, Al Amin, Ratan Mia alias Boro Mia, Roni Mia alias Roni Fakir, Ratan alias Chhoto Ratan, Abu Salam alias Salam, Moshiur Rahman alias Moshu, Khokon and

Dulal Mia. Those to serve life terms are Ohidul Islam Tipu, Monir, Rakibuddin Sarker alias Pappu Sarker, Ayub Ali, Jahangir (2) and Nurul Amin. The court also

convicted them to two life terms, to run concurrently. The death reference came to the HC within seven days after delivery of the

lower court verdict. Seventeen convicts later filed separate appeals with the HC challenging

the conviction and sentences handed by

the lower court.

AL responsible FROM PAGE 1

Protesting Ashraf's comment, he said

it was the AL, which had formed

government after Bangabandhu's

assassination. And its leaders took oath

as ministers, leaving Bangabandhu's

The JSD faction led by Sharif Nurul

In a joint statement, they said

"When we are trying to unite against

secret killings, militancy and criminal

activities, such a statement by Syed

Ashraf is misleading and embarrassing

Also yesterday, addressing a

programme in Jhenidah, Inu urged AL

leaders not to indulge in mudslinging

lessons. We all should try to keep intact

the unity of the alliance," the JSD

JSD in the alliance after assessing pre-

activists not to get confused by any-

the Jatiya Press Club, Shirin Akter,

general secretary of the JSD (Inu fac-

tion), said mudslinging among the 14-

party alliance partners would ruin its

further to ensure security of citizens

and tackle secret killings," she said at

the programme organised to protest a

professor Anwar Hossain said, "I request

the prime minister to restrain her deputy.

He is making confusing comments,

which may jeopardise the unity of the

few occasions since its birth in 1972,

now has three factions led by Inu,

Sharif and Rob. The two factions led by

Sharif and Inu are components of the

According to AL sources, several

veteran AL leaders talked to Ashraf about

his comments on the JSD before the

meeting of AL's parliamentary board at

Ashraf, who was present there, told

Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban last night.

The JSD, which saw splits on quite a

alliance at this critical point."

ruling 14-party combine.

JSD leader and Dhaka University

He added that the AL included the

Inu also urged his party leaders and

At another programme in front of

"This is not the time for history

against any of their alliance partners.

for Jasad [JSD] leaders, " they said.

Bangabandhu was assassinated under

the leadership of Khandaker Mostaque

Ambia and Nazmul Haque Prodhan

termed Ashraf's comment unexpected.

body at Road 32 in Dhanmondi.

other AL leaders.

president said.

one's provocation.

death threat to Inu.

and post-1975 situations.

them he didn't say anything wrong, and Rob, also founding general secretary of that he just pointed out historical facts. the erstwhile undivided JSD, alleged that However, there was no discussion the four national leaders were assassinated on instructions from AL leaders.

> night, 14-party spokesperson Mohammed Nasim said Ashraf's comments would not affect the alliance since it is united and would remain so in the future.

> had not made such a statement," said Nasim, also the health minister.

electoral alliance, but also an ideological Ahmed and patronisation of some one. Talking to The Daily Star, four senior

AL leaders said they had no idea why Ashraf had made such a statement.

kind of person who would say something like this by accident, and that there must be a reason behind it. At a programme in the capital, AL

Presidium Member Obaidul Quader said that Ashraf's comment on the JSD was his personal opinion. Ashraf's statement didn't reflect the

bridges minister.

as she brought the JSD to the House and made its leader a minister. Pointing to Ashraf's comment that the AL may have to repent for inducting a JSD member into the cabinet, Firoz

"The prime minister can stomach everything... even poison... Jasad [JSD] is now in parliament. It seems to me that in the future, she [Hasina] may bring to parliament those now engaged in secret killings," the JP lawmaker said in the House speaking on a point of

fought together in the Liberation War. Suddenly, he [Inu] took up arms against us after the independence," he said, claiming the JSD had killed 20 lakh people after the country's independence.

ing Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Bahauddin Nasim slated the JSD, and accused the party of creating grounds for Bangabandhu's assassination in 1975.

Security to top agenda

outright rejected the presence of Islamic State (IS) here. It said some home-grown criminals

were behind the attacks and that activities of criminals and militants were now under control. Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque

will lead the Bangladeshi delegation at the dialogue while the US side is likely to be headed by Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas A Shannon. US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Desai Biswal and other senior officials will also be present.

Meanwhile, US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Bernicat had a lengthy meeting yesterday with Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque. They discussed details of the Dhaka-Washington talk, according to diplomatic sources.

The partnership dialogue will feature three components -- security, trade and investment and development cooperation.

Security will top the agenda. The two sides will also discuss issues like development and governance, trade and investment, labour rights, regional connectivity, climate change, food security etc.

