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FROM LAHORE TO DHAKA

Syed Badrul Ahsan discusses formulation and breakdown of "Two Nation" theory
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ICT CONNECTS FARMERS

Govt sets up IT help centres to disseminate farming information in rural areas
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PRODIGY NEEDS HELP

Nine-year-old Baul singer Sagor needs approx Tk 50 lakh to treat lymphoma
PAGE 11

Taher trial illegal

HC says Zia masterminded cold-blooded murder of Taher

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The trial and execution of freedom fighter Col Abu Taher in 1976 was masterminded by the then chief martial law administrator, Gen Ziaur Rahman, the High Court said yesterday declaring the military tribunal and the trial illegal and unconstitutional.

"The so-called trial and execution of Colonel Abu Taher was a cold blooded assassination which was masterminded by a person no other than Ziaur Rahman," the court said after weeks of hearing on pleas by Taher's family and others to call the entire trial illegal.

Col Taher was a sector commander.

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- **Treat Col Taher, other accused in the case as patriots, not traitors**
- **Consider providing compensation to victims**
- **Prosecute military tribunal judge Abdul Ali for Taher's execution**
- **Probe Zia's 'involvement' in killing Bangabandhu, freedom fighters**



Family for posthumous trial of Zia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of Col Abu Taher have demanded posthumous trial of Ziaur Rahman for masterminding his killing in the name of trial.

"We are urging the government and parliament to enact a law for holding his (Zia) posthumous trial," said Prof M Anwar

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It's a move to defame ZIA

Says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There was an effort to defame BNP founder late president Ziaur Rahman through the High Court verdict on Colonel Taher's trial, BNP leaders alleged yesterday.

They said the government had been conspiring for a long time to undermine Zia.

"The present government is trying to defame 'Shaheed Zia' for long. But it's true that Taher wanted to create the Gono Bahini excluding the army," party standing committee member Moudud Ahmed told

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US for govt talks with Yunus

Blake says compromise possible; Wolfensohn backs amicable solution

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States yesterday called for a dialogue between Prof Muhammad Yunus and Bangladesh government to reach a solution to the dispute over the status of the Nobel laureate in the Grameen Bank he founded.

"I do believe that a compromise is possible and I am encouraging dialogue between the parties to find a mutually acceptable solution," Robert Blake, US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian Affairs, told a news conference at the American Club in Dhaka.

Replying to a question, he, however, said, "If there is no compromise, it will have an effect on bilateral relations."

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



Robert Blake

Muhith asked to work on Yunus issue

Says PM's adviser; finance minister bins report on committee for compromise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has assigned the finance minister to find a suitable solution to the issue of Grameen Bank and its founder Dr Muhammad Yunus, said Gowher Rizvi, international affairs adviser to the prime minister, yesterday.

The government is looking for a compromise on the issue for the sake of

SEE PAGE 7 COL 8
MORE ON B1



The wreckage of a US Air Force F-15E that crashed near the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Gaddafi forces hit back

Shell rebel-held towns; 40 more killed; US jet crashes

REUTERS, Tripoli

Muammar Gaddafi's forces attacked two west Libyan towns, killing dozens while rebels were pinned down in the east and Nato tried to resolve a heated row over who should lead the Western air campaign.

With anti-Gaddafi rebels struggling to

create a command structure that can capitalize on the air strikes against Libyan tanks and air defences, Western nations have still to decide who will take over command once Washington pulls back.

