



BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



COMPLETE GUIDANCE APP FOR HOME BUILDING

নির্মাণে আঁশ

Available on the Google Play and App Store

Five envoys withdrawn

High commissioner to the UK Abida Islam among them

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In its first foreign ministry reshuffle since assuming power, the BNP government yesterday withdrew five Bangladesh envoys – one career diplomat and four contractual appointees.

The career diplomat is Abida Islam, high commissioner to the UK. The contractual envoys are M Mahfuzul Haque (Portugal), Md Mainul Islam (Poland), M Mushfiqul Fazal Ansary (Mexico), and Md Nazmul Islam (Maldives).

All five have been instructed to report to the foreign ministry headquarters in Dhaka, according to a press statement issued yesterday.

A ministry official clarified that the contracts of the four appointees have not been cancelled, leaving open the possibility of new postings.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kobir had already announced Abida's withdrawal a day earlier at Heathrow Airport, citing her "divisive conduct and partisanship"

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



A worker uses a megaphone to inform motorists that octane is unavailable at a CNG filling station in the capital's Hazipara, where a sign at the gate also reads 'No octane', as people have been rushing to stations across Dhaka to stock up on fuel amid fears of a supply crunch.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Family Card brings hope to families in slums

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Hasen Banu is over 80. In the Korail slum, where her three sons and a daughter also live, she now spends a month at each child's home.

At this age, even buying medicine regularly has become difficult. So the news of getting a "Family Card" has brought her some relief.

Speaking at her shack in Korail yesterday, Hasen Banu said she had heard the card would allow her to receive Tk 2,500 a month. With that money, she hopes to buy medicine regularly. Sometimes, she will also be able to buy milk, eggs and fruit, and even treat her grandchildren.



Hasen Banu

"If this had come earlier, I could have lived a little better," she said.

Like Hasen Banu, many other women in Korail are hopeful about the new programme.

Residents said they had not seen such a process in a long time, one where no money was demanded and no political or organisational influence was involved.

Announcements were made through loudspeakers, people were approached at their homes and assistance was provided in filling out the forms.

At least 40,000 families will receive Family Cards in

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Edible oil prices surge despite ample stock



SUKANTA HALDER and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The prices of loose soybean oil and palm oil have risen in the local market despite assurances of sufficient stock and adequate supply, heaving financial pressure on consumers.

Over the past three to four days, the prices of loose soybean and palm oil have risen by Tk 5 to Tk 7 per litre at the retail level, while the supply of bottled soybean oil has remained relatively low over the past month, according to traders.

"Even if I pay a higher price, the supply of bottled soybean oil is not available," said Zakir Hossain, a retailer at Kawran Bazar who has been receiving 100 litres of oil against the demand of 200 litres for the past week.

Over in Chattogram's wholesale market, edible oil prices have risen too, with traders attributing the rise to global uncertainties triggered by the Iran war.

At the wholesale market in Khatunganj, the price of soybean oil and palm oil have increased by Tk 140 to Tk 150 over the past week. Now, per mound (37.32 kg) of soybean oil is selling for Tk 7,170 and palm oil for Tk 6,060.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Key decisions of interim govt being deleted from websites

Alleges TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman has accused the government of removing key state decisions and information published on websites during the tenure of the interim government.

He made the remarks yesterday at a press conference organised by the RTI Forum at the TIB office in Dhaka. The event was titled "Immediate Formation of the Information Commission and Necessary Amendments to the Right to Information Act 2009".

Iftekharuzzaman said many important decisions and pieces of information have been taken down from government websites.

"The current government is responsible for this. They cannot do this," he said, adding, "It is unethical, contrary to the right to information, and against state interests."

He said citizens have the right to access information regardless of whether it reflects positively or negatively on the state.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 8

Country's legal framework is failing women

UN Women study warns, calls for sweeping reforms

NILIMA JAHAN

A new assessment has revealed a glaring "equality gap" in Bangladesh's justice system, highlighting 19 laws that remain discriminatory, one law that needs to be repealed, and four new laws that are urgently required.

