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## Tarique may return in the first week of December

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahaman is expected to return to Bangladesh after 17 years in exile in the first week of December.

He will come to the country immediately after the election schedule is announced, Fazle Elahi Akbar, BNP chairperson's chief coordinator on defence and security issues, told The Daily Star.

Once back in Bangladesh from the UK, Tarique will be on the campaign trail all over the country.

"He needs to make his presence felt by the entire country as he is the chairman [acting] of the party. There will be huge crowds wherever he goes, so there are security risks."

The government has a

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## DMP tightens security after bomb blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All police stations in the Dhaka metropolitan area have been instructed to beef up security measures, while field officers have been directed to step up patrols and surveillance at important establishments.

The directives came at a security meeting held at the Police Auditorium in Rajarbagh Police Lines yesterday, attended by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Baharul Alam and DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali, among other top brass.

At the meeting, police officials reviewed present law and order and discussed the necessary courses of action.

Following the meeting, the DMP conducted security drills from 4:00pm to 5:00pm at key installations across the city.

The heightened security follows Friday night's incident, when a crude bomb exploded in front of St Mary's Cathedral in Kakrabi.

Hours later, two more crude bombs exploded in front of the residences of priests and teachers of St Joseph School and College in Mohammadpur.

The attack on St Mary's occurred just hours before its Jubilee celebration yesterday. The celebration, however, went ahead on the church premises with devotees from across the country.

These incidents come after a crude bomb attack on the Holy Rosary Church in Tejgaon on October 8.

Meanwhile, activists of the Awami League -- whose activities are currently banned -- held a flash procession in the capital's Shankar area Friday night, during which another crude bomb explosion occurred.

Besides, the Awami League announced a "Lockdown Dhaka" programme on social media for November 13 -- the day the International Crimes Tribunal is scheduled to fix the date for delivering its verdict in a case against three people, including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

DMP Additional Commissioner (admin) Md Sarwar said, "All things considered, an emergency situation could arise at any time. Security drills were arranged so that police can act swiftly in such a scenario."

## July victims faced 20 barriers to care, last rites

### New study finds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deceased and injured victims of the July uprising faced at least 20 different barriers in receiving medical care or having last rites performed, a new study has found.

Conducted by Bangladesh Health Watch and Eminence Bangladesh in association with Sweden Sverige and unveiled at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday, the study, titled "July Mass Uprising and Crisis of Health System", identified three primary and four root causes behind these obstructions and made five recommendations.

Public health researcher Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman and Eminence Bangladesh CEO Shamim Hayder Talukder presented the findings.

Ehsanur said that after discussions with injured victims, health service providers, journalists, and hospital administrators, as well as analyses of newspaper reports, the study found barriers in seeking medical treatment, receiving effective treatment, and conducting last rites.

Four major factors obstructed injured victims from seeking timely treatment: fear of persecution by police or the then ruling party (Awami League) members; mobility restrictions such as curfews; breakdown of transportation services; and having no one to accompany them.

Nine barriers were identified in receiving effective hospital treatment: denied or delayed admissions;



Police charged truncheons, fired sound grenades, and used water cannons to disperse a group of government primary school teachers, leaving dozens injured. The teachers were there to press home their three-point demand, including upgrading their pay scale to the 10th grade. The photos were taken at Shahbagh intersection yesterday afternoon. Story on page 3.

PHOTOS: STAR



## Govt reshuffles DCs in 15 dists ahead of polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday reshuffled deputy commissioners in 15 districts as the country prepares for the next general election in a few months.

The public administration ministry appointed new DCs in nine districts and transferred six others from one district to another. In doing so, it withdrew nine DCs and reassigned them to different ministries or agencies.

Four separate circulars were issued in this regard.

This marks the first major change in the district administration since Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus announced that the next general election will be held in February 2026, beginning the process of transferring power to an elected government.

