



KMC FOCUSES ON WATER, SLUM IN LAST BUDGET BEFORE ASSEMBLY ELECTION | 4

BENGAL CHEAPER THAN TAMIL NADU, ANDHRA PRADESH IN HEALTHCARE | 5



Mobile IMEI eraser worries cops

Cheap Chinese Device Changes Identification Number, Making It Impossible To Track

Dwaipayan.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: A mobile or smartphone's 15-digit identifying number may no longer be so unique. Racketeers have got hold of a software, called Flasher, which erases the IMEI number and superimposes a new one, making it impossible to track the phone.

The device is a dream come true for terrorists and petty thieves alike—and a nightmare for law enforcement agencies. Tracking the IMEI number has turned out to be one of the most crucial crime detection tools, helping nab criminals or recover stolen phones. But it may not be foolproof for long.

What's worse, it's not all that difficult to get your hands on a flasher. The Chinese made ones cost around Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000.

Delhi and Mumbai cops already have a strategy to crack down on the racket and Kolkata Police has started keeping track of street-shop technicians.

"The Flasher is a software that connects the phone to a computer and helps the user change the IMEI number of a handset. After the IMEI number is changed, it is next to impossible to locate that phone," said an officer of the cyber cell of Lalbazar.

Joint CP (crime) Pallab Kanti Ghosh said that its use in Kolkata was still limited. "Thankfully, it is still to become a major headache and we are yet to lodge a case on this ground. But we are keeping a keen eye on the developments," said Ghosh.

The stolen mobile phone market will un-

NOT SO UNIQUE ANY MORE

How it was detected

In March, Mumbai and Delhi police made separate arrests of suspects for changing IMEI numbers and seized 412 'Flashers'. In both cases, the trail led to Fancy Market in Kolkata and Naza Market in Lucknow

How the flasher works

A Flasher is a software that changes the IMEI number. All a crook has to do is use a USB cord to link the stolen phone to a computer and run Flasher. It changes the entire settings of the phone, erases the IMEI number and



superimposes another. After that it is almost impossible to track or locate the phone. When a SIM card is inserted, the phone will send out a new IMEI number to mobile towers. From terrorists to petty mobile thieves, criminals of all kinds will pounce on such a software

How the gang operates

Getting hold of a Flasher is not that difficult. It costs just Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000

It takes only four people to make a gang — a tech-savvy guy, a black market dealer and two snatchers

The snatchers hand stolen mobiles to the tech guy, who changes the IMEI numbers and passes them on to the dealer

These mobiles are then sold as second-hand ones

dergo a transformation because of this device. "You will see stolen mobiles not being sold as spare parts but as used phones," said cyber security expert Sashi Doval.

The use of Flashers in cellphone thefts first came to light in March this year, when the Mumbai crime branch arrested three persons for allegedly changing IMEI numbers of stolen cellphones. Police recovered 16 flashers from them. Soon after this, Delhi Police recovered 406 devices and arrested three persons from Karol Bagh Gaffer Market. "It is

while questioning them that we came to know that Fancy Market in Kolkata and Naza Market at Lalbazar in Lucknow had a huge market for these phones," said S K Gautam, joint CP, Delhi police (central range).

"We got a tip-off about the unique software, Flasher, which can change the entire settings of mobile phones. The thieves would impose a 'Super IMEI' number on these stolen phones to erase the original one," said Gautam. The gang used to connect stolen mobile phones to a laptop with a jack. "After

Cops bust phone racket

Kolkata: Bidhannagar Police on Thursday busted a cellphone racket and arrested three from the Golaghat area near Kestopur. Seventy eight handsets were seized from them. Debashis Kesari, the kingpin of the gang, was waiting for a bus near Golaghat when they were picked up. Two more members, Liaqat Ali and Rony Islam, were arrested following the lead provided by Kesari. Bidhannagar Commissionerate DCDD Kankar Prasad Barui said the gang procured stolen mobile phones from across the country. Kesari was heading for Malda with sets stolen from Indore. They were planning to sell the handsets, valued at Rs 8 lakh, in Bangladesh, police said. **TNN**

changing the mobile phones to their original settings, they used to change the IMEI number. When a SIM card would be inserted, the phones would beep a new IMEI number to mobile towers making it difficult for police to track them," a senior police officer said.

Kolkata Police have devised a strategy. "We send dummy customers to cellphone repair stores, who tell technicians that they need the IMEI numbers of their cellphones changed due to technical issues. One who does not have a Flasher will say flat out that it can't be done. If a technician says it is possible to change the IMEI number, we have a suspect," said an officer at Lalbazar.