The study, titled "Achieving Equality Before the Law in Bangladesh: An Assessment of the Law from a Gender Perspective", conducted by UN Women and authored by Dr Taslima Yasmin, associate professor of the law department at Dhaka University, warned that without repealing colonial-era relics and introducing a modern protective framework, the country's promise of justice for women will remain largely symbolic.

The assessment reviewed 32 laws essential to Bangladesh's international commitments on gender equality, identifying progress alongside significant gaps.

It examined three critical pillars where structural barriers hinder women's autonomy: gender-based violence (GBV), labour legislation, and personal law.

This included scrutiny of archaic definitions of rape and domestic violence, deficiencies in maternity protections, and the exclusion of the informal workforce. It also exposed discriminatory practices in citizenship, property, and family laws that continue to restrict women's decision-making power.

To bridge this gap, the study recommended

AT A GLANCE

19 laws remain discriminatory, one must be repealed, and four new laws are needed.

Rape and sexual offence laws have major gaps, including narrow definitions and marital rape exemptions.

Workplace protections are weak, with no enforceable sexual harassment law and limited maternity rights.

Personal and citizenship laws remain discriminatory, limiting women's rights in marriage, property, and nationality.

amending the 19 discriminatory statutes and repealing the 136-year-old Guardians and Wards Act.

It also recommended introducing four new laws, including dedicated legislation on workplace and educational sexual harassment,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

SWADHINATA PADAK Govt revises rules after 'award error'

BAHARAM KHAN

In order to allow the authorities to confer the Swadhinata Padak on late physician and social activist Zafrullah Chowdhury for a second time posthumously, the government yesterday amended the guidelines governing the country's highest civilian honour.

Last Thursday, the government announced the recipients of this year's Swadhinata Padak. The list included Zafrullah under the "Social Service/Public Service" category.

He had previously received the award in 1977 for his contribution to "Population Control".

Before yesterday's amendment, an individual or organisation was not eligible to receive the award more than once.

The revised Guidelines Regarding the Swadhinata Padak now allow an individual or institution to receive the honour again after a 25-year interval.

The Cabinet Division formalised the decision through an office memo.

While prominent citizens described the move as unprecedented, officials said the amendment was made to legalise a mistake.

Researcher and former secretary Abdul Awal Mazumder told The Daily Star, "Those who take such decisions just to justify their own mistakes are harmful to the state."

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7

PLAYING MUJIB'S SPEECH 3 ex-leaders of DU dorms sent to jail

They've been sued in a terrorism case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent three people, including Sheikh Tasnim Afroz Emi, former vice-president of Shamsunnahar Hall Union at Dhaka University and a central vice-presidential candidate in the last Ducus election, to jail in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act with Shahbagh Police Station.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Jewel Rana passed the order after police produced the accused before the court in the afternoon.



Tasnim Afroz Emi

The two other accused are Md Asif Ahmed Shoikot, former employment affairs secretary of the banned Chhatra League's Shahidullah Hall unit of Dhaka University, and Abdullah Al Mamun, a leader of BCL's Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall unit.

According to the case statement, a group of Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League activists gathered around 3:00pm on Saturday at Shahidullah Hall crossing and played Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 speech on loudspeaker.

Police went to the spot on information and detained Shoikot with the help of locals while he was trying to flee.

Later, around 9:20pm, Mamun and Emi, along with 10-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A farmer lifts water with a traditional bamboo-made irrigation device to water his Boro paddy field amid a water shortage in Naogaon's Mahadevpur Upazila yesterday. Farmers in several parts of the district are facing irrigation difficulties this season.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Inflation hits 10-month high in February, crosses 9%

B1

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 9

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:00 12:45 4:30 6:07 7:30
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
19	9		6:07
20	10	4:57	6:07
21	11	4:56	6:07