



## Hijacked ship sailing fast to Somali shores

DWAIPAYAN BARUA and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Neither the government nor the firm that owns the Bangladesh-flagged ship hijacked with 23 crew members has been able to contact the hostages or pirates as of last night.

The ship, MV Abdullah, was around 170 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia at 6:40pm (Bangladesh time) yesterday, according to Shakawat Hossain, general secretary of Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers' Association.

The vessel had picked up speed, probably because of favourable current, and was heading towards the Garacad sea port in Somalia at almost 14 nautical miles an hour, he said.



Effluents from garment and dyeing factories are being released into the Shitalakkhya at Demra Ghat near the Sultana Kamal Bridge in Dhaka. The pollution is affecting people and worsening biodiversity of the river. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

### INT'L DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS

## Shitalakkhya a deathbed for fish now Factories releasing untreated waste into the river

MONJURUL HAQUE and MD ABBAS

Sanjit Babu, from Baghia village in Gazipur's Kapasia upazila, has been running a tea stall at Narayanpur market on the bank of the Shitalakkhya river for the last four years.

Until five years ago, he used to fish in the river for a living. Both his father and grandfather were also fishermen. But the depletion of the fish stock in the river due to industrial pollution forced them all to turn to other professions.

His father now works as a farm labourer.

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**Pirates yet to demand ransom** | **No contact yet with hostages** | **170NM off the coast yesterday evening**



The ship may reach Somali anchorage by today if it maintains the speed overnight, he added.

When the pirates attacked the ship around 1:30pm (Bangladesh time) on Tuesday, it was around 500 nautical miles off the Somali coast, sailing from Maputo in Mozambique to Al Hamriyah in the UAE with 58,000 tonnes of coal.

SR Shipping Limited, which owns the vessel, says it suspects Somali pirates are behind the crime.

Mizanul Islam, media adviser of KSRM Group, the parent company of SR Shipping Limited, yesterday said it was highly unlikely that any sort of negotiations could be initiated unless the pirates started communicating.

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**DISTRESSED, THEIR FAMILIES NOW FEAR THE WORST P5**

## Gas crisis till April at least Summit's floating storage to take another month to finish maintenance work

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Gas scarcity is likely to continue till April despite the government's repeated assurance of scaling up gas supply during Ramadan and the irrigation season as one of the two Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRU) will take longer to complete maintenance works.

The Summit-operated FSRU, which re-gasifies the imported liquefied natural gas and supplies to the national grid, was supposed to resume operation after maintenance in the first week of March.

But Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, yesterday said that FSRU is unlikely to resume operation before March 30.

"We import 30 percent of our gas supply. Due to the lack of the FSRU, we have a shortfall of 10 percent of gas. Besides, our local gas production is also in decline," he told journalists after a meeting with the government officials of different companies related to the gas and fuel supply.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Ayesha

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## 36 injured in Gazipur gas cylinder fire

At least 15 of them in critical condition

STAR REPORT

At least 36 people, including women and children, suffered severe burns in a gas cylinder fire in Gazipur's Kaliakoir area last evening.

The victims were admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in the capital.

At least 15 of them are in critical conditions with 50 to 100 percent burns, Professor Pradip Chandra Das, associate professor at the burn institute, told reporters around 10:15pm.

Another six suffered 30-50 percent burns in their breathing tracts, and are not out of danger, he added.

The victims include seven children. Two of them are being treated in

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