

College boy shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A college boy was shot dead at Maluhar village in Nalchity upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Sajol, 20, son of Rafiqul Islam Hawlader of Pashchim Kamdepur village, and a first year honours student of BM College in Barisal.

Family members alleged that the men of Kabir Hossain, chairman of Mollarhat Union Parishad, killed Sajol as he did not support an UP member chosen by the chairman during the last UP election.

Claiming Sajol his supporter, the UP chairman refuted the allegation.

The body was sent to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said AKM Sultan Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Nalchity Police Station.

'Extremists not welcome in Hatiya'

ANDREW EAGLE

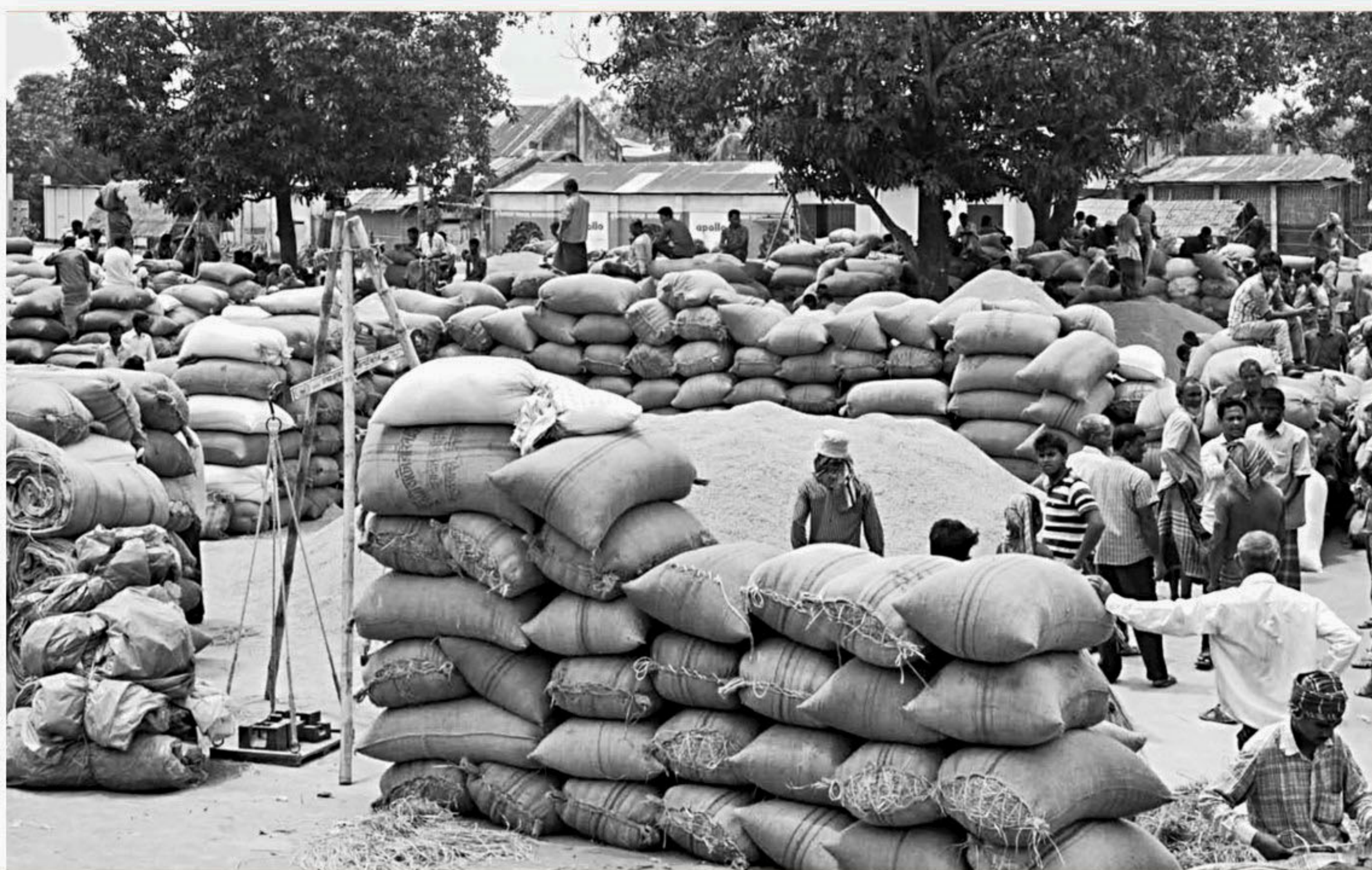
At an iftar event held at Sagoria High School in Burir Char Union of Noakhali's Hatiya Island last Saturday, popular ex-MP Mohammed Ali

addressed an audience of 3,000 locals with rousing words of encouragement for the islanders to stand united against extremism.