PM help sought to break Joka Metro land jinx

Krishnendu.Bandyopadhyay@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to arrive at a 'solution' that continues to remain elusive even after a series of high-level meets between highly placed officials of all stake-holders.

RVNL has taken the matter to the highest forum — Prime Minister's portal 'Pragati' — acquire a patch of land on the western fringes of Command Hospital complex for erecting a few piers to support the viaduct of the elevated corridor. Indian Army, the custodian of the hospital, has categorically declined to oblige, citing security concerns.

The PM door over the issue. Just a few weeks ago, RVNL officers had posted the same problem on 'Pragati'. Modi had then asked the stake-holders to resolve the issue mutually. This led to an inspection of the site and a series of meetings followed. The additional secretary (defence) flew down to Kolkata. State transport department officers also joined the inspection. A meeting was held at the office of the GoC-in-C of Eastern Command. There was another round of meeting at the chief secretary office where senior Army officers, RVNL and Metro officials discussed the issue at length in presence of top state government officers. But the matter remains unsolved.



Land issues have stalled construction at many places

RVNL wants the western boundary wall of the hospital complex to recede a bit to accommodate the piers. "This would not require demolition of any building of the sprawling complex. The amount of linear patch of land does not exceed 8 cottahs," said an RVNL official.

However, the Army does not want to part with this 'premier land'. Command Hospital is the most important super-specialty healthcare institution for the Jawans in eastern India. Naturally, Army does not want to compromise with the security of the land. But RVNL officials believe pushing back the wall a few feet would not affect the security of the complex.

This is not the first time that RVNL has knocked on

Now, RVNL has once more the put the ball back in the Prime Minister's court. The state government wants a speedy breakthrough as time over-run is escalating the cost substantially. "Both — construction of Metro rail and security of Army establishment — is of paramount importance. We are also trying our best to solve the issue," said a government officer.

The state government has also put its opinion on the issue on the Prime Minister's portal. "We are also waiting with bated breath for an early intervention of the Prime Minister. Hopefully, the Prime Minister will intervene in the next review meeting," a state government officer said.

IIT-Kgp devises 'super stetho' for lung diseases

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Call it the 'super stethoscope'. Its scope goes beyond hearing the heartbeat, though. It turns sound signals from the lungs into digital images, which in turn can be used to detect ailments. IIT-Kharagpur, in collaboration with the Institute of Pulmocare & Research Kolkata (IPCR), has designed this technology to spot lung disorders through images of digitally-processed lung sounds.

The technology is complex but not impossible to understand. In layman terms, most

TECH TAKES A LEAP

body organs, perhaps all, send out signals. A healthy organ will send out a particular signal, an organ with a specific disorder will send out another and so on. An image is allotted to each signal. After "hearing the lungs", the signal received is converted to a digital image. When compared to the 'healthy' image, even an untrained eye can see a difference in case of a disorder.

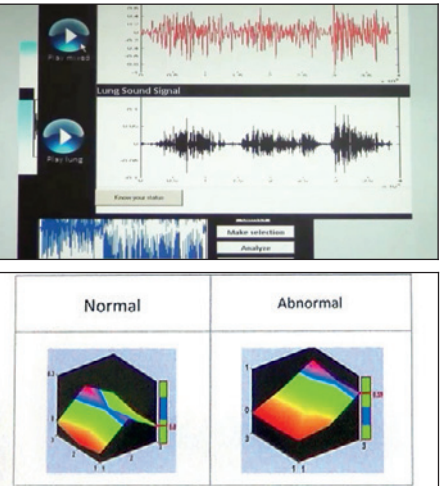
"Once the device reaches a marketable stage, the image can be sent directly to the medical facility by a smartphone. The likely



After 'hearing the lungs', the signal received is converted to a digital image. When compared to the 'healthy' image, even an untrained eye can see a difference in case of a disorder

disorder then would take very short time to diagnose. This would be of immense help to rural health centers once it is ready to be rolled out," said Dr Parthasarathi Bhattacharyya of IPCR.

"Call it an eye to help the ear. We aimed at spotting patterns in the lung sounds. These



carry specific signatures of normality and disorder. It is then converted to digital image for identification of the disorder, if any. So far, we have been able to identify only one signature — for interstitial lung disease — which makes the lungs shrink," he added. Two centuries after the stethoscope was in-

vented, this device has already got the patent for the core concept, said professor Goutam Saha of the department of electronics and electronic communication engineering.

