

## HIJACKED SHIP Negotiations with pirates progressing

Says Hasan Mahmud

DIPLOMATIC  
CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is in communication with the Somali pirates, regarding the release of Bangladeshi sailors on the hijacked MV Abdullah, said Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

"We are taking various measures. Our purpose is to ensure the sailors' release and rescue of the ship," said the minister during a press briefing at his office.

"In this regard, we have made much progress," he added.

On March 12, Somali pirates hijacked MV Abdullah, 600 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia.

Nine days after taking the  
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Buyers crowd around one of the many trucks selling watermelons at lower than half of current market price at the capital's Khamarbari intersection. Noting the struggles of people during Ramadan due to the soaring prices of essentials, Bangladesh Agri Farmers' Association launched the initiative with the slogan 'Farmer's product at farmers' prices' yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## 'Make teaching attractive as a profession'

Speakers tell CAMPE seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Increasing teachers' salaries and adding benefits to attract talented students to the profession is necessary to improve the quality of education in the country, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They also called for a stronger monitoring system with adequate budget allocation to ensure that teachers are fulfilling their responsibilities during a views exchange programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Titled "Equity Based Budget in Education: Our Expectations," the seminar was organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

Deputy Director of CAMPE, Mostafizur Rahman, presented a detailed presentation about the education budget.

He highlighted that student enrollment in primary school increased to 97.56 percent from 94.8 in 2010. The secondary school enrollment rate also rose to 73 percent from 49.5 in the same period.

The education budget as a percentage of GDP has been gradually decreasing over the last few years, falling from 2.49 percent in the 2016-17 fiscal year to 1.76 percent now, he said.

He mentioned that budgetary allocation for education should be at least 15 percent in the next budget, with a roadmap to reach 20 percent by 2026.

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## Yunus Centre clarifies receiving Unesco award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yunus Centre yesterday said Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus received an invitation from Baku Forum XI that he would receive an award from Unesco during the conference held in Baku, Azerbaijan from March 14 to 16.

"The Secretary General of the Nizami Ganjavi International Centre (NGIC), that organises the Baku Forum, Mr Rovshan Muradov sent an email to Yunus Centre informing that in addition to addressing the Conference, Professor Yunus would receive an award from UNESCO on the closing day of the conference," said a statement from Yunus Centre.

The statement came in response to Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury's remarks that Unesco did not give him any award called "Tree of Peace".

The statement said the official programme of the Baku Forum sent by NGIC to Yunus Centre also mentioned that Professor Yunus would receive an award from Unesco.

"During the closing dinner of Baku Forum, Professor Yunus was specifically reminded to attend the event to receive Tree of Peace award

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## SAFE DRINKING WATER

# 40pc people don't have access to it: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For Kochi Begum and others in her community, the gradual intrusion of saline water has been a major challenge, as it has been affecting their reproductive health.

"The water has even affected my menstrual cycle. Every day I have to fetch safe water far from home," said Kochi Begum of Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila, while sharing her hardship at a discussion session titled "Access to Safe Water in Climate Vulnerable Areas: A Gender Perspective."

The discussion was organised by "Community-Based Resilience, Women's Empowerment and Action (CREA)" Project of

**There is a lack of availability of freshwater in the coastal areas. Floods and cyclones further exacerbate the existing water crisis. Efforts are being made to cope with this situation by utilising nature-based solutions, but they are insufficient.**

Dr Sujit Kumar Bala  
Chairman, Dhaka WASA

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), marking World Water Day 2024.

Dr Sujit Kumar Bala, chairman of Dhaka WASA, said, "There is a

**Women are referred to as 'water managers' around the world because they are more involved in water collection, usage, and supply. As a result, they are unable to participate in income-generating and agricultural activities while spending extra time collecting water, causing them to struggle financially.**

Hasin Jahan  
Country director, WaterAid  
Bangladesh

lack of availability of freshwater in the coastal areas. Floods and cyclones further exacerbate the existing water crisis. Efforts are being made to cope with this situation by utilising nature-based solutions, but they are insufficient.

"It is time to look into the water-related issues in our coastal areas," he added.

In her keynote paper, Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid Bangladesh, shared statistics showing only 15 out of every 100 people in the country can get water from pipes.

Forty out of every 100 people don't have access to safe drinking water. Also, 26 million people have to drink water from shallow wells

that have too much salt in them, she said.

"The risk of infant mortality also increases due to the consumption of excess salt water during pregnancy," said Hasin.

"Women are referred to as 'water managers' around the world because they are more involved in water collection, usage, and supply. As a result, women are unable to participate in income-generating and agricultural activities while spending extra time collecting water, causing them to struggle financially," she added.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, said access to safe water is a basic human right and these rights are violated due to calamities such as floods and cyclones.

"But we often overlook the gender perspective of it, specifically how a woman or girl suffers as a result of it," she said.

"We want a collaborative approach to solve the crisis. The government alone cannot solve this. So, the private sector and NGOs like us must find a way to collaborate with the government," she said.