Besides, the decisions and proposals made during last month's Dhaka visit of several US delegations will come under discussion at the dialogue, diplomatic sources said.

Senior officials from different ministries, including foreign, home, commerce, finance, defence, and food and disaster management will participate in the discussions on June 23. The meeting of the heads of the delegations will be held the next day. Following the gruesome killing of

USAID official Xulhaz Mannnan, the US sent several teams to discuss security issues with the government. The teams were headed by Nisha Desai Biswal, US Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Gregory B Starrr and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs William E Toddecent. They met government high-ups and

top officials of law enforcement agencies. During the meetings, the US side

called for full-proof security of the US Embassy in Dhaka and its staff, and offered help to fight terrorism and violent extremism. About the security measures taken

by the government so far, US Embassy spokesperson Nancy VanHorn said the

embassy was relying on the robust and responsive protection measures by local law enforcement agencies. "The Bangladeshi police provide outstanding and professional protec-

tion to our diplomats and facilities,"

she said.

on the issue after Sheikh Hasina joined the meeting. In an interview with BBC Bangla last

"It would have been better if Ashraf Responding to a query, he said the

alliance with the JSD is not only an

But all of them said Ashraf is not the

views of the AL or the government, added Quader, also road transport and

Joining the debate, Kazi Firoz Rashid, lawmaker from the main opposition Jatiya Party, said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina may even bring secret killers to parliament someday",

said the AL leader had said the right "Let's fortify the unity of the alliance thing.

"We were in Chhatra League. We had

Last year, several AL leaders, includ-

Apart from that, the embassy relies

on private Bangladeshi security companies for secondary protection like other diplomatic missions and thousands of other establishments in Dhaka.

The Bangladeshi personnel employed by these companies are unarmed in compliance with local law. The US Embassy complies fully with Bangladesh's law while taking security measures, Nancy added.

Three killed in Myanmar chopper crash

Three Myanmar army officers were killed when their helicopter crashed into a hillside and burst into flames in the country's central region yesterday, the military said in a statement. The MI2 helicopter went down mid-morning after

it hit poor weather in south central Bago, according to the statement released by the office of the army's It was flying south from Meiktila to an air base

near Yangon, the former capital and largest city. *All three crew members... who were on board died on the spot," the statement said.

"Authorities plan to investigate the cause of helicopter crash," it added. A senior military officer from the army chief's

office confirmed the accident but did not provide any further details Myanmar has a busy aviation sector, partly to compensate for the country's poor road and rail

In February, all five crew died when a Myanmar air force plane crashed in the capital Naypyidaw soon

Last year an Air Bagan ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop carrying 49 passengers skidded off the runway after landing during heavy rain at Yangon International Airport.

FROM PAGE 2 The BNP chief also alleged that the 60BC computer

Extortion

government had turned the entire country into a jail and was harassing people in the holy month of Ramadan. KHALEDA LAMBASTS JSD Hinting at Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal,

Khaleda said the real killers were with the Awami League. "There are some people with the Awami League who are very experi-

enced in killing and making people disappear," she claimed. "The country is now in a very bad shape as Hasina is giving importance

to those who had killed and had made many Awami League leaders and activists disappear after the country's Liberation War. "They used to make indecent remarks about the Awami League

leader [Bangabandhu]. But, forgetting this, Hasina is revaluating these killers, ignoring her own party men. That's why the country's condition is so bad."

She called upon the country's people to get united to restore democracy in the country.

Blatant abuse

FROM PAGE 1 Sohanur Rahman in Rajshahi during

the ongoing special drive against militants. All the youths were innocent in the

eyes of law prior to their arrests. Even the policemen who picked them up admitted that none of them were facing any specific cases. They were detained on suspicion. Cops arrested them in exercise of their discretionary powers of section 54 of Code of Criminal Procedure. This newspaper ran a report yesterday about the ordeal they faced following arrests. Like Milon and Sekandar, there are

many more who have been victim of the ongoing special drive. Many incidents remain unreported by media. Another youth Zahidul Islam in

Kustia had to experience brutal use of

police powers as he was picked up on suspicion of having engaged in antigovernment activities. This shocked Zahid's father as he and all his family members are diehard supporters of the ruling Awami League. [Read the details in our today's report about it.] Why police are so enthusiastic about arresting people facing no

criminal charges? It is for money? Picking up people on suspicion has long been a means for policemen to make money. It's one of the major sources of corruption. This practice has been named "arrest trade". This is allegedly happening again

in the ongoing special drive. The strategy is -- pay money to buy freedom or face cases for serious crimes.

