



"We have agreed on a meeting at the highest level - with President Trump... A lot can be decided before the New Year."  
Zelensky hails 'new ideas' on Ukraine peace plan



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## Restoring party discipline now key task for Tarique

Leaders hope his return will help strengthen unity within party

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

After returning to the country, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman is facing a series of challenges ahead of election as the party remains mired in allegations of indiscipline, wrongdoing and infighting.

Still, the party is hopeful, with leaders saying his return will help restore unity and discipline while grassroots workers are moving forward for the polls in a positive and festive spirit.

Party leaders and analysts say Tarique's foremost task is to bring leaders and activists under a single command by reducing internal divisions, stopping infighting, restoring discipline, and ensuring party decisions are followed at all levels.

Ahead of the polls, he must also mobilise party members behind BNP-nominated candidates, prevent leaders from contesting against official nominees, and work to regain the trust of voters.

Tarique has been in Dhaka for only two days, during which his movements have drawn large crowds of party leaders and activists. Analysts say that in the days ahead, reaching ordinary voters directly and seeking their support will be crucial as the party moves toward the polls.

Within the party, this moment is widely seen as a test of Tarique's leadership after his 17-year exile. Tarique guided the party virtually from London in those years.

Leaders warn that failure to strengthen the organisation could leave



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman stands solemnly before the grave of his father and late president Ziaur Rahman. It was his first visit in nearly two decades. He placed wreaths and offered prayers at the mausoleum. Inset, Tarique wipes his eyes after becoming emotional during the prayers. The photos were taken yesterday afternoon at Zia Udyan in the capital.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL



**If party members get involved in violence or wrongdoing, the party's image will suffer.**

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman  
Former professor of government and politics, JU

BNP facing difficult days ahead.

Political analysts say strengthening unity and improving the party's image among voters will be Tarique's biggest tests before the election.

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, a former professor of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, said Tarique had already expressed concern about the law and order situation after his return, which would make maintaining discipline among leaders and activists particularly difficult.

Masud said establishing a clear chain of command and keeping party members united would not be easy.

Tarique, he added, must take a firm stance to ensure leaders and activists follow party decisions and stay away from election violence.

"If party members get involved in violence or wrongdoing, the party's image will suffer," he said.

Analysts also point out that a section of BNP leaders and activists believe the party is close to coming to power, a perception that could encourage behaviour contrary to party interests at the grassroots level.

Preventing such actions, they say, will be another challenge.

Meanwhile, several leaders have announced plans to contest the election as rebel candidates, ignoring party decisions.

Party insiders say persuading them to accept official nominations and directives will be among Tarique's toughest tasks.

After the August 5 changeover last year, allegations emerged that some leaders and activists were involved in activities violating party discipline.

On September 18, Tarique said that around 7,000 leaders and activists had been expelled for breaching party rules.

After his return, restoring discipline has become the central challenge, said Mohammad Mojibur Rahman, a professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research.

He said if party members engage in wrongdoing while Tarique is present in the country, it would damage his reputation and give opponents an opportunity to criticise him.

BNP has also faced criticism over internal conflicts and extortion since the fall of the Awami League government in 2024.

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## Tarique offers prayers at Zia's grave after 19yrs

Pays respects to martyred freedom fighters at National Memorial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After 19 years, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday visited the grave of his father and late president Ziaur Rahman.

Tarique, accompanied by senior party leaders, placed wreaths and offered prayers at the mausoleum in Zia Udyan at 4:50pm. He stood silently for a while before his father's grave, then raised his hands in prayer, visibly overcome with emotion.

Members of the BGB, Rab, army and police barred media personnel and party activists from entering the mausoleum complex. Only senior party leaders were allowed inside.

While Tarique was paying respects, party leaders and activists gathered outside.

Prayers were also offered for the recovery of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and for those martyred in the July uprising.

Tarique last visited his father's grave on September 1, 2006, marking the BNP's founding anniversary. At the time, he was serving as the party's senior joint secretary general.

Tarique Rahman returned home from London on Thursday morning, ending his 17-year-long exile.

