

Haor Development Board to be set up: PM

UNB, Netrakona

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is considering establishment of Haor Development Board for socio-economic prosperity of the people living in the country's haor and char areas.

The PM revealed the government's desire when she was exchanging views with her party leaders and the government officials of Netrakona district and Atapara upazila at Teligati Union Complex Building at noon after opening the distribution of the government-sponsored agri-input assistance cards for farmers.

Under the agri-input assistance programme, the government in future will also introduce cards for farmers with which they will be able to buy

fertilisers through banks, Hasina added.

"Now the farmers are able to buy diesel taking money from the banks. We will also make arrangement so that they can deposit money in the banks for buying fertilisers. Then the farmers will be given a coupon showing which they will buy fertilisers from the dealers."

She observed that once the card and banking system for fertiliser is introduced, none would be able to deprive the farmers of getting fertilisers and the subsidy given on fertiliser will be utilised properly.

The premier also directed the officials and her party men to give their best efforts in ensuring timely supply of agricultural equipment to the farmers.

She further told the officials and

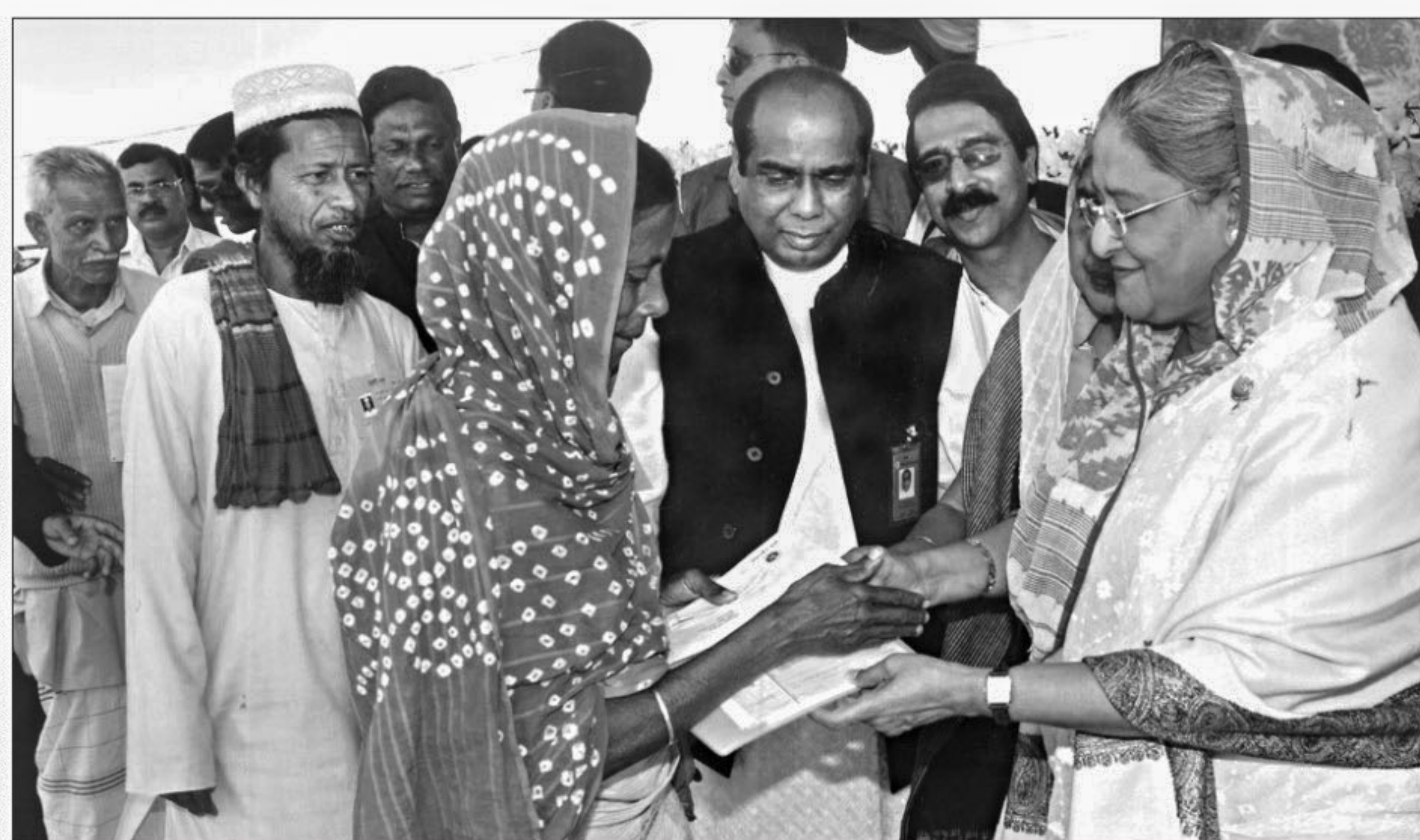
party men to come up with specific project proposals on local development works on priority basis and submit to the authorities concerned.