Recently, an editorial in the medical journal 'Respirology' published an article under the title 'Seeing what we hear: an eye to help the ear'. It was entirely focused on the new findings of this collaborative research.

"When a doctor uses a stethoscope, the sound of heartbeat sends him a signal. The quadrant tells the doctor that this signal is close this particular disease. He can say, 'Show me a person with the same disease'. It is helpful in finding the most likely disorder affecting the patient and a diagnostic test can be ordered. Here, we are going several steps ahead. Incredibly, the heart sound is filtered and only the lung sound is captured," said IIT director Partha Pratim Chakraborty.

On clinical trial, Saha said that a 20-patient trial has been successful and three doctors had individually verified the findings. On the future course, the IIT director said once it hits the market in a few years, it'll keep upgrading itself, just like a smartphone software. "It'll keep adding digital signatures as more and more are identified," he added.

Presi ties up with East Anglia to set up literary centre

Jhimli.Mukherjee@timesgroup.com

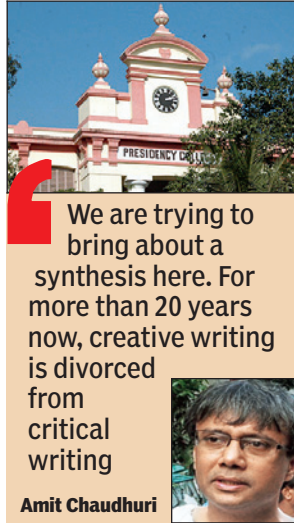
Kolkata: Students of English at Presidency University will no longer be restricted to only poring over texts and writing their grades. The institute will soon start a new centre to help them think beyond the syllabus, kindle their creativity and train them in critical thinking. Presidency is tying up with the University of East Anglia, (UEA) UK, to start the centre, which will be the first of its kind in the country.

Author Amit Chaudhuri, who is a faculty member of

two usually is considered mutually exclusive. "We are trying to bring about a synthesis here. For more than 20 years now, creative writing is divorced from critical writing. But you cannot do justice to literature unless a writer is called in to express his critique and unless an academic is encouraged to engage in creative writing," said Chaudhuri. "Why should writers be looked upon with suspicion by theorists?" Chaudhuri is currently conducting a creative writing workshop for UEA India in the city.

On Friday, he will team up with Presidency vice-chancellor Anuradha Lohia to announce the details of the centre, which will not only be open to home students but also to those belonging to other campuses. But they will have to take a test. Writers and personalities connected with the literary world and teachers of English literature from across the globe will be invited to talks, seminars, workshops and module teaching events through the year. "We have plans to groom the best students into writers and critics who can appreciate literary forms and styles, encourage them to write their original works and then publish them," Chaudhuri said.

The idea of the centre germinated after the success of an international symposium that Presidency organized in association with the UEA in December. According to Lohia, the best campuses in the world expect students to go beyond the curriculum and come up with original thinking. "There is no right or wrong when it comes to critical thinking. Many of our students are brilliant when it comes to their curriculum, but they need to be guided into such higher thoughts," Lohia said.



We are trying to bring about a synthesis here. For more than 20 years now, creative writing is divorced from critical writing

Amit Chaudhuri

UEA, will be the director of the new Centre for Creative and Critical, an initiative that will help create literary activists to bridge a gap in English literature studies.

While a creative writer is usually considered unable to engage in critical thinking, the academic, who is supposed to generate complex critical thoughts, are apparently not adroit in creative writing. The

IT'S POURING MISERY

Subhojyoti Kanjilal



FORTY-EIGHT SOGGY HOURS AND COUNTING... A low pressure trough has brought a grumpy, drippy weather to Kolkata where it has not stopped raining since Wednesday morning. By 5.30pm, the city had received 44.4 mm rain. At 10pm, the IMD website showed the Dum Dum station recording 66.3mm and Alipore 35.8mm rain. The good news is that it is unlikely to affect your weekend. The showers are likely to taper off around Friday noon, said Alipore Met director G C Debnath

Police help just an app away

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: After initial hiccups, Kolkata Police has re-launched an upgraded and easy-to-use version of mobile phone app 'Eyewatch Police' that allows citizens to seek help from Lalbazaar in real time.

"The app is a smartphone-based surveillance designed to help those, especially women, in trouble," said special additional CP (headquarters) Rajeev Mishra.

The free app uses GPS that enables the police to zero in on the location of the user in distress. The police control room at Lalbazaar receives an alert immediately.