Yesterday, he left his Gulshan residence for Zia Udyan around 2:45pm.

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## EDUCATION IN 2025

# A year of strikes, setbacks and disruptions

- Education disrupted nationwide by strikes, protests and policy reversals
- 1cr primary students affected by prolonged teacher agitation
- Primary education budget cut despite deepening learning crisis
- HSC pass rate plummeted to 58.83%, lowest in 21yrs
- SSC pass rate fared little better, hitting a 16yr low

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

In a Narsingdi village, Ahmed Mia faces a paradox common to millions of Bangladeshi parents. His daughter, Rafia, has completed the second grade at the local government primary school, yet she struggles to read Bangla.

"Nearly 90 percent of students here pass, but many cannot properly read," observes Ahmed from Bakharnagar.

In the neighbouring village of Satpara, Sonia Akter worries that the emptiness of the classrooms will soon translate into crowded local factories and marriage registries. "If school closures continue, boys could be drawn into crime, and early marriages may increase," she says.

Their anxieties are well-founded. For Bangladesh's education sector, 2025 was a year of disruptions, signifying major flaws in governance. From the primary level to the universities, the academic calendar was shredded by prolonged teacher agitation, government crackdowns, and indecisions on curriculum policies.

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## NCP-Jamaat deal 'likely in a day or two'

SHAMIMA RITA

The National Citizen Party is likely to finalise a seat-sharing deal with Jamaat-e-Islami within the next one or two days ahead of the election, even as a section of senior women leaders has publicly opposed any such arrangement.

The prominent women leaders opposing the possible deal include Senior Joint Convener Samanta Sarmeen, Joint Member Secretary Nusrat Tabassum, Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara, Joint Convener Monira Sharmin, and Tajnuva Jabeen.

They argue that the NCP has already forged a distinct political identity and that any electoral compromise with Jamaat would dilute, and eventually erase, that identity.

One of them, requesting anonymity, said that five of the top party leaders, including Convener Nahid Islam and Member Secretary Akhter Hossen, were in favour of striking a deal with Jamaat.

However, she said, a group of 30 other senior leaders, including the women, disagreed.

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## HADI MURDER Will not leave Shahbagh until justice is served

Vows Inqilab Moncho, demands advisers visit protest to explain progress

DU CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Moncho yesterday vowed to continue its Shahbagh blockade programme until the perpetrators of Sharif Osman Hadi's murder are brought to justice.



Announcing the programme, member secretary Abdullah Al Jaber said the state has failed to assure justice over the killing.

"We have kept our patience. Does the state care? What have they done to assure us?" he told a gathering at the Shahbagh intersection after Friday prayers, as part of a preannounced programme.

"We will not listen to the government anymore. We will not leave this place until we get a clear explanation from the government about the killers of Osman Hadi," he said, demanding that all government advisers should come to

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Leaders and activists of Inqilab Moncho began a sit-in at the capital's Shahbagh intersection after Juma prayers yesterday, demanding justice for the killing of Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, one of the frontliners in last year's July uprising.

PHOTO: STAR

## 4 killed, several hurt as launches collide in Meghna

2 more die as vessel hits bulk carrier in N'ganj for dense fog, low visibility

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and several others injured in two riverine accidents in Chandpur and Narayanganj yesterday. Officials said poor visibility, caused by dense fog, might have led to the incidents.

In Chandpur, four of them died after two launches collided in the Meghna river early yesterday.

The victims were Abdul Gani, 38, and Md Saju, 45, Rina, 35, of Bhola's Lalmojon upazila; and Md Hanif, 60, of the district's Chafashion upazila, said police.

They were passengers of the Dhaka-bound MV Zakir Samrat-3, which departed from Bhola's Ghosherhat. It was crossing the Haimchar area shortly after 2:00am when the Barishal bound MV Adventure-9 struck it.

Following the incident, the route permits of the two launches have been cancelled, said Md Kamruzzaman, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) at Chandpur river port.

Mohammad Hasan, a passenger of MV Adventure-9, said the collision took

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