"Come with specific project proposals. We will take necessary steps to implement the project."

The local Awami League leaders requested the prime minister for infrastructure development of Netrakona, saying that it is one of the most neglected districts of the country.

They demanded dredging of the rivers in Netrakona, setting up a bypass road beside the town as immediate public necessity.

They alleged that doctors in charge of the upazila hospital do not attend their office regularly, causing suffering to the poor people.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes the government-sponsored agri-input assistance cards among farmers at Teligati under Atapara upazila in Netrakona yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Son returns to mother after HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Ekushey Television (ETV) Chairman Abdus Salam to hand over his son Shihab to the custody of his divorced wife Farzana Islam Shilpi.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir passed the order upon a writ petition filed by Shilpi seeking to get back her four-and-a-half-year-old son.

After the verdict, Shihab was handed over to his mother.

Since the divorce of his parents, Shihab had been in the custody of his father as per an order of a magistrate's court in Dhaka.

Salam's lawyer Advocate SM Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that his client will appeal to the Supreme Court against the HC order to get back his son.

Call to observe birth, death anniversaries of Osmani officially

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded formal observance of the birth and death anniversaries of MAG Osmani, commander-in-chief of the armed forces during the liberation war.

Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said, "The birth and death anniversaries of Osmani should be observed officially and I want to propose that the occasions be observed officially."

Osmani had all the qualities of a good leadership, he added.

The minister said this at the discussion as the chief guest at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

Bangabir Osmani Smriti Parishad organised the programme to celebrate the 26th death anniversary of the great leader of the country.

"Osmani was a genius and we are fortunate that he was born in our society," said Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, former chairman of Privatisation Commission.

He supported the proposal of naming some residential halls of different public universities, including Dhaka University, after Osmani.

Osmani was the man who first said publicly after 1975 that the name of Bangabandhu would be written in golden letters in history, which was published in almost all the dailies with great importance that time.

Syeda Masuda Khaza presided over the discussion while Maj Gen (ret) M Azizul Islam, adviser of the parishad, and Syed Abdul Mukhtar and Sheikh Akhtarul Islam also spoke.

Man killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was killed in a road accident at Birampur in the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Md Monser Ali, 50.

The accident took place when a Dinajpur-bound speeding truck crashed him under its wheels while he was walking beside the Dinajpur-Birampur highway in Bizul Bazaar area.

POWER GRID CONNECTIVITY Indian team due tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

A high-powered Indian delegation will arrive here tomorrow to begin talks on cross-border power grid connectivity.

Indian Power Secretary HS Brahma will lead the Indian delegation while Secretary to the Power Division M. Abul Kalam Azad will lead the Bangladesh team during the official talks on February 19 and 20.

The two countries formed a steering committee after signing the MoU on power exchange during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India to materialise the whole package.

The committee is co-chaired by power secretaries of the two countries, Brahma and Azad.

"This committee in its first meeting will fix all pros and cons and suggest feasibility study, if needed," Chairman of Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) SM Alamgir Kabir told BSS yesterday.

A 16 to 18-member delegation, including private sector players, will take part in the two-day meeting, he said. Local entrepreneurs will also sit with the Indian delegation on February 19.