Milon of Natore was released only after his uncle gave a police official Tk 5,500. His uncle agreed to pay the money as the cop threatened to implicate Milon in a motorcycle theft case. Zahid's father alleged he had to bribe cops Tk 10,000 to ensure that

All these incidents show how some policemen were ignoring the SC's latest verdict and paying no heed to people's fundamental rights.

his son was not framed.

Police said they arrested around 12,000 people in the last four days. The police chief claimed that no innocent people were picked up. But the reality is that many people facing no criminal charges have been arrested.

If the drive goes on, the number of arrestees would surpass all the previous figures.

According to media reports, around 12,000 people were detained in June 2008 and carted off to prison in the first eight days of a special drive during the tenure of the caretaker govern-Over 15,000 people were rounded

up in an eight-day dragnet ahead of the April 30, 2004 deadline set by then opposition AL to topple the BNP government. On both occasions, a large number

of political activists were put behind

bars in connection with cases filed by opponents with political motives. In the ongoing drives, many grassroots BNP leaders and activists have been arrested. It's true that they are

facing cases, but most of them have been accused of street violence during anti-government agitations. Assuming office in January 2009, the previous AL-led government withdrew more than 7,000 cases filed

against its leaders and activists during the tenures of the past BNP and caretaker governments. Most of the cases were filed for street violence during anti-government agitations. The BNP did the same thing in

2001. The BNP-led government withdrew around 6,000 cases. And if the party returns to power, it is most likely to withdraw all the cases filed in last few years against its leaders and workers. The records of filing and withdraw-

ing cases against political opponents say the main problem lies in our conflicting political culture and tendency to strip away rule of law by the influential people. In such a political culture, the country's apex court's verdict is not honoured properly. Now, the crucial question is: Can

only a record number of arrests improve law and order and ensure rule of law? Or will this cause harass ment to many common people and allow a lot of cops to make money ahead of the Eid?

FROM PAGE 16 astrophysics department, told a confer-

ence in Athens: "We are not quite sure

how to interpret [the inscriptions], but they could hark back to suggestions that the colour of an eclipse was some sort of omen or signal. "Certain colours might be better for what's coming than other colours. This is the first instance we

have in the mechanism of any real mention of astrology rather than astronomy." The Antikythera Mechanism is a complex clockwork mechanism consisting of over 30 meshing bronze

gears, designed by Greek scientists sometime between 150 and 100BC. Before the discovery of the device, researchers thought such technology had not existed for well over 1,000

years after. All known fragments of the Antikythera Mechanism are currently held for research at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.

Transit fee

FROM PAGE 1

today.

Highways Department and the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). The committee made the report for

the Bangladesh government, which India had opposed as they thought the recommended fee was too high for narrow roads. them.

On the benefit-sharing issue, the secretary said he did not know about it. "There is a technical committee that will decide on the issue." The Daily Star also spoke with a

senior customs official of the NBR to get a better understanding of the rationale behind the agreed transit fee. "Customs has fixed the price as a

rule of thumb. It is not based on exact analysis and measurement," said the official requesting not to be named. Amid this situation, the shipment of the first consignment of transit

Ashuganj is being executed at a charge of Tk 192 per tonne. The consignment, which comprises of 1,000 tonnes of corrugated iron sheets, is likely to reach Ashuganj by

cargo from Kolkata to Agartala via

An Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade exists between India and Bangladesh since 1972. Under the deal, inland vessels of

one country can transit through the specified routes of the other coun-The deal, which is renewed from time to time, was amended several

times to include new routes and In 2010, India included Ashuganj as a port of call for transhipment through road networks. More importantly for India, this allowed it to operate transit

without having to go for a separate

road transit protocol. Before this new arrangement kicked in, India was allowed to transship goods on waterways and for that, it gave Bangladesh Tk 10 crore annually, with no additional transshipment or transit fee.

Now that the facility has been extended to roads and railway, the question of fee has come to the surface. Accordingly, the committee submit-

ted its comprehensive report to the government in April 2011. It proposed Tk 1,058 per tonne as transshipment and transit fee. The committee recommended that

the country will have to improve

services, administration, human resources, customs, infrastructure, ports, railways, waterways and roads to provide the services to India. "We analysed the issue comprehensively, from investment to traffic movement and administrative cost and accordingly proposed the fee,"

director of the Centre for Policy

committee. The sharing of benefits that India will get by using Bangladesh territories was an important consideration in setting the fee, he said, adding that India will be able to save time and costs for fuel and transportation to ferry the goods from mainland India to

its north-eastern parts. The only land route access to these

states from within India is through Assam and West Bengal by Siliguri or the Chicken's Neck corridor. The lengthy route from Assam passes through hilly terrain with steep and

India would be able to save \$210 per truck, thanks to the shortening of distance by 600 km, according to the core committee report.

