



No thanks to technology

Radicalisation booms through highly secured apps, closed groups of social media networks

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Technology seems to have made jobs easy for militants and difficult for crime busters. Facebook groups, YouTube videos and two highly secured apps -- Telegram and ProtectedText -- come in handy for militant outfits to spread hate and select or train would-be radicals in Bangladesh. Law enforcers, on the other hand, find the protective nature of closed online groups and the messaging tools a major obstacle to militancy probe and counterterrorism operation. With a boom in information technology, devices like smart phones and apps, radicalisation no longer requires real-life preaching. Many turn to extremism by going

through contents available online while many become radicalised by group discussions on Facebook. Apart from social networking sites, Telegram and ProtectedText have become very popular in militant circle and radicals use the apps for making plans and issuing directives. They were used while carrying out a number of killing missions in Bangladesh. Another useful tool for militancy is YouTube, a video-sharing site where hundreds of clips on hate campaign and terror propaganda and training are available. Expressing concern, advertisers globally are asking YouTube authorities to take down the videos. Some have already pulled their ads. SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Ninety-year-old Jahiron Bewa rides her bicycle to a house call in Taluk Dulali village of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari recently. Jahiron, trained in basic healthcare in 1973, has been treating patients around the upazila every day for the last 44 years. She treats common ailments and gives free healthcare advice. PHOTO: STAR

UNSTOPPABLE

90-year-old widow pedals village to village providing healthcare

S DILIP ROY with ANDREW EAGLE
In the villages of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila the sight of a jolly, very elderly woman moving about house to house on a bicycle, from morning into the afternoon, isn't unusual. Everybody knows that nonagenarian Jahiron Bewa, who the villagers refer to as "Banglar Nani (Grandmother of Bangladesh)" keeps herself busy providing sick villagers across the upazila with healthcare advice, just as she has done for the last 44 years. "I only provide treatment for common ailments," says the widow of Sayed Ali who SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

HAVOC IN HAORS

Fish dying further down

Atomic energy team to check radioactive materials in Sunamganj

REAZ AHMAD and PINAKI ROY

A team of experts dispatched by the government reached Sunamganj yesterday to collect water samples from the haors there for lab test at the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission in order to ascertain whether there is any radioactive materials in the waters. Reports of an outcry across the border over India's exposing open pits of uranium to Ranikor River basin causing deaths of fish in Meghalaya and subse-

quent deaths of ducks, fish and other aquatic animals in Bangladesh's north-eastern haor belt prompted the government to send the 10-member team. The team was sent at a time when fisheries department yesterday gave a primary estimate of deaths of 800 metric tonnes (MT) of fish worth over Tk 25 crore in Netrakona, further down to some parts of Sunamganj's haor zone closer to India's Ranikor basin. "We are sending our experts to the haor area. They will collect samples and examine them to determine why

fish died there," Science and Technology Minister Yafes Osman told The Daily Star. India's Khasi communities living in Ranikor River basins, just across the Indo-Bangla border near Sunamganj's haor zone, raised alarm after the deaths of their river as well as fish due to what they suspect was uranium toxins from an estimated 1,500 drilling pits kept open and exposed in close vicinities. Meanwhile, a three-member team SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Fisheries department officials dumping lime water and chemicals into Chhyar Beel to lower acidity and increase oxygen in the waterbody in Netrakona's Khaliajuri upazila yesterday. The department says, over 500 tonnes of fish have died in different haors of the upazila following the recent flashfloods. PHOTO: STAR

Rain to reign for two more days

STAR REPORT

With many low-lying areas of Moulvibazar, Sherpur and Barisal districts submerged with rainwater and water from hilly areas in the upstream, the Dhaka Met Office yesterday said heavy rain might occur in many parts of the country today and tomorrow. "Due to frequent thunderstorm activities, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur at places over Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Barisal and Chittagong divisions on April 22-24. Due to very heavy rainfall, landslide may occur at places over the hilly SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

TALIBAN ATTACK ON AFGHAN MILITARY BASE

Death toll hits 140

Many soldiers hurt as terrorists posing as troops open fire on unarmed soldiers during meal

REUTERS, Mazar-i-Sharif/Kabul

At least 140 Afghan soldiers were killed by Taliban attackers apparently disguised in military uniforms, officials said yesterday, in what would be the deadliest attack ever on an Afghan military base. One official in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, where the attack occurred, said at least 140 soldiers were killed and many others wounded. Other officials said the toll was likely to be even higher. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because the government has yet to release exact casualty figures. The defence ministry said more than 100 soldiers were killed or wounded. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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