

## Constable remanded over rape of 13-year-old

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Shimul Ahmed (27) a constable of Armed Police Battalion (APBN), on a one-day remand in a case filed against him on charge of raping a 13-year-old girl in Dhaka's Motijheel area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim passed the order after Sujon Kumer Roy, sub-inspector of Motijheel Police Station and also the case's investigation officer, produced him before it with a three-day remand prayer.

In the remand prayer, the IO said the accused entered the house of the girl at around 9:30am of December 26 as her parents were out and raped her.

He needs to be remanded to gather more information about the incident, the IO added.

Claiming himself innocent, Shimul told the court he was framed in the case.

Upon hearing, the magistrate placed him on the remand.

Shimul was arrested on Monday after the victim's father filed a case against him with Motijheel Police Station.

The victim was admitted to One-Stop Crisis Centre of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.



It's that time of the year. As winter slowly settles in, it marks the time when Chattogram's Laskar Dighi becomes a temporary abode for numerous migrant birds. For locals, this is indeed the season to be merry, as they wake up and enter the night surrounded by the pleasant tweets of these visiting birds. The amicable avians spend a good couple of months at the dighi, which is populated by local species for the rest of the year. This photo was taken from Raozan upazila's Kadalpur village.

## 3 killed, 4 hurt in Dinajpur road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three people were killed and four were injured in separate road accidents in Ghoraghat and Parbatipur upazilas of Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased are Akhter Hossain (38), Shahjahan Ali (70) and Ashraf Ali (35).

Witnesses said a pick-up van coming from Naogaon rammed into a bicycle on Parbatipur-Fulbari road in Sherpur area of Parbatipur upazila around 12:30pm, leaving bicyclist Shahjahan dead on the spot. Besides, a pick-up van passenger, Ashraf, died on the spot and two others were injured as the vehicle turned over on the road after hitting the bicycle.

Abul Bashar, sub-inspector of Bhabanipur Police Investigation Centre, said they recovered the bodies of two people from the spot and handed over those to family for burial.

Sources at Ghoraghat Fire Service Station said a Rajshahi-bound truck hit another truck, parked beside Dinajpur-Gobindaganj Regional Highway, in Birahampur area of Ghoraghat, leaving truck driver Akhter dead and two people, including the truck helper, injured.

On information, a police team and fire service members recovered the body.

## 'Place bill on EC formation in next JS session'

Workers Party calls upon president at dialogue

RASHIDUL HASAN

Rejecting the government's argument that there is not enough time to enact a law on forming the next Election Commission, Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) yesterday said the caretaker government bill was passed in parliament within one night in 1996.

While holding dialogue with President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban on the matter, the party called upon the president to instruct the government to place a bill on EC's formation in the next session of parliament in January.

"You [Abdul Hamid] will address the parliament in January, which will be the first session of next year. In the speech, you assure the nation that the law will be enacted in that session," Rashed Khan Menon, president of WPB, which is a part of the ruling-Awami League alliance, told reporters after the dialogue.

Pointing to Law Minister Anisul Huq's argument that the law cannot be enacted before expiration of the present EC on February 14 next year, Menon said it is very much possible, if the government wants it.



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## Who will be the next chief justice?



Imman Ali



Foez Siddique



Nuruzzaman



Obaidul Hassan

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Syed Mahmud Hossain, the current chief justice, will retire tomorrow, as he will turn 68 the day after that.

Article 96 (1) of the constitution states, "Subject to other provisions of this article, a judge shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-seven years."

However, it is still not clear who will be appointed as the next (23rd) chief justice of Bangladesh, and when will the president announce the appointment.

And so, there is a buzz at the Supreme Court premises over this issue.

"The honourable president will appoint the new chief justice. I don't know whom and when he [President Abdul Hamid] will appoint. He has the sole authority to do so, as per

the constitution," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star on Monday.

Meanwhile, some SC lawyers told this correspondent that the next chief justice will be appointed from the four judges of the Appellate Division, considering political issues and the next parliamentary election.

There is a precedent of appointing chief justices by superseding other judges of the apex court who were their seniors. Some of the superseded judges had resigned from office due to this, they said.

Of the sitting Appellate Division judges, Justice Muhammad Imman Ali will retire on December 31, 2022, Justice Hasan Foez Siddique on September 25, 2023, Justice Md Nuruzzaman on June 30, 2023, and Justice Obaidul Hassan on January 10, 2026, SC sources said.