Once the app is downloaded and installed on a smart phone, the user in distress can send an SOS to the Kolkata Police control room by pressing the designated button. A team of policemen, headed by an officer of an inspector rank, manning the

KEEPING AN EYE

HOW TO GET IT

- > The app can be downloaded from Apple Store and Google Playstore
- > Link is also available on the police website
- > It's free, only download charges applicable

ON SPEED DIAL

- > After downloading, an user needs to provide details, like a number the police can dial,

as well as name and contact number of the user's guardian



OTHERS WHO DID IT

- > Delhi Police launched 'Himmat' app for women
- > Mumbai Police's 'Travel Safe When Alone' helps women on the go

- > Bhubaneswar and Cuttack have app 'Mo Sathi'
- > UP police's 'Tatpar' promises to help those in distress

Eye-Watch Police will alert the nearest police station and action will be taken within minutes. The police can also access the video of the user's location using his/her phone camera.

The Eyewatch app was launched last year but there weren't many takers for it as it was not user-friendly. The new version, police officers claimed, is free from all the

glitches.

Last year, Mumbai police had launched a free SMS service to ensure safety of women travelling alone or at odd hours. The 'Travel Safe When Alone' initiative in Mumbai allowed women to send the registration number of the auto rickshaw or taxi she is travelling in to a police helpline through a text message.

FTII workshop film still 'speaks' to viewers

Priyanka.Dasgupta@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: As they do not have a social media account, Kolkata-based director Rajula Shah and editor Arghya Basu are completely oblivious to the ripple created by 'Anu Dhinam', a workshop film they made during their Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) days. The reason for the new-found interest in 'Anu Dhinam' is that like Aditya Vikram Sengupta's, 'Asha Jaor Majhe', and Iranian filmmaker Keywan Karimi's short film, 'Zan Va Shohar Karegar', it is also based on the same short story by Italo Calvino.

The short story, 'The Adventure of a Married Couple', is part of Calvino's 'Difficult Loves', a compilation of short stories. The tale is about the life of Arturo and his wife, Elide, who work in different shifts. Barely getting a chance to meet each other, their sense of yearning overwhelms readers, who find resonances with their own difficulties.

Rajula first read the story during

her college days in Bhopal. "Calvino's works shared a close proximity to cinematic understanding of things," she said. She joined FTII as a student in 1997 and returned there in 2010, to work as a faculty first in the department of television direction and later, in film direction. Rajula "curated" this workshop film by the TV direction batch of 2010-2011. "The one-year television course at FTII has its limited applications. I wanted my students to undertake a journey through a workshop of making a film. This would help them understand if they have the ability to work together on a film," she said. But Rajula's method of teaching was greeted with a lot of resistance from FTII. "Yet, I continued. I heard the different interpretations of the story by the students and then traced the common points," she said.

Adapting the script took time. Malayali was chosen as the language. "Few in my class understood Malayali. Since the story is about something inexplicable, we decided to use the lan-



A still from 'Anu Dhinam', based on Italo Calvino's 'The Adventure of a Married Couple'

guage," she said. With zero budget, the makers only had access to FTII's camera and lights. Ten days went into writing the script and pre-production work. While senior cameraman A K Bir shot the film, Arghya edited the film and worked on the sound design. "The actors, Nithin Lukose and Devika Daftardar, were part of my class. Ten days went into shooting and editing

the film. Today, I'm happy if the film still speaks to a viewer," she said.

Rajula is curious about 'Asha Jaor Majhe'. "I want to see how an individual aligns himself to a text. Ideas are floating in the air and it depends on an individual's radar. Borrowing from Henri Cartier-Bresson, I'll say, I'm interested in seeing how a director thinks 'where the event wa-

nts to be seen from'. I want to know what kind of resource makes a certain kind of film," she said.

Last year, Rajula quit as an FTII faculty member and shifted to Kolkata where she is working on an installation film on oral poetry. As for FTII, she said, "What's happening at FTII has been a continuing struggle. Working from inside revealed a malaise deeper than something our opinions can address or prayers heal. FTII has given me much. It was time to ask what I could do for FTII. What is FTII? Is FTII something/someplace apart from me? To answer such questions, one is first required to say no to something." In her case, it was the status quo. "I needed to resign and return to the rigor of the practice to even stand by what I teach. It is clear FTII cannot be saved alone and from any authority. The story goes before and after and through each one of us. When a battle gets real, the task of a journalist is no less or more difficult than that of a filmmaker/teacher," she said.