After giving transit fee, bridge tolls and other charges, the potential gain for India would be at least \$100, equivalent to nearly Tk 8,000.

The distance between Kolkata and

Agartala is about 1,650 km through India, which comes down to 515 km if transportation is through Bangladesh.

So, India is saving over a thousand kilometre distance through Bangladesh and over \$200 per trip. Similarly, the road distance

halved when using the Bangladesh territory. "I don't know on what basis the fee has been fixed. Who will invest to

ing of rivers?" said Rahman.

different too, he said. Like other countries, Bangladesh should also incorporate congestion,

Documents show the core committee had proposed road usage charge of Tk 318.3 for every 100km for heavy trucks and Tk 215.9 for buses. But Bangladesh settled on only Tk 52 for use of its roads.

on after 2 to 3 years based on experi-

Bangladesh has a chance of earning

"If India transits one-third of the goods it carries through the chicken neck, Bangladesh will be able to earn

tonnes of goods through its chicken neck corridor to its northeastern states. "We are talking about Tk 192 transit fees only. But there are many more charges, which India has to pay

to avail the facility," said Hamid, said Mustafizur Rahman, executive adding that there will be berthing and unberthing charges, unloading charge, port occupancy charge, load-Dialogue and a member of the core ing and unloading of container charges and so on.

He, however, said private players, particularly vessel owners, will earn a lion's share of the Tk 900 crore estimated income per year from transit

Fatwa against secret killings

FROM PAGE 16 murders. But the police and the government say they have no presence in the country.

The fatwa announcement came as police said they had detained 3,115 people on the fourth day of a nationwide anti-militant drive aimed at stopping the killings, taking the total number to 11,307.

Bangladeshi authorities had faced criticism for failing to tackle the violence, but Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed at the weekend to catch "each and every killer". She has accused the main opposi-

Jamaat-e-Islami, of orchestrating the killings to destabilise the country. 'ACTS OF TERRORISM' However, the BNP says 2,100 of its activists have been arrested and accuses the government of using the crackdown

tion Bangladesh Nationalist Party

(BNP) and its Islamist party ally,

to suppress political dissent. Most of those arrested are wanted for criminal offences unconnected with militancy. Deputy inspector general of

Bangladesh police A K M Shahidur Rahman told AFP just 145 of those arrested were members of Islamist militant groups. Police said they had detained two local leaders of the Ansarullah Bangla

Team (ABT) on the outskirts of the capital with a meat cleaver and some Jihadi books in their possession. Police have blamed the ABT and another homegrown militant group, Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh

(JMB), for most of the murders. Many of the ABT's leaders are highly educated and the group has a reputation for sophistication.

recent days.

terror police officer.

The crackdown comes after five suspected Islamist militants were shot

profile operations against the JMB, scores of whose members were among those arrested in the latest sweep.

that tried to defend the killings. "The fatwa clearly says these killings

FROM PAGE 1

materials, the building also had structural flaws, according to the case statement.

of CID, submitted two charge sheets -one for killing and another for violating building code -- before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Dhaka. According to the law, government's

offence. The court could not take cognisance of the charges against the three accused as the labour ministry refused to give

the charge sheet of the murder case. On December 22 last year, another Dhaka court used its inherent power to include the three labour ministry officials in the charge sheet of the

They are: Deputy Chief Inspector (Mills & Factories) Jamsedur Rahman, and inspectors (Engineering) Yusuf Ali and Shahidul Islam

It took the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) 25 months to submit the charge sheet in the case. The delay was caused by the government's alleged dillydallying in giving permission to implicate its officials and

Meantime, another Dhaka court fixed July 18 for hearing on charge framing against Rana and 40 others in

dead in gunbattles with police in number of witnesses. It is thought to have been triggered by the murder this month of Mahmuda Begum, wife of a top anticonnection with the murder case.

between Kolkata to Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, is 734 km, which is

develop the infrastructure and dredg-

If India invests to develop infrastructure, the fee would be different and if Bangladesh does, it will be

road usage and environmental degradation charges into the fee, he said.

"Tk 10 per tonne for BIWTA sounds

very cheap," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research He, however, suggested Bangladesh to review the charges it has been agreed

huge foreign currency by giving services to Indian transit cargos, said Sk Mahfuz Hamid, managing director of Gulf Orient Seaways that transports goods from India on river routes.

over Tk 900 crore per year." Presently, India sends 15 lakh

and transshipment to India.

The officer had led several high-

Masuod said the police crackdown was important, but the clerics' fatwa would discredit any Islamist groups

are not a just part of Jihad, but mere acts of terrorism," he said.

Rana Plaza

On June 1 last year, Bijoy Krishna Kar, assistant superintendent of police

prior approval is required to charge a government official with criminal

permission to include the officials in

recording of statements of a large