The pro-BNP lawyers have demanded no supersession in appointing the new chief justice.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain was appointed as the 22nd chief justice on February 2, 2018, superseding Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, who had been discharging duties of the chief justice for four months.

The post of chief justice had remained vacant for about three months, after Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha stepped down on November 10, 2017.

Later in the day on February 2, 2018, Justice Wahhab resigned as an apex court judge.

Earlier, six other apex court judges -- Justice KM Hasan, Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain, Justice MM Ruhul Amin, Justice Md Tafazzul Islam, Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Md Muzammel Hossain -- were appointed chief justice, ignoring seniority of their colleagues.

## He was never afraid to speak up to the powerful

Speakers tell discussion on Reazuddin Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran journalist Reazuddin Ahmed upheld a time when the interests of journalism lay before political interests, reminisced speakers at a memorial discussion yesterday.

The memorial was held at Jatiya Press Club.

The session was organised by the Editors' Council and Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB). Ahmed passed away on December 25 while receiving treatment for Covid-related complications.

The Ekushey Padak-awardee was not only remembered for his material achievements, but also for his ability to lead the journalist community in unity. "We have lost a guardian of the community," said senior journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul.

He said during today's trying times, there are more leaders who feed off of strife than people willing to come to an understanding.

Bulbul explained how Ahmed was a staunch supporter of inclusive democracy and had the courage to speak up to the most powerful in state and society.

Reazuddin Ahmed's son Mashrur Reaz spoke about how his father had retired from his role of leading the management of a media organisation only to launch a newspaper two years later.

"He had retired saying he was ageing, which was making his job difficult. But

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Attendees at the memorial observed a minute's silence in honour of their beloved colleague Reazuddin Ahmed.

PHOTO: STAR

## AIRFARE FOR EXPATS Govt, Biman, Baira served legal notice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on the authorities concerned for taking proper steps to bring air-ticket fares for Bangladeshi expatriates to a reasonable price.

Mohammad Shishir Manir sent the legal notice on behalf of eight Bangladeshi expatriate labourers to the officials concerned of government, Balaka Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited and Bangladesh Association of Recruiting Agency (BAIRA).

In the legal notice, the lawyer asked the officials to explain in seven days why appropriate action should not be taken against the persons and organisations involved in the irregularities, corruption and unusual air-ticket fares.

If the respondents do not respond to the legal notice in seven days, a case will be moved before the High Court for necessary directives, Shishir Manir said in the legal notice.



As the year nears its end, all educational institutions around the country are gearing up for distributing free textbooks among students, traditionally given out every year on January 1. In Dhaka, freshly printed books are being circulated to different schools from Mohammadpur Govt Primary School's main campus under the supervision of teachers. This photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## 2 Rab members hurt in clash with 'drug peddlers' in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least two Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members and several locals were injured in a clash with suspected drug peddlers during an anti-narcotics drive in Baromasia Tea Garden, under Chattogram's Fatikhkhari upazila, on Monday night.

Two Rab vehicles were also vandalised during the clash, which occurred around 9:00pm.

The force had to open fire to bring the situation under control, said Rab officials.

The injured are Rab-7 media officer Flight Lt Niaz Uddin Chapal and deputy assistant director Samad, among others.

Of the injured, Chapal was shifted to Dhaka CMH, Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col MA Yousuf told The Daily Star.

Rab claimed that a group of drug peddlers used to produce alcohol in the guise of tea garden workers. The racket produced huge amounts of liquor to sell on December 31, ahead of thirty-first night celebrations.

"Based on a tip-off, Rab went to Baromasia Tea Garden area to destroy the liquor factory. As they were returning after destroying the liquor items, a gang of drug dealers swooped in on the law enforcers with lethal weapons, injuring two Rab men," he said. "Rab detained five persons in this connection so far. The drive is still ongoing."

Local sources and police, however, said the team of Rab went to the tea garden in plain clothes, in a microbus and private car.

Seeking anonymity, an elected public representative of Suabil union who visited the spot, said the Rab men were in plain clothes, which created confusion among tea workers. After the incident, the workers went into hiding.

Superintendent of Police of Chattogram SM Rashidul Haque said, "Till now, we haven't received any complaint from Rab."