The two sides will focus on a feasibility study on coal-fired power plant's scope at Mongla, scope of technical assistance in Bangladesh's power sector and formation of a joint committee to increase efficiency.

The PDB chairman said a technical committee would also arrive here on February 18 to chalk out the plan on grid connectivity issue.

A separate joint co-ordination committee, comprising top government officials of Bangladesh and India, has also been formed to fix up the modules of the whole package.

According to the MoU, the exchange volume would be started from 250MW initially while it could eventually be as high as 1000MW as the project cost was estimated at around \$200 million.

The two countries are set to exchange electricity for nearly 17 hours a day.

"We will need to transform the connecting points of the two systems into high voltage DC line or (HVDC) as back-to-back link of 250MW capacity," the PDB chairman said.

Bangladesh currently faces electricity deficit of 1,500MW to 1,800MW against the de-rated capacity of 4,500MW in 43 power plants.

Criminal killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a "shootout" between his cohorts and members of Rapid Action Battalion at Muktijoddha Cooperative Market in the capital's Mirpur-13 yesterday.

Rab-4 recovered one revolver, four bullets and a Chinese axe from the spot.

Deceased Parvez, 32, also known as Behai Parvez, was a member of Ibrahim gang active in Kafrul area, police said.

An official of Rab-4 told The Daily Star that a patrol team of the elite force found a gang of seven to eight youths quarrelling inside Muktijoddha Market around 3:00am.

As the Rab members tried to enter the market, the criminals opened fire at them, prompting the elite force to retaliate that ensued a 15-minute long

gunfight. Parvez was caught in the line of fire while his cohorts managed to flee the scene, the Rab sources said.

Police reached the spot on information and took bullet injured Parvez to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on duty doctor declared him dead at around 4:15am.

Rab claimed that constable Badshah Miah of the elite force was also injured.

Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kafrul police station said Parvez was accused in several cases including murder, extortion and snatching.

Rab sources said they intensified patrolling in the area over the last few days following their intelligence report that local criminals might have locked into gunfights over establishing control on Jhut (garment factory wastage) trading.

Entries invited for Shilu Abed Craftsperson Award

METRO DESK

Entries are invited from craftspeople for Shilu Abed Master Craftsperson Lifetime Achievement Award, says a press release.

The award recognises those who have made outstanding contribution to the crafts industry. Sponsored by Rajshahi University's Chhatra Brac and collaborated by the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB), this award will be given to a craftsman selected by a distinguished jury on March 5, Shilu Abed's birthday.

A total of 40 craftspeople have received the award since 1998.

Persons interested to apply for the award can collect details from 'Probertona', 2/8 Sir Syed Road, Dhaka-1207, or 'Aranya', 60 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1000. The last date for submitting entry is February 24.

SETTLEMENT COURT High Court issues rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government to show cause within three weeks as to why it should not be directed to appoint a chairman and two members at the first settlement court in Dhaka.

The first settlement court deals with the cases involving abandoned properties.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Borhan Uddin issued the rule upon a writ petition filed by Chowdhury Habibur Rahman Siddiqui, a retired additional secretary.

The petitioner's lawyer advocate Subrata Chowdhury told the court that the first settlement court in Dhaka cannot function as the posts of the chairman and two members have been lying vacant since 2007.

Several thousands of cases have been pending with this court, he said.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tania, a five-year-old girl from Satkhira, has been suffering from blood cancer.

She is now undergoing treatment at Ward-12 at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, says a press release.

According to doctors, her treatment should continue for the next two years, which involves a huge amount of money.

But it is not possible for her father Anwar Hossain, a mason by profession, to arrange such a huge amount.

So, her family has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of the child.

Contributions can be sent to Anwar Hossain, Savings account No. 9115-1, Pubali Bank Ltd, Goran Bazar Branch, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also call her father at 01746113266 for details.

'Campus anarchy a bid to foil war crimes trial'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jamaat-Shibir men are killing people as per their plans and creating anarchy in a bid to thwart the move for trying the war criminals and banning religion-based politics, leaders of the ruling grand alliance said at a public meeting yesterday.

