RAPING FEMALE STUDENTS

Teacher jailed for 10 yrs in Kushtia

UNB, Kushtia

A court in Kushtia yesterday sentenced a former schoolteacher to 10 years' imprisonment in a case filed for raping his female students and recording the rape-scenes on hidden cameras.

The convict is Helal Uddin Panna alias Panna Master, an ex-teacher of Barokhada Adarsha School, and son of Taslim Uddin of Haripur village in Sadar upazila.

The court also fined Panna Tk 1.5 lakh. He will have to serve six more months in jail in case of his failure to pay the money.

However, three other accused in the case -- Engineer Alimuzzaman Tutul, Monwar Hossain Mano and Awlad Hossain Dulal -- were acquitted of the charges.

Engineer Shariful Islam Sajal, another accused in the case, died during the trial.

The verdict came barely three weeks into the verdict of ex-teacher of Viqarunnisa Noon School in Dhaka Porimal Joyodhar for violating a student of the school.

JSC, primary terminal results Dec 31

STAR REPORT

The results of Junior School Certificate and Junior Dakhil Certificate, and primary and ebtedai terminal examinations will be published on December 31. The result sheets would be handed

over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina around 10:00am on that day, said Rabindranath Roy, public relations officer of the primary and mass education ministry.

The primary terminal exams for class-V students began on November 22 across the country with more than 32 lakh students taking part.

Of the examinees, more than 29.49 lakh students of primary schools took the test, while around three lakh students of madrasas sat for the ebtedai exam.

Class-VIII terminal tests -- JSC and its madrasa equivalent JDC examinations -- began across the country on November 1. A total of 2,325,933 examinees from 28,632 educational institutions appeared at the tests.

No Militant

However, investigation officer of the case, Rezaus Sadik, said they did not find any militant links; the professor was killed following an altercation with RU assistant section officer Nasrin Akhter Reshma over some academic activities.

The charge sheet was prepared on the basis of a confessional statement by Reshma.

Of those charge-sheeted, seven are behind bars. They are Reshma, her husband and Jubo Dal activist Abdus Samad Pintu, Katakhali upazila Jubo Dal Convener Ariful Islam alias Manik, and Manik's associates Sabuj Sheikh, Sirajul Islam alias Kalu, Al Mamun, and

Ibrahim Khalil alias "Tokai" Babu. The others -- Rajshahi district Jubo Dal Convener Anwar Hossain Uzzal, Sagar, Jinnat, and Arif Hossain -- are

After her arrest, Reshma confessed in a court to her involvement in the killing, while Rapid Action Battalion, after arresting Reshma's husband Pintu and five others, claimed that the professor was killed for "misbehaving with Reshma".

However, the five denied the mur-

der allegations in court. The IO said the militant outfit claimed responsibility for the murder

to distract the law enforcers. Forge nat'l

Bangladesh Photojournalists'

addressing the council of a faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists at

Association auditorium in the capital.

Coming down heavily on the government for its stance on IS's presence and militant activities in Bangladesh, the BNP leader said, "The government is denying the existence of Islamic Sate (IS) in the country. But interestingly, four people, who had been arrested from Kishoreganj, are being tried as IS members. It's a self-

contradictory stance." Fakhrul said undemocratic and

extremist forces get a chance to operate their activities when democracy does not prevail in a country, when people cannot think and talk freely, and the media cannot write independently.

"We're again urging the government not to approach the issue [of the alleged IS's presence] lightly. It's a national problem. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Lebanon have badly been affected by this problem, and many people of these countries are now moving from one place to another as refugees."

Indian war veterans

FROM PAGE 20 capital, he said.

"Even BBC got fooled and reported that six of our battalions landed whereas there was only one, spread over a large area," he laughed, recalling that day.

But what Kapoor's talk mostly highlighted was how positively the local people responded to them.

"We were taught that the moment we'd land we were to say Joy Bangla," he said, adding how the two words worked like magic gathering hundreds of locals who helped them collect their equipment, including ammunition and parachutes.

