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## Tarique Rahman to Return for Bangladesh's Landmark Election



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Dhaka, October 6 - Exiled opposition leader Tarique Rahman, acting chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), has announced his plan to return home after nearly two decades abroad to contest the country's upcoming February general election, which is being described as one of the most critical in Bangladesh's history.

In an interview with BBC Bangla, Rahman, 58, said, "The time has come, God willing, I will return

soon.” His statement ended months of speculation surrounding his political comeback. The BNP, once crushed under the long rule of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is now the frontrunner following her ouster in the 2024 mass uprising that left over 1,400 people dead, according to UN investigators.

Hasina, who fled to India, faces trial in absentia for crimes against humanity. The interim government led by Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus has barred her Awami League from political activity until the trial concludes.

Rahman, son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, was cleared of all charges filed during Hasina’s tenure and is widely expected to become Bangladesh’s next prime minister if the BNP wins. He pledged to restore democracy and freedom of speech, saying restrictions like those imposed under Hasina’s rule “will never happen again.”

The BNP faces limited competition, though Jamaat-e-Islami and emerging youth-led parties are attempting to gain ground. Rahman dismissed concerns, expressing confidence that the people’s demand for reform will ensure a decisive BNP victory.