They said the murder of Rajshahi University's Chhatra League activist Faruk Hossain was a part of Jamaat's master plan.

The leaders argued that Jamaat-Shibir men have no right to do politics following cancellation of the fifth amendment of the constitution.

Speaking as the chief guest,

Jute and Textile Minister Abdul Latif Siddiki stressed strengthening the unity of the alliance at grassroots level in order to fight the anti-liberation forces and the Islamist militants.

The government is facing difficulty in dealing with the chaos at different parts of the country, as there are elements of Jamaat-Shibir among police and government officials.

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon blamed Jamaat chief Matiur Rahman Nizami for masterminding the RUM murder.

He said the government must try the war criminals foiling all conspiracies against it.

Lawmaker Hasanul Haque Inu said Jamaat has two faces, sometimes they kill people

themselves and sometimes they hire militants to kill others.

"They (Jamaat) fought with the countrymen openly in 1971 and they began an undeclared war in 1975. Now we have started a war to save the country's politics from those conspirators."

Lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, AL central Organising Secretary Abu Sayeed Swapan, AL leader Akhtar Kabir, Jatiya Party President, Dury Jatiya Party President, Dury Mujibul Haque Baku and Samyabadi Dal leader Lutfar Rahman also spoke.

Rajshahi mayor and city grand alliance Convener AHM Khairuzzaman Liton presided over the meeting.

Rebel faction beats up JCD leader

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and workers of a faction of Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) beat up a central leader of the organisation on the Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday.

Ainul Islam Manik, assistant religious affairs secretary of the central committee of JCD and also joint convener of its DU unit, came under attack at Hakim Chatter at noon.

The attackers also took off his clothes. With injuries in the head and hands, he was sent to the university medical centre, witnesses said. Later, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

But JCD leaders and workers, including many of the rebel faction, have strongly reacted against the incident of taking off the victim's clothes.

Such incidents cannot be accepted, they said. Leaders of new JCD central committee and their followers have been remaining outside in the wake of protests by rebel faction.

UP DELIMITATION HC rule on govt, EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government and the Election Commission to explain within a week why they should not be directed to delimit areas of the wards of union parishes across the country before elections.

The HC bench of Justice ASM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Borhan Uddin issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Mahbubur Rahman Tulu, president of Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum.

It also fixed February 23 for further hearing on the petition. Petitioner's lawyer advocate AM Amin Uddin told the court that the areas of the wards would be delimited before their elections as per the Union Parishad Act 2009.

The HC yesterday issued another rule upon the government and EC to explain within a week why they should not be directed to allow the citizens of some areas of Gulshan, Uttara and Labagh to be involved in specific wards under Dhaka City Corporation so that they can cast votes in DCC polls.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Ahsan Ullah Hasan, councillor of ward No 6 of the city.

It was stated in the writ petition that names of around 6 lakh voters of some 'mouzas' in Gulshan, Uttara and Labagh areas were not involved in the voter list of DCC.

The court fixed February 24 for further hearing on the issue.

UNREGISTERED BLOOD CENTRES HC directs govt to explain in 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain within three months as to why it has not taken any legal steps to stop operation of unregistered blood transfusion centres.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir directed the government to submit a report within three months on the list of unregistered blood transfusion centres and actions taken against those centres.

It also directed the government to ensure whether the registered blood transfusion centres are being operated following the Safe Blood Transfusion Act.

The health secretary and the director general of Directorate General of Health Services, have to reply to the rule and comply with the order.

The HC bench came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by a victim of unsafe blood transfusion Ainur Rashid and non-government organisation Ain O Salish Kendro and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust.

In the petition they contended that the petition has been filed with a plea to take legal action against the unregistered blood transfusion centres as per the Safe Blood Transfusion Act 2002.

Barrister Sara Hossain assisted by advocate Abanti Nurul appeared for the petitioners.

15 hurt in N'ganj clash

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between villagers and criminals over sand extraction at Dashdona Nayagaon village in Sonargaon upazila yesterday.

According to sources, the incident happened when a group of people hired by Siddique Molla tried to extract sand from the Meghna and people from the nearby villages intervened. The criminals assaulted the villagers with lethal weapons, leaving 15 injured.

