



Govt aims to gradually issue 2cr family cards

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The government is set to launch the pilot phase of its family card programme on March 10 with the ultimate aim of gradually bringing two crore families under monthly cash support.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will formally inaugurate the four-month pilot in 14 upazilas, where eligible families with at least five members will receive Tk 2,500 a month through direct transfers to their mobile wallets or bank accounts.

During the pilot, 6,500 families will be

- Pilot phase in 14 upazilas
- Pilot phase to start on March 10
- 6,500 families to receive benefits
- A family will receive Tk 2,500 a month
- Cards to be issued to mother or female head
- Tk 60,000cr will be needed a year for full implementation



No one will be excluded, and there will be no involvement of intelligence agencies or party elements.

AZM Zahid Hossain, social welfare minister



covered, with the scheme expanding nationwide in phases, according to the draft Family Card Piloting Implementation Guidelines 2026 and the Family Card Policy Paper.

The matter was discussed and the pilot phase was finalised at a cabinet committee meeting chaired by Tarique yesterday.

If fully implemented, the programme, a key election pledge of the BNP, would cost about Tk 5,000 crore a month, roughly Tk 60,000 crore a year. It will potentially become the largest social spending commitment in the country's history. The projected annual allocation would amount to nearly 12 percent of this fiscal year's revenue target.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Thousands of Muslims wait to break their Ramadan fast at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka. The mosque committee, Islamic Foundation, and Tablighi Jamaat arrange free iftar for fasting devotees daily throughout the holy month.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CONTAINER TERMINAL DEAL Safeguard nat'l interest: Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday instructed officials to ensure that all decisions regarding the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) at Chattogram Port serve the national interest.

He gave the directive while presiding over a meeting at the Cabinet Division on the terminal's operations.

The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman, and Executive Chairman of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

2024 ENQUIRY COMMISSION

Evidence found against top military officials, politicians

ZYMA ISLAM

For 17 years, the killing of 74 people, including 57 of the nation's top military officers, during a mutiny at the then BDR headquarters in Palkhona has remained an open wound, clouded by state-led investigations dismissed by critics as a facade of justice.

In 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs set up a seven-member body to re-examine the findings of the 2009 BDR mutiny commission,

BDR CARNAGE 2009

following widespread criticism of the 2013 mass trial. The inquiry was tasked with uncovering evidence that the previous report may have overlooked due to political interference.

The previous official investigation into the mutiny blamed years of

pent-up anger among ordinary soldiers, who felt their appeals for pay raises and better treatment were ignored. Rampaging troops from the then Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh) murdered some of the brightest military officers during the two-day revolt that began in Dhaka's Palkhona on February 25, 2009 and spread across the country.

However, the new body, the National Independent Investigation

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman makes a phone call to police officials of the DMP's Ramna Division after a secretariat employee sought his help in locating his abducted son yesterday. The boy was rescued within an hour of the call.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

PM's call leads to swift rescue of abducted boy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's intervention prompted a swift police operation yesterday to rescue an abducted schoolboy.

The 14-year-old son of Khondkar Shamim Hasan, a darkroom assistant at the Press Information Department under the information ministry, was abducted by criminals from in front of Shantinagar's Popular Diagnostic Centre after he had finished coaching classes around 3:30pm.

According to the family, he was returning home on his bicycle when two men intercepted him and forced him into a nearby abandoned building.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Shamim said the abductors took his son to the seventh floor of a 10-storey under-construction building in the area, beat him, and took his mobile phone.

"They called my wife from my son's phone and demanded Tk 50,000, threatening to beat him further if we failed to pay. When we said we could not afford that amount, they reduced the ransom to Tk 30,000."

Shamim was at the Secretariat when he learned about the abduction. He immediately went to Ramna Police Station. Upon realising that Prime Minister Tarique had not yet left the office, he rushed back to the Secretariat.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

Ali Hossain Fakir made new IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed Additional Inspector General of Police and Armed Police Battalion chief Md Ali Hossain Fakir as the new Inspector General of Police.

The home ministry announced the appointment in a notification replacing Baharul Alam, who had been serving as IGP on contract since November 20, 2024.

A member of the 15th batch of the Bangladesh Civil Service (Police) cadre, Ali was sent into forced retirement "in the public interest" on November 16, 2022, while serving as the commanding officer



SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Talks of contractual secys stir discontent in civil service

BAHARAM KHAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A sense of disgruntlement has taken over the civil administration over discussions to appoint retired officers to top positions in key ministries through contracts.

Following the removal of 13 secretaries on Monday, the public administration ministry is now working on replacing secretaries in another dozen ministries and divisions, while the secretaries of several other ministries may be transferred to lesser important posts but with the same status to make way for the contractual appointments.

The names of at least 8-10 officers who retired several years ago but received retroactive promotions to the rank of secretary during the interim government's tenure are being discussed at various levels of the administration.

Among them, Abdul Khaleq of the 1984 batch; Kamruzzaman, Baki Billah and Touhidul Islam of the 1985 batch; Zakir Hossain Kamal

of the 1986 batch; and Faridul Islam of the 11th batch may be considered for appointment on a contractual basis.

Last night, Manjur Morshed Chowdhury, who had received a retroactive promotion, was made the senior secretary to the home affairs ministry on a one-year contract.

Earlier, the new government appointed ABM Abdus Sattar from the 1982 batch as the principal secretary to the prime minister on a contractual basis.

Those being discussed for contractual appointments have undoubtedly endured difficult times in the past, said an additional secretary awaiting promotion to the post of secretary.

However, through retroactive promotions, they have already received their titles and financial compensation.

"Now, if they occupy the positions that we deserve, the legacy of deprivation will continue.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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