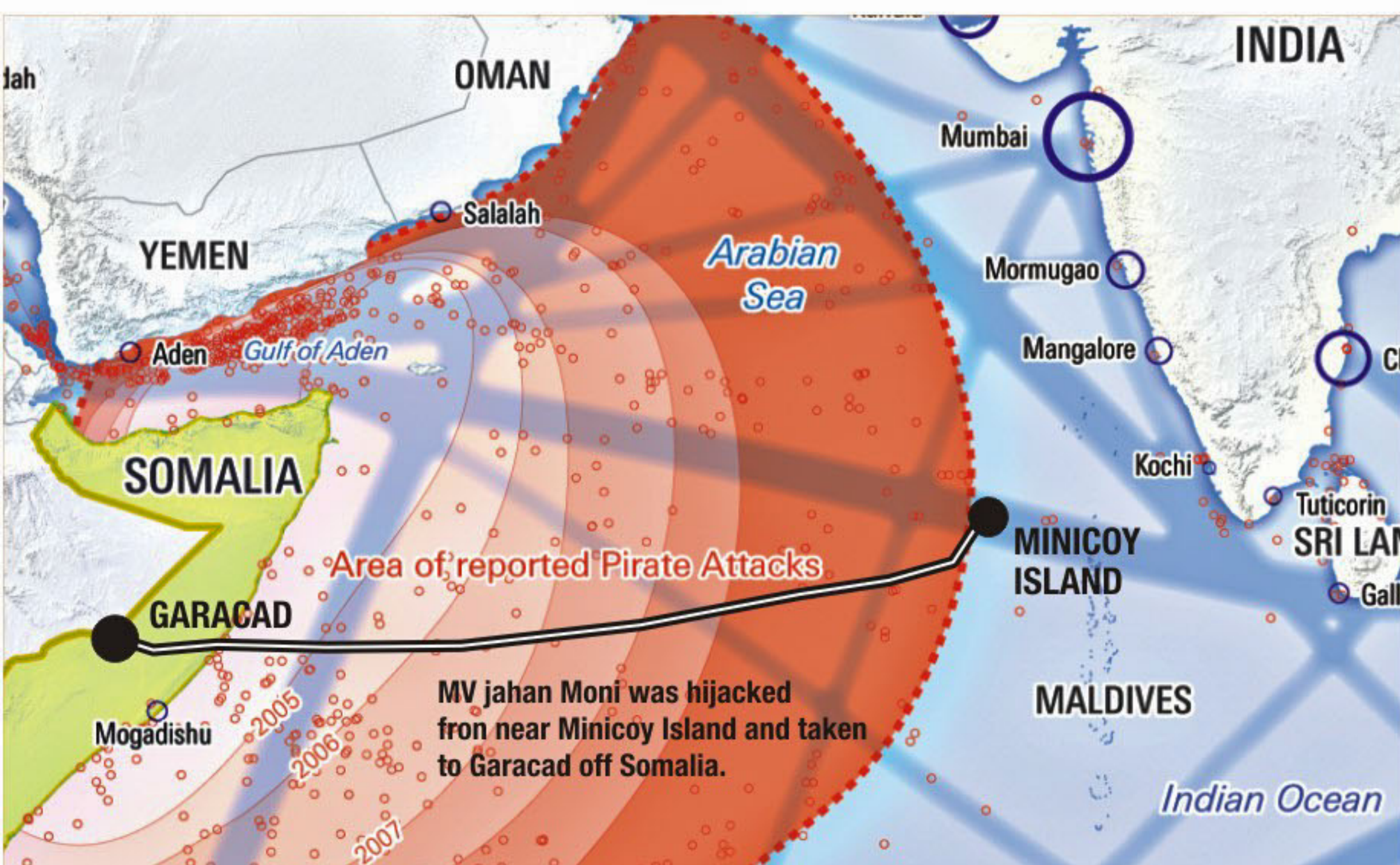
The United States will cede control in days, President Barack Obama said, even as divisions in Europe fuelled speculation

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Rejoinders, our replies

The Daily Star has received two rejoinders sent separately by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in response to an editorial the paper carried on March 20 and a front page report published on March 18, both dealing

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



Nightmare on board

Freed Jahan Moni crew tell of horrors

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Fear was what possessed the sailors over the 100 days in captivity.

They had been briefed well on a situation like ship hijacking. But when the pirates asked them to surrender, three of the sailors fainted.

"Are they going to shoot me now? Would they let me talk to my daughter, would they?" M Idris, a deck fitter, was uttering to himself, lying on the floor of the ship's bridge along with several others on the pirates' instruction.

Panic already gripped the sailors as they had

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

HIJACK FEAR IN SEA

Govt mulls private security for ships

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

The government may allow private security personnel to protect Bangladesh-flagged ships from getting hijacked by Somali pirates in the waters around the Arabian peninsula.

"We have recently allowed private [foreign] security personnel on board a ship that belongs to the owner of the hijacked MV Jahan Moni," said Rear Admiral (retd) Bazlur Rahman, director general of the Department of Shipping.

Bazlur said allowing private security personnel on a ship was an isolated incident but not a uniformed decision.

"We've written to the ministry of shipping to make a decision in this regard urgently."

Owner of MV Jahan Moni, Mohammad Shahjahan, seemed unhappy over foreign

armed personnel on his ship instead of Bangladeshi ones.

It is too high a price to bear, he said, adding, "We've lots of retired naval personnel whom we can employ easily."

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan also appeared flexible in allowing private security forces on ships provided the international maritime rules and regulations allow them to.

"If anybody seeks deployment of such forces [local or foreign], we'll consider it under the international maritime laws," the minister told The Daily Star.

The issue of protecting ocean-going ships with armed forces came to the limelight after hijacking of the first Bangladeshi ship, MV Jahan Moni, by

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

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