



A HISTORIC HOMECOMING



(From top left, clockwise) Bangladesh Nationalist Party acting chairman Tarique Rahman waves to his supporters before delivering a speech at an event in Dhaka's 300 Feet area marking his homecoming; supporters wait along the route from the airport to the venue, holding party flags, electoral symbols, and banners; Tarique waves from a bus as his motorcade slowly moves through the large crowd gathered to welcome him; some activists and supporters receive medical attention at the venue; the BNP leader, accompanied by his wife and daughter, greets party leaders at the airport; and Tarique removes his shoes to step barefoot onto Bangladeshi soil and scoops up a handful of earth in a symbolic gesture of homecoming. Tarique was welcomed back to Bangladesh yesterday by huge crowds of joyous supporters after 17 years in exile.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN, PRABIR DAS, BNP MEDIA CELL



Shafiqur to run

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on behalf of Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman for Dhaka-15 parliamentary seat.  
Dhaka-15 comprises Kafrul area.  
Other candidates who have collected nominations for Dhaka-15 are: Dr Ahammad Sajedul Huq Rubel (Communist Party of Bangladesh-CPB); Md Shafiqul Islam Khan (BNP); Alamgir Ferdous (NCP); SM Fazlul Haque (Islami Andolan Bangladesh); AKM Shafiqul Islam (Gonoforum); Md Tanzil Islam, and Khan Shoaib Amanullah.  
The deadline for submitting nomination papers is December 29.

Cold, dense fog

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came out in the morning. Working outdoors in this cold is very difficult," he said.  
A similar situation has been prevailing in other northern districts.  
"It's unbearably cold, so I opted to stay indoors. If I go out in this weather, I will fall ill. However, now I have to borrow money from others just to buy rice and lentils," said Kandri Bala, a female day labourer from Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.  
Farmer Makbul Hossain, 55, of Phulbari upazila in Kurigram, said it was difficult to work on farmland amid such severe cold.  
"Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the country from midnight till morning and it may continue till noon (Friday) at places," said a bulletin of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.  
"Air navigation, inland river transport and road communication may be disrupted temporarily due to thick fog," said the BMD forecast for the next 24 hours, issued at 6:00pm yesterday.  
"Night temperature may fall slightly, and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country. Due to foggy conditions, cold may be felt more intensely at many places across the country," it added.  
[Our correspondents from Rajshahi and Lalmonirhat contributed to the report]

X-mas celebrated amid festivity

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community dressed as Santa Claus to distribute gifts among children, maintaining a long standing tradition, BSS reports.  
In Tangail, the main celebration took place at the Jalchhatra Christ Dharmapalli Church in Madhupur. Addressing the gathering, local religious leader Samnom Nakret urged the community to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ by living with mutual love, compassion, and peaceful coexistence. Traditional Pitha festivals were organised in several villages, including Mominpur, Idilpur, Pirgachha, Sainamari, and Dharati.  
In Sunamganj, the festival was held in at least 25 churches in the district town and surrounding upazilas. Communities in border villages, including Uttar Narayantala, Puratan Gudigaon, Kathalbari, and Paschim Kona Para, celebrated the day with enthusiasm.  
In Bandarban and Magura, special prayers were offered seeking happiness, peace, and prosperity for the nation. Families celebrated the festival by sharing traditional food and holding gatherings.  
Similar celebrations were reported in Sherpur, Barguna, Natore, Rajshahi, Jhenaidah, and Rangamati.  
Law enforcement agencies adopted additional security measures to ensure safety during the festival.  
Marking the occasion, President Mohammed Shahabuddin extended

NCP's Ctg-16 nominee

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warm greetings to the Christian community at home and abroad on Christmas.  
As in every year, the president exchanged greetings with distinguished members of the Christian community at the Bangabhaban.  
According to a press release issued by Sabbir Ahmed Akunjee, senior assistant secretary of the Public Division at the President's Office, diplomats, high commissioners, and representatives of international organisations also attended the programme.  
The president called for upholding communal harmony among the people of the country, irrespective of religion, race, and creed.  
He personally dissatisfied with NCP's alliance with Jamaat. We wanted NCP to pursue an independent political course," he said, adding that the party leadership had failed to uphold the vision of a new political settlement following the July uprising.  
A former student of Dhaka University, Arshadul held several key positions within NCP, including joint member secretary at the central level. He hails from Banskhali upazila in Chattogram.  
He termed his resignation symbolic, saying he chose to announce it on the day BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman returned to Bangladesh after 17 years in exile, describing it as a "special day".  
Arshadul also said NCP had failed to materialise the aspirations of the July Uprising, despite the sacrifices of more than 1,400 martyrs and thousands of injured protesters.  
He criticised what he described as a growing trend of using religion to polarise society and creating controversy around the Liberation War, warning that vested quarters were pushing the country towards uncertainty.  
Expressing confidence in Tarique Rahman's leadership, Arshadul said there was no alternative to BNP and its allies forming the next government through victory in the upcoming polls.