He saluted the locals' efforts, which helped them to organise themselves quickly and carry out their attack. The most senior among the 10 war

heroes, 89-year-old Maj Gen Rajendra Nath, repeatedly mentioned how the Mukti Bahini helped them immensely. Nath was posted near the border at Krishnanagar in West Bengal. Referring to the continuous flow of refugees in India through the borders,

Nath said all India had wanted was for the refugees to return but Pakistan could not care less. He noted how India attacked Pakistan as a last resort, only after the

latter had carried out an aerial attack on West India. "It was God's kindness that a large

number of the refugees were young

people. They were full of life and they wanted to take revenge for the loss of their families, their daughters, their homes," he said, adding the Mukti Bahini had become a vital force in the

Septuagenarian commander VK Raizada was one of the navy officers who had trained the Mukti Bahini. "I was posted in Kolkata in July 1971 and became part of a special team which trained Pakistani [Bangali] sailors running away from the Navy and young boys recruited from the refugee camps to form Mukti Bahini.

"Mukti Bahini had no ships, so we acquired two pilot vessels, Padma and Palash, and turned them into gunboats by installing guns and other equipment to lay mines." He recounted how the main aim of

channel of Pakistan on River Passur at the Mongla Port. "We laid mines and made sure that

these vessels was to block the export

no foreign ships passed through," he

Then he settled on December 10, 1971, the day the Indian Air Force mistakenly bombed Padma and Palash, killing a number of freedom fighters as well as Indian navy personnel. Thanks to some life jackets they had initially acquired from a merchant ship, Raizada survived. But the memory of that day is still vivid in his mind.

Go birding in Purbachal

FROM PAGE 20

you can imagine. You feel the difference in the air quality as soon as you leave the Airport Road, heading east for Purbachal. The wide new road that takes you there is still unnamed but is popularly called "300 Feet Road".

Within a kilometre along the way the landscape changes magically. Suddenly, there are no high-rise buildings blocking the sun and soon you actually get to see the sky touch the ground at the horizon. On holidays you may come here only to take in the fresh air and enjoy the vastness of the horizon. But like us, you too will probably wish to do a little bit of nature watching. It is irresistible.

You are at Purbachal once you cross the river called Balu Nodi, meaning the sand river. Then the road winds through an enormous expanse of land to be turned into a residential area. Brand new bitumen roads radiate through the grassland on both sides. Countless concrete poles stand like match sticks all over the place. The poles will presumably support the electric lines when people begin building homes here. Now they serve as the perching posts for the eagles, buzzards and falcons. The untrodden grass fields down below are now an undisturbed feeding ground for small birds, rodents and insects.

the fields.

In the grass fields of Purbachal, the game of hide and seek continues endlessly between the aerial hunters and the clever little creatures on or near the ground. It is easy to observe here how evolution works; how it helps the hunters to hone their weapons while also strengthening the defence strategies of the hunted. Here you will also see a Kestrel apparently meditate on a pole when the sun is warming up the morning breeze. But soon you will know that the meditative look on the Kestrel was a sham when it suddenly swoops down on the ground to take some unsuspecting insect or an inexperienced munia bird in its talons.

The raptors being big and bold are easy to be spotted at Purbachal. The dainty and colorful birds could be seen in the morning hours. Farmers from nearby villages are growing vegetables over a large part of the land here. The vegetable gardens provide suitable perches for the beautiful munias, orioles, rollers, shrikes etc. Even dry grass provides a lot of insects for the larks, pipits and lapwings. The strange looking yellow-wattled lapwing is easily seen at Purbachal although it is considered a rarity everywhere else in Bangladesh.

We can confidently recommend a short walk through Purbachal on a holiday or any time before the own-These happen to be the staple for the ers begin constructing another conhungry raptors sitting on the poles or crete jumble there.

The writer is an ornithologist.

Probe allegations

FROM PAGE 20

mayoral aspirant in Sirajganj municipality delivered speeches at a Victory Day rally in the district headquarters which turned into a campaign procession for "boat", the electoral symbol of the Awami League, according to media reports.

circling endlessly in the warm air over

The whip and lawmaker of Sherpur-1 constituency, Atiur Rahman, Rajshahi-4 lawmaker Enamul Haque, and Mymensingh-9 lawmaker Anwarul Abedin Khan also sought vote for "boat" in Victory Day programmes in their areas, media reports said.

