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detering  
Afsana Mimi**

# BNP plans big push from big rally

Fresh programmes may begin Sunday

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A charged-up BNP plans to stage a big show of strength in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters today after the police finally gave it the go-ahead.

However, party leaders asked BNP supporters, who started arriving in the capital in droves from across the country, to avoid confrontations and to remain alert to any instigation.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of top BNP leaders yesterday said they already have a "strategic win" against the government's initial decision to not allow their rally.

At the same time, they are concerned about the possibility of the ruling party activists creating "anarchy" and then blaming it on them.

The BNP is yet to finalise its next course of action to drive home its one-



BNP activists from different parts of the country started gathering in front of its Nayapaltan central office ahead of the party's today rally there. The party will announce the next course of action at the rally to press home its one-point demand for polls under a non-party interim government. The photo was taken yesterday evening.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Polls schedule likely in late Oct: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal yesterday said the schedule for the 12th parliamentary election could be unveiled in the last week of October.

"If we don't announce the schedule in October, then we will have to do it in November since there is an obligation to hold the election within 90 days," he told The Daily Star last night.

According to the constitution, the national election must be held within 90 days before the five-year term of the parliament expires. The 11th parliament began its first sitting on January 30, 2019.

The CEC said, "There was neither any discussion in the commission about the schedule nor any decision was made regarding it," he added.

The Daily Star talked to the CEC after he told a television channel that the schedule of the next polls

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Unease in Dhaka before rivals' rallies

Light traffic on weekday; over 500 detained in 2 days; cops on riot gear on streets

STAR REPORT

An uneasy calm was prevailing in the capital ahead of the Awami League and BNP rallies today.

Police arrested over 500 people in the capital alone over the last two days, the BNP said. Besides, traffic was light on the streets yesterday, even though it was a weekday.

Hundreds of people offer their Juma prayers at the Baitul Mukarram on Fridays. The ruling AL's rally at the south gate of the mosque will presumably see thousands of activists gather in the area.

Abul Kalam Azad, who works for a company, said he went to his office in Paltan yesterday, but returned home early fearing violence.

"Some of my colleagues did not even go to work," he told The Daily Star.

Riot control vehicles and a large number of law enforcers were seen in front of the BNP office in Nayapaltan



yesterday.

Police did not let journalists take photos in front of the BNP office. They even seized phones from journalists who went live on social media.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq yesterday said police, Rab, Armed Police Battalion, and Ansar will be on the city streets while the border guards will be ready to prevent any untoward situations.

Criminals may take advantage of the large gatherings of the two major parties and disrupt law and order, he added.

Regarding the large number of arrests, he said police detained wanted individuals and people they suspect to be criminals with the overall security in mind.

Besides, this was done as part of the regular efforts to combat crime.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## AL to be on guard across the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has made preparations to ensure a large gathering at its "peace rally" near the south gate of Baitul Mukarram today.

Leaders and activists of AL's city units will be at their offices and in the neighbourhoods so that BNP activists do not launch a blockade, try to lay siege to any important government facility, and "create unrest".

They, however, were also asked not to stop BNP activists from joining their rally at Nayapaltan, according to Abu Ahmed Mannafi, president of Dhaka City (south) AL.

Since the top AL leaders want to see at least two lakh people at the event, activists from the districts adjoining Dhaka were asked to attend the rally.

The AL rally, organised by Jubo League, Chhatra League and Swechchhasebak League, will begin at 2:30pm.

AL's associate bodies first announced

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Journos to blame for foreign envoys 'bossing us around'

Says Momen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said special briefs on various issues have been prepared and will be given to foreign countries so they can have a better understanding of Bangladesh.

This, he said, would help the countries refrain from making "ignorant" remarks on Bangladesh.

Momen said this while speaking to reporters after a book launch at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital.

He also said foreign diplomats in Dhaka are "extra active" and "boss around" due to journalists' activities.

He made these remarks a day after the government expressed dissatisfaction over the joint statement issued by 13 foreign missions condemning the attack on Hero Alom, an independent candidate in Dhaka 17 by-polls. The government termed the statement a "violation" of diplomatic norms and urged all missions to refrain from such behaviour.

"Journalists should see the good sides [of Bangladesh] ... Due to them,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



## DENGUE OUTBREAK 178 dead in July alone

Late hospitalisation, re-infection to blame for death rate, say experts

HELEMUL ALAM and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

With 10 new deaths recorded yesterday, 178 people have died from dengue just in the month of July.

The number is just one shy of the total deaths in all of 2019 when dengue reached epidemic proportions with over one lakh patients.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, apart from the new deaths, 2,361 people were hospitalised in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Since January this year, 225 people have died from the mosquito-borne virus. The number was 281 last year, 105 in 2021, seven in 2020 and 179 in 2019.

Experts and doctors have attributed this year's death rate to late hospitalisation and re-infections.

Fluid intake is the main treatment for dengue patients, they said, adding that in most cases, blood and platelets transfusions are not needed.

They suggested that those diagnosed with dengue at home take sufficient amounts of fluids and consider

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Three-year-old Tasnim, from Brahmanbaria, and five-year-old Jannat, from Narayanganj, sharing a single bed on the floor in Mugda Medical College Hospital's dengue ward. As the number of cases has been on a steep rise, hospital authorities are having to ask incoming patients to share beds as there are no free ones available anymore.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Corruption, labour rights discourage investment

Says US state dept on Bangladesh's business climate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's inadequate infrastructure, limited financing instruments, bureaucratic delays, lax enforcement of labour laws and corruption continue to hinder foreign investment, said a recent report by the US Department of State.

The government has made gradual progress over the past decade in reducing some constraints on investment, such as taking steps to better ensure reliable electricity, but inadequate infrastructure, limited financing instruments, bureaucratic delays, lax enforcement of labour laws and corruption continue to hinder foreign investment.

The government has made efforts to improve the business environment, but the full implementation of its foreign investment policies has yet to materialise, said the report styled '2023 Investment Climate Statements: Bangladesh', which was unveiled yesterday.

"Bangladesh's weak and slow legal system, which is widely believed to be corrupt, impedes foreign investment. In Bangladesh, courts have little ability to enforce their

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

**"Although Bangladesh is a traditionally moderate, secular country, political disturbances are likely to grow in size and intensity as national elections approach in late 2023/early 2024."**

US Department of State