Dharitri Kumar Sarkar, deputy secretary of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and Md Robiul Alam, joint secretary of Ministry of Water Resources, also spoke.

After the discussion, Shaheen Anam guided the guests around the photo exhibition. The exhibition's theme was "Climate Change and Vulnerability of Women."

## ALL UNITS DU admission tests results published

DU CORRESPONDENT

Results of Dhaka University admission tests for all units for the academic year 2023-2024 were published yesterday.

Vice-chancellor Prof ASM Maksud Kamal disclosed the result around 3:30pm at Abdul Matin Chowdhury Virtual Classroom.

There was a pass rate of 8.89 percent in A unit [Science], 10.07 percent in B unit (Arts and Social Science), 13.3 percent in C unit (Business), and 11.75 percent in Cha unit (Fine Arts).

The results can be viewed on the university website -- admission.eis.du.ac.bd -- or via SMS.

For SMS notification of the result, candidates of B unit will have to type "DU ALS (roll number)" and send it to 16321.

For A unit candidates, they have to type "DU SCL(roll number)," C unit candidates will have to type "DUBUS(roll number)," and Cha unit candidates will have to type "DU FRI(roll number)".

The qualified students must fill out subject choice forms through the website between April 3 and April 25.



## Tk 400cr transacted through hundi in three months

Says CID after arresting 5  
of a gang

MUNTAKIM SAAD

A group of Dubai-based hundi traders created an app, bought 150 "agent SIM cards" of different mobile financial services in Bangladesh, and transacted around Tk 400 crore -- meant to be remitted by Bangladeshi expatriates -- in the last three months.

The Criminal Investigation Department of Police estimated the amount after arresting five people from Dhaka and Chattogram on Wednesday who are allegedly involved with this hundi racket, CID chief Mohammad Ali Mia, additional inspector general of police, told a press conference at the CID Headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The money was channelled through hundi, a cross-border money transfer method that bypasses the legal banking system, ultimately hitting the country's foreign currency reserves.

The arrestees are -- Nasim Ahmed, 62, Fazle Rabbi Suman, 32, Kamruzzaman, 33, Zahir Uddin, 37, and Khairul Islam Pias, 34.

The CID seized Tk 28.51 lakh, 18 SIM cards, six modems, and six mobile phones from their possessions.

Hundi traders have been luring Bangladeshi migrants to use illegal methods to send money back home. They do this by using local agents of mobile financial services to pay the migrants' relatives or designated individuals in Bangladesh in exchange for any amount of foreign currency the migrants want to send, according to Criminal Investigation Department.

The CID official said the hundi traders collect foreign currency from expatriate Bangladeshis through their agents.

The racket was transacting money using an app named "Zet Robatic App." To do the transactions, they bought agent sims from Tasmia Associates, an MFS distribution house in Chattogram, he said.

## 12TH PARLIAMENT Businesspeople dominate reserved seats as well: Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like the lawmakers in general seats, businesspeople also dominate the list of reserved seat MPs in the 12th National Parliament.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) revealed the information at a virtual press conference held yesterday after analysing the information given in the affidavits of 50 lawmakers elected to reserved women's seats.

A total of 13 (26 percent) of the 50 reserved-seat MPs belong to the category of business people.

Apart from this, seven (14 percent) lawmakers are service holders, five (10 percent) are in teaching, five (10 percent) are housewives, two (4 percent) are engaged in the law profession, and two (4 percent) are involved in farming.

Eight (16 percent) reserved lawmakers mentioned their profession as "politics," while the remaining eight (16 percent) are associated with different other professions.

Earlier, after analysing the data of the general seat lawmakers following the January 7 polls, Shujan said 200 out of the 299 MPs are in business, meaning 66.89 percent of the total members of parliament are businesspeople.

As many as 185, or 61.66 percent, of the total parliamentarians of the 11th National Parliament were in business.

## INCOME AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Only 10 (20 percent) of the 50 MPs elected in reserved women's seats earn Tk 5 lakh or less annually.

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Staffers of DNCC's Karwan Bazar office sort and pack documents, machines, and furniture while a truck waits outside to transport them to the temporary office in Mohammadpur. Around 176 permanent and 180 make-shift shops at Karwan Bazar will also be relocated to Gabtoli after Eid, as the existing structures are risky and may lead to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## DNCC relocates its Karwan Bazar office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The relocation of Karwan Bazar began yesterday with the shifting of Dhaka North City Corporation's office.

"The current office building in Karwan Bazar is risky. So, we are relocating the corporation's zone-5 office to Mohammadpur Community Centre, beside Shia Mosque. A temporary office will be set up there," said the zone's executive officer Motakabbir Ahmed.

The office will be fully evacuated before Eid as its demolition will begin later. Furthermore, 176 permanent and 180 make-shift shops at Karwan Bazar will be shifted to Gabtoli after Eid.

The decision came following a meeting with traders on March 18. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan was in attendance.

Speaking at the discussion, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said the wholesale kitchen market in Karwan bazar is risky and may collapse at any minute.