As per electoral code of conduct, ministers and MPs are not allowed to join any sort of electoral activities in this election.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of senior officials at the EC Secretariat said action should be taken against the violators, whoever they are, to ensure fair polls.

"If the minister and lawmakers go unchallenged, it would encourage other lawmakers to violate the electoral rules," said a deputy secretary of the EC Secretariat.

The EC in the last one week asked returning officers of at least 35 municipalities, including the six last night, to look into different alleged incidents of violations of electoral laws reported by the media.

The EC did not get any response from the returning officers as of yesterday, said EC's secretary Sirazul Islam. The EC on December 6 issued show-

cause notices on three AL MPs --Safiqul Islam Shimul (Natore-2), MA Malek (Dhaka-20) and Shawkat Hasnur Rahman (Barguna-2) in connection with violations of electoral code of conduct. In response, all of them apologised

and pledged not break the rules again. The EC yesterday asked police to

withdraw the officers-in-charge of Kulaura of Moulvibazar, and Kalkini of Madaripur in connection with favouring

AL-nominated mayor aspirant there. Meanwhile, ruling AL men allegedly continued to violate electoral rules in

different municipalities. An AL lawmaker of Shariatpur-2 constituency and former deputy speaker of parliament yesterday alleged that the AL rebel candidate in Naria municipality of Shariatpur was using muscle power and was continu-

ously violating the electoral code. Talking to reporters at the EC Secretary, he feared that if things went on like this, the situation would soon destabilise.

In Sreepur municipality of Gazipur, AL-nominated mayor candidate Anisur Rahman brought out a motorcade with around 50 motorbikes as part of his campaign violating the electoral law, reports our correspondent there.

Anisur Rahman could not be contacted over phone for comments.

In Ujirpur and Muladi municipalities of Barisal, BNP-nominated mayor candidates Shahidul Islam Khan and Asad Mahmud alleged that AL men had torn off their campaign posters and banners over the last two days, reports our correspondent.

Returning officer of Baraigram municipality of Natore yesterday fined AL-nominated mayor aspirant Abdul Barek Tk 10,000 for violating electoral code of conduct, reports our correspondent. As per electoral rules, a candidate is

allowed to set up one electoral camp in an area that had at least 20,000 voters. Barek had set up multiple camps. In Savar, an assistant returning

officer (ARO) had been using a car of the municipality which had been handed over to him without due procedures. The ARO had formally asked for a

car from the municipality but the request was denied. However, acting mayor of the

municipality and also a councillor candidate informally handed over a sport utility vehicle and the ARO had been using it since December 4.

A number of councillor candidates promising to continue his work for the alleged that the acting mayor gave the underprivileged children in future.

It won't affect

FROM PAGE 20 with the coalition's policy," expatriates' welfare minister Nurul Islam told reporters when asked about possible IS threats that Bangladeshi expats might face because of the

decision

He was briefing the media at Probashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital's Iskaton on the ministry's programmes on International Migrants Day today.

He said the role of Bangladesh in the coalition would be understood better after talks with Saudi Arabia.

About 40 lakh Bangladeshis are working in different countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq and Libya. Meanwhile, the Communist Party

of Bangladesh (CPB) has expressed

surprises and anguish over

Bangladesh being part of the Saudiled 34-member "Islamic Military Alliance". The government did not act wisely in making such an important decision without any discussion at any

level, not even in parliament, said CPB President Mujahidul Islam Selim and General Secretary Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed yesterday in a statement. Bangladesh has always been following the policy of non-alliance since its birth, but the sudden shift of

position is highly condemnable and cannot be accepted at all, reads the statement. There are creditable allegations against Saudi Arabia of patronising and financing IS, Al Qaeda, Taliban

and other communal, terrorist organisations, CPB said. Besides, it added it was well known that patrons like the Jamaat-e Islami of terrorist organisations were functioning with Saudi's fund and

help. The CPB urged the government to cut immediately its ties with the military alliance that had already been called into question, and launch a meaningful struggle instead against terrorism and militancy at home and abroad.

Happiness

FROM PAGE 1

school's headmistress Noorjahan Begum, among others who know him, a "change maker" in that area. She said those inspiring moves not only prevented many students from becoming dropouts but also encouraged others to do better.

