



New police unit to check cyber crime

Social media users to face stringent watch; police can detect users quickly

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Social media users may have to be more cautious about making "unlawful" public remarks and sharing contentious items as it would soon be only a matter of hours for police to trace their origins with the help of special software.

A specialised police unit, expected to start operations in a few months, will be equipped with the software named open source intelligence (OSINT) to mine any remarks or postings that are defamatory, can hurt religious sentiment and can constitute an offence under the ICT Act, police officials said.

The 505-man fully-fledged specialised unit -- Cyber Crime Investigation Bureau -- has already been approved by the home ministry while the import of the OSINT is in the pipeline, the officials added.

"The OSINT is definitely a useful software to help police find cyber offenders as it can monitor the wide cyber world in a short time," Alimuzzaman, deputy commissioner of Social Media Monitoring and Cyber Security division of the DMP, told The Daily Star on Friday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

7 killed as bus plunges into ditch

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

At least seven people were killed and 20 others injured as a bus skidded off a road and fell into a ditch following a collision with a motorcycle in Feni's Daganbhuian yesterday.

The Chandpur-bound bus from Chittagong plunged into the ditch in Amriagaon area around 6:00pm, said police, quoting witnesses.

Three people were killed on the spot. The others

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Troubled banks worry Muhith

Merger can be a remedy, he writes to BB

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Some banks are in serious trouble. A number of sponsors are bankrupting banks, while another group is out to grab power of banks. Some directors, in collaboration with a few sponsors, are busy trying to change ownerships of banks. These were among the observations reportedly made by Finance Minister AMA Muhith in a recent letter to the Bangladesh Bank governor.

It is time to merge one or two problematic banks and the Bangladesh Bank should consider this, he said in the letter.

"It is my view that time may be right to start the initial process of merging the banks," said Muhith mentioning the problems in the banking sector.

The finance minister sent the letter to the central bank on December 28 last year, an official of the finance ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BNP bid to stage protests foiled

20 hurt in police action at different places, claims party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers yesterday obstructed BNP's protest programmes at different places in the capital and elsewhere, the party claimed.

In a press release, the BNP said at least 20 leaders and activists of the party and its associate organisations were injured as police swooped on them during their protest.

The party had earlier announced yesterday's protest programmes as police did not give it permission to hold rallies in the capital marking January 5 as "democracy

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Food stock rises

Cut in subsidised rice distribution, rise in import key reasons

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government's food stock saw a rise this year compared to the same period last year. This was mainly due to a significant reduction in food distribution to the ultra-poor and a rise in rice import.

According to data from the food ministry, food stock on January 2 this year increased by 1.17 lakh tonnes and stood at 8.33 lakh tonnes, of which rice stock was 5.3 lakh tonnes.

The figure was 7.16 lakh tonnes on the same day last year.

Two consecutive floods depleted the government's rice stock to historic low of

just 1.5 lakh tonnes in the beginning of July last year.

Low production also led to an increase in rice prices in local markets and the government could not collect one fourth of its domestic procurement target of boro rice.

As a result, the government was compelled to cut public food distribution.

The data shows that 10.29 lakh tonnes of food-rice and wheat-was distributed among the poor between July 1 and December 2, 2016. But the government, under the public food distribution system (PFDS), could provide only 6.64 lakh

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

New voters to get NID cards from March

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Election Commission is set to start handing over laminated NID cards this March to those who have been included in the voter list since 2013.

"Around 50 lakh out of 1.1 crore cards have been printed so far. We hope to start the distribution in March," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

For those with NID cards, but not the smart ones, the EC plans to complete smart NID card distribution by December. It began the distribution on December 1 in 37 districts.

Brig Gen Mohammed Saidul Islam, project director of IDEA, told The Daily Star, "Smart cards are almost ready; we are waiting for finger print and IRIS machines. We will get those by this month and hopefully start delivery of the cards to [the people in] all the districts from February."

Those who have been included in the voter list since 2013 would have their smart cards later.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



The site for the 1,200 megawatt ultra-super critical coal-fired power plant in Matarbari of Cox's Bazar's Maheshkhali upazila.

Matarbari port to be turned into a deep-sea port

Nasrul Hamid says

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

The sea port being built for the Matarbari coal-fired power plant will be turned into a deep-sea port, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid has said.

He was talking to journalists after visiting the power plant site in Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar on Friday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the main construction work of the 1,200 megawatt power plant on January 25. She will also address a public rally at the project site.

Terming the under-construction port Energy-Power Deep-Sea Port, the state minister said it would be initially used for producing power and handling coal. Later, a deep-sea port would be built as an extension to it for multipurpose use.

"An area at the project site has been designated for setting up an LNG terminal and a coal terminal. Imported coal will be supplied to other coal-fired power plants across the country from this terminal."

The ultra-super critical Matarbari power plant would require around 8,000 to 10,000 tonnes of coal daily, he added.

State-owned Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCLB) is implementing the Tk 35,984 crore project in Matarbari and Dhalghata of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

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