Villagers alleged that sand grabbers are indiscriminately extracting sand from the river putting the villages on the fringe of extinction.

Nursia Kamal, upazila nirbahi officer of Sonargaon said a contract has been given for river excavation from BIWA. The authority is looking into the villagers' allegation of illegal sand extraction.

DHAKA TODAY

Convocation
The 4th Convocation of University of Asia Pacific (UAP) will be held. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises a three-day seminar titled 'The history heritage and urban issues of capital Dhaka'. Venue: Nabab Nowab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan, Dhaka University. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable
Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) organises a roundtable titled 'Bangladesh Development Forum 2010: Anticipations and achievements'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar
Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) organises a seminar on 'Anti-corruption reform efforts for women entrepreneurs'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop
Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media (BIJEM) organises a workshop titled 'Story, structure and screenwriting', which will be conducted by US filmmaker Eric J Adams. Venue: BIJEM conference room. Time: 10:30am.

Workshop
Climate Change Adaptation-64 (CCA 64) organises a workshop on the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh and the role of NGOs. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

Award giving ceremony
NewsNetwork will give away awards to the winners of an essay contest for secondary school students titled 'How to be a good citizen'. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar
Institute of Bankers, Bangladesh organises a seminar on improving the quality of IBB examination. Venue: Pubali Bank auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Symposium
Brac organises a symposium titled 'The role of women in development'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:30am.

Publication ceremony
The publication ceremony of 'Trikal-Trigun' by Language Movement veteran Col (ret) SD Ahmed will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

DR AZIZUR ABDUCTION Maulana Shakhawat on 3-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Maulana Shakhawat Hossain, Nayeb-e-Ameer of a faction of Khelafat Maslish, was arrested and remanded for a three-day yesterday in a case filed for kidnapping a physician at Mirpur in the city in September 2003.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Maulana Shakhawat and produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka yesterday with a ten-day prayer.

The court, however, placed the accused on a three-day remand for interrogation.

Homeopathic physician Azizur Rahman, who lived on Mazar Road at Mirpur, was kidnapped on September 4 in 2003. The police are yet to find any trace of Dr Azizur.

In the forwarding report, Assistant Superintendent of CID Mohammad Fazlul Kabir, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said a group of militants led by Maulana Shakhawat kidnapped Dr Azizur Rahman and killed him. They also destroyed the evidences.

Following the abduction, Dr Azizur's wife Farhana Reza Jui, went to Maulana Shakhawat to know about her husband where he (Shakhawat) told that she had come too late as her husband was earlier killed and the body was dumped after cutting it into pieces.

Later, Jui asked him to give a piece of the body for burial, but he did not pay heed to her. So, he needs to be remanded to know about the people responsible for kidnapping and killing the victim, the IO said.

Earlier Harkatul Jihad (Huji) Chief Mufti Abdul Hannan was shown arrested in the case and remanded for several times.

After Dr Azizur was abducted, his wife Jui filed a case against five people without mentioning names for kidnapping.

The first IO CID Inspector Mohammad Wares submitted a final report (FRT) on May 12 in 2007 saying that the charges brought against the five were not proved.

Later, Jui submitted a no confidence petition against the final report on September 30 the same year. The court rejected the petition as it was filed after the acceptance of the final report.

The Prothom Alo published a report on May 13 in 2008 giving details about Dr Azizur's abduction. Following the report, Jui submitted a petition to the home ministry on May 18 for reviving the case.

The home ministry accepted the petition and ordered the CID to reinvestigate the case.

DHAKA BAR ASSOC Hasina to lay foundation of bldg today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Proceedings of the lower courts will remain suspended until 2:00pm today as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lay the foundation of a multistoried building for Dhaka Bar Association (DBA) near the Dhaka Judge Court in the old part of the city today.

DBA General Secretary Advocate Gazi Shah Alam said the chief justice announced the suspension of the court proceedings following an application.

The foundation laying ceremony will begin at 11:00am. Meanwhile, security has been tightened in the court area to avoid any untoward incidents.