20 percent and plenty of school dropouts, largely because of poverty. Kabir said at first the children who visited the library were treated with

According to locals, the area has,

approximately, a literacy rate of just

candies, a strategy he took to introduce the kids to the world of reading The practice is there even today. Moreover, school dropouts are also

taught English twice a week inside

that room. The idea first popped into his mind some six years ago when he bought a group of school dropouts, who were loitering outside his office,

some candies from a grocery store.

"Such a small gift put such a big smile on their faces...," he recalled and said he then decided to do something that would help such children in the long run.

"Happiness is one of those things that increase when you share. I am sharing mine with these children.

"Trust me, I don't spend more than 10 percent of my monthly salary to do all this things, but the happiness, love and respect I get from the people here is simply something money can't buy,

added a Joyous Kabir. It is rare that any needy student or their guardians sought financial assistance from him and returned empty-

handed, according to locals. For example, Tahmina Akter, a single mother, who had quit her studies to become a garment worker in the capital, found Kabir by her side when she was at a loss.

Her days have changed. Today, she is a student of Veterinary Science at Bangladesh Agriculture University in Mymensingh. Many such boys and girls from that

area are now studying at different public universities, including Dhaka University and Rajshahi University, and a private institution, Institute of Health Technology, in Rangpur. Talking to this correspondent,

Kabir, a former student of Jahangirnagar University's Geography department, acknowledged the support of many current and former students of his university in his mission. They came to know about the matter via Facebook. "Money has not been a problem

so far," he said, "Many, mostly from JU, are quite proactive when it's about children's education." As Kabir was saying he needed

more such volunteers in future, more good news was awaiting him. A girl of a local day labourer became 26th on the merit list of this year's

Rajshahi University admission test. "See, this girl would have to quit her study to get married had we not offered her our support and love," he

said in an emotional yet a joyful voice,

Cancer 'not just down

FROM PAGE 20

The new study, in the journal Nature, used four approaches to conclude only 10-30% of cancers were down to the way the body naturally functions or "luck".

Experts said the analysis was pretty convincing". Cancer is caused by one of the body's own stem cells going rogue and dividing out of control.

That can be caused either by intrinsic factors that are part of the innate way the body operates, such as the risk of mutations occurring every time a cell divides, or extrinsic factors such as smoking, UV radiation and many others that have not been identified.

The argument has been about the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

In January, a report in the journal Science tried to explain why some tissues were millions of times more vulnerable to developing cancer than others.

Their explanation came down to the number of times a cell divides, which is out of our control and gave rise to the 'bad luck' hypothesis.

In the latest study, a team of doctors from the Stony Brook Cancer Centre in New York approached the problem from different angles, including computer modelling, population data and genetic approaches. They said the results consistently

suggested 70-90% of the risk was due to extrinsic factors. Dr Yusuf Hannun, the director of Stony Brook, told the BBC News website: "External factors play a big role, and people cannot hide behind bad luck. "They can't smoke and say it's bad

luck if they have cancer. It is like a revolver, intrinsic risk is one bullet. "And if playing Russian roulette,

then maybe one in six will get cancer - that's the intrinsic bad luck. Now, what a smoker does is add two or three more bullets to that revolver. And now, they pull the trigger."

Dr Emma Smith, from Cancer Research UK, said: "While healthy habits like not smoking, keeping a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and cutting back on alcohol are not a guarantee against cancer, they do dramatically reduce the risk of developing the disease."

Controversy rages over

ness, moderation and coexistence decide the extent of its participation in different activities of the alliance," a statement issued by the country's foreign office said.

After Saudi Arabia on Tuesday announced that it had forged the 34nation alliance of Muslim countries, senior foreign ministry officials initially expressed surprise at Pakistan's inclusion in it, saying Riyadh had not taken Islamabad on board.

But subsequent developments revealed that Saudi Arabia had been given a secret commitment regarding joining the alliance, about which the foreign office was not aware.

There were speculations about who had given that assurance.

The Pakistan military had started in October a new phase in the bilateral defence relationship by training Saudi special forces personnel in countering terrorism. Army chief Gen Raheel Sharif visited Saudi Arabia after the special exercises for discussions on counter-terrorism efforts.