"Hatiya's people will never minimise with any fundamentalist in any way," he said. "Where ever we find extremism we will destroy it. We must stand together to ensure victory in our fight to end their harmful activities."

Having read the Quran translation in Bangla several times, Ali observed, there was no way to argue that Islam can support the killing of innocent people. "Foreigners will come here. They help us. They bring skills and they are good for our country," Mohammed Ali continued.

The iftar party was organised by the Hatiya Degree College committee.



A paddy market in Birganj upazila under Dinajpur district. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Rice prices shoot up as traders, middlemen take the helm

Kongkon Karmaker, Dinajpur

In a development like a mockery to farmers, paddy prices in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Joypurhat and Naogaon districts saw rapid rise when there was hardly any saleable paddy left with the growers.

During a visit to local paddy markets in Dinajpur, the correspondent found that a maund (40 kg) of paddy is selling for Tk 650 to 750, whereas farmers had to sell it for Tk 400 to 500 only a couple of weeks ago.

In Birganj upazila of the district, a 75-kg bag of BR-28 paddy now sells at Tk 1450 while the same of other varieties like hybrid paddy is sold for Tk 1250 to 1300.

"It is strange that the paddy prices see rise when the growers have sold off their produce. Farmers are held hostage by traders and middlemen during the harvesting season every year," said Azizul Islam, a farmer of Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

"Market prices fall when farmers want to sell paddy after harvest. It's a mechanism of middlemen and influential

Growers had to sell it for low prices after harvest as govt procurement drive started late

traders," said Rafiqul Islam, a farmer of Bhandara village in Biral upazila of Dinajpur.

Many farmers even failed to recover what they had invested for producing paddy, he said.

At least 4.38 lakh and 651 hectares of land was brought under Irri-Boro farming under Dinajpur, Joypurhat and Naogaon districts and total paddy production would be 26,33,766 tonnes this year, said officials concerned of the Department of Agriculture Extension.

Like in many other places, farmers of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Naogaon, Joypurhat and Thakurgaon staged demonstrations spreading paddy on highways in protest against the mysterious price fall of their produced paddy in May.

"Our demonstration demanding proper price of our paddy brought no results. Farmers had to sell their produced paddy early to repay their loan that they had taken to cover the cultivation cost," said Afaz Ali of Naogaon Sadar upazila.

The government should take steps to ensure fair prices of paddy for the farmers before the harvesting season, he said.

Many farmers blamed the food officials for delay in starting the government's procurement drive.

As per the government's announcement, the procurement drive was to start from May 5 but in Thakurgaon district the drive began on May 29.

This year the government fixed Tk 23 for a kg of paddy under the procurement drive.

According to the food control

department of Dinajpur, they have already procured nearly 32,000 tonnes of paddy although the target was 26,000 tonnes this season.

"Despite reaching their target, we are continuing the paddy procurement drive as per government direction," said Md Abdul Kader, Food Control Officer of Dinajpur.

Meanwhile, there are allegations that farmers of Azimpur union of Biral upazila of Dinajpur got chance to supply their paddy to government warehouse despite having cards, said Nazibur Rahman, a farmer of Azimpur village of the union.

Contacted, Abdul Kader said he will see the matter.

Meanwhile, Rangpur, Joypurhat and Naogaon districts are still far behind in achieving their paddy procurement drive target.

Paddy procurement target was 19,816 tonnes in Rangpur, 26,545 tonnes in Naogaon, and 12,433 tonnes in Joypurhat, but the amounts of procurement so far is 10,352 tonnes, 18,333 tonnes, and 9,131 tonnes of paddy respectively, said sources of district food

Grabbing of cane farmland protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of workers of Rangpur Sugar Mills in Gaibandha staged a protest rally in front of the mill's gate yesterday against illegal grabbers, who occupied land belonging to Shahebganj cane farm saying that the land was their ancestral property.