The districts in which they changes will take place are Noakhali, Habiganj, Gazipur, Dhaka, Gaibandha, Barguna, Bogura, Sirajganj, Magura, Pirojpur, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Khulna, Kushtia, and Bhola.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission yesterday transferred 23 officials ahead of the upcoming

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## 'Will not accept anyone as big brother'

**Says Jamaat ameer on his party's foreign policy motto**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said Bangladesh is an independent and sovereign country, and it will not run on anyone's directives.

"We'll not accept anyone as a big brother -- we will stand on our own feet and move forward with our heads held high and with self-respect," he said at a gathering organised by Shafiqur's supporters at Jhilpar in Mirpur's Pirerbagh under the Dhaka-15 constituency.

Shafiqur is contesting in the upcoming polls from this constituency.

The Jamaat chief said the party's foreign policy motto will be based on friendship and equality with all and no antagonism towards anyone.

He added that the party will not compromise on establishing a society based on justice and fairness and in freeing the country from corruption and misrule.

"We want to build a confident young generation who will be self-reliant and voluntarily assist the government."

He urged the people to ensure the victory of Jamaat candidates across the country in the upcoming election to establish a peaceful, dynamic and developed society.

Shafiqur said Jamaat does not believe in the politics of mere promises; rather, it is committed to ensuring consistency between words and actions.

"Prior to the elections, some people or parties talked about the dreams of turning Bangladesh into America

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## Democracy cannot survive discrimination

Say political, legal analysts, and civil society leaders, urge enactment of anti-discrimination law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democracy will not sustain if discrimination cannot be eliminated, said noted political and legal analysts and civil society leaders yesterday.

"If we cannot eliminate discrimination, democracy will not be protected in the future because the institutions we create will easily break down," said SR Osmani, professor of Development Economics at the University of Ulster.

Osmani's comment came at a discussion on anti-discriminatory law organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Manusher Jonno Foundation, and Nagorik Uddyog (Citizen's Initiative), with support from Switzerland and UNDP, at the Bangladesh-China Conference Centre yesterday.

Democracy can go astray due to tyranny of the majority. Institutional obstacles can be created, but there is no guarantee that they will be permanent and effective, he said.

In the past, despite constitutional guarantees and recognition, institution after institution has been destroyed, first for party interests,

and then for individual interests. "The answer, therefore, is in the people, who must take responsibility for protecting their power," he said.

However, the vast majority of these people are victims of discrimination, which starts with socio-economic disparities that ultimately turns into a disparity in political power.

When those who are oppressed are asked whether they want democracy or autocracy, they prefer democracy.

However, due to discrimination, the attraction towards democracy often decreases over time, and they get frustrated and that leads to apathy.

"This then takes them far away from that deliberative democracy or public reason. At that point, they lack the opportunity to enter the discussion forum, and the ruling party, individual or group takes advantage of this lack of opportunity and this apathy."

The ruling group accumulates more power by exploiting the apathy and consequently accumulating more power.

"In this way, the decline of democracy gradually occurs. This eventually enables the rise of autocracy. Therefore, eradication of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



If discrimination continues and deepens, it will not only hinder justice or reform, but will also eventually endanger democracy and development.

**DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA**  
Convenor of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs



Heavy rains at the turn of October and November have damaged early potato sowed in Joypurhat. Waterlogged fields resulted in seeds failing to sprout, forcing farmers to replant at a cost of Tk 20,000-25,000 per acre. The photo was taken on Thursday in Khetai upazila of Joypurhat.

## PRICE SPIRAL Commission urges govt to authorise onion imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In response to escalating onion prices, the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) has advised the government to authorise imports as a strategic measure to increase supply and stabilise the local market.

Retail prices of the popular kitchen essential climbed by 53 percent to Tk 110-120 per kilogramme in Dhaka's markets yesterday from Tk 70-80 per kg a week ago, according to data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The BTTC attributed the price spiral partly to delays in planting the early-season varieties, locally referred to as "Murikata" onions, which could delay harvesting and impact market supply.

BTTC Chairman Moinul Khan said the commission found certain intermediaries to be trying to destabilise the market by creating an

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4