The foreign ministry statement tried to brush off the embarrassment caused to Riyadh because of the reports, which had included Pakistan in the coalition without its prior knowledge, by saying that it welcomed the formation of the counter-terrorism alliance.

Pakistan had previously been included in the Saudi-led coalition battling a rebellion in Yemen without its knowledge. It later refused to participate in operations in that con-

Malaysia, which was also named as a member, downplayed its role in the alliance.

"There is no military commitment, but it is more of an understanding that we are together in the combat against militancy," Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told Malaysian daily the Star.

In Lebanon, another listed member, the announcement caused rifts in the government, with Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam voicing his support for the coalition even as the Foreign Ministry denied the country would join.

The coalition is "a forward step in favour of all Islamic peoples against terrorism," Salam said, according to a statement released on the state-run National News Agency.

"Lebanon will remain, by its open-

principle, a model against terror, extremism and cruelty."

The foreign ministry, on the other hand, said in a statement that "what happened tampers with Lebanon's distinctive position with regard to the definition to fight terrorism and the definition adopted for terror organisations."

received any correspondence or phone call related to the subject of the formation of this alliance." The Lebanese Shiite Muslim militant group Hezbollah, which is

"The ministry has by no means

heavily supported by Iran, is embroiled in the Syrian civil war and bolstering the flagging troops of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Saudi Arabia sponsors the Sunni Muslimdominated insurgency against Assad's rule, the LA Times reports. Absent from the list of countries are Iraq and Syria -- despite the coali-

according to a comments made by Saudi Defence Minister Mohammad ibn Salman on Tuesday, at fighting terrorism in those countries. "In terms of operations in Syria and Iraq, we can't undertake these operations without coordinating

tion's operations being aimed,

with legitimacy in this place and the international community," Salman said while making the announcement of the new coalition. Iraqi lawmaker Hakem Zamili

dismissed the new alliance as "sectarian" In an interview with Lebanese flict, according to the Los Angeles broadcaster Al Mayadeen, Zamili said that Saudi Arabia, which he accused of supporting the Al Qaeda-

affiliated Nusra Front in Syria, "was not serious" in fighting terrorism. Also missing is Saudi Arabia's regional rival and Shiite powerhouse Iran, which is pitted against the

Saudis in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Then again, the Saudi government claimed the coalition partners came from "all over the Islamic world," a number of the countries do not have

Muslim majorities. For example, 85 percent of the population of Uganda is Christian and about 75 percent of Gabon is Christian. Benin's largest religion is Catholicism and the majority of the Togo population holds indigenous

UN moves to tighten

beliefs.

FROM PAGE 20

A Russian-drafted resolution on cutting off the extremists' revenue streams was adopted in February, but diplomats complain that countries have been slow to take action to choke off sources of funding.

The latest measure would require all countries to report within 120 days on steps taken to target IS financing. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

will be asked to prepare a sweeping report in 45 days on the IS threat and its revenue streams. "If we can get at ISIL's wallet and its

financial coffers in an intensified and even more aggressive way, that's going to have a material effect on their ability to prosecute war," US Ambassador Samantha Power said, using an alternative acronym for the IS group.

British finance chief George Osborne, supporting the draft resolution, "will call on the Security Council to use the UN sanctions regime to freeze the assets of traders and middle-

Treasury said.

"The UK and its international partners must act now to do more to stop the illegal funding of terrorist organisations like Daesh who want to destroy all that we stand for," Osborne

According to the London-based IHS

analysis firm, the Islamic State group is pulling in \$80 million per month, but Russian and US coalition air strikes on oil facilities are putting a strain on its finances. About half of IS revenues come from extortion and looted property, 43

percent from oil sales and the remainder from drug smuggling, electricity sales and donations, according to IHS. The UN measure will give countries "more flexibility to go after those who

are helping ISIL, whether to move funds, to store funds or to earn funds," said Adam Szubin, a senior US Treasury official. Countries will be asked to boost information-sharing and in particular

travel ban and arms ban on individuals

reach out to the private sector to enlist them in the financial war against IS. men who facilitate the illegal trade in A UN sanctions committee made oil which provides Daesh with its up of the 15 Security Council member principal source of revenue," the states can impose an assets freeze,

on the run.