At the rally organised by Rangpur Chinikal Sramik-Karmochari Union, the speakers said some vested quarters helped local landless people including aborigines to occupy the mill's land. Hundreds of people started capturing government properties and erecting houses from Friday afternoon in the name of land recovery committee.

The speakers demanded immediate removal of the houses erected on the land of sugar mills.

Around five years ago, the mill authorities declared lay-off and leased portions of farm land to local influential people. On restoration of production in the sugar mill around two years ago, the authorities started cane cultivation on the farm land cancelling all the leases. That angered the lease holders and they started agitation, the speakers said.

They said they will launch a tougher movement if the administration does not take the land back from the grabbers.

At 3:00pm the agitators brought out a procession that paraded the main roads and later besieged the deputy commissioner's (DC) residence. The leaders handed over a memorandum to the DC's office asking for immediate eradication of the illegal grabbers from the land of the cane farm.

ROOPPUR N-PLANT, ISHWARDI EPZ Security tightened for foreigners

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The authorities have taken additional security measures for the foreigners working in Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Ishwardi upazila under the district, following the bloody militant attack targeting foreigners at a café at Gulshan in the capital on Friday.

"All the foreigners working in Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and the Ishwardi EPZ have been asked not to move alone for the sake of the security. If required, the foreigners must inform the law enforcers who will escort them to the designated place," said Pabna Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Munshi Md Moniruzzaman.

At a joint meeting presided over by Pabna Deputy Commissioner Rekha Rani Balo yesterday morning, the authorities of Rooppur Nuke Plant and EPZ were asked to ensure proper security of the foreigners, the ADC said.

Around 200 foreigners are currently living in Ishwardi upazila, 56 of them are Russians working for Rooppur Nuclear Plant, said ABM Ruhul Kuddus, in charge of the plant's site office.

"We are concerned about the security of the Russians working in the country's biggest power plant at Rooppur, especially after Friday's gory incident in Dhaka," he said.

Local administration has already taken adequate security measures for the foreigners, he added.

Additional forces have been deployed at the Rooppur Nuclear Plant's site office, project site and residential areas, said Biman Kumar Das, OC of Ishwardi Police Station.

Ishwardi EPZ has also been brought under added security measures.

All the foreigners have been given security at the office and residences and they have been asked to take help of law enforcers during visit to other places.

Rain damages fertiliser under open sky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Heavy rainfall damaged over 2000 sacks of urea fertiliser as they were kept under the open sky due to lack of accommodation at the godown of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

At present, 22,000 tonnes of fertiliser are stocked at Shibganj Buffer Stock while it has the capacity to keep only 7,500 tonnes, said Asaduzzaman Khan, officer-in-charge of the BCIC warehouse.

Shortage of space at the godown compelled us to pile up a large amount of fertiliser under the open sky, making it vulnerable to damage by rain, the OC

said, adding that it is reserved for the next aman season, and will be distributed among at least 103 dealers of ten upazilas within this month.

At present 15,000 tonnes of fertiliser are stored inside the warehouse while seven thousand tonnes were kept under the open sky, covering polythene, he said.

At least 2/3 thousand sacks of fertiliser were damaged due to heavy rain that continued for two days since June 24, said labourers of the warehouse.

Asaduzzaman Khan, however, said over 4000 sacks got wet.

Replying to a query, he said the damage is minimum, considering the huge amount.

Security tightened

FROM PAGE 16 adding, they suspect that Friday's gunmen were members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

He said they had been looking for those JMB members.

The government has beefed up the security so that incidents like Friday's attack are not repeated.

As part of the security measures, police have increased their patrols and surveillance at their check posts in different areas of the city, including those having shopping malls and bus stations.

Instructed by government high-ups, law enforcers yesterday held a series of meetings at the police headquarters and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) headquarters.

The meetings reviewed security arrangements across the country in wake of the attack on Friday.

At the meetings, top police officials decided to increase security and intelligence activities to prevent militant attacks.

Chaired by IGP Shahidul Hoque, a meeting at the police headquarters elaborately discussed the security system in the diplomatic zones and decided to increase both "visible and invisible" security arrangements there.

The move has been taken so that foreigners feel safe and secure.

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Miah, Rapid Action Battalion Director General Benazir Ahmed, chiefs of the Detective Branch of police and the Special Branch, among others, were present.

The DMP at another meeting at its headquarters reviewed different aspects of the Gulshan attack and security measures in the area.

"We have held a series of meetings to review and

update our security arrangements. We have discussed how to provide more security to the people, especially to the foreigners," DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Miah told The Daily Star.

Terming Friday's incident an "attack on the nation", he said they were doing their best to ensure everybody's security.

Biplob Kumar Sarker, deputy commissioner of the DMP (Tejgaon Zone), who was present at both the meetings, said top officials asked them to enhance surveillance at all security check posts in the capital, including in the diplomatic zone.

Law enforcers have also been asked to increase intelligence gathering to avert terror attacks in future.

Meanwhile, a team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday visited the Gulshan restaurant and collected

evidence from the spot, said Inspector Prashanto Debnath of the crime scene unit of the CID.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "Our top priority is to ensure people's security. The government is working to this end sincerely."

About boosting confidence among foreigners, she said, "We can't deny the fact that a heinous incident has occurred, but we are not sitting idle. We will try to ensure more security to the people as well as the foreigners," she said.

The minister said, "Our effort will continue to curb terrorism as we have zero tolerance against it. We believe by the grace of Allah, we will be able to contain radicalism in the country though we will have difficulties in doing so."

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed at a programme in Bhola warned terrorists, saying none of

them would be spared.

People have to remain alert against all terror activities and form anti-terrorism committees in every village to solve the problem, he added.

14-PARTY PROGRAMME

The Awami League-led 14-Party alliance yesterday said it would hold a protest rally at the Central Shaheed Minar on July 11, and seven-day protest rallies in all divisional headquarters from July 24 to protest the Gulshan attack.

"It will also form anti-terrorism committees at unions, city corporations, upazilas and districts across the country," 14-party spokesman and AL Presidium Member Mohammed Nasim told reporters after a meeting of the alliance.

He claimed that local agents were involved in the attack and they were all trained cadres of Shibir, pro-Jamaat-e-Islami body.



PHOTO: STAR

Two labourers remove a sack of wet urea fertiliser after heavy rain damaged over 2000 sacks of urea fertiliser kept under the open sky due to shortage of space at the godown of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) in Thakurgaon.

Charge sheet

FROM PAGE 16 will be placed before the court after the Eid holidays.

The accused on the charge sheet are Md Sarwar Hossain alias Sabu alias Mizan alias Driver, 33, Md Abdur Rahman alias Pintu alias Badha, 20, Shariful Islam alias Danish alias Sifat alias Jid, 28, and Mosabbir Khandakar alias Prince alias Ripon, 28.

According to Bazlur Rashid, the IO of the case, four of the seven accused JMB men have already been arrested and they are currently in custody of Dinajpur jail. The remain-

ing three accused are still on the run. The IO however did not disclose the names of the other three accused before their arrests.

The police confirmed that two of the four arrestees have made confessional statements, admitting their involvement in the gun attack on Parolary.

A total of six arrests were made in connection with the case before the seventh arrest of Mosabbir Khandakar in April this year.

Out of the seven arrestees, names of three have been dropped from the charge sheet as their involve-

ment in the crime has been not been found, the IO said. One of them is Jamaat leader Mahubur Rahman, and Shibir activists Razibur Rahman, 28, and Asaduzzaman, 28.

Father Silas of Kosba Missionary in Dinajpur filed the case accusing unidentified persons on the day of the attack. The case was transferred to the DB on November 26, 2015.

Parolary, following the attack, was taken to the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka by a helicopter for treatment. He left Bangladesh Around 10 days after making partial

recovery.

The missionary physician came to Bangladesh 30 years ago and dedicated himself in the service of the disadvantaged.

CESARE TAVELLA CASE

Meanwhile, in the murder case of another Italian national Cesare Tavella, the DB of Dhaka Metropolitan Police on June 27 submitted charge sheet to a Dhaka court against seven people including BNP leader MA Quayum, his brother Matin and five others.

Tavella, an aid worker, was killed in the capital's Gulshan Diplomatic Zone on September 28 last year.

ROKEYA UNIVERSITY Female hall named after Sheikh Hasina

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur has named an under-construction 10-storey dormitory for female students as Sheikh Hasina Hall.

The University Senate decided to name the hall after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting on Saturday.

Vice-Chancellor Dr AKM Nur-Un-Nabi chaired the first ever meeting of the Senate after its founding seven years ago.